THE WHOLE

WORKS

OF

THE LATE REVEREND AND LEARNED

Mr. THOMAS BOSTON,

Miniſter of the Goſpel at Etterick.

CONTAINING,

I. Human Nature in its Fourfold Sta[illegible]
II. A View of the Covenant of Grace [illegible] Sacred Records; with a Memorial c[illegible] Faſting.
III. Several Sermons on Afflictions, and the Nature of Church-communion.
IV. An Explication of the firſt Part of the Aſſembly's Shorter Catechiſm.
V. Miſcellany Queſtions and Tracts; with a Paraphraſe on the Epiſtle of Paul to the Ga[illegible]latians.
[illegible]I. Sermons on various important Subjects, from twenty-five different Texts of Scripture.
VII. Sermons on the Everlaſting Eſpouſals, the Myſtery of Chriſt in the Form of a Servant, the peculiar Advantages and Defects of Life, and the Evil and Danger of Schiſm.
VIII. Sermons on the Throne of Grace.

And by it he being dead, yet ſpeaketh. Heb. xi. 4.

DUNDEE,
Printed by LAURENCE CHALMERS,
For ROBERT NICOLL Bookſeller, and ſold by him at his Shop, oppoſite to the [illegible]
M,DCC,LXXIII.

A Short Account of the Author's Life.

MR Thomas Boston, the youngeſt of ſeven children, born 1676, of creditable religious parents in the town of Dunſe, where they had ſome heritage; licenſed to preach 1697; ordained miniſter at Simprin[*] 1699; married 1700 to Catharine Brown, of good extract, in the Pariſh of Culroſs; a gentlewoman of ſingular wiſdom, and many rare endowments, (by whom he had a good many children, of whom two ſons[†] and two daughters ſurvive them;) tranſported to Ettrick[‡] 1707; died 1732, near five years before his ſpouſe[§], in the 56th year of his age.

He was of a ſtature above the middle ſize; of a venerable, amiable aſpect, with his own hair originally black; of a ſtrong and fruitful genius; of a lively imagination, (ſuch as affords what is called *ready Wit*, which, inſtead of cultivating, he laid under a ſevere reſtraint;) of tender affections; a clear and ſolid judgment; his temper candid, modeſt, cautious, benevolent, obliging, and courteous; had a natural averſion to any thing rude or uncivil, in words or behaviour, and a delicate feeling in caſe of meeting with ought of that ſort: could be heavy and ſevere in his words when there was juſt occaſion, or he judged the ſame neceſſary.

He was early called by divine grace; all along afterwards exerciſed unto godlineſs; walked indeed with God in all his ways; daily acknowledging him; frequent in ſolemn extraordinary applications to Heaven, (namely upon every new emergent of duty, difficulty, or trial;) followed with evident, comfortable, and confirming teſtimonies of divine acceptance and audience; a diligent, judicious obſerver, recorder, and improver of the diſpenſations of divine providence, in connection with the word, his own frame and walk; and conſequently of great experience in religion. He was accurately and extenſively regardful of the divine law, in all manner of life and converſation, (even in things that eſcape the notice of the moſt part of Chriſtians;) of a tender conſcience, carefully watching againſt and avoiding the appearance of evil; compaſſionate and ſympathiſing with the diſtreſſed; charitable to the needy, (to the degree of religiouſly ſetting apart the tenth of his worldly ſubſtance yearly for their ſupply;) a dutiful huſband, an indulgent father; a ſincere, a faithful, and an affectionate friend: to which he had a particular caſt in his temper, which proved a rich bleſſing to them who were favoured with his friendſhip.

He was a conſiderable ſcholar in all the parts of theological learning, and excelled in ſome of them. What he was for a *Humaniſt*, (even towards the latter end of his days,) his tranſlation of his own work, on the Hebrew accentuation, into good Roman Latin, will abundantly teſtify. He was well ſeen in the Greek; and for the ſkill he attained in the Hebrew, he will, we are ſatisfied, in ages to come, be admired, and had in honour by the learned world; eſpecially when it is underſtood under what diſadvantages, in what obſcurity and ſecluſion from learned aſſiſtances, the work was compoſed; and when it is conſidered, how far notwithſtanding he has outſtripped all that went before him in that ſtudy, namely, of the Hebrew *accentuation*. He underſtood the French; and, for the ſake of comparing tranſlations, could read the Dutch Bible. There were few pieces of learning that he had not ſome good taſte of; but all his knowledge behoved to be otherwiſe diſcovered than by his profeſſing of it. He was a hard ſtudent, of indefatigable application; ſo that, whatever he was once heartily engaged in, he knew not to quit, till, by help from heaven, and inceſſant labour, he got through it. Had a great knowledge and underſtanding of human nature, of the moſt proper methods of addreſſing it, and the moſt likely handles for catching hold of it. He had an admirable talent at drawing a paper, which made a ſtateſman[*], a very able judge, ſay, [when Mr Boſton was clerk of the ſynod of Merſe and Teviotdale,] that he was the beſt clerk he had ever known in any court, civil or eccleſiaſtical. An admirer of other mens parts and gifts, liberally giving them their due praiſe, even though in ſome things they differed from him; far from cenſorious, aſſuming, or detracting.

As a miniſter he had on his ſpirit a deep and high ſenſe of divine things; was mighty in the ſcriptures, in his acquaintance with the letter, with the ſpirit and ſenſe of them, in happily applying and accommodating them for explaining and illuſtrating the ſubject. His knowledge and inſight into the myſtery of Chriſt was great, though a humbling ſenſe of his want of it was like to have quite ſunk and laid him by, after he began to preach. He had a peculiar talent of going deep into the myſteries of the goſpel, and at the ſame time making them plain, making intelligible their connection with and influence upon goſpel holineſs: notable inſtances of which may be ſeen in his moſt valuable treatiſe of the *Covenant*, and in his ſermons of Chriſt in the *form of a ſervant*. His invention was rich, but judiciouſly bounded; his thoughts were always juſt, and often new; his expreſſions proper and pure; his illuſtrations and ſimilies often ſurpriſing; his method natural and clear; his delivery grave and graceful, with an air of earneſtneſs, meekneſs, aſſurance, and authority, tempered together. No wonder his miniſtrations in holy things were all of them dear and precious to the ſaints. He was fixed and eſtabliſhed upon ſolid and rational grounds in the reformation principles, in oppoſition to Popery, Prelacy, ſuperſtition, and perſecution. Was pleaſant and lively in converſation, but always with a *decorum* to his character: quite free of that ſourneſs of temper, or *aſcetical* rigidity, that generally poſſeſſes men of a retired life. He fed and watched with diligence, the flock over which the Holy Ghoſt made him overſeer, and, notwithſtanding his eager purſuit of that ſtudy which was his delight, he abated nothing of his preparation for the Sabbath, nor of his work abroad in the pariſh; nor did he ſo much as uſe the ſhort-hand, whereof he was maſter, but always wrote out his ſermons fair, and generally as full as he preached them: far from ſerving the Lord with that which coſt him nothing. It was his delight to ſpend and be ſpent in the ſervice of the goſpel. Was a faithful, and at the ſame time, a prudent reprover of ſin. Was endued with a rich meaſure of Chriſtian wiſdom and prudence, without craft or guile, whereby he was exceedingly ſerviceable in judicatories, and excellently fitted for counſel in intricate caſes. Zeal and knowledge were in him united to a pitch rarely to be met with. Had a joint concern for purity and peace in the church: no man more zealous for the former, and, at the ſame time, more ſtudious of the latter, having obſerved and felt ſo much of the miſchief of diviſion and ſeparation. Was exceeding ſcrupulous of any thing new or unprecedented, until he was thoroughly ſatisfied of its neceſſity and grounds. It was his ſettled mind, that ſolidly and ſtrongly to eſtabliſh the truth, was in many caſes the beſt, the ſhorteſt, and the moſt effectual way to confute error, without irritating and inflaming the paſſions of men to their own and to the truth's prejudice: therefore, in his explication and vindication of the *Proteſtant doctrine* in a paroxiſm quarrelled and condemned in a *certain book*, he anſwered all and every body, but took notice expreſsly of nobody. He obeyed the voice, " But thou, O man of God, flee theſe " things," being, in an uncommon degree, dead to the world: Finding, ſays he, in the account of his life, the buſineſs of it enſnaring to my mind, I had neither heart nor hand for it. On all which accounts he was much reſpected and regarded by, not only his brethren that differed from him, but generally by all ſorts of men. To conclude, he was a ſcribe ſingularly inſtructed unto the kingdom. Happy in finding out acceptable words.—A *workman* that needed not be aſhamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. A burning and ſhining light. " The righteous ſhall be had in everlaſting re" membrance."

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[*] The ſmalleſt charge of a country pariſh perhaps in Scotland, not being quite ninety examinable perſons in his time. [†] One ſucceeds his father in name, office, and charge. [‡] One of the remoteſt and wildeſt places in the ſouth of Scotland. [§] Among her other uncommon excellencies, ſhe was eminent for her exemplary bearing of affliction, under which ſhe was bowed down, well nigh as long as that daughter of Abraham mentioned in Luke xiii. 11.

[*] Mr Baillie of Jerviſwood.

Though a ſkilful hand might in fewer words have drawn his character to much better purpoſe, there is no partiality by overdoing in what is ſaid, if intimate friendſhip for many years, and the account of his own life, done by himſelf, are allowed for competent evidences: but the hearing him preach one ſermon would have ſaid ſomething that cannot be ſaid now.

His removal in the juncture wherein he was taken away, ſome are ſatisfied, had, on ſeveral accounts, more of divine anger in it, with reſpect to this church, than is commonly apprehended.

It might have been more edifying, had there been room for it here, to have heard of him in his *own words*, from the general account of his life, by him addreſſed to his children: out of which ſhall, with their leave, ſubjoin only a few touches towards the cloſe of it, as follows:

" Thus alſo I was much addicted to peace, " and averſe from controverſy; though once " engaged therein, I was ſet to go through " with it. I had no great difficulty to retain a " honour and charity for my brethren differing " from me both in opinion and practice; but " then I was in no great hazard neither of be" ing ſwayed by them to depart from what I " judged truth or duty. Withal, it was eaſy " to me to yield to them in things wherein I " found not myſelf in conſcience bound up. " Whatever precipitant ſteps I have made in the " courſe of my life, which I deſire to be hum" bled for, raſhneſs in conduct was not my " weak ſide. But ſince the Lord, by his grace, " brought me to conſider things, it was much " my exerciſe to diſcern ſin and duty in parti" cular caſes, being afraid to venture on things, " untill I ſhould ſee myſelf called thereto: but " when the matter was cleared to me, I gene" rally ſtuck faſt by it, being as much afraid to " deſert the way which I took to be pointed out " to me. I never had the art of making rich, " nor could I ever heartily apply myſelf to the " managing of ſecular affairs. Even the ſecu" lar way of managing the diſcipline of the " church was ſo unacceptable to me, that I had " no heart to dip in the public church-ma" nagement. What appearances I made at any " time in theſe matters, were not readily in that " way." He concludes.

" And thus I have given ſome account of the " days of my vanity. Upon the whole, I bleſs " my God in Jeſus Chriſt, that ever he made me " a Chriſtian, and took an early dealing with " my ſoul: that ever he made me a miniſter of " the goſpel, and gave me ſome inſight into the " doctrine of his grace; and that ever he gave " me the bleſſed Bible, and brought me ac" quainted with the originals, and eſpecially " with the Hebrew text. The world hath all a" long been a ſtep dame to me, and whereſoever " I would have attempted to neſtle in it, there " was a thorn of uneaſineſs laid for me. Man is " born crying, lives complaining, and dies diſ" appointed from that quarter. *All is vanity* " *and vexation of ſpirit. I have waited for thy* " *ſalvation, O Lord.*"

ALEX. COLDEN.
GAB. WILSON.
H. DAVIDSON.

HUMAN NATURE,

IN ITS

FOURFOLD STATE

OF

Primitive Integrity,	Subſiſting in	The Parents of Mankind in Paradiſe;
Entire Depravation,		The Irregenerate;
Begun Recovery,		The Regenerate.
And Consummate Happiness or Misery.		All Mankind in the Future State.

IN

Several Practical Diſcourſes.

John ii. 24, 25. *But Jeſus did not commit himſelf unto them, becauſe he knew all men, and needed not that any ſhould teſtify of man: for he knew what was in man.*
Luke ix. 55. *Ye know not what manner of ſpirit ye are of.*
Prov. xxvii. 19. *As in water face anſwereth to face, ſo the heart of man to man.*

PREFACE.

IT is a maxim among wiſe men, That the knowledge of perſons is of as great uſe in the conduct of human life, as the knowledge of things: and it is moſt certain, that he who knows the various tempers, humours, and diſpoſitions of men, who can find out their turn of thought, and penetrate into the ſecret ſprings and principles of their actings, will not be at a loſs to find out proper means for compaſſing his aims, will eaſily preſerve himſelf from ſnares, and either evite or overcome difficulties. But the knowledge of human nature, *morally* conſidered, or, in other words, of the temper and diſpoſition of the ſoul in its *moral powers*, is of much greater value; as it is of uſe in the concerns of an unchangeable life and world. He who is poſſeſſed of ſo valuable a branch of knowledge, is thereby capacitated to judge aright of himſelf, to underſtand true Chriſtianity, and to conceive juſtly of perfect happineſs and conſummate miſery.

The depravity of human nature is ſo plainly taught, yea, inculcated in ſacred ſcripture, and is ſo obvious to every thinking man's obſervation, who ſearches his own breaſt, and reflects duly on his own temper and actings, that it is ſurpriſingly ſtrange and wonderful, how it comes to paſs that this important truth is ſo little underſtood, yea, ſo much diſbelieved, by men who bear the name of *Goſpel-miniſters*. Are there not perſons to be found in a neighbouring nation, in the character of preachers, appearing daily in pulpits, who are ſo unacquainted with their Bibles and themſelves, that they ridicule the doctrine of *original ſin* as unintelligible jargon? If they are perſons of a moral life and converſation, they ſeem to imagine, they cannot become better than they are; if they are immoral, they ſeem to indulge a conceit, that they can become virtuous, yea religious, when they pleaſe. Theſe are the men who talk of the dignity of human nature, of greatneſs of mind, nobleneſs of ſoul, and generoſity of ſpirit: as if they intended to perſuade themſelves and others that *pride* is a good principle; and do not know that pride and ſelfiſhneſs are the bane of mankind, and productive of all the wickedneſs, and much of the miſery to be found in this and in the other world; and is indeed that wherein the depravity of human nature properly conſiſts.

Upright Adam's nature faintly adumbrated the divine, in a moderated ſelf-eſteem, an adequate ſelf-love, and delightful reflection on his own borrowed excellency, regulated by a juſt eſteem of, and ſupreme love to his adored Creator: whence a peaceful ſerenity of mind, a loving, compaſſionate, and benevolent diſpoſition of ſoul, a depth of thought, and brightneſs of imagination, delightfully employed in the rapturous contemplation of his beloved Maker's infinite perfections; thus bearing the divine image, and reſembling *God* that made him. But no ſooner did he diſobey the divine prohibitory command, than the ſcales were caſt; his moderated ſelf-eſteem degenerated into pride, his adequate ſelf love ſhrunk into mere ſelfiſhneſs, and his delightful reflections on his own excellency varied into the tickling pleaſures of *vanity* and *conceit*: he loſt view of the author of his being, and thenceforth, inſtead of delighting in him, firſt dreaded and then deſpiſed him.

The modeſt, and therefore hitherto anonymous author of the following diſcourſes, Mr Thomas Boſton, having handled this ſubject, in preaching to his own obſcure parochial congregation at Etterick, in the ſheriffdom of Selkirk, had a particular view to their benefit, in printing and publiſhing them; and therefore the ſtile and method is plain and ſimple, and the firſt edition printed on coarſe paper; but the ſubject is ſo comprehenſive and important, ſo well managed, and the book has been ſo well received, that it now appears in the world, more embelliſhed, as well as better corrected than formerly.

Let it ſuffice to recommend it to thoſe who have a right taſte of genuine Chriſtianity, that all the author's notions flow ſo directly from the ſacred fountain, that it is to be doubted if he has had much recourſe to any other helps than his Bible and his *God* for aſſiſtance. Mean time, I am aware of an exception from thoſe who rank themſelves among the polite part of mankind, as that there is the ſame harſh peculiarity of dialect in it, which is commonly to be found in books of practical divinity. But I beg leave to obſerve, That the dialect they except againſt, is borrowed from ſacred ſcripture: and like as *it has pleaſed God, by the fooliſhneſs of preaching to ſave them that believe;* ſo alſo to countenance what they are diſpleaſed with, by the operations of his Spirit on the minds of true Chriſtians, as their common experience witneſſeth. However, I heartily wiſh, the exception were altogether removed, by ſome perſons digeſting, into a methodical *treatiſe*, the views of human nature in its primitive perfection, in its depraved condition, and in its retrieved ſtate, who is maſter of modern ſtile, and thoroughly underſtands the ſubjects diſcourſed in this book, that by becoming all things to all men, *ſome*, *viz.* of all ranks and kinds of men, may be gained.

I am not to declaim at large in favours of religion; this were to write a book by way of preface. Many able pens have been employed in recommending it to the world, by ſtrong arguments drawn from its uſefulneſs to ſociety, its ſuitableneſs to the dignity of the rational nature, and the advantages ariſing to men from it in this and the other world. But, after all, may not one be allowed to doubt if religion be rightly underſtood by all its patrons? may not the beauties and excellencies of a precious gem be elegantly deſcribed by a naturaliſt, or jeweler, who never ſaw the particular one he talked of, and knows little of its nature, leſs of the conſtruction of its parts, and nothing of its proper uſe? Are there not men of bright parts, who reaſon finely in the defence of religion, and yet are ſo much ſtrangers to it, that they brand the perſons who are ſo happy as to be poſſeſſed of it, with the hard name of *ſpiritualiſts*, reckoning them a kind of Enthuſiaſts, unworthy of their regard? The truth is, Chriſtianity is a myſtery; mere reaſon does not comprehend it. There is a ſpiritual diſcerning neceſſary to its being rightly underſtood; whence it comes to paſs, that men of great learning and abilities, though they read the ſcriptures with attention, and comment learnedly upon them; yet do not, yea, cannot enter into the vein of thought peculiar to the inſpired penmen, becauſe they ſhare not of the ſame ſpirit: wherefore it is, that the apoſtle Paul aſſerts, that *the natural*, that is unregenerate *man, doth not know the things of God, neither indeed can* be capable of knowing them, *becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.*

From what has been ſaid, it is eaſy to conclude, That no pedantic apology, on the part of the author, for appearing in print, or fawning compliments to the courteous reader, on the part of the prefacer, are to be expected. The truth is, both the one and the other are rather little arts, vailing pedantry and conceit, than evidences of modeſty and good ſenſe. It is of more uſe, to recommend the peruſal of the book to perſons of all ranks and degrees, from a few ſuitable topics; and then to ſhow wherein this edition differs from the firſt.

That all mankind, however differenced by their rank and ſtation in the world, have an equal concern in what is revealed concerning another and future world, will be readily owned; and it muſt be as readily granted, that, however allowable it may be for men of learning and parts to pleaſe themſelves with fineneſs of language, juſtneſs of thought, and exact connection, in writings upon other ſubjects; yet they ought not to indulge themſelves in the ſame taſte in diſcourſes on divine things, leſt they expoſe themſelves to the juſt cenſure of acting with the ſame indiſcretion, as a perſon in danger of famiſhing by hunger would be guilty of, if he perverſely rejected plain wholeſome food, when offered to him, for no other reaſon than the the want of palatable ſauce, or order and ſplendour in ſerving it up.

The ſacred book, we call the Bible, has a peculiar ſublimity in it, vailed with unuſual dialect and ſeeming inconnection; but it is not therefore to be rejected by men who bear the name of Chriſtians, as uncouth or unintelligible: true wiſdom dictates quite another thing; it counſels us, by frequent reading, to acquaint ourſelves well with it, become accuſtomed to its peculiar phraſes, and ſearch into its ſublimities; upon this ground, that the matters contained in it are of the utmoſt conſequence to us, and, when rightly underſtood, yield a refined delight, much ſuperior to what is to be found in reading the beſt written books on the moſt entertaining ſubjects. What pleads for the parent, is a plea for the progeny; practical diſcourſes upon divine ſubjects are the genuine offſpring of the ſacred text, and ought therefore to be read carefully and with attention, by perſons of all ranks and degrees; though they are indeed calculated for, and peculiarly adapted to ſuch as move in low ſpheres of life.

Let it, however, be a prevailing argument with perſons of all denominations carefully to read books of practical divinity, that many of them are not written on the ſame motives and principles as other books are; the authors have often a peculiar divine call to publiſh them, and well-founded hope of their being uſeful to advance Chriſtianity in the world. In conſequence whereof it is, that great numbers have reaped benefit by reading them, eſpecially in childhood and youth; many have been converted by them; and it may be queſtioned, if ever there was a true Chriſtian, ſince the art of printing made theſe books common, who has not, in ſome ſtage of life, reaped conſiderable advantage from them. This book recommends itſelf in a particular manner, by its being a ſhort ſubſtantial ſyſtem of practical divinity; inſomuch, that it may with truth be aſſerted, that a perſon, who is thoroughly acquainted with all that is here taught, may, without danger to his eternal intereſt, remain ignorant of other things, which pertain to the ſcience called Divinity. It is therefore earneſtly recommended to the ſerious and frequent peruſal of all, but eſpecially of ſuch as are in that ſtage of life called Youth, and are ſo ſtationed in the world, as not to be frequently opportuned to hear ſermons, and read commentaries on the ſacred text.

It is doubtleſs incumbent on maſters of families to make ſome proviſion of ſpiritual, as well as bodily food, for their children and ſervants. This is effectually done by putting practical books in their hands: and therefore this book is humbly and earneſtly recommended as a family-book, which all the members of it are not only allowed, but deſired to peruſe.

As to the difference betwixt this and the former edition which gives it preference, it lies chiefly in the author's not only having reviſed the ſtile, but the thought in many places, and corrected both, ſo as to ſet ſeveral important truths in a clearer light and make the ſtile of the book now uniform, which formerly was not ſo, becauſe of the explications of peculiar words and phraſes in uſe among the practical divines, eſpecially of the church of Scotland, which were interſperſed throughout the former edition, and introduced by another hand, for the ſake of ſuch perſons as are not accuſtomed to them. It remains that the prefacer not only ſubjoin his name, (which was concealed in the firſt edition) as a teſtimony that he eſteems the author and values the book, but that he may thereby recommend it in a particular manner to the peruſal of perſons of his own acquaintance. If in his aſſiſting towards its being publiſhed, and in prefacing both editions, he has not run unſent, he has what will bear him up under all cenſures: the charitable will think no evil, and others will do as they pleaſe.

Edinburgh, 18*th*
March 1729.

ROBERT WIGHTMAN, M. D. G. E.

STATE I.

NAMELY,

The STATE of INNOCENCE or PRIMITIVE INTEGRITY, in which MAN was created.

Eccl. vii. 29. *Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have ſought out many inventions.*

THERE are four things very neceſſary to be known by all that would ſee heaven: *Firſt*, What man was in the ſtate of innocence, as God made him. *Secondly*, What he is in the ſtate of corrupt nature, as he hath unmade himſelf. *Thirdly*, What he muſt be in the ſtate of grace, as *created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works*, if ever he be made a partaker of the inheritance of the ſaints in light. And *laſtly*, What he ſhall be in his eternal ſtate, as made by the Judge of all, either perfectly happy, or completely miſerable, and that for ever. Theſe are weighty points, that touch the vitals of practical godlineſs; from which moſt men, and even many profeſſors, in theſe dregs of time, are quite eſtranged. I deſign therefore, under the divine conduct, to open up theſe things, and apply them.

I begin with the firſt of them, namely, the ſtate of innocence: that beholding man *poliſhed after the ſimilitude of a palace*, the ruins may the more affect us; we may the more prize that matchleſs perſon, whom the Father has appointed the *repairer of the breach*; and that we may with fixed reſolves, betake ourſelves to that way which leadeth to the *city that hath* unmoveable *foundations*. In the text we have three things;

1. The ſtate of innocence wherein man was created. *God hath made man upright*. By man here we are to underſtand our firſt parents; the archetypal pair, the root of mankind, the compendized world, and the fountain from whence all generations have ſtreamed; as may appear by comparing Gen. v. verſ. 1. and 2.----*In the day that God created man, in the likeneſs of God made he him. Male and female created he them, and bleſſed them*, (as the root of mankind,) *and called their name Adam*. The original word is the ſame in our text. In this ſenſe, man was made right, (agreeable to the nature of God, whoſe work is perfect), without any imperfection, corruption, or principle of corruption, in his body or ſoul. He was made upright, that is, ſtraight with the will and law of God, without any irregularity in his ſoul. By the ſet it got in its creation, it directly pointed towards God, as his chief end; which ſtraight inclination was repreſented, as in an emblem, by the erect figure of his body, a figure that no other living creature partakes of. What David was in a goſpel-ſenſe, that was he in a legal ſenſe; one according to God's own heart, altogether righteous, pure, and holy. God made him thus: he did not firſt make him, and then make him righteous; but in the very making of him, he made him righteous. Original righteouſneſs was concreated with him; ſo that in the ſame moment he was a man, he was a righteous man, morally good; with the ſame breath that God breathed in him a living ſoul, he breathed in him a righteous ſoul.

2. Here is man's fallen ſtate: *But they have ſought out many inventions*. They fell off from their reſt in God, and fell upon ſeeking inventions of their own, to mend their caſe; and they quite marred it. Their ruin was from their own proper motion: they would not abide as God had made them; *but they ſought out inventions* to deform and undo themſelves.

3. Obſerve here the certainty and importance of theſe things; *Lo, this only have I found*, &c. Believe them, they are the reſult of a narrow ſearch, and a ſerious enquiry, performed by the wiſeſt of men. In the two preceding verſes Solomon repreſents himſelf as in queſt of goodneſs in the world; but the iſſue of it was, he could find no ſatisfying iſſue of his ſearch after it; though it was not for want of pains, for he *counted one by one to find out the account*. *Behold, this have I found* (ſaith the preacher) to wit, *That* (as the ſame word is read in our text) *yet my ſoul ſeeketh, but I find not*. He could make no ſatisfying diſcovery of it, which might ſtay his enquiry. He found good men very rare, one as it were among a thouſand; good women more rare, not one good among his thouſand wives and concubines, 1 Kings xi. 3. but could not ſatisfy the grand query, *Where ſhall wiſdom be found?* No, it could not: (and if the experience of others, in this point, run counter to Solomon's, as it is no reflection on his diſcerning, it can as little decide the queſtion, which will remain undetermined till the laſt day). But, amidſt all this uncertainty there is one point found out and fixed: *This have I found*. Ye may depend upon it as a moſt certain truth, and be fully ſatisfied in it: *Lo this*; fix your eyes upon it, as a matter worthy of moſt deep and ſerious regard; to wit, that man's nature is now depraved: but that depravation was not from God, for he *made man upright*; but from themſeves, *they have ſought out many inventions*.

Doctrine, *God made man altogether righteous*.

THIS is that ſtate of innocence, in which God ſet man down in the world. It is deſcribed in the holy ſcriptures with a running pen, in compariſon of the following ſtates; for it was of no continuance, but paſſed as a flying ſhadow, by man's abuſing the freedom of his own will. I ſhall,

Firſt, Enquire into the righteouſneſs of this ſtate in which man was created.

Secondly, Lay before you ſome of the happy concomitants and conſequents thereof.

Laſtly, Apply the whole.

Of MAN's *original righteouſneſs.*

FIRST, As to the righteouſneſs of this ſtate, conſider, That as uncreated righteouſneſs, the righteouſneſs of God, is the ſupreme rule; ſo all created righteouſneſs, whether of men or angels, hath reſpect to a law as its rule, and is a conformity thereunto. A creature can no more be morally independent on God in its actions and powers, than it can be naturally independent on him. A creature, as a creature, muſt acknowledge the Creator's will as its ſupreme law; for as it cannot be without him, ſo it muſt not be but for him, and according to his will; yet no law obliges, until it be revealed. And hence it follows, that there was a law, which man, as a rational creature, was ſubjected to in his creation;

and that this law was revealed to him. *God made man upright*, ſays the text. This preſuppoſeth a law to which he was conformed in his creation; as when any thing is made regular, or according to rule, of neceſſity the rule itſelf is preſuppoſed. Whence we may gather, that this law of righteouſneſs, obſerved in all points by the ſecond Adam, is oppoſed by the carnal mind, ſome notions of which remain yet among the Pagans, who, *having not the law, are a law unto themſelves*, Rom. ii. 14. In a word, this law is the very ſame which was afterwards ſummed up in the ten commandments, and promulgate on mount Sinai, to the Iſraelites, called by us the moral law; and man's righteouſneſs conſiſted in conformity to this law or rule. More particularly, there is a twofold conformity required of man; a conformity of the powers of his ſoul to the law, which you may call habitual righteouſneſs; and a conformity of all his actions to it, which is actual righteouſneſs. Now, God made man habitually righteous: man was to make himſelf actually righteous; the former was the ſtock God put into his hand; the latter, the improvement he ſhould have made of it. The ſum of what I have ſaid is, that the righteouſneſs wherein man was created, was the conformity of all the faculties and powers of his ſoul to the moral law. This is what we call original righteouſneſs, which man was originally endued with. We may take it up in theſe three things:

Firſt, Man's underſtanding was a lamp of light. He had perfect knowledge of the law, and of his duty accordingly: he was made after God's image, and conſequently could not want knowledge, which is a part thereof, Col. iii. 10. *The new man is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him.* And indeed this was neceſſary to fit him for univerſal obedience, ſeeing no obedience can be according to the law, unleſs it proceed from a ſenſe of the commandment of God requiring it. It is true, Adam had not the law written upon tables of ſtone; but it was written upon his mind, the knowledge thereof being concreated with him. God impreſſed it upon his ſoul, and made him a law to himſelf, as the remains of it among the Heathens do teſtify, Rom. ii. 14. 15. And ſeeing man was made to be the mouth of the creation, to glorify God in his works, we have ground to believe he had naturally an exquiſite knowledge of the works of God. We have a proof of this in his giving names to the beaſts of the field, and the fowls of the air, and theſe ſuch as expreſs their nature. *Whatſoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof*, Gen. ii 19. And the dominion which God gave him over the creatures, ſoberly to uſe and diſpoſe of them according to his will, (ſtill in ſubordination to the will of God), ſeems to require no leſs than a knowledge of their natures. And, beſides all this, his perfect knowledge of the law, proves his knowledge in the management of civil affairs, which, in reſpect of the law of God, *a good man will guide with diſcretion*, Pſal. cxii. 5.

Secondly, His will lay ſtraight with the will of God, Eph. iv. 24. There was no corruption in his will, no bent nor inclination to evil; for that is ſin, properly and truly ſo called: hence the apoſtle ſays, Rom. vii. 7. *I had not known ſin, but by the law; for I had not known luſt, except the law had ſaid, Thou ſhalt not covet.* An inclination to evil is really a fountain of ſin, and therefore inconſiſtent with that rectitude and uprightneſs which the text expreſsly ſays he was endued with at his creation. The will of man then was directed and naturally inclined to God and goodneſs, though mutably. It was diſpoſed, by its original make, to follow the Creator's will, as the ſhadow does the body; and was not left in an equal balance to good and evil: for at that rate he had not been upright, nor habitually conform to the law; which in no moment can allow the creature not to be inclined towards God as his chief end, more than it can allow man to be a god to himſelf. The law was impreſſed upon Adam's ſoul: now this, according to the new covenant, by which the image of God is repaired, conſiſts in two things; 1. Putting the law into the mind, denoting the knowledge of it; 2. Writing it in the heart, denoting inclinations in the will, anſwerable to the commands of the law, Heb. viii. 10. So that, as the will, when we conſider it as renewed by grace, is by that grace natively inclined to the ſame holineſs, in all its parts which the law requires; ſo was the will of man (when we conſider him as God made him at firſt) endued with natural inclinations to every thing commanded by the law. For if the regenerate are partakers of the divine nature, as undoubtedly they are, for ſo ſays the ſcripture, 2 Pet. i. 4.; and if this divine nature can import no leſs than inclinations of the heart to holineſs, then ſurely Adam's will could not want this inclination; for in him the image of God was perfect. It is true, it is ſaid, Rom. ii. 14. 15. *That the Gentiles ſhew the work of the law written in their hearts*; but this denotes only their knowledge of that law, ſuch as it is; but the apoſtle to the Hebrews, in the text cited, takes the word heart in another ſenſe, diſtinguiſhing it plainly from the mind. And it muſt be granted, that, when God promiſeth in the new covenant, *to write his law in the hearts of his people*, it imports quite another thing than what Heathens have; for though they have notions of it in their minds, yet their hearts go another way; their will has got a ſet and a bias quite contrary to that law; and therefore the expreſſion, ſuitable to the preſent purpoſe, muſt needs import, beſides theſe notions of the mind, inclinations of the will going along therewith; which inclinations, though mixed with corruption in the regenerate, were pure and unmixed in upright Adam. In a word, as Adam knew his Maſter's pleaſure in the matter of duty, ſo his will ſtood inclined to what he knew.

Thirdly, His affections were orderly, pure, and holy; which is a neceſſary part of that uprightneſs wherein man was created. The apoſtle has a petition, 2 Theſſ. iii. 5. *The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God*; that is, *The Lord ſtraighten your hearts*, or make them ly ſtraight to the love of God: and our text tell us, man was thus made ſtraight. *The new man was created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs*, Eph. iv. 24. Now this holineſs, as it is diſtinguiſhed from righteouſneſs, may import the purity and orderlineſs of the affections. And thus the apoſtle, 1 Tim. ii. 8. will have men to *pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting*: becauſe, as troubled water is unfit to receive the image of the ſun, ſo the heart filled with impure and diſorderly affections is not fit for divine communications. Man's ſenſitive appetite was indeed naturally carried out towards objects grateful to the ſenſes. For ſeeing man was made up of body and ſoul, and God made this man to glorify and enjoy him, and for this end to uſe his good creatures in ſubordination to himſelf; it is plain that man was naturally inclined both to ſpiritual and ſenſible good; yea to ſpiritual good, the chief good, as his ultimate end. And therefore his ſenſitive motions and inclinations were ſubordinate to his reaſon and will, which lay ſtraight with the will of God, and were not in the leaſt contrary to the ſame. Otherwiſe he ſhould have been made up of contradictions; his ſoul being naturally inclined to God, as the chief end, in the ſuperior part thereof; and the ſame ſoul inclined to the creature, as the chief end, in the inferior part thereof, as they call it: which is impoſſible; for man, at the ſame inſtant, cannot have two chief ends. Man's affections then, in his primitive ſtate, were pure from all defilement, free from all diſorder and diſtemper, becauſe in all their motions they were duly ſubjected to his clear reaſon, and his holy will. He had alſo an executive power anſwerable to his will; a power to do the good which he knew ſhould be done, and which he inclined to do, even to fulfil the whole law of God. If it had not been ſo, God would not have required of him perfect obedience; for to ſay that *the Lord gathereth where he hath not ſtrawed*, is but the blaſphemy of a wicked heart againſt a good and bountiful God, Matth. xxv. 24, 25. From what has been ſaid it may be gathered, That the original righteouſneſs explained was univerſal and natural, yet mutable.

Firſt, It was univerſal; both with reſpect to the ſubject of it, the whole man; and the object of it, the whole law. Univerſal, I ſay, with reſpect to the ſubject of it; for this righteouſneſs was diffuſed through the whole man: it was a bleſſed leaven, that leavened the whole lump.

There was not one wrong pin in the tabernacle of human nature, when God ſet it up, however ſhattered it is now. Man was then holy in ſoul, body, and ſpirit; while the ſoul remained untainted, its lodging was kept clean and undefiled; the members of the body were conſecrated veſſels, and inſtruments of righteouſneſs. A combat betwixt fleſh and ſpirit, reaſon and appetite, nay the leaſt inclination to ſin, or luſt of the fleſh in the inferior part of the ſoul, was utterly inconſiſtent with this uprightneſs in which man was created; and has been invented to vail the corruption of man's nature, and to obſcure the grace of God in Jeſus Chriſt: it looks very like the language of fallen Adam, laying his own ſin at his Maker's door, Gen. iii. 12. *The woman whom thou gaveſt to be with me, ſhe gave me of the tree, and I did eat.* But as this righteouſneſs was univerſal in reſpect of the ſubject, becauſe it ſpread through the whole man; ſo alſo it was univerſal in reſpect of the object, the holy law. There was nothing in the law but what was agreeable to his reaſon and will, as God made him; though ſin hath now ſet him at odds with it; his ſoul was ſhapen out in length and breadth to the commandment, though exceeding broad; ſo that his original righteouſneſs was not only perfect in parts, but in degrees.

Secondly, As it was univerſal, ſo it was natural to him, and not ſupernatural, in that ſtate. Not that it was eſſential to man, as man; for then he could not have loſt it, without the loſs of his very being: but it was connatural to him, he was created with it; and it was neceſſary to the perfection of man, as he came out of the hand of God; neceſſary to conſtitute him in a ſtate of integrity. Yet, Thirdly, It was mutable; it was a righteouſneſs that might be loſt, as is manifeſted by the doleful event. His will was not abſolutely indifferent to good or evil; God ſet it towards good only; yet he did not ſo fix and confirm its inclinations, that it could not alter. No, it was moveable to evil, and that only by man himſelf, God having given him a ſufficient power to ſtand in this integrity, if he had pleaſed. Let no man quarrel God's work in this: for if Adam had been unchangeably righteous, he behoved to have been ſo, either by nature, or by free gift: by nature he could not be ſo, for that is proper to God, and incommunicable to any creature; if by free gift, then no wrong was done him, in with-holding of what he could not crave. Confirmation in a righteous ſtate, is a reward of grace, given upon continuing righteous through the ſtate of trial; and would have been given to Adam, if he had ſtood out the time appointed for probation by the Creator; and accordingly is given to the ſaints, upon the account of the merits of Chriſt, who was obedient even to the death. And herein believers have the advantage of Adam, that they can never totally nor finally fall away from grace.

Thus was man made originally righteous, being *created in God's own image*, Gen. i. 27. which conſiſts in the poſitive qualities of knowledge, righteouſneſs, and holineſs, Col. iii. 10. Eph. iv. 24. All that God made *was very good*, according to their ſeveral natures, Gen. i. 31. and ſo was man morally good, being made after the image of him who is good and upright, Pſal. xxv. 8. Without this he could not have anſwered the great end of his creation, which was, to know, love, and ſerve his God, according to his will: nay, he could not be created otherwiſe; for he behoved either to be conform to the law in his powers, principles and inclinations, or not: if he was, then he was righteous; and, if not, he was a ſinner; which is abſurd and horrible to imagine.

Of MAN's *original happineſs.*

SECONDLY, I ſhall lay before yon ſome of thoſe things which did accompany or flow from the righteouſneſs of man's primitive ſtate. Happineſs is the reſult of holineſs; and as this was an holy, ſo it was an happy ſtate.

Firſt, Man was then a very glorious creature. We have reaſon to ſuppoſe, that as Moſes' face ſhone when he came down from the mount; ſo man had a very lightſome and pleaſant countenance, and beautiful body, while as yet there was no darkneſs of ſin in him at all. But ſeeing God himſelf is *glorious in holineſs*, (Exod. xv. 11.) ſurely that ſpiritual comelineſs the Lord put upon man at his creation, made him a very glorious creature. O how did light ſhine in his holy converſation, to the glory of the Creator! while every action was but the darting forth of a ray and beam of that glorious unmixed light which God had ſet up in his ſoul, while that lamp of love, lighted from heaven, continued burning in his heart, as in the holy place; and the law of the Lord, put in his inwards parts by the finger of God, was kept by him there as in the moſt holy. There was no impurity to be ſeen without; no ſquint look in the eyes, after any unclean thing; the tongue ſpoke nothing but the language of heaven; and, in a word, *the King's SON was all glorious within, and his clothing of wrought gold.*

Secondly, He was the favourite of Heaven. He ſhone brightly in the image of God, who cannot but love his own image, where-ever it appears. While he was alone in the world, he was not alone, for God was with him. His communion and fellowſhip was with his Creator, and that immediately; for as yet there was nothing to turn away the face of God from the work of his own hands, ſeeing ſin had not as yet entered, which alone could make the breach.

By the favour of God, he was advanced to be confederate with Heaven in the firſt covenant, called, the covenant of works. God reduced the law, which he gave in his creation, in the form of a covenant, whereof perfect obedience was the condition, life was the thing promiſed, and death the penalty. As for the condition one great branch of the natural law was, that man believe whatſoever God ſhall reveal, and do whatſoever he ſhall command: accordingly God, making this covenant with man, extended his duty to the *not eating of the tree of knowledge* of good and evil; and the law thus extended was the rule of man's covenant-obedience. How eaſy were theſe terms to him who had the natural law written on his heart; and that inclining him to obey this poſitive law revealed to him, it ſeems, by an audible voice, (Gen. ii. 17.) the matter whereof was ſo very eaſy? And, indeed, it was highly reaſonable that the rule and matter of his covenant-obedience ſhould be thus extended, that which was added being a thing in itſelf indifferent, where his obedience was to turn upon the preciſe point of the will of God, the plaineſt evidence of true obedience; and it being in an external thing, wherein his obedience or diſobedience would be moſt clear and conſpicuous.

Now, upon this condition, God promiſed him life, the continuance of natural life, in the union of ſoul and body, and of ſpiritual life, in the favour of his Creator: he promiſed him alſo eternal life in heaven, to have been entered into when he ſhould have paſſed the time of his trial upon earth, and the Lord ſhould ſee meet to tranſport him into the upper paradiſe. This promiſe of life was included in the threatening of death, mentioned Gen. ii. 17.: for while God ſays, *In the day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die:* It is in effect, *If thou do not eat it, thou ſhalt ſurely live.* And this was ſacramentally confirmed by another tree in the garden, called therefore, *the tree of life*, which he was debarred from when he had ſinned; Gen. iii. 22, 23. *Leſt he put forth his hand, and take alſo of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever; therefore the Lord God ſent him forth from the garden of Eden.* Yet it is not to be thought that man's life and death did hang only on this matter of the forbidden fruit, but on the whole law; for ſo ſays the apoſtle, Gal. iii. 10. *It is written, Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* That of the forbidden fruit was a revealed part of Adam's religion; and ſo behoved expreſsly to be laid before him: but as to the natural law, he naturally knew death to be the reward of diſobedience; for the very Heathens were not ignorant of this, *knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit ſuch things are worthy of death*, Rom. i. 32. And moreover, the promiſe included in the threatning, ſecured Adam's life, according to the covenant, as long as he obeyed the natural law, with the addition of that poſitive command; ſo that he needed nothing to be expreſſed to him in the covenant, but what concerned the eating of the forbidden fruit. That eternal life in heaven was promiſed in the covenant is plain from this, that the threatning was of eternal death in hell; to which when man had made himſelf liable, Chriſt was promiſed by his death to purchaſe eternal life. And Chriſt himſelf expounds the promiſe of the covenant of works, of eternal life, while he propoſeth the condition of that covenant to a proud young man, who, though he had not Adam's ſtock, yet would needs enter into life in the way of working, as Adam was to have done under this covenant, Matth. xix. 17. *If thou wilt enter into life,* (*viz.* eternal life, by doing, ver. 16.) *keep the commandments.*

The penalty was death, Gen. ii. 17. *In the day that thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely die.* The death threatened was ſuch as the life promiſed was; and that moſt juſtly, to wit, temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal death. The event is a commentary on this; for that very day he did eat thereof, he was a dead man in law; but the execution was ſtopped, becauſe of his poſterity, then in his loins, and another covenant was prepared; however, that day his body got its death's-wound, and became mortal. Death alſo ſeized his ſoul; he loſt his original righteouſneſs, and the favour of God: witneſs the grips and throws of conſcience which made him hide himſelf from God. And he became liable to eternal death, which would have actually followed of courſe, if a Mediator had not been provided, who found him bound with the cords of death, as a malefactor ready to be led to execution. Thus you have a ſhort deſcription of the covenant into which the Lord brought man in the ſtate of innocence.

And ſeemeth it a ſmall thing unto you, that earth was thus confederate with heaven? This could have been done to none but him whom the King of heaven delighted to honour. It was an act of grace, worthy of the gracious God, whoſe favourite he was; for there was grace and free favour in the firſt covenant; tho' *the exceeding riches of grace,* as the apoſtle calls it, Eph. ii. 7. was reſerved for the ſecond. It was certainly an act of grace, favour, and admirable condeſcenſion in God, to enter into a covenant, and ſuch a covenant, with his own creature. Man was not at his own but at God's diſpoſal; nor had he any thing to work with, but what he had received from God. There was no proportion betwixt the work and the promiſed reward. Before that covenant, man was bound to perfect obedience, in virtue of his natural dependence on God; and death was naturally the wages of ſin, which the juſtice of God could and would have required, though there never had been any covenant betwixt God and man: but God was free; man could never have required eternal life as the reward of his work, if there had not been ſuch a covenant. God was free to have diſpoſed of his creature as he ſaw meet; and if he had ſtood in his integrity as long as the world ſtood, and there had been no covenant promiſing eternal life to him upon his obedience, God might have withdrawn his ſupporting hand at laſt, and ſo made him creep back into the womb of nothing, whence almighty power had drawn him out. And what wrong could there have been in this, while God would take back what he freely gave? But now the covenant being made, God becomes debtor to his own faithfulneſs: if man will work, he may crave the reward on the ground of the covenant. Well might the angels then, upon his being raiſed to this dignity, have given him this ſalutation, *Hail! thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee.*

Thirdly, God made him lord of the world, prince of the inferior creatures, univerſal lord and emperor of the whole earth. His Creator gave him dominion over the fiſh of the ſea, and over the fowl of the air, over all the earth, yea, and every living thing that moveth on the earth: *he put all things under his feet,* Pſal. viii. 6, 7, 8. He gave him a power, ſoberly to uſe and diſpoſe of the creatures in the earth, ſea, and air. Thus man was God's depute-governor in the lower world; and this his dominion was an image of God's ſovereignty. This was common to the man and the woman: but the man had one thing peculiar to him, to wit, that he had dominion over the woman alſo, 1 Cor. xi. 7. Behold how the creatures came to him, to own their ſubjection, and to do him homage as their lord; and quietly ſtood before him, till he put names on them as his own, Gen. ii. 19. Man's face ſtruck an awe upon them; the ſtouteſt creatures ſtood aſtoniſhed, tamely and quietly adoring him as their lord and ruler. Thus was man *crowned with glory and honour,* Pſal. viii. 5. The Lord dealt moſt liberally and bountifully with him, *put all things under his feet*: only he kept one thing, one tree of the garden out of his hands, even the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

But you may ſay, *And did he grudge him this?* I anſwer, Nay; but when he had made him thus holy and happy, he graciouſly gave him this reſtriction, which was in its own nature a prop and ſtay to keep him from falling. And this I ſay upon theſe three grounds: (1.) As it was moſt proper for the honour of God, who had made man lord of the lower world, to aſſert his ſovereign dominion over all, by ſome particular viſible ſign; ſo it was moſt proper for mans ſafety. Man being ſet down in a beautiful paradiſe, it was an act of infinite wiſdom, and of grace too, to keep from him one ſingle tree, as a viſible teſtimony that he muſt hold all of his Creator, as his great landlord, that ſo, while he ſaw himſelf lord of the creatures he might not forget that he was ſtill God's ſubject. (2.) This was a memorial of his mutable ſtate given to him from heaven, to be laid up by him for his greater caution. For man was created with a free will to good, which the tree of life was an evidence of: but his will was alſo free to evil, and the forbidden tree was to him a memorial thereof. It was, in a manner, a continual watch-word to him againſt evil, a beacon ſet up before him, to bid him beware of daſhing himſelf to pieces on the rock of ſin. (3.) God made man upright, directed towards God as the chief end. He ſet him, like Moſes, on the top of the hill, holding up his hands to heaven: and as Aaron and Hur ſtayed up Moſes's hands, (Exod. xvii. 10, 11, 12.), ſo God gave man an erect figure of body and forbid him the eating of this tree, to keep him in this poſture of uprightneſs wherein he was created. God made the beaſts looking down towards the earth, to ſhew that their ſatisfaction might be brought from thence; and accordingly it does afford them what is commenſurable to their appetite: but the erect figure of man's body, which looketh upward, ſhewed him that his happineſs lay above him, in God; and that he was to expect it from heaven, and not from earth. Now this fair tree, of which he was forbidden to eat, taught him the ſame leſſon; that his happineſs lay not in enjoyment of the creatures, for there was a want even in paradiſe: ſo that the forbidden tree was, in effect, the hand of all the creatures, pointing man away from themſelves to God for happineſs. It was a ſign of emptineſs hung before the door of the creation, with that inſcription, *This is not your reſt.*

Fourthly, As he had a perfect tranquillity within his own breaſt, ſo he had a perfect calm without. His heart had nothing to reproach him with; conſcience then had nothing to do, but to direct, approve, and feaſt him: and without there was nothing to annoy him. The happy pair lived in perfect amity; and though their knowledge was vaſt, true, and clear, they knew no ſhame. Though they were naked, there were no bluſhes in their faces; for ſin, the ſeed of ſhame was not yet ſown, Gen. ii. 25. And their beautiful bodies were not capable of injuries from the air: ſo that they had no need of clothes, which are originally the badges of our ſhame. They were liable to no diſeaſes nor pains: and, though they were not to live idle, yet toil, wearineſs, and ſweat of the brows, were not known in this ſtate.

Fifthly, Man had a life of pure delight, and undreggy pleaſure in this ſtate. Rivers of pure pleaſures run through it. The earth, with the product thereof, was now in its glory; nothing had yet come in, to mar the beauty of the creatures. God ſet him down, not in a common place of the earth; but in Eden, a place eminent for pleaſantneſs, as the name of it imports; nay not only in Eden, but in the garden of Eden; the moſt pleaſant ſpot of that pleaſant place; a garden planted by God himſelf, to be the manſion-houſe of this his favourite. As, when God made the other living creatures, he ſaid *Let the water bring forth the moving creature*, Gen. i. 20. and *Let the earth bring forth the living creature*, verſe 24. but when man was to be made, he ſaid, *Let us make man*, verſe 26. ſo, when the reſt of the earth was to be furniſhed with herbs and trees, God ſaid, *Let the earth bring forth graſs*,——and *the fruit tree*, *&c.* Gen. i. 11. But of paradiſe it is ſaid, *God planted it*, chap. ii. 8. which cannot but denote a ſingular excellency in that garden beyond all other parts of the then beautiful earth. There he wanted neither for neceſſity nor delight; for there was *every tree that is pleaſant to the ſight, and good for food*, verſe 9. He knew not theſe delights which luxury invented for the gratifying of luſts; but his delights were ſuch as came out of the hand of God; without paſſing through ſinful hands, which readily leave marks of impurity on what they touch. So his delights were pure, his pleaſures refined. And yet may *I ſhow you a more excellent way: wiſdom had entered into his heart;* ſurely then *knowledge was pleaſant unto his ſoul*. What delight do ſome find in their diſcoveries of the works of nature, by the ſcraps of knowledge they have gathered! but how much more exquiſite pleaſure had Adam, while his piercing eyes read the book of God's works; which God laid before him, to the end he might glorify him in the ſame; and therefore had ſurely fitted him for the work! But, above all, his knowledge of God, and that as his God, and the communion he had with him, could not but afford him the moſt refined and exquiſite pleaſure in the innermoſt receſſes of his heart. Great is that delight which the ſaints find in theſe views of the glory of God, that their ſouls are ſometimes let into, while they are compaſſed about with many infirmities: but much more may well be allowed to ſinleſs Adam: no doubt he reliſhed theſe pleaſures at another rate.

Laſtly, He was immortal. He would never have died if he had not ſinned; it was in caſe of ſin that death was threatened, Gen. ii. 17. which ſhews it to be the conſequent of ſin, and not of the ſinleſs human nature. The perfect conſtitution of his body, which came out of God's hand very good, and the righteouſneſs and holineſs of his ſoul, removed all inward cauſes of death; nothing being prepared for the grave's devouring mouth, but *the vile body*, Phil. iii. 21. and *thoſe who have ſinned*, Job. xxiv. 19. And God's ſpecial care of his innocent creature, ſecured him againſt outward violence. The apoſtle's teſtimony is expreſs, Rom. v. 12. *By one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin.* Behold the door by which death came in! Satan wrought with his lies till he got it opened, and ſo death entered; and therefore is he ſaid to have been *a murderer from the beginning*, John. viii. 44.

Thus have I ſhown you the holineſs and happineſs of man in this ſtate. If any ſhall ſay, What is all this to us, who never taſted of that holy and happy ſtate? They muſt know, it nearly concerns us, in ſo far as Adam was the root of all mankind, our common head and repreſentative; who received from God our inheritance and ſtock, to keep it for himſelf, and his children, and to convey it to them. The Lord put all mankind's ſtock (as it were) in one ſhip; and, as we ourſelves would have done, he made our common father the pilot. He put a bleſſing in the root, to have been, if rightly managed, diffuſed into all the branches. According to our text, making Adam upright, he made man upright; and all mankind had that uprightneſs in him; for, *if the root be holy, ſo are the branches*; but more of this afterwards. Had Adam ſtood, none would have quarrelled the repreſentation.

The doctrine of the ſtate of innocence applied.

USE I. For information. This ſhews us, (1.) That not God, but man himſelf, was the cauſe of his ruin. God made him upright; his Creator ſet him up, but he threw himſelf down. Was the Lord's directing and inclining him to good, the reaſon of his woful choice? or did Heaven deal ſo ſparingly with him, that his preſſing wants ſent him to hell to ſeek ſupply? Nay, man was, and is, the cauſe of his own ruin. (2.) God may moſt juſtly require of men perfect obedience to his law, and condemn them for their not obeying it perfectly, though now they have no ability to keep it. In ſo doing *he gathers* but *where he has ſtrawed*. He gave man ability to keep the whole law; man has loſt it by his own fault: but his ſin could never take away that right which God hath to exact perfect obedience of his creature, and to puniſh in caſe of his diſobedience. (3.) Behold here the infinite obligation we lie under to Jeſus Chriſt the ſecond Adam, who, with his own precious blood, has bought our eſcheat, and freely makes offer of it again to us, Hoſ. xiii. 9. and that with the advantage of everlaſting ſecurity, that it can never be altogether loſt any more, John. x. 28. 29. Free grace will fix thoſe, whom free will ſhook down into a gulf of miſery.

USE II. This reacheth a reproof to three ſorts of perſons: (1.) To theſe who hate religion in the power of it, where-ever it appears; and can take pleaſure in nothing, but in the world and their luſts. Surely thoſe men are far from righteouſneſs: they are *haters of God*, Rom. i. 30. for they are haters of his image. Upright Adam in paradiſe would have been a great eye-ſore to all ſuch perſons; as he was to the ſerpent, whoſe ſeed they prove themſelves to be, by their malignity. (2.) It reproves thoſe who put religion to ſhame, and thoſe who are aſhamed of religion, before a graceleſs world. There is a generation who make ſo bold with the God that made them, and can in a moment cruſh them, that they ridicule piety, and make a mock of ſeriouſneſs. *Againſt whom do ye ſport yourſelves? againſt whom make ye a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue?* Iſ. lvii. 4. Is it not againſt God himſelf, whoſe image, in ſome meaſure repaired on ſome of his creatures, makes them fools in your eyes? But *be ye not mockers, leſt your bands be made ſtrong*, Iſ. xxviii. 22. Holineſs was the glory God put on man, when he made him: but now the ſons of men turn that glory into ſhame, becauſe they themſelves glory in their ſhame. There are others that ſecretly approve of religion, and in religious company will profeſs it, who, at other times, to be neighbour-like, are aſhamed to own it: ſo weak are they, that they are blown over with the wind of the wicked's mouth. A broad laughter, an impious jeſt, a ſilly gibe out of a profane mouth, is to many an unanſwerable argument againſt religion and ſeriouſneſs: for, in the cauſe of religion, they are *as ſilly doves without heart*. O that ſuch would conſider that weighty word, Mark viii. 38. *Whoſoever therefore ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and ſinful generation; of him alſo ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.* (3.) It reproves the proud ſelf-conceited profeſſor, who admires himſelf in a garment he hath patched together of rags. There are many, who, when once they have gathered ſome ſcraps of knowledge of religion, and have attained to ſome reformation of life, do ſwell big with conceit of themſelves: a ſad ſign that the effects of the fall lie ſo heavy upon them, that they have not as yet come to themſelves, Luke. xv. 17. They have eyes behind, to ſee their attainments; but no eyes within, no eyes before, to ſee their wants, which would ſurely humble them: for true knowledge makes men to ſee, both what once they were, and what they are at preſent; and ſo is humbling, and will not ſuffer them to be content with any meaſure of grace attained; but puts them on to preſs forward, *forgetting the things that are behind*, Phil. iii. 13. 14. But thoſe men are ſuch a ſpectacle of commiſeration, as one would be that had ſet his palace on fire, and were glorying in a cottage he had built for himſelf out of the rubbiſh, though ſo very weak, that it could not ſtand againſt a ſtorm.

USE. III. Of lamentation. Here was a ſtately building; man carved like a fair palace, but now lying in aſhes: let us ſtand and look on the ruins, and drop a tear. This is a lamentation, and ſhall be for a lamentation. Could we chuſe but to weep, if we ſaw our country ruined, and turned by the enemy into a wilderneſs? if we ſaw our houſes on fire, and our houſholds periſhing in the flames? But all this comes far ſhort of the diſmal ſight, *man fallen as a ſtar from heaven.* Ah! may we not now ſay, *O that we were as in months paſt,* when there was no ſtain in our nature, no cloud on our minds, no pollution in our hearts! Had we never been in better caſe, the matter had been leſs: but *they that were brought up in ſcarlet, do now embrace dunghills!* Where is our primitive glory now? Once no darkneſs in the mind, no rebellion in the will, no diſorder in the affections. But ah! *how is the faithful city become an harlot? Righteouſneſs lodged in it; but now murderers Our ſilver is become droſs, our wine mixt with water.* That heart which was once the temple of God, is now turned into a den of thieves. Let our name be Ichabod, for the glory is departed. Happy waſt thou, O man, who was like unto thee? No pain nor ſickneſs could affect thee, no death could approach thee, no ſigh was heard from thee, till theſe bitter fruits were plucked off the forbidden tree. Heaven ſhone upon thee, and earth ſmiled: thou waſt the companion of angels, and the envy of devils. But how low is he now laid, who was created for dominion, and made lord of the world! *The crown has fallen from our head: wo unto us that we have ſinned.* The creatures that waited to do him ſervice, are now, ſince the fall, ſet in battle-array againſt him, and the leaſt of them, having commiſſion, proves too hard for him. Waters overflow the old world; fire conſumes Sodom; the ſtars in their courſes fight againſt Siſera; frogs, flies, lice, *&c.* turn executioners to Pharaoh and his Egyptians; worms eat up Herod: yea, man needs *a league with the beaſts*, yea, with the very *ſtones of the field*, Job v. 23; having reaſon to fear, that every one that findeth him will ſlay him. Alas! how are we fallen! how are we plunged into a gulf of miſery! The ſun has gone down on us, death has come in at our windows; our enemies have put out our two eyes, and ſport themſelves with our miſeries. Let us then ly down in our ſhame, and let our confuſion cover us. Neverthelеſs there is hope in Iſrael concerning this thing. Come then, O ſinner, look to Jeſus Chriſt the ſecond Adam: quit the firſt Adam and his covenant; come over to the Mediator and Surety of the new and better covenant; and let your hearts ſay, *Be thou our ruler, and let this breach be under thy hand:* and let your *eye trickle down, and ceaſe not, without any intermiſſion, till the Lord look down and behold from heaven,*" Lam. iii. 49.

STATE II.

NAMELY,

The State of Nature, or of Entire Depravation.

HEAD I.

The Sinfulness of Man's *Natural State.*

Genesis vi. 5.

And God ſaw that the wickedneſs of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

WE have ſeen what man was, as God made him; a lovely and happy creature: let us view him now as he hath unmade himſelf; and we ſhall ſee him a ſinful and miſerable creature. This is the ſad ſtate we were brought into by the fall; a ſtate as black and doleful, as the former was glorious; and this we commonly call the ſtate of nature, or man's natural ſtate, according to that of the apoſtle, Eph. ii. 3. *And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.* And herein two things are to be conſidered; 1ſt, The ſinfulneſs; 2dly, The miſery of this eſtate, in which all the unregenerate do live. I begin with the ſinfulneſs of man's natural ſtate, whereof the text gives us a full, tho' ſhort account. *And God ſaw that the wickedneſs of man was great*, &c.

The ſcope and deſign of theſe words is, to clear God's juſtice, in bringing the flood on the old world. There are two particular cauſes of it taken notice of in the preceding verſes. (1.) Mixt marriages, verſ. 2. *The ſons of God*, the poſterity of Seth and Enos, profeſſors of the true religion, married with *the daughters of men*, the profane curſed race of Cain. They did not carry the matter before the Lord, that he might chuſe for them, Pſal. xlviii. 14: but, without any reſpect to the will of God, they choſe, not according to the rules of their faith, but of their fancy; they *ſaw that they were fair:* and their marriage with them occaſioned their divorce from God. This was one of the cauſes of the deluge which ſwept away the old world. Would to God all profeſſors in our day could plead not guilty: but though that ſin brought on the deluge, yet the deluge hath not ſwept away that ſin; which, as of old, ſo in our day, may juſtly be looked upon as one cauſe of the decay of religion. It was an ordinary thing among the Pagans, to change their gods, as they changed their condition into a married lot; and many ſad inſtances the Chriſtian world affords of the ſame; as if people were of Pharaoh's opinion, That religion is only for thoſe who have no other care upon their heads, Exod. v. 17. (2.) Great oppreſſion, verſ. 4. *There were giants in the earth in thoſe days:* men of great ſtature, great ſtrength, and monſtrous wickedneſs, *filling the earth with violence*, ver. 11. But neither their ſtrength, nor treaſures of wickedneſs, could profit them in the day of wrath. Yet the gain of oppreſſion ſtill carries many over the terror of this dreadful example. Thus much for the connection, and what particular crimes that generation was guilty of. But every perſon that was ſwept away with the flood could not be guilty of theſe things; and *ſhall not the Judge of* *all the earth do right?* Therefore, in my text, there is a general indictment drawn up againſt them all, *The wickedneſs of man was great in the earth, &c.* And this is well inſtructed, for *God ſaw it.* Two things are laid to their charge here:

Firſt, Corruption of life, wickedneſs, *great wickedneſs.* I underſtand this of the wickedneſs of their lives; for it is plainly diſtinguiſhed from the wickedneſs of their hearts. The ſins of their outward converſation were great in the nature of them, and greatly aggravated by their attending circumſtances: and this not only among thoſe of the race of curſed Cain, but thoſe of holy Seth; the wickedneſs of man was great. And then it is added, *in the earth;* (1.) To vindicate God's ſeverity, in that he not only cut off ſinners, but defaced the beauty of the earth; and ſwept off the brute creatures from it, by the deluge; that as men had ſet the marks of their impiety, God might ſet the marks of his indignation, on the earth. (2.) To ſhew the heinouſneſs of their ſin, in making the earth, which God had ſo adorned for the uſe of man, a ſink of ſin, and a ſtage whereon to act their wickedneſs, in defiance of Heaven. God ſaw this corruption of life; he not only knew it, and took notice of it, but he made them to know, that he did take notice of it, and that he had not forſaken the earth, though they had forſaken heaven.

Secondly, Corruption of nature; *Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.* All their wicked practices are here traced to the fountain and ſpring-head: a corrupt heart was the ſource of all. The ſoul, which was made upright in all its faculties, is now wholly diſordered. The heart, that was made according to God's own heart, is now the reverſe of it, a forge of evil imaginations, a ſink of inordinate affections, and a ſtorehouſe of all impiety, Mark vii. 21. 22. Behold the heart of the natural man, as it is opened in our text. The mind is defiled; the thoughts of the heart are evil; the will and affections are defiled; the imagination of the thoughts of the heart, (*i. e.* whatſoever the heart frameth within itſelf by thinking, ſuch as judgment, choice, purpoſes, devices, deſires, every inward motion), or rather, the frame of the thoughts of the heart, (namely, the frame, make, or mould of theſe, 1 Chron; xxix. 18.), is evil. Yea, and *every imagination*, every frame of his thoughts, is ſo. The heart is ever framing ſomething; but never one right thing: the frame of thoughts in the heart of man, is exceeding various; yet are they never caſt into a right frame. But is there not, at leaſt a mixture of good in them? *No*, they are *only evil;* there is nothing in them truly good and acceptable before God: nor can any thing be ſo that comes out of that forge; where not the Spirit of God, but *the prince of the power of the air, worketh*, Eph. ii. 2. Whatever changes may be found in them, are only from evil to evil; for the imagination of the heart, or frame of thoughts in natural men, is evil continually, or every day. From the firſt day to the laſt day, in this ſtate, they are in midnight darkneſs; there is not a glimmering of the light of holineſs in them; not one holy thought can ever be produced by the unholy heart. O what a vile heart is this! O what a corrupt nature is this! The tree that always brings forth fruit, but never good fruit, whatever ſoil it be ſet in, whatever pains be taken on it, muſt naturally be an evil tree: and what can that heart be, whereof *every imagination*, every ſet of thoughts, is *only evil*, and that *continually?* Surely that corruption is ingrained in our hearts, interwoven with our very natures, has ſunk into the marrow of our ſouls, and will never be cured but by a miracle of grace. Now ſuch is man's heart, ſuch is his nature, till regenerating grace change it. God that ſearcheth the heart ſaw man's heart was ſo, he took ſpecial notice of it; and the faithful and true witneſs cannot miſtake our caſe; though we are moſt apt to miſtake ourſelves in this point, and generally do overlook it.

Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, ſaying, What is that to us? Let that generation of whom the text ſpeaks ſee to that. For the Lord has left the caſe of that generation on record, to be a looking-glaſs to all after generations, wherein they may ſee their own corruption of heart, and what their lives would be too, if he reſtrained them not: for *as in water face anſwereth to face, ſo the heart of man to man*, Prov. xxvii. 19. Adam's fall has framed all mens hearts alike in this matter. Hence the apoſtle, Rom. iii. 10----18. proves the corruption of the nature, hearts and lives of all men, from what the Pſalmiſt ſays of the wicked in his day, Pſal. xiv. 1. 2. 3, Pſal. v. 9. Pſal. cxl. 3. Pſal. x. 7. Pſal. xxxvi. 1. and from what Jeremiah ſaith of the wicked in his day Jer. ix. 3. and from what Iſaiah ſays of thoſe that lived in his time, Iſ. lvii. 7. 8. and concludes with that, chap. iii. 19. *Now we know, that what things ſoever the law ſaith, it ſaith to them that are under the law; that every mouth may be ſtopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.* Had the hiſtory of the deluge been tranſmitted unto us, without the reaſon thereof in the text, we might thence have gathered the corruption and total depravation of man's nature: for what other quarrel could a holy and juſt God have with the infants that were deſtroyed by the flood, ſeeing they had no actual ſin? If we ſaw a wiſe man, who having made a curious piece of work and heartily approved of it when he gave it out of his hand, as fit for the uſe it was deſigned for, riſe up in wrath and break it all in pieces, when he looked on it afterwards; would we not thence conclude the frame of it had been quite marred, ſince it went out of his hand, and that it does not ſerve for that uſe it was at firſt deſigned for? How much more, when we ſee the holy and wiſe God deſtroying the work of his own hands, once ſolemnly pronounced by him very good, may we conclude that the original frame thereof is utterly marred, that it cannot be mended, but it muſt needs be new-made or loſt altogether? Gen. vi. 6. 7. *And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart: and the Lord ſaid I will deſtroy man*, or blot him out; as a man doth a ſentence out of a book, that cannot be corrected by cutting off ſome letters, ſyllables, or words, and interlining others here and there; but muſt needs be wholly new-framed. But did the deluge carry off this corruption of man's nature? did it mend the matter? No, it did not. God in his holy providence, *that every mouth may be ſtopped, and all the new world may become guilty before God*, as well as the old, permits that corruption of nature to break out in Noah, the father of the new world, after the deluge was over. Behold him, as another Adam, ſinning in the fruit of a tree: Gen. ix. 20. 21. *He planted a vineyard, and he drank of the wine, and was drunken, and he was uncovered within his tent.* More than that, God gives the ſame reaſon againſt a new deluge, which he gives in our text for bringing that on the old world; *I will not*, ſaith he, *again curſe the ground any more for man's ſake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth*, Gen. viii. 21. Whereby it is intimated, that there is no mending of the matter by this means; and that if he would always take the ſame courſe with men that he had done, he would be always ſending deluges on the earth, ſeeing the corruption of man's nature remains ſtill. But though the flood could not carry off the coruption of nature, yet it pointed at the way how it is to be done; to wit, that men muſt be *born of water and of the Spirit*, raiſed from ſpiritual death in ſin, by the grace of Jeſus Chriſt, who *came by water and blood:* out of which a new world of ſaints ariſe in regeneration, even as the new world of ſinners out of the waters, where they had long lain buried (as it were) in the ark. This we learn from 1 Pet. iii. 20. 21. where the apoſtle, ſpeaking of Noah's ark, ſaith, *Wherein few, that is, eight ſouls, were ſaved by water. The like figure whereunto, even baptiſm, doth alſo now ſave us.* Now the waters of the deluge being a like figure to baptiſm, it plainly follows, that they ſignified (as baptiſm doth) *the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the holy Ghoſt.*

To conclude then, theſe waters, though now dried up, may ſerve us ſtill for a looking-glaſs, in which we may ſee the total corruption of our nature, and the neceſſity of regeneration.

From the text, thus explained, ariſeth this weighty point of Doctrine, which he that runs may read in it, *viz. Man's nature is now wholly corrupted.* Now is there a ſad alteration, a wonderful overturn, in the nature of man: where, at firſt, there was nothing evil; now there is nothing good. In proſecuting of this doctrine, I ſhall,

Firſt, Confirm it.

Secondly, Repreſent this corruption of nature in its ſeveral parts.

Thirdly, Shew you how man's nature comes to be thus corrupted.

Laſtly, Make application.

That man's nature is corrupted.

FIRST, I am to confirm the doctrine of the corruption of nature; to hold the glaſs to your eyes, wherein you may ſee your ſinful nature; which, though God takes particular notice of it, many do quite overlook. And here we ſhall conſult, 1. God's word. 2. Mens experience and obſervation.

I. For ſcripture-proof, let us conſider,

Firſt, How the ſcriptures take particular notice of fallen Adam's communicating his image to his poſterity, Gen. v. 3. *Adam begat a ſon in his own likeneſs, after his image; and called his name Seth.* Compare with this verſe 1. of that chapter, *In the day that God created man, in the likeneſs of God made he him.* Behold here, how the image after which man was made, and the image after which he is begotten, are oppoſed. Man was made in the likeneſs of God; that is, a holy and righteous God made a holy and righteous creature: but fallen Adam begat a ſon, not in the likeneſs of God, but in his own likeneſs; that is, corrupt ſinful Adam begat a corrupt ſinful ſon. For as the image of God bore righteouſneſs and immortality in it, as was cleared before; ſo this image of fallen Adam bore corruption and death in it, 1 Cor. xv. 49. 50. compare verſ. 22. Moſes, in that firſt chapter of Geneſis, being to give us the firſt bill of mortality that ever was in the world, uſhers it in with this, that dying Adam begat mortals. Having ſinned, he became mortal, according to the threatening; and ſo he begat a ſon, in his own likeneſs, ſinful, and therefore mortal. Thus ſin and death paſſed on all. Doubtleſs he begat both Cain and Abel in his own likeneſs, as well as Seth. But it is not recorded of Abel; becauſe he left no iſſue behind him, and his falling the firſt ſacrifice to death in the world was a ſufficient document of it: nor of Cain, to whom it might have been thought peculiar, becauſe of his monſtrous wickedneſs; and beſides all his poſterity was drowned in the flood: but it is recorded of Seth, becauſe he was the father of the holy ſeed; and from him all mankind ſince the flood have deſcended, and fallen Adam's own likeneſs with them.

Secondly, It appears from that ſcripture text, Job. xiv. 4. *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.* Our firſt parents were unclean, how then can we be clean? how could our immediate parents be clean? or how ſhall our children be ſo? The uncleanneſs here aimed at, is a ſinful uncleanneſs; for it is ſuch as makes man's days full of trouble: and it is natural, being derived from unclean parents; *Man is born of a woman*, ver. 1. *And how can he be clean that is born of a woman.*" Job. xxv. 4. An omnipotent God, whoſe power is not here challenged, could bring a clean thing out of an unclean, and did ſo in the caſe of the man Chriſt; but no other can. Every perſon that is born according to the courſe of nature, is born unclean. If the root be corrupt, ſo muſt the branches be. Neither is the matter mended, though the parents be ſanctified ones: for they are but holy in part, and that by grace, not by nature; and they beget their children as men, not as holy men. Wherefore, as the circumciſed parent begets an uncircumciſed child, and after the pureſt grain is ſown, we reap corn with the chaff; ſo the holieſt parents beget unholy children, and cannot communicate their grace to them, as they do their nature; which many godly parents find true, in their ſad experience.

Thirdly, Conſider the confeſſion of the Pſalmiſt David, Pſal. li. 5. *Behold, I was ſhapen in iniquity, and in ſin did my mother conceive me.* Here he aſcends from his actual ſin, to the fountain of it, namely, corrupt nature. He was a man according to God's own heart; but *from the beginning it was not ſo* with him. He was begotten in lawful marriage; but when the lump was ſhapen in the womb, it was a ſinful lump. Hence the corruption of nature is called the old man; being as old as ourſelves, older than grace, even in thoſe that are ſanctified from the womb.

Fourthly, Hear our Lord's determination of the point, John. iii. 6. *That which is born of the fleſh, is fleſh.* Behold the univerſal corruption of mankind, all are fleſh. Not that all are frail, though that is a ſad truth too: yea, and our natural frailty is an evidence of our natural corruption; but that is not the ſenſe of this text: but here is the meaning of it, all are corrupt and ſinful, and that naturally: hence our Lord argues here, that becauſe they are fleſh, therefore they muſt be *born again*, or elſe they *cannot enter into the kingdom of God*, ver. 3. 5. And as the corruption of our nature evidenceth the abſolute neceſſity of regeneration, ſo the abſolute neceſſity of regeneration plainly proves the corruption of our nature; for why ſhould a man need a ſecond birth, if his nature were not quite marred in the firſt birth? Infants muſt be born again, for that is an except (John. iii. 3.) which admits of no exception. And therefore they were circumciſed under the Old Teſtament; as having the *body of the ſins of the fleſh* (which is conveyed to them by natural generation) to put off, Col. ii. 11. And now, by the appointment of Jeſus Chriſt, they are to be baptized; which ſays they are unclean, and that there is no ſalvation for them, but by the *waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt*, Tit. iii. 5.

Fifthly, Man certainly is ſunk very low now, in compariſon of what he once was. God made him but a *little lower than the angels*: but now we find him likened to the beaſts that periſh. He hearkened to a brute, and is now become like one of them. Like Nebuchadnezzar, his portion (in his natural ſtate) is with the beaſts, *minding only earthly things*, Philip. iii. 19. Nay, brutes, in ſome ſort, have the advantage of the natural man, who is ſunk a degree below them. He is more witleſs, in what concerns him moſt, than the ſtork, or the turtle, or the crane, or the ſwallow, in what is for their intereſt. Jer. viii. 7. He is more ſtupid than the ox or aſs, Iſ. i. 3. I find him ſent to ſchool to learn of the ant or emmet, which having no guide, or leader to go before her; no overſeer or officer, to compel or ſtir her up to work; no ruler, but may do as ſhe liſts, being under the dominion of none; yet *provideth her meat in the ſummer and harveſt*, Prov. vi. 6. 7. 8. while the natural man hath all theſe, and yet expoſeth himſelf to eternal ſtarving. Nay, more than all this, the ſcripture holds out the natural man, not only as wanting the good qualities of thoſe creatures; but as a compound of the evil qualities of the worſt of the creatures; in which do concentre the fierceneſs of the lion, the craft of the fox, the unteachableneſs of the wild aſs, the filthineſs of the dog and ſwine, the poiſon of the aſp, and ſuch like. Truth itſelf calls them ſerpents, *a generation of vipers*; yea, more, even *children of the devil*, Matth. xxiii. 33. John viii. 44. Surely then man's nature is miſerably corrupted.

Laſtly, *We are by nature the children of wrath*, Eph. ii. 3. We are worthy of, and liable to the wrath of God; and this by nature: and therefore, doubtleſs, we are by nature ſinful creatures. We are condemned before we have done good or evil; under the curſe, ere we know what it is. *But will a lion roar in the foreſt while he hath no prey?* Amos iii. 4. that is, will a holy and juſt God roar in his wrath againſt man, if he be not, by his ſin, made a prey for wrath? No, he will not, he cannot. Let us conclude then, that, according to the word of God, man's nature is a corrupt nature.

II. If we conſult experience, and obſerve the caſe of the world, in theſe things that are obvious to any perſon, that will not ſhut his eyes againſt clear light; we ſhall quickly perceive ſuch fruits as diſcover this root of bitterneſs. I ſhall propoſe a few things, that may ſerve to convince us in this point,

Firſt, Who ſees not a flood of miſeries overflowing the world? and whither can a man go where he ſhall not dip his foot, if he go not over head and ears in it? Every one at home and abroad, in city and country, in palaces and cottages, is groaning under ſome one thing or other, ungrateful to him. Some are oppreſſed with poverty, ſome chaſtened with ſickneſs and pain, ſome are lamenting their loſſes, none wants a croſs of one ſort or another. No man's condition is ſo ſoft, but there is ſome thorn of uneaſineſs in it. And at length death, the wages of ſin, comes after theſe its harbingers, and ſweeps all away. Now, what but ſin has opened the ſluice? There is not a complaint nor ſigh heard in the world, nor a tear that falls from our eye, but it is an evidence that man is fallen as a ſtar from heaven; for *God diſtributeth ſorrows in his anger*, Job. xxi. 17. This is a plain proof of the corruption of nature: foraſmuch as thoſe that have not yet actually ſinned, have their ſhare of theſe ſorrows; yea, and draw their firſt breath in the world weeping, as if they knew this world, at firſt ſight, to be a *Bochim*, the place of weepers. There are graves of the ſmalleſt, as well as of the largeſt ſize, in the church-yard; and there are never wanting ſome in the world, who, like Rachel, *are weeping for their children, becauſe they are not*, Matth. ii. 18.

Secondly, Obſerve how early this corruption of nature begins to appear in young ones. Solomon obſerves, that *even a child is known by his doings*, Prov. xx. 11. It may ſoon be diſcerned, what way the bias of the heart lies. Do not the children of fallen Adam, before they can go alone, follow their father's footſteps? What a vaſt deal of little pride, ambition, curioſity, vanity, wilfulneſs, and averſeneſs to good, appears in them? And when they creep out of infancy, there is a neceſſity of uſing *the rod of correction to drive away the fooliſhneſs that is bound in their heart*, Prov. xxii. 15. Which ſhews, that if grace prevail not, the child will be as Iſhmael, a wild-aſs-man, as the word is, Gen. xvi. 12.

Thirdly, Take a view of the manifold groſs outbreakings of ſin in the world. *The wickedneſs of man* is yet *great in the earth.* Behold the bitter fruits of the corruption of our nature, Hoſ. iv. 2. *By ſwearing, and lying, and killing, and ſtealing, and committing adultery, they break out (like the breaking forth of waters) and blood toucheth blood.* The world is filled with filthineſs, and all manner of lewdneſs, wickedneſs and profanity. Whence is this deluge of ſin on the earth, but from the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep, the heart of man, *out of which proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetouſneſs, wickedneſs, &c.* Mark vii. 21. 22. Ye will, it may be, thank God with a whole heart, that ye are not like theſe other men: and indeed ye have better reaſon for it, than, I fear, ye are aware of: for, *as in water face anſwereth to face, ſo the heart of man to man*, Prov. xxvii. 19. As looking into clear water, ye ſee your own face, ſo looking into your heart, ye may ſee other mens there; and looking into other mens, in them ye may ſee your own. So that the moſt vile and profane wretches that are in the world, ſhould ſerve you for a looking-glaſs, in which you ought to diſcern the corruption of your own nature: and if you do ſo, ye would, with a heart truly touched, thank God, and not yourſelves, indeed, that ye are not as other men, in your lives; ſeeing the corruption of nature is the ſame in you, as in them.

Fourthly, Caſt your eye upon theſe terrible convulſions the world is thrown into by the luſts of men. Lions make not a prey of lions, nor wolves of wolves: but men are turned wolves to one another, *biting and devouring one another.* Upon how ſlight occaſions will men ſheath their ſwords in one anothers bowels? The world is a wilderneſs, where the cleareſt fire men can carry about with them, will not fright away the wild beaſts that inhabit it, (and that becauſe they are men, and not brutes) but one way or other they will be wounded. Since Cain ſhed the blood of Abel, the earth has been turned into a ſlaughter-houſe; and the chace has been continued, ſince Nimrod began his hunting; on the earth, as in the ſea, the greater ſtill devouring the leſſer. When we ſee the world in ſuch ferment, every one ſtabbing another with words or ſwords, we may conclude there is an evil ſpirit among them. Theſe violent heats among Adam's ſons, ſpeak the whole body to be diſtempered, the whole head to be ſick, and the whole heart faint. They ſurely proceed from an inward cauſe, James vi. 1. *luſts that war in our members.*

Fifthly, Conſider the neceſſity of human laws, fenced with terrors and ſeveritics; to which we may apply what the apoſtle ſays, 1 Tim. i. 9. That *the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawleſs and diſobedient, for the ungodly and for ſinners, &c.* Man was made for ſociety; and God himſelf ſaid of the firſt man, when he had created him, that it was *not meet that he ſhould be alone;* yet the caſe is ſuch now, that in ſociety, he muſt be hedged in with thorns. And that from hence we may the better ſee the corruption of man's nature, conſider. (1.) Every man naturally loves to be at full liberty himſelf; to have his own will for his law; and if he would follow his natural inclinations, would vote himſelf out of the reach of all laws, divine and human. And hence ſome (the power of whoſe hands has been anſwerable to their natural inclination) have indeed made themſelves abſolute and above laws; agreeable to man's monſtrous deſign at firſt, to be as gods, Gen. iii. 5. Yet, (2.) There is no man that would willingly adventure to live in a lawleſs ſociety: and therefore even pirates and robbers have laws among themſelves, tho' the whole ſociety caſts off all reſpect to law and right. Thus men diſcover themſelves to be conſcious of the corruption of nature; not daring to truſt one another, but upon ſecurity. (3.) How dangerous ſoever it is to break through the hedge, yet the violence of luſt makes many adventure daily to run the riſk. They will not only ſacrifice their credit and conſcience, which laſt is lightly eſteemed in the world; but for the pleaſure of a few moments immediately ſucceeded with terror from within, they will lay themſelves open to a violent death by the laws of the land wherein they live. (4.) The laws are often made to yield to mens luſts, ſometimes whole ſocieties run into ſuch extravagancies, that, like a company of priſoners, they break off their fetters and put their guard to flight; and the voice of laws cannot be heard for the noiſe of arms. And ſeldom is there a time wherein there are not ſome perſons ſo great and daring, that the laws dare not look their impetuous luſts in the face; which made David ſay, in the caſe of Joab, who had murdered Abner, *Theſe men, the ſons of Zeruiah, be too hard for me*, 2 Sam. iii. 39. Luſts ſometimes grow too ſtrong for laws, ſo that the law is ſlacked, as the pulſe of a dying man, Hab. i. 3. 4. (5.) Conſider what neceſſity often appears of amending old laws and making new ones; which have their riſe from new crimes, that man's nature is very fruitful of. There would be no need of mending the hedge, if men were not, like unruly beaſts, ſtill breaking it down. It is aſtoniſhing to ſee, what figure the Iſraelites, who were ſeparated unto God from among all the nations in the earth, do make in their hiſtory: what horrible confuſions were among them, when there was no king in Iſrael, as you may ſee in xviii. xix. xx. xxi. chapters of Judges: how hard it was to reform them, when they had the beſt of magiſtrates; and how quickly they turned aſide again, when they got wicked rulers. I cannot but think, that one grand deſign of that ſacred hiſtory, was to diſcover the corruption of man's nature, the abſolute need of the Meſſiah, and his grace; and that we ought, in the reading of it, to improve it to that end. How cutting is that word the Lord has to Samuel, concerning Saul, 1 Sam. i. 17. *The ſame ſhall reign over* (or as the word is, ſhall reſtrain) *my people.* O the corruption of man's nature! the awe and dread of the God of heaven reſtrains them not; but they muſt have gods on earth to do it *to put them to ſhame*, Judges xviii. 7.

Sixthly, Conſider the remains of that natural corruption in the ſaints. Though grace has entered, yet corruption is not quite expelled; though they have got the new creature, yet much of the old corrupt nature remains; and theſe ſtruggle together within them, as the twins in Rebekah's womb, Gal. v. 17. They find it preſent with them at all times, and in all places, even in the moſt retired corners. If a man have an ill neighbour, he may remove; if he have an ill ſervant, he may put him away at the term; and if a bad yoke-fellow, he may ſometimes leave the houſe, and be free of moleſtation that way. But ſhould the ſaint go into a wilderneſs, or ſet up his tent in ſome remote rock in the ſea, where never foot of man, beaſt nor fowl had touched, there will it be with him. Should he be with Paul caught up to the third heavens, it ſhall come back with him, 2 Cor. xii. 7. It follows him, as the ſhadow does the body: it makes a blot in the faireſt line he can draw. It is like the fig-tree in the wall; which how nearly ſoever it was cut, yet ſtill grew, till the wall was thrown down; for the roots of it are fixed in the heart, while the ſaint is in the world, as with bands of iron and braſs. It is eſpecially active *when he would do good*, Rom. vii. 31. then the fowls come down upon the carcaſes. Hence often, in holy duties, the ſpirit even of a ſaint (as it were) evaporates; and he is left ere he is aware, like Michael, with an image in the bed, inſtead of a huſband. I need not ſtand to prove the remains of the corruption of nature in the [illegible], to themſelves; for they groan under it; and to prov[illegible] them, were to hold out a candle to let men ſee the [illegible]: and as for the wicked, they are ready to account molehills in the ſaints as big as mountains, if not to reckon them all hypocrites. But conſider theſe few things on this head. (1.) *If it be thus in the green tree, how muſt it be in the dry?* The ſaints are not born ſaints but made ſo by the power of regenerating grace. Have they got a new nature, and yet ſo much of the old remains with them? How great muſt that corruption be in others, where it is altogether unmixed with grace! (2.) The ſaints groan under the remains of it, as a heavy burden. Hear the apoſtle, Rom. vii. 24. *O wretched man that I am! who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?* What though the carnal man lives at eaſe and quiet, and the corruption of nature is not his burden: is he therefore free from it? No, no; only he is dead, and feels not the ſinking weight. Many a groan is heard from a ſick-bed, but never one from a grave. In the ſaint, as in the ſick man, there is a mighty ſtruggle; life and death ſtriving for the maſtery: but in the natural man, as in the dead corpſe, there is no noiſe; becauſe death bears full ſway. (3.) The godly man reſiſts the old corrupt nature; he ſtrives to mortify it, yet it remains; he endeavours to ſtarve it, and by that means to weaken it, yet it is active; how muſt it ſpread then, and ſtrengthen itſelf in that ſoul, where it is not ſtarved, but fed? And this is the caſe of all the unregenerate, who make *proviſion for the fleſh, to fulfil the luſts thereof.* If the garden of the diligent afford him new work daily, in cutting off and rooting up; ſurely that of the ſluggard muſt needs be *all grown over with thorns.*

Laſtly, I ſhall add but one obſerve more; and that is, that in every man, naturally, the image of fallen Adam does appear. Some children, by their ſtatures and lineaments of their face, do, as it were, father themſelves; and thus we do reſemble our firſt parents. Every one of us bears the image and impreſs of their fall upon him: and to evince the truth of this, I do appeal to the conſciences of all, in theſe following particulars.

1ſt, Is not ſinful curioſity natural to us? and is not this a print of Adam's image? Gen. iii. 6. Is not man naturally much more deſirous to know new things, than to practiſe old known truths? How like to old Adam do we look in this, itching after novelties, and diſreliſhing old ſolid doctrines? We ſeek after knowledge rather than holineſs, and ſtudy moſt to know theſe things which are leaſt edifying. Our wild and roving fancies need a bridle to curb them, while good ſolid affections muſt be quickened and ſpurred up.

2dly, If the Lord, by his holy law, and wiſe providence, do put a reſtraint upon us, to keep us back from any thing, doth not that reſtraint whet the edge of our natural inclinations, and make us ſo much the keener in our deſires? And in this do we not betray it plainly, that we are Adam's children? Gen. iii. 2. 3. 6. I think this cannot be denied; for daily obſervation evinceth, that it is a natural principle that *ſtolen waters are ſweet, and bread eaten in ſecret is pleaſant*, Prov. ix. 17. The very Heathens were convinced, that man was poſſeſſed with this ſpirit of contradiction, though they knew not the ſpring of it. How often do men give themſelves the looſe in theſe things, in which, if God had left them at liberty, they would have bound up themſelves! but corrupt nature takes a pleaſure in the very jumping over the hedge. And is it not a repeating of our father's folly, that men will rather climb for forbidden fruit, than gather what is ſhaken off the tree of good providence to them, when they have God's expreſs allowance for it?

3dly, Which of all the children of Adam is not naturally diſpoſed to hear the *inſtruction that cauſeth to err?* And was not this the rock our firſt parents ſplit upon? Gen. iii. 4. 6. How apt is weak man, ever ſince that time, to parley with temptations! *God ſpeaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not*, Job. xxxiii. 14. but readily doth he liſten to Satan. Men might often come fair off, if they would diſmiſs temptations with abhorrence, when firſt they appear; if they would nip them in the bud, they would ſoon die away: but, alas! when we ſee the train laid for us, and the fire put to it, yet we ſtand till it run along, and we be blown up with its force.

4thly, Do not the eyes in our head often blind the eyes of the mind? And was not this the very caſe of our firſt parents? Gen iii. 6. Man is never more blind than when he is looking on the objects that are moſt pleaſing to ſenſe. Since the eyes of our firſt parents were opened to the forbidden fruit, mens eyes have been the gates of deſtruction to their ſouls; at which impure imaginations and ſinful deſires have entered the heart, to the wounding of the ſoul, waſting of the conſcience, and bringing diſmal effects ſometimes on whole ſocieties, as in Achan's caſe, Joſh. vii. 21. Holy Job was aware of this danger, from theſe two little rowling bodies, which a very ſmall ſplinter of wood will make uſeleſs; ſo as (with that king who durſt not, with his ten thouſand, meet him that came with twenty thouſand againſt him, Luke xiv. 31. 32.) he ſendeth and deſireth conditions of peace, Job. xxxi. 1. *I have made a covenant with mine eyes*, &c.

5thly, Is it not natural to us to care for the body, even at the expence of the ſoul? This was one ingredient in the ſin of our firſt parents, Gen. iii. 6. O how happy might we be, if we were but at half the pains about our ſouls, that we beſtow upon our bodies! If that queſtion, *What muſt I do to be ſaved?* (Acts xvi. 30.) did run but near as oft through our minds as theſe other queſtions do, *What ſhall we eat? What ſhall we drink? Wherewithal ſhall we be clothed?* (Matth. vi. 31.) many a now hopeleſs caſe would turn very hopeful. But the truth is, moſt men live as if they were nothing but a lump of fleſh: or as if their ſouls ſerved for no other uſe, but, like ſalt, to keep their body from corrupting. *They are fleſh*, John iii. 6. *they mind the things of the fleſh*, Rom. viii. 5. *and they live after the fleſh*, verſ. 13. If the conſent of the fleſh be got to an action, the conſent of the conſcience is rarely waited for: yea, the body is often ſerved, when the conſcience has entered a diſſent againſt it.

6thly, Is not every one by nature diſcontent with his preſent lot in the world, or with ſome one thing or other in it? This alſo was Adam's caſe, Gen. iii. 5. 6. Some one thing is always miſſing; ſo that man is a creature given to changes. And if any doubt of this, let them look over all their enjoyments; and, after a review of them, liſten to their own hearts, and they will hear a ſecret murmuring for want of ſomething; though perhaps, if they conſidered the matter aright, they would ſee that it is better for them to want, than to have that ſomething. Since the hearts of our firſt parents flew out at their eyes, on the forbidden fruit, and a night of darkneſs was thereby brought on the world; their poſterity have a natural diſeaſe, which Solomon calls, *The wandering of the deſire*, (or, as the word is, *The walking of the ſoul*), Eccl. vi. 9. This is a ſort of diabolical trance, wherein the ſoul traverſeth the world; feeds itſelf with a thouſand airy nothings; ſnatcheth at this and the other created excellency, in imagination and deſire; goes here, and there, and every where, except where it ſhould go. And the ſoul is never cured of this diſeaſe, till overcoming grace bring it back, to take up its everlaſting reſt in God through Chriſt: but till this be, if man were ſet again in paradiſe, the garden of the Lord, all the pleaſures there would not keep him from looking, yea, and leaping over the hedge a ſecond time.

7thly, Are we not far more eaſily impreſſed and influenced by evil counſels and examples, than by thoſe that are good? You ſee this was the ruin of Adam, Gen. iii. 6. Evil example, to this day, is one of Satan's maſter-devices to ruin men. And though we have, by nature, more of the fox than of the lamb; yet that ill property ſome obſerve in this creature, viz. that if one lamb ſkip into a water, the reſt that are near will ſuddenly follow, may be obſerved alſo in the diſpoſition of the children of men; to whom it is very natural to embrace an evil way, becauſe they ſee others upon it before them. Ill example has frequently the force of a violent ſtream, to carry us over plain duty; but eſpecially if the example be given by thoſe we bear a great affection to: our affection, in that caſe, blinds our judgment; and what we would abhor in others, is complied with, to humour them. And nothing is more plain, than that generally men chuſe rather to do what the moſt do, than what the beſt do.

8thly, Who of all Adam's ſons needs be taught the art of *ſewing fig-leaves together*, to cover their nakedneſs? Gen. iii. 7. When we have ruined ourſelves, and made ourſelves naked to our ſhame, we naturally ſeek to help ourſelves by ourſelves: and many poor ſhifts are fallen upon, as ſilly and inſignificant as Adam's fig-leaves. What pains are men at, to cover their ſin from their own conſciences, and to draw all the fair colours upon it that they can? And when once convictions are faſtened upon them, ſo that they cannot but ſee themſelves naked; it is as natural for them to attempt to ſpin a cover to it out of their own bowels, as for fiſhes to ſwim in the waters, or birds to fly in the air. Therefore the firſt queſtion of the convinced is, *What ſhall we do?* Acts. ii. 27. How ſhall we qualify ourſelves? what ſhall we perform? Not minding that the new creature is God's own workmanſhip, (or deed, Eph. ii. 10.), more than Adam thought of being clothed with the ſkins of ſacrifices, Gen. iii. 21.

9thly, Do not Adam's children naturally follow his footſteps, *in hiding themſelves from the preſence of the Lord?* Gen. iii. 8. We are every whit as blind in this matter as he was, who thought to hide himſelf from the preſence of God among the ſhady trees of the garden. We are very apt to promiſe ourſelves more ſecurity in a ſecret ſin, than in one that is openly committed. *The eye of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, ſaying, No eye ſhall ſee me*, Job xxiv. 15. And men will freely do that in ſecret, which they would be aſhamed to do in the preſence of a child; as if darkneſs could hide from an all-ſeeing God. Are we not naturally careleſs of communion with God; ay, and averſe to it? Never was there any communion betwixt God and Adam's children, where the Lord himſelf had not the firſt word. If he would let them alone, they would never enquire after him. Iſ. lvii. 17. *I hid me*. Did he ſeek after a hiding God? Very far from it, *He went on in the way of his heart.*

10thly, How loth are men to confeſs ſin, to take guilt and ſhame to themſelves? And was it not thus in the caſe before us? Gen. iii. 10. Adam confeſſeth his nakedneſs, which he could not get denied; but not one word he ſays of his ſin: here was the reaſon of it, he would fain have hid it if he could. It is as natural for us to hide ſin, as to commit it. Many ſad inſtances thereof we have in this world; but a far clearer proof of it we ſhall get at the day of judgment, the day in which *God will judge the ſecrets of men*, Rom. ii. 16. Many a foul mouth will then be ſeen, which is now *wiped, and ſaith, I have done no wickedneſs*, Prov. xxx. 20.

Laſtly, Is it not natural for us to extenuate our ſin, and transfer the guilt upon others? And when God examined our guilty firſt parents, did not Adam lay the blame on the woman? and did not the woman lay the blame on the ſerpent? Gen. iii. 12. 13. Now Adam's children need not be taught this helliſh policy; for before they can well ſpeak (if they cannot get the fact denied) they will cunningly liſp out ſomething to leſſen their fault, and lay the blame upon another. Nay, ſo natural is this to men, that, in the greateſt of ſins, they will lay the fault upon God himſelf; they will blaſpheme his holy providence under the miſtaken name of misfortune or ill-luck, and thereby lay the blame of their ſin at Heaven's door. And was not this one of Adam's tricks after his fall? Gen. iii. 12. *And the man ſaid, The woman whom thou gaveſt to be with me, ſhe gave me of the tree, and I did eat.* Obſerve the order of this ſpeech. He makes his apology in the firſt place; and then comes his confeſſion: his apology is long; but his confeſſion very ſhort; it is all comprehended in a word, *and I did eat.* How pointed and diſtinct is his apology, as if he was afraid his meaning ſhould have been miſtaken? *The woman*, ſays he, or *that woman*, as if he would have pointed the Judge to his own work, of which we read, Gen. ii. 22. There was but one woman then in the world; ſo that one would think he needed not have been ſo nice and exact in pointing at her: yet ſhe is as carefully marked out in his defence, as if there had been ten thouſand. *The woman whom thou gaveſt me*: here he ſpeaks, as if he had been ruined with God's gift. And to make the gift look the blacker, it is added to all this, *thou gaveſt to be with me*; as my conſtant companion, to ſtand by me as a helper. This looks as if Adam would have fathered an ill deſign upon the Lord, in giving him this gift. And, after all, there is a new demonſtrative here, before the ſentence is complete: he ſays not, *The woman gave me*, but *the woman ſhe gave me*, emphatically; as if he had ſaid, *She*, even *ſhe* gave me of the tree. This much for his apology. But his confeſſion is quickly over, in one word, (as he ſpoke it), *and I did eat.* And there is nothing here to point to himſelf, and as little to ſhew what he had eaten. How natural is this black art to Adam's poſterity? he that runs may read it. So univerſally does Solomon's obſerve hold true, Prov. xix. 3. *The fooliſhneſs of man perverteth his way; and his heart fretteth againſt the Lord.* Let us then call fallen Adam, father; let us not deny the relation, ſeeing we bear his image.

And now, to ſhut up this point, ſufficiently confirmed by concurring evidence from the Lord's word, our own experience and obſervation; let us be perſuaded to believe the doctrine of the corruption of our nature: and to look to the ſecond Adam, the bleſſed Jeſus, for the application of his precious blood, to remove the guilt of this ſin; and for the efficacy of his holy Spirit, to make us new creatures; knowing that *except we be born again, we cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

Of the corruption of the underſtanding.

SECONDLY, I proceed to enquire into the corruption of nature in the ſeveral parts thereof. But who can comprehend it? who can take the exact dimenſions of it, in its breadth, length, height, and depth? *The heart is deceitful above all things and deſperately wicked; who can know it?* Jer. xvii. 9. However, we may quickly perceive as much of it as may be matter of deepeſt humiliation, and may diſcover to us the abſolute neceſſity of regeneration. Man in his natural ſtate is altogether corrupt. Both ſoul and body are polluted, as the apoſtle proves at large, Rom. iii. 10. to 18. As for the ſoul, this natural corruption has ſpread itſelf through all the faculties thereof; and is to be found in the *underſtanding*, the *will*, the *affections*, the *conſcience*, and the *memory*.

I. The *underſtanding*, that leading faculty, is deſpoiled of its primitive glory, and covered over with confuſion. We have fallen into the hands of our grand adverſary, as Samſon into the hands of the Philiſtines, and are deprived of our two eyes. *There is none that underſtandeth*, Rom. iii. 11. *Mind and conſcience are defiled*, Tit. i. 15. The natural man's apprehenſion of divine things is corrupt, Pſal. l. 21. *Thou thoughteſt that I was altogether ſuch an one as thyſelf.* His judgment is corrupt, and cannot be otherwiſe, ſeeing his *eye is evil*: and therefore the ſcripture, to ſhew that men did all wrong, ſays, *Every one did that which was right in his own eyes*, Judges xvii. 6. and xxi. 25. And his imaginations, or reaſonings, muſt be caſt down, by the power of the word, being of a piece with his judgment, 2 Cor. x. 5. But, to point out this corruption of the mind or underſtanding more particularly, let theſe things be conſidered.

Firſt, There is a natural weakneſs in the minds of men [illegible] reſpect to ſpiritual things. The apoſtle determines concerning every one that is not endued with the graces of the Spirit, *That he is blind, and cannot ſee afar off*, 2 Pet. i. 9. Hence the Spirit of God in the ſcripture clothes as it were divine truths with earthly figures, even as parents teach their children, *uſing ſimilitudes*, Hoſ. xii. 10. Which, though it doth not cure, yet doth evidence this natural weakneſs in the minds of men. But we want not plain proofs of it from experience. As, (1.) How hard a taſk is it to teach many people the common principles of our holy religion, and to make truths ſo plain as they may underſtand them? Here there muſt be *precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line*, Iſ. xxviii. 9. Try the ſame perſons in other things, they ſhall be found *wiſer in their generation than the children of light*. They underſtand their work and buſineſs in the world as well as their neighbours; though they be very ſtupid and unteachable, in the matters of God. Tell them how they may advance their worldly wealth, or how they may gratify their luſts, and they will quickly underſtand theſe things; though it is very hard to make them know how their ſouls may be ſaved, or how their hearts may find reſt in Jeſus Chriſt. (2.) Conſider theſe who have many advantages above the common gang of mankind; who have had the benefit of good education and inſtruction; yea, and are bleſſed with the light of grace in that meaſure wherein it is diſtributed to the ſaints on earth; yet how ſmall a portion have they of the knowledge of divine things! what ignorance and confuſion do ſtill remain in their minds; how often are they mired even in the matter of practical truths and ſpeak as a child in theſe things! It is a pitiful weakneſs that we cannot perceive the things which God has revealed to us; and it muſt needs be a ſinful weakneſs, ſince the law of God requires us to know and believe them. (3.) What dangerous miſtakes are to be found amongſt men, in their concerns of greateſt weight! what woful deluſions prevail over them! do not we often ſee thoſe, who, otherwiſe, are the wiſeſt of men, the moſt notorious fools with reſpect to their ſouls intereſt? Math. xi. 25. *Thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent.* Many that are eagle-eyed in the trifles of time, are like owls and bats in the light of life. Nay, truly, the life of every natural man is but one continued dream and deluſion, out of which he never awakes, till either, by a new light darted from heaven into his ſoul, he *come to himſelf*, Luke xv. 17. or *in hell he lift up his eyes*, chap. xvi. 23. And therefore, in ſcripture-account, be he never ſo wiſe, he is a fool and a ſimple one.

Secondly, Man's underſtanding is naturally overwhelmed with groſs darkneſs in ſpiritual things. Man, at the inſtigation of the devil, attempting to break out a new light in his mind, (Gen. iii. 5.) inſtead of that, broke up the doors of the bottomleſs pit; ſo as, by the ſmoke thereof, he was buried in darkneſs. When God at firſt had made man, his mind was a lamp of light; but now when he comes to make him over again, in regeneration, he finds it darkneſs, Eph. v. 8. *Ye were ſometimes darkneſs.* Sin has cloſed the windows of the ſoul, darkneſs is over all that region: it is the land of darkneſs and ſhadow of death, where the light is as darkneſs. The prince of darkneſs reigns there, and nothing but the works of darkneſs are framed there. We are born ſpiritually blind, and cannot be reſtored without a miracle of grace. This is thy caſe, whoſoever thou art, that art not born again. And that you may be convinced in this matter, take theſe following evidences of it.

Evidence 1. The darkneſs that was upon the face of the world, before, and at that time when Chriſt came, ariſing as *the Sun of righteouſneſs* upon the earth. When Adam by his ſin had loſt that primitive light wherewith he was endued in his creation, it pleaſed God to make a gracious revelation of his mind and will to him, touching the way of ſalvation, Gen. iii. 15. This was handed down by him, and other godly fathers, before the flood: yet the natural darkneſs of the mind of man prevailed ſo far againſt that revelation, as to carry off all ſenſe of true religion from the old world, except what remained in Noah's family, which was preſerved in the ark. After the flood, as men multiplied on the earth, the natural darkneſs of mind prevails again, and the light decays, till it died out among the generality of mankind, and is preſerved only among the poſterity of Shem. And even with them it was well near its ſetting, when God called Abraham from ſerving other gods, Joſh. xxiv. 15. God gives Abraham a more clear and full revelation, and he communicates the ſame to his family, Gen. xviii. 19. yet the natural darkneſs wears it out at length, ſave that it was preſerved among the poſterity of Jacob. They being carried down into Egypt, that darkneſs prevailed ſo, as to leave them a little ſenſe of true religion; and a new revelation behoved to be made them in the wilderneſs. And many a cloud of darkneſs got above that, now and then, during the time from Moſes to Chriſt. When Chriſt came, the world was divided into Jews and Gentiles. The Jews, and the true light with them, were within an incloſure, Pſal. cxlvii. 19. 20. Betwixt them and the Gentile world, there was a partition-wall of God's making, namely, the ceremonial law: and upon that there was reared up another of man's own making, namely, a rooted enmity betwixt the parties, Eph. ii. 14. 15. If we look abroad without the incloſure, (and except thoſe proſelytes of the Gentiles, who, by means of ſome rays of light breaking forth unto them from within the incloſure, having renounced idolatry; worſhipped the true God, but did not conform to the Moſaical rites) we ſee nothing but *dark places of the earth, full of the habitations of cruelty*, Pſal. lxxiv. 20. Groſs darkneſs covered the face of the Gentile world, and the way of ſalvation was utterly unknown among them. They were drowned in ſuperſtition and idolatry, and had multiplied their idols to ſuch a vaſt number, that above thirty thouſand are reckoned to have been worſhipped by thoſe of Europe alone. Whatever wiſdom was among their philoſophers, *the world by* that *wiſdom knew not God*, 1 Cor. i. 21. and all their reſearches in religion were but groping in the dark, Acts xvii. 27. If we look within the incloſure, and except a few that were groaning and *waiting for the conſolation of Iſrael*, we will ſee a groſs darkneſs on the face of that generation. Though *to them were committed the oracles of God*; yet they were moſt corrupt in their doctrine. Their traditions were multiplied; but the knowledge of theſe things, wherein the life of religion lies, was loſt: maſters of Iſrael knew not the nature and neceſſity of regeneration, John iii. 10. Their religion was to build on their birth-privilege, as children of Abraham, Matth. iii. 9. to glory in their circumciſion, and other external ordinances, Philip iii. 2. 3. and to *reſt in the law*, (Rom. ii. 17.) after they had, by their falſe gloſſes, cut it ſo ſhort, as they might go well near to the fulfilling of it, Matth. v.

Thus was darkneſs over the face of the world, when Chriſt the true light came into it; and ſo is darkneſs over every ſoul, till he as the day-ſtar ariſe in the heart. The former is an evidence of the latter. What, but the natural darkneſs of mens minds, could ſtill thus wear out the light of external revelation, in a matter upon which eternal happineſs did depend? Men did not forget the way of preſerving their lives: but how quickly did they loſe the knowledge of the way of ſalvation of their ſouls, which are of infinite more weight and worth! When patriarchs and prophets teaching was ineffectual, men behoved to be taught of God himſelf, who alone can open the eyes of the underſtanding. But, that it might appear, that the corruption of man's mind lay deeper than to be cured by mere external revelation; there were but very few converted by Chriſt's preaching *who ſpoke as never man ſpoke*, John xii. 37. 38. The great cure on the generation remained to be performed, by the Spirit accompanying the preaching of the apoſtles; who, according to the promiſe, (John xiv. 12.) were to do greater works. And if we look to the miracles wrought by our bleſſed Lord, we will find, that, by applying the remedy to the ſoul, for the cure of bodily diſtempers, (as in the caſe of the man ſick of the palſy, Matth. ix. 2.) he plainly diſcovered, that it was his main errand into the world to cure the diſeaſes of the ſoul. I find a miracle wrought upon one that was born blind, performed in ſuch a way, as ſeems to have been deſigned to let the world ſee in it, as in a glaſs, their caſe and cure, John ix. 6. *He made clay, and anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.* What could more fitly repreſent the blindneſs of mens minds, than eyes cloſed up with earth? Iſ. vi. 1. *ſhut their eyes:* ſhut them up by anointing, or caſting them with mortar, as the word will bear. And chap. xliv. 18. *He hath ſhut their eyes:* and the word properly ſignifies, he hath *plaiſtered* their eyes; as the houſe, in which the leproſy had been was to be plaiſtered, Levit. xiv. 42. Thus the Lord's word diſcovers the deſign of that ſtrange work; and by it ſhews us, that the eyes of our underſtanding are naturally ſhut. Then the blind man muſt *go and waſh* off this clay *in the pool of Siloam*: no other water will ſerve this purpoſe. If that pool had not repreſented him, whom the Father ſent into the world *to open the blind eyes*, (Iſ. xliii. 7.) I think the Evangeliſt had not given us the interpretation of the name, which he ſays ſignifies *ſent*, John ix. 7. And ſo we may conclude, that the natural darkneſs of our minds is ſuch, as there is no cure for, but from the blood and Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe *eye-ſalve* only can make us *ſee*, Rev. iii. 18.

Evid. 2. Every natural man's heart and life is a maſs of darkneſs, diſorder, and confuſion; how refined ſoever he appear in the ſight of men. *For we ourſelves alſo*, ſaith the apoſtle Paul, *were ſometimes fooliſh, diſobedient, deceived, ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures*, Tit. iii. 3. and yet, at that time which this text looks to, he was *blameleſs, touching the righteouſneſs which is in the law*, Philip. iii. 6. This is a plain evidence that *the eye is evil, the whole body being full of darkneſs*, Matth. vi. 23. The unrenewed part of mankind is rambling through the world, like ſo many blind men; who will neither take a guide, nor can guide themſelves; and therefore are falling over this and the other precipice, into deſtruction. Some are running after their covetouſneſs, till they be pierced through with many ſorrows; ſome ſticking in the mire of ſenſuality; others daſhing themſelves on the rock of pride and ſelf-conceit; every one ſtumbling on ſome one ſtone of ſtumbling or other: all of them are running themſelves upon the ſword-point of juſtice, while they eagerly follow whither their unmortified paſſions and affections lead them: and while ſome are lying along in the way, others are coming up and falling headlong over them. And therefore, *Wo unto the* (blind) *world becauſe of offences*, Matth. xviii. 7. Errors in judgment ſwarm in the world; becauſe it is *night, wherein all the beaſts of the foreſt do creep forth.* All the unregenerate are utterly miſtaken in the point of true happineſs: for though Chriſtianity hath fixed that matter in the point of principle, yet nothing leſs than overcoming grace can fix it in the practical judgment. All men agree in the deſire to be happy; but amongſt unrenewed men, touching the way to happineſs, there are almoſt as many opinions as there are men; they being *turned every one to his own way*, Iſ. liii. 6. They are like the blind Sodomites about Lot's houſe, all were ſeeking to find the door; ſome grop one part of the wall for it, ſome another; but none of them could certainly ſay, he had found it; and ſo the natural man may ſtumble on any good, but the chief good. Look into thine own unregenerate heart, and there thou wilt ſee all turned upſide down; heaven lying under, and the earth a-top. Look into thy life, there thou mayeſt ſee, how thou art playing the madman, ſnatching at ſhadows, and neglecting the ſubſtance: eagerly flying after that which is not, and ſlighting that which is, and will be for ever.

Evid. 3. The natural man is always as a workman left without light; either trifling or doing miſchief. Try to catch thy heart at any time thou wilt, and thou ſhalt find it either *weaving the ſpider's web*, or *hatching cockatrice eggs*, (Iſ. lix. 5.) roving through the world, or digging into the pit; filled with vanity, or elſe with vileneſs; buſy doing nothing, or what is worſe than nothing. A ſad ſign of a dark mind.

Evid. 4. The natural man is void of the ſaving knowledge of ſpiritual things. He knows not what a God he has to do with; he is unacquainted with Chriſt; and knows not what ſin is. The greateſt graceleſs wits are blind as moles in theſe things. Ay, but ſome ſuch can ſpeak of them to good purpoſe: and ſo might theſe Iſraelites, of the temptations, ſigns, and miracles, their eyes had ſeen, (Deut. xxix. 3.) to whom nevertheleſs, the Lord had not *given an heart to perceive, and eyes to ſee, and ears to hear unto that day*, verſ. 4. Many a man that bears the name of a Chriſtian, may make Pharaoh's confeſſion of faith, Exod. v. 2. *I know not the Lord, neither will they let go* what he commands them to part with. God is with them, as a prince in diſguiſe among his ſubjects, who meets with no better treatment from them, than if they were his fellows, Pſal. l. 21. Do they know Chriſt, or ſee his glory, and any beauty in him, for which he is to be deſired? If they did, they would not ſlight him as they do: a view of his glory would ſo darken all created excellency, that they would take him for and inſtead of all, and gladly cloſe with him, as he offereth himſelf in the goſpel, John iv. 10. Pſal. ix. 10. Matth. xiii. 44. 45. 46. Do they know what ſin is, who hug the ſerpent in their boſom, hold faſt deceit, and refuſe to let it go? I own indeed they may have a natural knowledge of thoſe things, as the unbelieving Jews had of Chriſt, whom they ſaw and converſed with: but there was a ſpiritual glory in him, perceived by the believers only, John i. 14. and in reſpect of that glory, *the* (unbelieving) *world knew him not*, ver. 10. But the ſpiritual knowledge of them they cannot have: it is above the reach of the carnal mind, 1 Cor. ii. 14. *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are fooliſhneſs unto him, neither can he know them, for they are ſpiritually diſcerned.* He may indeed diſcourſe of them; but no other way than one can talk of honey or vinegar, who never taſted the ſweetneſs of the one, nor the ſourneſs of the other. He has ſome notions of ſpiritual truths, but ſees not the things themſelves that are wrapt up in the words of truth, 1 Tim. i. 7. *Underſtanding neither what they ſay, nor whereof they affirm.* In a word, natural men fear, ſeek, confeſs, they know not what. Thus you may ſee man's underſtanding naturally is overwhelmed with groſs darkneſs in ſpiritual things.

Thirdly, There is in the mind of man a natural bias to evil, whereby it comes to paſs, that whatever difficulties its finds while occupied about things truly good, it acts with a great deal of eaſe in evil; as being in that caſe in its own element, Jer. iv. 22. The carnal mind drives heavily in the thoughts of good; but furiouſly in the thoughts of evil. While holineſs is before it, fetters are upon it: but when once it has got over the hedge, it is as a bird got out of the cage, and becomes a free-thinker indeed. Let us reflect a little on the apprehenſion and imagination of the carnal mind: and we ſhall find inconteſtible evidence of this woful bias to evil.

Evidence 1. As when a man, by a violent ſtroke on the head, loſeth his ſight, there ariſeth to him a kind of of falſe light, whereby he perceives a thouſand airy nothings: ſo man being ſtruck blind to all that is truly good, and for his eternal intereſt, has a light of another ſort brought into his mind; his *eyes are opened, knowing evil*: and ſo are the words of the tempter verified, Gen. iii. 5. The words of the prophet are plain, *They are wiſe to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge*, Jer. iv. 22. The mind of man has a natural dexterity to deviſe miſchief: none are ſo ſimple, as to want ſkill to contrive ways to gratify their luſts, and ruin their ſouls; though the power of every one's hand cannot reach to put their devices [illegible] execution. None needs to be taught this black art; but as weeds grow up of their own accord in the neglected ground, ſo doth this wiſdom (which is *earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh*, James iii. 15.) grow up in the minds of men, by virtue of the corruption of their nature. Why ſhould we be ſurpriſed with the product of corrupt wits; their cunning devices to affront Heaven, to oppoſe and run down truth and holineſs, and to gratify their own and other mens luſts? They row with the ſtream; no wonder they make great progreſs: their ſtock is within them, and increaſeth by uſing of it: and the works of darkneſs are contrived with the greater advantage, that the mind is wholly deſtitute of ſpiritual light; which, if it were in them, in any meaſure, would ſo far mar the work, 1 John iii. 9. *Whoſoever is born of God doth not commit ſin*; he does it not as by art, for *his ſeed remaineth in him.* But, on the other hand, *it is as a ſport to a fool to do miſchief: but a man of underſtanding hath wiſdom*, Prov. x. 23. *To do witty wickedneſs nicely*, (as the words import), *is* as *a ſport* or a play *to a fool*; it comes off with him eaſily, and why, but becauſe he is a fool, and hath not wiſdom; which would mar the contrivances of darkneſs? The more natural a thing is, it is done the more eaſily.

Evid. 2. Let the corrupt mind have but the advantage of one's being employed in, or preſent at, ſome piece of ſervice to God; that ſo the device, if not in itſelf ſinful, yet may become ſinful, by its unſeaſonableneſs; it ſhall quickly fall on ſome device or expedient, by its ſtarting aſide; which deliberation, in ſeaſon, could not produce. Thus Saul, who wiſt not what to do before the prieſt began to conſult God, is quickly determined when once the prieſt's hand was in: his own heart then gave him an anſwer, and would not allow him to wait an anſwer from the Lord, 1 Sam. xiv. 18. 19. Such a deviliſh dexterity hath the carnal mind, in deviſing what may moſt effectually divert men from their duty to God.

Evid. 3. Doth not the carnal mind naturally ſtrive to graſp ſpiritual things in imagination; as if the ſoul were quite immerſed in fleſh and blood, and would turn every thing into its own ſhape? Let men, who are uſed to the forming of the moſt abſtracted notions, look into their own ſouls, and they ſhall find this bias in their minds; whereof the idolatry, which did of old, and ſtill doth, ſo much prevail in the world, is an inconteſtible evidence: for it plainly diſcovers, that men naturally would have a viſible deity, and ſee what they worſhip: and therefore they *changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image, &c.* Rom. i. 23. The reformation of theſe nations (bleſſed be the Lord for it!) hath baniſhed idolatry and images too, out of our churches: but heart-reformation only can break down mental idolatry, and baniſh the more ſubtle and refined image-worſhip, and repreſentations of the Diety, out of the minds of men. The world, in the times of its darkneſs, was never more prone to the former, than the unſanctified mind is to the latter. And hence are horrible, monſtrous, and miſhapen thoughts of God, Chriſt, the glory above, and all ſpiritual things.

Evid. 4. What a difficult taſk is it to detain the carnal mind before the Lord! how averſe is it to the entertaining of good thoughts, and dwelling in the meditation of ſpiritual things! If one be driven, at any time, to think of the great concerns of his ſoul, it is no harder work to hold in an unruly hungry beaſt, than to hedge in the carnal mind, that it get not away to the vanities of the world again. When God is ſpeaking to men by his word, or they are ſpeaking to him in prayer, doth not the mind often leave them before the Lord, like ſo many *idols, that have eyes, but ſee not, and ears, but hear not?* The carcaſe is laid down before God, but the world gets away the heart: though the eyes be cloſed, the man ſees a thouſand vanities: the mind, in the mean time, is like a bird got looſe out of the cage, ſkipping from buſh to buſh; ſo that, in effect, the man never *comes to himſelf*, till he be *gone from the preſence of the Lord.* Say not, it is impoſſible to get the mind fixed. It is hard indeed, but not impoſſible: grace from the Lord can do it, Pſal. cviii. 1. agreeable objects will do it. A pleaſant ſpeculation will arreſt the minds of the inquiſitive: the worldly man's mind is in little hazard of wandering, when he is contriving of buſineſs, caſting up his accounts, or telling his money: if he anſwer you not at firſt, he tells you, he did not hear you, he was buſy; his mind was fixed. Were we admitted into the preſence of a king, to petition for our lives, we would be in no hazard of gazing through the chamber of preſence. But here lies the caſe; the carnal mind, employed about any ſpiritual good, is out of its element, and therefore cannot fix.

Evid. 5. But however hard it is to keep the mind on good thoughts, it ſticks as glue to what is evil and corrupt like itſelf, 2 Pet. ii. 14. *Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot ceaſe from ſin.* Their eyes cannot ceaſe from ſin, (ſo the words are conſtructed), that is, their hearts and minds, venting by the eyes what is within, are like a furious beaſt, which cannot be held in when once it has got out its head. Let the corrupt imagination once be let looſe on its proper object, it will be found hard work to call it back again, though both reaſon and will be for its retreat. For then it is in its own element; and to draw it off from its impurities, is as the drawing of a fiſh out of the water, or the renting of a limb from a man. It runs like fire ſet to a train of powder, that reſteth not till it can get no further.

Evid. 6. Conſider how the carnal imagination ſupplies the want of real objects to the corrupt heart; that it may make ſinners happy, at leaſt, in the imaginary enjoyment of their luſts. Thus the corrupt heart feeds itſelf with imagination-ſins; the unclean perſon is filled with ſpeculative impurities, *having eyes full of adultery*; the covetous man fills his heart with the world, though he cannot get his hands full of it; the malicious perſon, with delight, acts his revenge within his own breaſt; the envious, within his own narrow ſoul, beholds with ſatisfaction his neighbour laid low enough; and every luſt finds the corrupt imagination a friend to it in time of need. And this it doth, not only when people are awake, but ſometimes even when they are aſleep; whereby it comes to paſs, that theſe ſins are acted in dreams, which their hearts were carried out after while they were awake. I know, ſome do queſtion the ſinfulneſs of theſe things; but can it be thought, they are conſiſtent with that holy nature and frame of ſpirit which was in innocent Adam, and in Jeſus Chriſt, and ſhould be in every man? It is the corruption of nature, then, that makes *filthy dreamers* condemned, Jude 8. Solomon had experience of the exerciſe of grace in ſleep: in a dream he prayed, in a dream he made the beſt choice; both were accepted of God, 1 Kings iii. 5.---15. And if a man may, in his ſleep, do what is good and acceptable to God, why may he not alſo, when aſleep, do that which is evil and diſpleaſing to God? The ſame Solomon would have men aware of this; and preſcribes the beſt remedy againſt it, namely the law upon the heart, Prov. vi. 20. 21. *When thou ſleepeſt* (ſays he, ver. 22.) *it ſhall keep thee*, to wit, from ſinning in thy ſleep; that is, from ſinful dreams: for one's being kept from ſin (not his being kept from affliction) is the immediate proper effect of the law of God impreſſed upon the heart, Pſal. cxix. 11. And thus the whole verſe is to be underſtood, as appears from ver. 23. *For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light, and reproofs of inſtruction are the way of life.* Now, the law is a lamp and light, as it guides in the way of duty; and inſtructing reproofs from the law are the way of life, as they keep from ſin: neither do they guide into the way of peace, but as they lead into the way of duty; nor do they keep a man out of trouble, but as they keep him from ſin. And remarkable is the particular in which Solomon inſtanceth, namely, the ſin of uncleanneſs, *to keep thee from the evil woman, &c.* ver. 24. which is to be joined with ver. 22. incloſing the 23d in a parentheſis, as ſome verſions have it. Theſe things may ſuffice to convince us of the natural bias of the mind to evil.

Fourthly, There is in the carnal mind, an oppoſition to ſpiritual truths, and an averſion to the receiving of them. It is as little a friend to divine truths, as it is to holineſs. The truths of natural religion, which do, as it were, force their entry into the minds of natural men, they *hold* priſoners *in unrighteouſneſs*, Rom. i. 18. And as for the truths of revealed religion, there is *an evil heart of unbelief* in them, which oppoſeth their entry; and there is an armed force neceſſary to captivate the mind to the belief of them, 2 Cor. x. 4. 5. God has made a revelation of his mind and will to ſinners, touching the way of ſalvation; he has given us the doctrine of his holy word: but do natural men believe it indeed? No, they do not; *for he that believeth not on the Son of God, believeth not God*, as is plain from 1 John v. 10. They believe not the promiſes of the word: they look on them, in effect, only as fair words; for thoſe that receive them are thereby made *partakers of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 14. The promiſes are as ſilver cords let down from heaven, to draw ſinners unto God, and to waft them over into the promiſed land; but they caſt them from them. They believe not the threatnings of the word. For, as men travelling in deſerts carry fire about with them, to fright away wild beaſts; ſo God has made his law a fiery law, Deut. xxxiii. 2. hedging it about with threats of wrath; but men naturally are more brutiſh than beaſts themſelves; and will needs *touch the fiery ſmoaking mountain*, though they ſhould be *thruſt through with a dart*. I doubt not but moſt, if not all of you, who are yet in the black ſtate of nature, will here plead, *Not guilty*; but remember, the carnal Jews in Chriſt's time were as confident as you are, that they believed Moſes, John ix. 28, 29. But he confutes their confidence, roundly telling them, John v. 46. *Had ye believed Moſes, ye would have believed me.* Did ye believe the truths of God, ye durſt not reject, as ye do, him who is truth itſelf. The very difficulty you find in aſſenting to this truth, bewrays that unbelief I am charging you with. Has it not proceeded ſo far with ſome at this day, that it has ſteeled their foreheads, with the impudence and impiety, openly to reject all revealed religion? Surely *it is out of the abundance of the heart their mouth ſpeaketh.* But though ye ſet not your mouths againſt the heavens, as they do, the ſame bitter root of unbelief is in all men by nature, and reigns in you, and will reign, till overcoming grace captivate your minds to the belief of the truth. To convince you in this point, conſider theſe three things:

Evidence 1. How few are there who have been bleſſed with an inward illumination, by the ſpecial operation of the Spirit of Chriſt, letting them into a view of divine truths in their ſpiritual and heavenly luſtre? How have you learned the truths of religion, which ye pretend to believe? Ye have them merely by the benefit of external revelation, and of your education; ſo that you are Chriſtians, juſt becauſe you were not born and bred in a Pagan, but in a Chriſtian country. Ye are ſtrangers to the inward work of the holy Spirit, bearing witneſs by and with the word in your hearts; and ſo you cannot have the aſſurance of faith, with reſpect to that outward divine revelation made in the word, 1 Cor. ii. 10. 11. 12. and therefore ye are ſtill unbelievers. *It is written in the prophets, And they ſhall be all taught of God.---Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me*, ſays our Lord, John vi. 45. Now ye have not come to Chriſt, therefore ye have not been *taught of God*: ye have not been ſo taught, and therefore ye have not come; ye believe not. Behold the revelation, from which the faith even of the fundamental principles in religion doth ſpring, Matth. xvi. 16. 17. *Thou art Chriſt, the Son of the living God.----Bleſſed art thou, Simon Barjona: for fleſh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.* If ever the Spirit of the Lord take a dealing with thee, to work in thee that faith which is of the *operation of God*, it may be as much time may be ſpent in the razing the old foundation, as will make thee find a neceſſity of the *working of his mighty power*, to enable thee to believe the very *foundation-principles*, which now thou thinkeſt thou makeſt no doubt of, Eph. i. 19.

Evid. 2. How many profeſſors have made ſhipwreck of their faith (ſuch as it was) in the time of temptation and trial! See how they fall, like ſtars from heaven, when Antichriſt prevails! 2 Theſſ. ii 11. 12. *God ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſion, that they ſhould believe a lie: that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth.* They fall into damning deluſions; becauſe they never really believed the truth, though they themſelves, and others too, thought they did believe it. That houſe is built on the ſand, and that faith is but ill founded, that cannot bear out, but is quite overthrown, when the ſtorm comes.

Evid. 3. Conſider the utter inconſiſtency of moſt mens lives with the principles of religion which they profeſs: ye may as ſoon bring eaſt and weſt together, as their principles and practice. Men believe that fire will burn them; and therefore they will not throw themſelves into it: but the truth is, moſt men live as if they thought the goſpel a mere fable, and the wrath of God revealed in his word againſt their unrighteouſneſs and ungodlineſs, a mere ſcarecrow. If ye believe the doctrines of the word, how is it that ye are ſo unconcerned about the ſtate of your ſouls before the Lord? how is it that ye are ſo little concerned with that weighty point, whether ye be born again or not? Many live as they were born, and are like to die as they live, and yet live in peace. Do ſuch believe the ſinfulneſs and miſery of a natural ſtate? do they believe they are the children of wrath? Do they believe there is no ſalvation without regeneration, and no regeneration but what makes one a new creature? If you believe the promiſes of the word, why do you not embrace them, and labour to enter into the promiſed reſt? What ſluggard would not dig for a hid treaſure, if he really believed he might ſo obtain it? Men will work and ſweat for a maintenance, becauſe they believe that by ſo doing they will get it; yet they will be at no tolerable pains for *the eternal weight of glory;* why, but becauſe they do not believe the word of promiſe? Heb. iv. 1. 2. If ye believe the threatnings, how is it that ye live in your ſins, live out of Chriſt, and yet hope for mercy? Do ſuch believe God to be the holy and juſt One, who will *by no means clear the guilty?* No, no, *none believe, none* (or next to none) *believe what a juſt God the Lord is, and how ſeverely he puniſheth.*

Fifthly, There is in the mind of man a natural proneſs to lies and falſehood, which makes for the ſafety of luſts. *They go aſtray, as ſoon as they be born, ſpeaking lies*, Pſal. lviii. 3. We have this, with the reſt of the corruption of our nature, from our firſt parents. God revealed the truth to them; but through the ſolicitation of the tempter, they firſt doubted of it; then diſbelieved it, and embraced a lie inſtead of it. And, for an unconteſtible evidence hereof, we may ſee that firſt article of the devil's creed, *Ye ſhall not ſurely die*, Gen. iii. 4.; which was obtruded by him on our firſt parents, and by them received, naturally embraced by their poſterity, and held faſt, till a light from heaven oblige them to quit it. It ſpreads itſelf through the lives of natural men; who, till their conſciences be awakened, walk after their own luſts, ſtill retaining the principle, *That they ſhall not ſurely die:* and this is often improved to that perfection, that the man can ſay, over the belly of the denounced curſe, *I ſhall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenneſs to thirſt*, Deut. xix. 19. Whatever advantage the truths of God have over error, by means of education, or otherwiſe; error has always, with the natural man, this advantage againſt truth, namely, that there is ſomething within him which ſays, *O that it were true:* ſo that the mind lies fair for aſſenting to it. And here is the reaſon of it. The true doctrine is, *the doctrine that is according to godlineſs*, 1 Tim. vi. 3.; and *the truth which is after godlineſs*, Tit. i. 1. Error is the doctrine which is according to ungodlineſs, for there is never an error in the mind, nor an untruth vented in the world, (in matters of religion), but what has an affinity with one corruption of the heart or other; according to that of the apoſtle, 2 Theſſ. ii. 12. *They believed not the truth, but had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs.* So that truth and error, being otherwiſe attended with equal advantages for their reception, error, by this means, has moſt ready acceſs into the mind of men in their natural ſtate. Wherefore, it is nothing ſtrange that men reject the ſimplicity of goſpel truths and inſtitutions, and greedily embrace error and external pomp in religion; ſeeing they are ſo agreeable to the luſts of the heart, and the vanity of the mind of the natural man. And from hence alſo it is, that ſo many embrace atheiſtical principles: for none do it but in compliance with their irregular paſſions; none but thoſe, whoſe advantage it would be, that there were no God.

Laſtly, Man naturally is high-minded: for when the goſpel comes in power to him, it is employed in *caſting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itſelf againſt the knowledge of God*, 2 Cor. x. 5. Lowlineſs of mind is not a flower that grows in the field of nature; but is planted by the finger of God in a renewed heart, and learned of the lowly Jeſus. It is natural to man to think highly of himſelf, and what is his own: for the ſtroke he has got by his fall in Adam, has produced a falſe light, whereby molehills about him appear like mountains; and a thouſand airy beauties preſent themſelves to his deluded fancy. *Vain man would be wiſe*, (ſo he accounts himſelf, and ſo he would be accounted of by others), *though man be born like a wild aſs's colt*, Job xi. 12. His way is right, becauſe it is his own: *for every way of a man is right in his own eyes*, Prov. xxi. 2. His ſtate is good, becauſe he knows none better; he is *alive without the law*, Rom. vii. 9. and therefore his hope is ſtrong, and his confidence firm. It is another tower of Babel, reared up againſt Heaven; and ſhall not fall, while the power of darkneſs can hold it up. The word batters it, yet it ſtands; one while, breaches are made in it, but they are quickly repaired; at another time, it is all made to ſhake, but ſtill it is kept up; till either God himſelf by his Spirit raiſe an heart-quake within the man, which tumbles it down, and leaves not one ſtone upon another, (2 Cor. 4. 5.), or death batter it down, and raze the foundations of it, Luke xvi. 23. And as the natural man thinks highly of himſelf, ſo he thinks meanly of God, whatever he pretends, Pſal. l. 21. *Thou thoughteſt that I was altogether ſuch an one as thyſelf.* The doctrine of the goſpel, and the myſtery of Chriſt, are fooliſhneſs to him; and in his practice he treats them as ſuch, 1 Cor. i. 18. and ii. 14. He brings the word and the works of God, in the government of the world, before the bar of his carnal reaſon; and there they are preſumptuouſly cenſured and condemned, Hoſ. xiv. 9. Sometimes the ordinary reſtraint of providence is taken off, and Satan is permitted to ſtir up the carnal mind: and, in that caſe, it is like an ant's neſt, uncovered and diſturbed: doubts, denials, and helliſh reaſonings crowd in it, and cannot be laid by all the arguments brought againſt them, till a power from on high captivate the mind, and ſtill the mutiny of the corrupt principles.

This much of the corruption of the underſtanding; which, although the half be not told, may diſcover to you the abſolute neceſſity of regenerating grace. Call the *underſtanding* now, *Ichabod;* for *the glory is departed from* it. Conſider this, ye that are yet in the ſtate of nature, and grone ye out your caſe before the Lord, that the Sun of righteouſneſs may ariſe upon you, before you be ſhut up in everlaſting darkneſs. What avails your worldly wiſdom? what do your attainments in religion avail, while your underſtanding lies yet wrapt up in its natural darkneſs and confuſion, utterly void of the light of life? Whatever be the natural man's gifts or attainments, we muſt, as in the caſe of the leper, (Lev. xiii. 24.), *pronounce him utterly unclean, his plague is in his head.* But that is not all; it is in his heart too; his will is corrupted, as I ſhall ſhew anon.

Of the corruption of the will.

II. The *will*, that commanding faculty, which ſometimes was faithful, and ruled with God, is now turned traitor, and rules with and for the devil. God planted it in man *wholly a right ſeed;* but now it is *turned into the degenerate plant of a ſtrange vine.* It was originally placed in a due ſubordination to the will of God, as was ſhown before; but now it is gone wholly aſide. However ſome do magnify the power of free-will, a view of the ſpirituality of the law, to which acts of moral diſcipline do in no wiſe anſwer, and a deep inſight into the corruption of nature, given by the inward operation of the Spirit, convincing of ſin, righteouſneſs, and judgment, would make men find an abſolute need of the power of free grace, to remove the bands of wickedneſs from off their free-will. To open up this plague of the heart, I offer theſe following things to be conſidered.

Firſt, There is, in the unrenewed will, an utter inability for what is truly good and acceptable in the ſight of God. The natural man's will is in Satan's fetters; hemmed in within the circle of evil, and cannot move beyond it, more than a dead man can raiſe himſelf out of his grave, Eph. ii. 1. We deny him not a power to chuſe, purſue, and act, what on the matter is good: but though he can will what is good and right, he can will nothing aright and well, John xv. 5. *Without me*, i. e. ſeparate from me, as a branch from the ſtock, (as both the word and context do carry it), *ye can do nothing:* to wit, nothing truly and ſpiritually good. His very choice and deſire of ſpiritual things, is carnal and ſelfiſh, John vi. 26. *Ye ſeek me becauſe ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.* He not only comes not to Chriſt, but he cannot come, John vi. 44. And what can one do acceptable to God, who believeth not on him whom the Father hath ſent? To evidence this inability for good in the unregenerate, conſider theſe two things:

Evidence 1. How often does the light ſo ſhine before mens eyes, that they cannot but ſee the good they ſhould chuſe, and the evil they ſhould refuſe; and yet their hearts have no more power to comply with that light; than if they were arreſted by ſome inviſible hand? They ſee what is right, yet they follow, and cannot but follow what is wrong. Their conſciences tell them the right way, and approve of it too; yet cannot their will be brought up to it; their corruption ſo chains them, that they cannot embrace it; ſo they ſigh, and go backward; over the belly of their light. And if it be not thus, how is it that the word and way of holineſs meet with ſuch entertainment in the world? how is it that clear arguments and reaſon on the ſide of piety and a holy life, which bear in themſelves even on the carnal mind, do not bring men over to that ſide? Although the being of a heaven and a hell were but a may-be, it were ſufficient to determine the will to the choice of holineſs, were it capable to be determined thereto by mere reaſon: but men *knowing the judgment of God, (that they which commit ſuch things are worthy of death,) not only do the ſame, but have pleaſure in them that do them,* Rom. i. 32. And how is it that thoſe who magnify the power of free-will do not confirm their opinion before the world, by an ocular demonſtration, in a practice as far above others in holineſs, as the opinion of their natural ability is above that of others? or is it maintained only for the protection of luſts, which men may hold faſt as long as they pleaſe; and when they have no more uſe for them, can throw them off in a moment, and leap out of Delilah's lap, into Abraham's boſom? Whatever uſe ſome make of that principle, it does of itſelf, and in its own nature, caſt a broad ſhadow for a ſhelter to wickedneſs of heart and life. And it may be obſerved, that the generality of the hearers of the goſpel, of all denominations, are plagued with it: for it is a root of bitterneſs, natural to all men; from whence doth ſpring ſo much fearleſſneſs about the ſoul's eternal ſtate, ſo many delays and off-puts in that weighty matter, whereby much work is laid up for a death-bed by ſome; while others are ruined by a legal walk, and unacquaintedneſs with the life of faith, and the making uſe of Chriſt for ſanctification; all flowing from the perſuaſion of ſufficient natural abilities. So agreeable is it to corrupt nature.

Evid. 2. Let thoſe, who, by the power of the ſpirit of bondage, have had the law laid out before them in its ſpirituality, for their conviction, ſpeak and tell, if they found themſelves able to incline their hearts towards it, in that caſe; nay if the more that light ſhone into their ſouls, they did not find their hearts more and more unable to comply with it. There are ſome, who have been brought into *the place of the breaking forth*, who are yet in the devil's camp, that from their experience can tell, light let into the mind cannot give life to the will, to enable it to comply therewith; and could give their teſtimony here, if they would. But take Paul's teſtimony concerning it, who, in his unconverted ſtate, was far from believing his utter inability for good; but learned it by experience, Rom. vii. 8. 9. 10. 11. 13. I own, the natural man may have a kind of love to the law: but here lies the ſtreſs of the matter, he looks on the holy law in a carnal dreſs; and ſo, while he hugs a creature of his own fancy, he thinks he has the law, but in very deed he is without the law; for as yet he ſees it not in its ſpirituality; if he did, he would find it the very reverſe of his own nature; and what his will could not fall in with, till changed by the power of grace.

Secondly, There is in the unrenewed will an averſeneſs to good. Sin is the natural man's element; he is as loth to part with it, as the fiſhes are to come out of the water into dry land. He not only cannot come to Chriſt, but he *will not come*, John v. 40. He is polluted, and hates to be waſhen, Jer. xiii. 27. *Wilt thou not be made clean? when ſhall it once be?* He is ſick; but utterly averſe to the remedy: he loves his diſeaſe ſo, that he lothes the phyſician. He is a captive, a priſoner, and a ſlave; but he loves his conqueror, his jailor and maſter; he is fond of his fetters, priſon, and drudgery, and has no liking to his liberty. For evidence of this averſeneſs to good, in the will of man, I ſhall inſtance in ſome particulars.

Evidence 1. The untowardneſs of children. Do we not ſee them naturally lovers of ſinful liberty? How unwilling are they to be hedged in? how averſe to reſtraint? The world can bear witneſs, that they are *as bullocks unaccuſtomed to the yoke:* and more, that it is far eaſier to bring young bullocks tamely to bear the yoke, than to bring young children under diſcipline, and make them tamely ſubmit to the reſtraint of ſinful liberty. Every body may ſee in this, as in a glaſs, that man is naturally wild and wilful, according to Zophar's obſerve, (Job. xi. 12.); that *man is born like a wild aſs's colt.* What can be ſaid more? He is like a colt, the colt of an aſs, the colt of a wild aſs. Compare Jer. ii. 24. *A wild aſs uſed to the wilderneſs; that ſnuffeth up the wind at her pleaſure; in her occaſion who can turn her away?*

Evid. 2. What pain and difficulty do men often find in bringing their hearts to religious duties? and what a taſk is it to the carnal heart to abide at them? It is a pain to it, to leave the world but a little to converſe with God. It is not eaſy to borrow time from the many things, to beſtow upon the *one thing needful.* Men often go to God in duties, with their faces towards the world; and when their bodies are on the mount of ordinances, their hearts will be found at the foot of the hill, *going after their covetouſneſs*, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. They are ſoon wearied of well-doing; for holy duties are not agreeable to their corrupt nature. Take notice of them at their worldly buſineſs, ſet them down with their carnal company, or let them be ſucking the breaſts of a luſt; time ſeems to them to fly, and drive furiouſly, ſo that it is gone ere they are aware. But how heavily does it drive, while a prayer, a ſermon, or a Sabbath laſtes? The Lord's day is the longeſt day of all the week with many; and therefore they muſt ſleep longer that morning, and go ſooner to bed that night, than ordinarily they do; that the day may be made of a tolerable length; for their hearts ſay within them, *When will the Sabbath be gone?* Amos viii. 5. The hours of worſhip are the the longeſt hours of that day: hence, when duty is over, they are like men eaſed of a burden; and when ſermon is ended, many have neither the grace nor good manners to ſtay till the bleſſing be pronounced, but, like the beaſts, their head is away as ſoon as one puts hand to looſe them; why, but becauſe, while they are at ordinances, they are, as Doeg, *detained before the Lord?* 1 Sam. xxii. 7.

Evid. 3. Conſider how the will of the natural man doth rebel againſt the light, Job xxiv. 13. Light ſometimes entereth in, becauſe he is not able to hold it out: but he *loveth darkneſs rather than light.* Sometimes, by the force of truth, the outer door of the underſtanding is broken up; but the inner door of the will remains faſt bolted. Then luſts riſe againſt light: corruption and conſcience encounter, and fight as in the field of battle, till corruption getting the upper hand, conſcience is forced to give the back; convictions are murdered, and truth is made and held priſoner, ſo that it can create no more diſturbance. While the word is preached or read, or the rod of God is upon the natural man, ſometimes convictions are darted in on him, and his ſpirit is wounded, in greater or leſſer meaſure: but theſe convictions not being able to make him fall, he runs away with the arrows ſticking in his conſcience; and at length one way or other, gets them out, and licks himſelf whole again. Thus, while the light ſhines, men, naturally averſe to it, wilfully ſhut their eyes, till God is provoked to blind them judicially, and they become proof againſt the word and providences too; ſo they may go where they will, they can ſit at eaſe: there is never a word from heaven to them, that goeth deeper than into their ears, Hoſ. iv. 17. *Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone.*

Evid. 4. Let us obſerve the reſiſtance made by elect ſouls, when the Spirit of the Lord is at work, to bring them from *the power of Satan unto God.* Zion's King gets no ſubjects but by ſtroke of ſword, *in the day of his power*, Pſal. cx. 2. 3. None come to him, but ſuch as are drawn by a divine hand, John vi. 44. When the Lord comes to the ſoul, he finds the ſtrong man keeping the houſe, and a deep peace and ſecurity there, while the ſoul is faſt aſleep in the devil's arms. But *the prey muſt be taken from the mighty, and the captive delivered.* Therefore the Lord awakens the ſinner, opens his eyes, and ſtrikes him with terror, while the clouds are black above his head, and the ſword of vengeance is held to his breaſt. Now he is at no ſmall pains to put a fair face on a black heart; to ſhake off his fears, to make head againſt them, and to divert himſelf from thinking on the unpleaſant and ungrateful ſubject of his ſoul's caſe. If he cannot ſo rid himſelf from them, carnal reaſon is called in to help, and urgeth, that there is no ground for ſo great fear; all may be well enough yet; and if it be ill with him, it will be ill with many. When the ſinner is beat from this, and ſees no advantage in going to hell with company, he reſolves to leave his ſins, but cannot think of breaking off ſo ſoon; there is time enough, and he will do it afterwards. Conſcience ſays, *To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts:* but he cries, *To morrow, Lord, to-morrow, Lord;* and *juſt now, Lord*, till that *now* is never like to come. And thus many times he comes from his prayers and confeſſions, with nothing but a breaſt full of ſharper convictions; for the heart doth not always caſt up the ſweet morſel, as ſoon as confeſſion is made with the mouth, Judges x. 10.---16. And when conſcience obligeth him to part with ſome luſts, others are kept as right eyes and right hands; and there are rueful looks after thoſe that are put away; as it was with the Iſraelites, who with bitter hearts did remember *the fiſh they did eat in Egypt freely*, Num. iii. 5. Nay, when he is ſo preſſed, that he muſt needs ſay before the Lord, that he is content to part with all his idols; the heart will be giving the tongue the lie. In a word, the ſoul, in this caſe, will ſhift from one thing to another; like a fiſh with the hook in his jaws, till it can do no more, and power come to make it ſuccumb, as *the wild aſs in her month*, Jer. ii. 24.

Thirdly, There is in the will of man a natural proneneſs to evil, a woful bent towards ſin. Men naturally are *bent to backſliding from God*, Hoſ. ii. 7. They hang (as the word is) towards backſliding; even as a hanging wall, whoſe *breaking cometh ſuddenly at an inſtant.* Set holineſs and life upon the one ſide, ſin and death upon the other; leave the unrenewed will to itſelf, it will chuſe ſin, and reject holineſs. This is no more to be doubted, than that water, poured on the ſide of a hill, will run downward, and not upward, or that a flame will aſcend, and not deſcend.

Evid. 1. Is not the way of evil the firſt way the children of men do go? do not their inclinations plainly appear on the wrong ſide, while yet they have no cunning to hide them? In the firſt opening of our eyes in the world, we look a-ſquint, hell-ward, not heaven-ward. As ſoon as it appears we are reaſonable creatures, it appears we are ſinful creatures, Pſal. lviii. 3. *The wicked are eſtranged from the womb, they go aſtray, as ſoon as they be born*, Prov. xxii. 15. *Fooliſhneſs is bound in the heart of a child: but the rod of correction ſhall drive it far from him.* Folly is bound in the heart, it is woven into our very nature. The knot will not looſe; it muſt be broke aſunder by ſtrokes. Words will not do it, the rod muſt be taken to drive it away: and if it be not driven far away, the heart and it will meet and knit again. Not that the rod of itſelf will do this: the ſad experience of many parents teſtifies the contrary; and Solomon himſelf tells you, Prov. xxvii. 22. *Though thou ſhouldſt bray a fool in a mortar, among wheat, with a peſtil, yet will not his fooliſhneſs depart from him;* it is ſo bound in his heart. But the rod is an ordinance of God, appointed for that end; which, like the word, is made effectual, by the Spirit's accompanying his own ordinance. And this, by the way, ſhews that parents, in adminiſtering correction to their children, have need, firſt of all, to correct their own irregular paſſions, and look upon it as a matter of awful ſolemnity, ſetting about it with much dependence on the Lord, and following it with prayer for the bleſſing, if they would have it effectual.

Evid. 2. How eaſily are men led aſide to ſin! The children, who are not perſuaded to good, are otherwiſe ſimple ones, eaſily wrought upon: thoſe whom the word cannot draw to holineſs, are *led by Satan at his pleaſure.* Profane Eſau, that cunning man, (Gen. xxv. 27.), was as eaſily cheated of the bleſſing, as if he had been a fool or an idiot. The more natural a thing is, it is the more eaſy: ſo Chriſt's *yoke is eaſy* to the ſaints, in ſo far as they are *partakers of the divine nature:* and ſin is eaſy to the unrenewed man; but to learn to do good, as difficult as for *the Ethiopian to change his ſkin;* becauſe the will naturally hangs towards evil, but is averſe to good. A child can cauſe a round thing to run, while he cannot move a ſquare thing of the ſame weight; for the roundneſs makes it fit for motion, ſo that it goes with a touch. Even ſo, when men find the heart eaſily carried towards ſin, while it is as a dead weight in the way of holineſs; we muſt bring the reaſon of this from the natural ſet and diſpoſition of the heart, whereby it is prone and bent to evil. Were man's will, naturally, put in equal balance to good and evil, the one might be embraced with as little difficulty as the other; but experience teſtifies it is not ſo. In the ſacred hiſtory of the Iſraelites, eſpecially in the book of Judges, how often do we find them forſaking JEHOVAH, the mighty God, and doting upon the idols of the nations about them? But did ever one of theſe nations grow fond of Iſrael's God, and forſake their own idols? No, no; though man is naturally given to changes, it is but from evil to evil, not from evil to good, Jer. ii. 10. 11. *Hath a nation changed their gods, which yet are no gods? but my people have changed their glory, for that which doth not profit.* Surely the will of man ſtands not in equal balance, but has a caſt to the wrong ſide.

Evid. 3. Conſider how men go on ſtill in the way of ſin, till they meet with a ſtop, and that from another hand than their own; Iſ. lvii. 17. *I hid me, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.* If God withdraw his reſtraining hand, and lay the reins on the ſinner's neck, he is in no doubt what way to chooſe: for (obſerve it) the way of ſin is the way of his heart; his heart naturally lies that way; it hath a natural propenſity to ſin. As long as God ſuffereth them, they walk in their own way, Acts xiv. 16. The natural man is ſo fixed in his woful choice, that there needs no more to ſhew he is off from God's way, but to tell him he is upon his own.

Evid. 4. Whatever good impreſſions are made upon him, they do not laſte. Though his heart be firm as a ſtone, yea, harder than the nether milſtone, in point of receiving of them; it is otherwiſe unſtable as water, and cannot keep them. It works againſt the receiving of them; and, when they are made, it works them off, and returns to its natural bias; Hoſ. vi. 4. *Your goodneſs is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.* The morning cloud promiſeth a hearty ſhower; but, when the ſun ariſeth it evaniſheth; the ſun beats upon the early dew, and it evaporates; ſo the huſbandman's expectation is diſappointed. Such is the goodneſs of the natural man Some ſharp affliction, or piercing convic tion, obligeth him, in ſome ſort, to turn from his evil courſe; but his will not being renewed, religion is ſtill againſt the grain with him, and therefore this goes off again, Pſal. lxxviii. 34. 36. 37. Though a ſtone thrown up into the air, may abide there a little while; yet its natural heavineſs will bring it down to the earth again; and ſo do unrenewed men return to *the wallowing in the mire*; becauſe although they were waſhed, yet their ſwiniſh nature was not changed. It is hard to cauſe wet wood take fire, hard to make it keep fire; but it is harder than either of theſe, to make the unrenewed will retain attained goodneſs; which is a plain evidence of the natural bent of the will to evil.

Evid. laſt. Do the ſaints ſerve the Lord now, as they were wont to ſerve ſin in their unconverted ſtate? Very far from it. Rom. vi. 20. *When ye were the ſervants of ſin, ye were free from righteouſneſs.* Sin got all and admitted no partner: but now, when they are the ſervants of Chriſt, are they free from ſin? Nay, there are ſtill with them ſome deeds of the old man, ſhewing that he is but dying in them. And hence their hearts often miſgive them, and ſlip aſide unto evil, *when they would do good*, Rom. vii. 21. They need to watch, and keep their hearts with all diligence; and their ſad experience teacheth them, *That he that truſteth in his own heart is a fool*, Prov. xxviii. 26. If it be thus in the green tree, how muſt it be in the dry?

Fourthly, There is a natural contrariety, direct oppoſition and enmity, in the will of man to God himſelf, and his holy will, Rom. viii. 7. *The carnal mind is enmity againſt God; for it is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.* The will was once God's deputy in the ſoul, ſet to command there for him; but now it is ſet up againſt him. If you would have the picture of it, in its natural ſtate, the very reverſe of the will of God repreſents it. If the fruit hanging before one's eyes, be but forbidden, that is ſufficient to draw the heart after it. Let me inſtance in the ſin of profane ſwearing and curſing, to which ſome are ſo abandoned, that they take a pride in them; belching out horrid oaths and curſes, as if hell opened with the opening of their mouths; or larding their ſpeeches with minced oaths, as *faith, haith, fai'd ye hai'd ye*, and ſuch like; and all this without any manner of provocation, though even that would not excuſe them. Pray, tell me, (1.) What profit is there here? A thief gets ſomething in his hand for his pains; a drunkard gets a belly-full; but what do ye get? Others ſerve the devil for pay; but ye are volunteers, that expect no reward but your work itſelf, in affronting of Heaven. And if you repent not, you will get your reward in full tale: when you go to hell, *your work will follow you.* The drunkard ſhall not have a drop of *water to cool his tongue* there; nor will the covetous man's wealth follow him into the other world: but ye ſhall drive on your old trade there; and an eternity will be long enough to give you your heart's fill of it. (2.) What pleaſure is there here, but what flows from your trampling upon the holy law? Which of your ſenſes doth ſwearing or curſing gratify? If it gratify your ears, it can only be by the noiſe it makes againſt the heavens. Though you had a mind to give up yourſelves to all manner of profanity and ſenſuality, there is ſo little pleaſure can be ſtrained out of theſe ſins, that we muſt needs conclude, your love to them, in this caſe, is a love to them for themſelves; a deviliſh unhired love, without any proſpect of profit or pleaſure from them otherwiſe. If any ſhall ſay, theſe are monſters of men. Be it ſo; yet, alas! the world is fruitful of ſuch monſters; they are to be found almoſt every-where. And allow me to ſay, they muſt be admitted as the mouth of the whole unregenerate world againſt Heaven, Rom. iii. 14. *Whoſe mouth is full of curſing and bitterneſs.* verſ. 19. *Now we know, that what things ſoever the law ſaith, it ſaith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be ſtopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*

I have a charge againſt every unregenerate man and woman, young or old, to be verified by the teſtimonies of the ſcriptures of truth, and the teſtimony of their own conſciences; namely, that whether they be profeſſors or profane, whatever they be, ſeeing they are not born again they are heart-enemies to God; to the Son of God; to the Spirit of God; and to the law of God. Hear this, ye careleſs ſouls, that live at eaſe in your natural ſtate.

1ſt, Ye are *enemies to God in your mind*, Col. i. 21. Ye are not as yet reconciled to him; the natural enmity is not as yet ſlain, though perhaps it lies hid, and ye do not perceive it. (1.) Ye are enemies to the very being of God, Pſal. xiv. 1. *The fool hath ſaid in his heart, There is no God.* The proud man would that none were above himſelf; the rebel, that there were no king: and the unrenewed man, who is a maſs of pride and rebellion, that there were no God. He ſaith it in his heart, he wiſheth it were ſo, though he be aſhamed and afraid to ſpeak it out. And that all natural men are ſuch fools, appears from the apoſtle's quoting a part of this pſalm, *That every mouth may be ſtopped*, Rom. iii. 10. 11. 12. 19. I own indeed, that while the natural man looks on God as the Creator and Preſerver of the world, becauſe he loves his own ſelf, therefore his heart riſeth not againſt the being of his Benefactor: but this enmity will quickly appear when he looks on God as the Rector and Judge of the world, binding him, under the pain of the curſe, to exact holineſs, and girding him with the cords of death, becauſe of ſin. Liſten in this caſe to the voice of thy heart, and thou wilt find it to be *No God.* (2.) Ye are enemies to the nature of God, Job xxi. 14. *They ſay unto God, Depart from us, for we deſire not the knowledge of thy ways.* Men ſet up to themſelves an idol of their own fancy, inſtead of God; and then fall down and worſhip it. They love him no other way, than Jacob loved Leah, while he took her for Rachel. Every natural man is an enemy to God, as he is revealed in his word. An infinitely holy, juſt, powerful, and true Being, is not the God whom he loves, but the God whom he lothes. In effect, men naturally are *haters of God*, Rom. i. 30. and if they could, they certainly would make him another than what he is. For, conſider it is a certain truth, *That whatſoever is in God, is God*; and therefore his attributes or perfections are not any thing really diſtinct from himſelf. If God's attributes be not God himſelf, he is a compound being, and ſo not the firſt Being, (which to ſay is blaſphemous); for the parts compounding are before the compound itſelf; but he is *Alpha and Omega, the firſt and the laſt.*

Now, upon this, I would, for your conviction, propoſe to your conſciences a few queries. (1.) *How ſtand your hearts affected to the infinite purity and holineſs of God?* Conſcience will give an anſwer to this, which the tongue will not ſpeak out. If ye be not partakers of his holineſs, ye cannot be reconciled to it. The Pagans finding they could not be like God in holineſs, made their gods like themſelves in filthineſs; and thereby diſcovered what ſort of a god the natural man would have. God is holy; can an unholy creature love his unſpotted holineſs? Nay it is the righteous only that can *give thanks at the remembrance of his holineſs*, Pſal. xcvii. 12. God is light; can creatures of darkneſs rejoice therein? Nay, *every one that doth evil hateth the light*, John iii. 20. *For what communion hath light with darkneſs?* 2 Cor. vi. 14. (2.) *How ſtand your hearts affected to the juſtice of God?* There is not a man, who is wedded to his luſts, as all the unregenerate are, but would be content, with the blood of his body, to blot that letter out of the name of God. Can the malefactor love his condemning judge? or an unjuſtified ſinner, a juſt God? No; he cannot, Luke vii. 47. *To whom little is forgiven, the ſame loveth little.* Hence ſeeing men cannot get the doctrine of his juſtice blotted out of the Bible, yet it is ſuch an eye-ſore to them, that they ſtrive to blot it out of their minds: and they ruin themſelves by preſuming on his mercy, while they are not careful to get a righteouſneſs, wherein they may ſtand before his juſtice; but *ſay in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil,* Zeph. i. 12. (3.) *How ſtand ye affected to the omniſcience and omnipreſence of God?* Men naturally would rather have a blind idol, than an all-ſeeing God; and therefore do what they can, as Adam did, to hide themſelves from the preſence of the Lord. They no more love the all-ſeeing, every where preſent God, than the thief loves to have the judge witneſs to his evil deeds. If it could be carried by votes, God would be voted out of the world, and cloſed up in heaven; for the language of the carnal heart is, *The Lord ſeeth us not: The Lord hath forſaken the earth,* Ezek. viii. 12. (4.) *How ſtand ye affected to the truth and veracity of God?* There are but few in the world that can heartily ſubſcribe to that ſentence of the apoſtle, Rom iii. 4. *Let God be true, but every man a liar.* Nay truly, there are many, who, in effect, do hope that God will not be true to his word. There are thouſands who hear the goſpel, that hope to be ſaved, and think all ſafe with them for eternity, who never had any experience of the new-birth, nor do at all concern themſelves in that queſtion, *Whether they are born again, or not?* a queſtion that is like to wear out from among us at this day. Our Lord's words are plain and peremptory, *Except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God.* What are ſuch hopes then, but real hopes that God (with profoundeſt reverence be it ſpoken) will recal his word, and that Chriſt will prove a falſe prophet? What elſe means the ſinner, who *when he heareth the words of the curſe, bleſſeth himſelf in his heart ſaying, I ſhall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart?* Deut. xxix. 19. Laſtly, *How ſtand ye affected to the power of God?* None but new creatures will love him for it, on a fair view thereof; though others may ſlaviſhly fear him upon the account of it. There is not a natural man, but would contribute to the utmoſt of his power to the building of another tower of Babel, to hem it in. On theſe grounds I declare every unrenewed man an enemy to God.

2dly, Ye are enemies to the Son of God. That enmity to Chriſt is in your hearts, which would have made you join the huſbandmen who *killed the heir, and caſt him out of the vineyard;* if ye had been beſet with their temptations, and no more reſtrained than they were. *Am I a dog,* (you will ſay), to have ſo treated my ſweet Saviour? So did Hazael in another caſe; but when he had the temptation, he was a dog to do it. Many call Chriſt their ſweet Saviour, whoſe conſciences can bear witneſs, they never ſucked as much ſweetneſs from him, as from their ſweet luſts, which are ten times ſweeter to them than their Saviour. He is no other way ſweet to them than as they abuſe his death and ſufferings, for the peaceable enjoyment of their luſts; that they may live as they liſt in the world; and when they die, may be kept out of hell. Alas! it is but a miſtaken Chriſt that is ſweet to you, whoſe ſouls lothe that Chriſt, who *is the brightneſs of the Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon.* It is with you as it was with the carnal Jews, who delighted in him, while they miſtook his errand into the world, fancying that he would be a temporal deliverer to them, Mal. iii. 1. But when he was come, and *ſat as a refiner and purifier of ſilver,* verſ. 2, 3. and caſt them as *reprobate ſilver,* who thought to have had no ſmall honour in the kingdom of the Meſſiah; his doctrine galled their conſciences, and they reſted not till they had embrued their hands in his blood. To open your eyes in this point, which ye are ſo loth to believe, I will lay before you the enmity of your hearts againſt Chriſt in all his offices.

1. Every unregenerate man is an enemy to Chriſt in his prophetical office. He is appointed of the Father the great Prophet and Teacher; but not upon the world's call, who, in their natural ſtate, would have unanimouſly voted againſt him; and therefore when he came, he was condemned as a ſeducer and blaſphemer. For evidence of this enmity, I ſhall inſtance in two things.

Evidence 1. Conſider the entertainment he meets with, when he comes to teach ſouls inwardly by his Spirit. Men do what they can to ſtop their ears, like the deaf adder, that they may not hear his voice. They *always reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt: they deſire not the knowledge of his ways;* and therefore bid him *depart from them.* The old calumny is often raiſed upon him on that occaſion, John x. 20. *He is mad, why hear ye him?* Soul-exerciſe, raiſed by the ſpirit of bondage, is accounted, by many, nothing elſe but diſtraction, and melancholy fits; men thus blaſpheming the Lord's work, becauſe they themſelves are beſide themſelves, and cannot judge of thoſe matters.

Evid. 2. Conſider the entertainment he meets with, when he comes to teach men outwardly by his word.

(1.) His written word, the Bible, is ſlighted. Chriſt hath left it to us, as the book of our inſtructions, to ſhow us what way we muſt ſteer our courſe, if we would come to Immanuel's land. It is a lamp to light us through a dark world, to eternal light. And he hath left it upon us, to ſearch it with that diligence wherewith men dig into mines for ſilver or gold, John v. 39. But, ah! how is this ſacred treaſure profaned by many! They ridicule that holy word, by which they muſt be judged at the laſt day; and will rather loſe their ſouls than their jeſt, dreſſing up the conceits of their wanton wits in ſcripture-phraſes: in which they act as mad a part, as one who would dig into a mine, to procure metal to melt and pour down his own and his neighbour's throat. Many exhauſt their ſpirits in reading romances, and their minds purſue them, as the flame doth the dry ſtubble; while they have no heart for, nor reliſh of, the holy word; and therefore ſeldom take a Bible in their hands. What is agreeable to the vanity of their minds, is pleaſant and taking; but what recommends holineſs to their unholy hearts, makes their ſpirits dull and flat. What pleaſure will they find in reading of a profane ballad, or ſtory-book, to whom the the Bible is taſteleſs, as the white of an egg; Many lay by their Bibles with their Sabbath-days clothes; and whatever uſe they have for their clothes, they have none for their Bibles, till the return of the Sabbath. Alas! the duſt or finery about your Bibles is a witneſs now, and will, at the laſt day, be a witneſs of the enmity of your hearts againſt Chriſt, as a Prophet. Beſides all this, among theſe who ordinarily read the ſcriptures, how few are there that read it as the word of the Lord to their ſouls, and keep up communion with him in it! They do not make his ſtatutes their counſellors, nor doth their particular caſe ſend them to their Bibles. They are ſtrangers to the ſolid comfort of the ſcriptures. And if at any time they be dejected, it is ſomething elſe than the word that revives them: as Achab was cured of his ſullen fit, by the ſecuring of Naboth's vineyard for him.

(2.) Chriſt's word preached is deſpiſed. The entertainment moſt of the world, to whom it has come, have always given it, is that which is mentioned, Matth. xxii. 5. *They made light of it;* and for its ſake, they are deſpiſed whom he has employed to preach it; whatever other face men put upon their contempt of the miniſtry, John xv. 20. 21. *The ſervant is not greater than the lord: if they have perſecuted me, they will alſo perſecute you; if they have kept my ſaying, they will keep yours alſo. But all theſe things will they do unto you for my name's ſake.* That Levi was the ſon of the hated, ſeems not to have been without a myſtery, which the world in all ages hath unriddled. But though *the earthen veſſels,* wherein God has put *the treaſure,* be turned, with many, into *veſſels wherein there is no pleaſure,* yet why is the treaſure itſelf ſlighted? But ſlighted it is, and that with a witneſs this day. *Lord, who hath believed our report? To whom ſhall we ſpeak?* Men can, without remorſe, make to themſelves ſilent Sabbaths, one after another. And, alas! when they come to ordinances, for the moſt part, it is but *to appear* (or as the word is, *to be ſeen*) before the Lord; and to *tread his courts,* namely, as a company of beaſts would do, if they were driven into them, Iſ. i. 12.; ſo little reverence and awe of God appears on their ſpirits. Many ſtand like brazen walls before the word, in whoſe corrupt converſation the preaching of the word makes no breach. Nay, not a few are growing worſe and worſe, under *precept upon precept;* and the reſult of all is, *They go and fall backward, and be broken, and ſnared, and taken*, Iſ. xxviii. 13. What tears of blood are ſufficient to lament that (the goſpel) *the grace of God* is thus *received in vain!* We are but the voice of one crying; the ſpeaker is in heaven; and ſpeaks to you from heaven by men: why do ye *refuſe him that ſpeaketh?* Heb. xii. 25. God has made our Maſter *Heir of all things*, and we are ſent to court a ſpouſe for him. There is none ſo worthy as he; none more unworthy than they to whom this match is propoſed: but the *prince of darkneſs* is preferred before the *PRINCE OF PEACE*. A diſmal darkneſs overclouded the world by Adam's fall, more terrible than if the ſun, moon and ſtars had been for ever wrapt up in blackneſs of darkneſs; and there we ſhould have eternally lain, had not this grace of the goſpel, as a ſhining ſun, appeared to diſpel it, Tit. ii. 11. But yet we fly like night-owls from it; and, like the wild beaſts, *lay ourſelves down in our dens:* when *the ſun ariſeth*, we are ſtruck blind with the light thereof; and, as creatures of darkneſs, love darkneſs rather than light. Such is the enmity of the hearts of men againſt Chriſt, in his prophetical office.

2. The natural man is an enemy to Chriſt in his prieſtly office. He is appointed of the Father a Prieſt for ever; that, by his alone ſacrifice and interceſſion, ſinners may have peace with, and acceſs to God: but Chriſt crucified is a ſtumbling block, and fooliſhneſs, to the unrenewed part of mankind, to whom he is preached, 1 Cor. i. 23. They are not for him, as the *new and living way;* nor is he, by the voice of the world, *an High Prieſt over the houſe of God.* Corrupt nature goes quite another way to work.

Evidence 1. None of Adam's children naturally incline to receive the bleſſing in borrowed robes; but would always, according to the ſpider's motto, owe all to themſelves: and ſo climb up to heaven on a thread ſpun out of their own bowels. For they *deſire to be under the law*, Gal. iv. 21. and *go about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs*, Rom. x. 3. Man naturally looks on God as a great Maſter; and himſelf as his ſervant, that muſt work and win heaven as his wages. Hence, when conſcience is awakened, he thinks that, to the end he may be ſaved, he muſt anſwer the demands of the law, ſerve God as well as he can, and pray for mercy wherein he comes ſhort. And thus many come to duties, that never come out of them to Jeſus Chriſt.

Evid. 2. As men, naturally, think highly of their duties, that ſeem to them to be well done; ſo they look for acceptance with God, according as their work is done, not according to the ſhare they have in the blood of Chriſt. *Wherefore have we faſted, ſay they, and thou ſeeſt not?* They will value themſelves on their performances and attainments; yea, their very opinions in religion, (Phil. iii. 4. 5. 6. 7.), taking to themſelves what they rob from Chriſt the great High Prieſt.

Evid. 3. The natural man, going to God, in duties, will always be found, either to go without a Mediator, or with more than the one only Mediator Jeſus Chriſt. Nature is blind, and therefore venturous; it ſets men a-going immediately to God without Chriſt; to ruſh into his preſence, and put their petitions in his hand, without being introduced by the Secretary of heaven, or putting their requeſts into his hand. So fixed is this diſpoſition in the unrenewed heart, that when many hearers of the goſpel are converſed with upon the point of their hopes of ſalvation, the name of Chriſt will ſcarcely be heard from their mouths. Aſk them, how they think to obtain the pardon of ſin? they will tell you, they beg and look for mercy, becauſe God is a merciful God; and that is all they have to confide in. Others look for mercy for Chriſt's ſake; but how do they know that Chriſt will take their plea in hand? Why, as the Papiſts have their mediators with the Mediator, ſo have they. They know he cannot but do it; for they pray, confeſs, mourn, and have great deſires, and the like; and ſo have ſomething of their own to commend them unto him: they were never made poor in ſpirit, and brought empty-handed to Chriſt, to lay the ſtreſs of all on his atoning blood.

3. The natural man is an enemy to Chriſt in his kingly office. The Father has appointed the Mediator, King in Zion, Pſal. ii. 6. And all to whom the goſpel comes are commanded, on their higheſt peril, to *kiſs the Son*, and ſubmit themſelves unto him, ver. 12. But the natural voice of mankind is, *Away with him;* as you may ſee, ver. 2. 3. *They will not have him to reign over them*, Luke xix. 14.

Evidence 1. The workings of corrupt nature, to wreſt the government out of his hands. No ſooner was he born, but being born a King, Herod perſecuted him, Matth. ii. And when he was crucified, they *ſet up over his head his accuſation written, This is Jeſus, the King of the Jews*, Matth. xxvii. 37. Though his kingdom be a ſpiritual kingdom, and not of this world, yet they cannot allow him a kingdom within a kingdom, which acknowledgeth no other head or ſupreme, but the Royal Mediator. They make bold with his royal prerogatives, changing his laws, inſtitutions, and ordinances; modelling his worſhip according to the devices of their own hearts, introducing new offices and officers into his kingdom, not to be found in *the book of the manner of his kingdom:* diſpoſing of the external government thereof, as may beſt ſuit their carnal deſigns. Such is the enmity of the hearts of men againſt Zion's King.

Evid. 2. How unwilling are men, naturally, to ſubmit unto, and be hedged in by the laws and diſcipline of his kingdom! As a king, he is a law-giver, (Iſ. xxxiii. 22.), and has appointed an external government, diſcipline and cenſures, to controul the unruly, and to keep his profeſſed ſubjects in order, to be exerciſed by officers of his own appointment, Matth. xviii. 17. 18. 1 Cor. xii. 28. 1 Tim. v. 17. Heb. xiii. 17. But theſe are the great eye-ſores of the carnal world, who love ſinful liberty, and therefore cry out, *Let us break their bands aſunder, and caſt away their cords from us*, Pſal. ii. 3. Hence this work is found to be, in a ſpecial manner, a ſtriving againſt the ſtream of corrupt nature, which, for the moſt part, puts ſuch a face on the church, as if there were no *king in Iſrael*, every one doing that which is *right in his own eyes.*

Evid. 3. However natural men may be brought to feign ſubmiſſion to the King of ſaints, yet luſts always retain the throne and dominion in their hearts, and they are *ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures*, Tit. iii. 3. None, but theſe in whom Chriſt is formed, do really put the crown on his head, and receive the kingdom of Chriſt within them. His crown is *the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his eſpouſals.* Who are they, whom the power of grace has not ſubdued, that will allow him to ſet up, and to put down, in their ſouls, as he will? Nay, as for others, any lord ſhall ſooner get the rule over them, than the Lord of glory: they kindly entertain his enemies, and will never abſolutely reſign themſelves to his government, till conquered in a day of power. Thus ye ſee, that the natural man is an enemy to Jeſus Chriſt in all his offices.

But O how hard is it to convince men in this point! They are very loth to take with it. And, in a ſpecial manner, the enmity of the heart againſt Chriſt in his prieſtly office ſeems to be hid from the view of moſt of the hearers of the goſpel. Yet there appears to be a peculiar malignity in corrupt nature againſt that office of his. It may be obſerved, that the Socinians, theſe enemies of our bleſſed Lord, allow him to be properly a Prophet and a King, but deny him to be properly a

Prieſt. And this is agreeable enough to the corruption of our nature; for under the covenant of works, the Lord was known as a Prophet or Teacher, and alſo as a King or Ruler; but not at all as a Prieſt: ſo man knows nothing of the myſtery of Chriſt, as the way to the Father, till it be revealed to him: and when it is revealed, the will riſeth up againſt it; for corrupt nature lies croſs to the myſtery of Chriſt, and the great contrivance of ſalvation, through a crucified Saviour, revealed in the goſpel. For clearing of which weighty truth, let theſe four things be conſidered.

Firſt, The ſoul's falling in with the grand device of ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, and ſetting the matters of ſalvation on that footing before the Lord, is declared by the ſcriptures of truth to be an undoubted mark of a real ſaint, who is happy here, and ſhall be happy hereafter. Matth. xi. 6. *And bleſſed is he whoſoever ſhall not be offended in me.* 1 Cor. i. 23. 24. *But we preach Chriſt crucified, unto the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and unto the Greeks, fooliſhneſs; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Chriſt the power of God, and the wiſdom of God.* Philip. iii. 3. *For we are the circumciſion, which worſhip God in the ſpirit, and rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the fleſh.* Now, how could this be, if nature could comply with that grand device?

Secondly, Corrupt nature is the very reverſe of the goſpel-contrivance. In the goſpel, God propoſeth Jeſus Chriſt as the great means of re-uniting man to himſelf, he has named him as the Mediator, one *in whom he is well pleaſed*, and will have none but him, Matth. xvii. 5.; but nature *will have none of him*, Pſal. lxxxi. 11. God appointed the place of meeting for the reconciliation, namely, the fleſh of Chriſt; accordingly, *God was in Chriſt*, (2 Cor. v. 19.) as the tabernacle of meeting, to make up the peace with ſinners: but natural men, though they ſhould die for ever, will not come thither, John v. 40. *And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.* In the way of the goſpel, the ſinner muſt ſtand before the Lord in an imputed righteouſneſs: but corrupt nature is for an inherent righteouſneſs; and therefore, ſo far as natural men follow after righteouſneſs, they follow after *the law of righteouſneſs*, Rom. ix. 31. 32. and not after *the Lord our righteouſneſs*. Nature is always for building up itſelf, and to have ſome ground for boaſting: but the great deſign of the goſpel is to exalt grace, to depreſs nature, and exclude boaſting, Rom. iii. 27. The ſum of our natural religion is, to do good from and for ourſelves, John v. 44.; the ſum of the goſpel religion is, to deny ourſelves, and to do good from and for Chriſt Philip. i. 21.

Thirdly, Every thing in nature is againſt believing in Jeſus Chriſt. What beauty can the blind mind diſcern in a crucified Saviour, for which he is to be deſired? How can the will, naturally impotent, yea and averſe to good, make choice of him? Well may the ſoul then ſay to him in the day of the ſpiritual ſiege, as the Jebuſites ſaid to David in another caſe, *Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou ſhalt not come in hither*, 2 Sam. v. 6. The way of nature is to go into one's ſelf for all; according to the fundamental maxim of unſanctified morality, *That a man ſhould truſt in himſelf*; which, according to the doctrine of faith, is mere fooliſhneſs; for ſo it is determined, Prov. xviii. 26. *He that truſteth in his own heart is a fool.* Now faith is the ſoul's going out of itſelf for all: and this, nature, on the other hand, determines to be fooliſhneſs, 1 Cor. i. 18. 23. Wherefore there is need of *the working of mighty power*, to cauſe ſinners *to believe*, Eph. i. 19. Iſ. liii. 1. We ſee the promiſes of welcome to ſinners, in the goſpel-covenant, are ample, large and free, clogged with no conditions, Iſ. lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17. If they cannot believe his bare word, he has given them his oath upon it, Ezek. xxxiii. 11.; and, for their greater aſſurance, he has appended ſeals to his ſworn covenant, namely, the holy ſacraments: ſo that no more could be demanded of the moſt faithleſs perſon in the world, to make us believe him, than the Lord hath condeſcended to give us, to make us believe himſelf. This plainly ſpeaks nature to be againſt believing, and theſe who flee to Chriſt for a refuge, to have need of *ſtrong conſolation*, (Heb. vi. 18.) to balance their ſtrong doubts, and propenſity to unbelief. Farther, alſo it may be obſerved, how, in the word ſent to a ſecure, graceleſs generation, their objections are anſwered aforehand; and words of grace are heaped one upon another, as ye may read, Iſ. lv. 7. 8. 9. Joel. ii. 13. Why? Becauſe the Lord knows, that when theſe ſecure ſinners are thoroughly awakened, doubts, fears, and carnal reaſonings againſt believing, will be going within their breaſts, as thick as duſt in a houſe, raiſed by ſweeping a dry floor.

Laſtly, Corrupt nature is bent towards the way of the law, or covenant of works; and every natural man, as far as he ſets himſelf to ſeek after ſalvation, is engaged in that way; and will not quit it, till beat from it by a divine power. Now the way of ſalvation by works, and that of free grace in Jeſus Chriſt, are inconſiſtent, Rom. xi. 6. *And if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwiſe grace is no more grace; But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwiſe work is no more work.* Gal. iii. 12. *And the law is not of FAITH; but the man that DOTH them ſhall live in them.* Wherefore, if the will of man naturally incline to the way of ſalvation by the law, it lies croſs to the goſpel-contrivance. And that ſuch is the natural bent of our hearts, will appear, if theſe following things be conſidered.

1. The law was Adam's covenant; and he knew no other, as he was the head and repreſentative of all mankind, that were brought into it with him, and left under it by him, though without ſtrength to perform the condition thereof. Hence this covenant is ingrained in our nature; and though we have loſt our father's ſtrength, yet we ſtill incline to the way he was ſet upon, as our head and repreſentative, in that covenant; that is by doing, to live. This is our natural religion, and the principle which men naturally take for granted, Matth. xix. 16. *What good thing ſhall I do, that I may have eternal life?*

2. Conſider the oppoſition that has always been made in the world, againſt the doctrine of free grace in Jeſus Chriſt, by men ſetting up for the way of works; thereby diſcovering the natural tendency of the heart. It is manifeſt, that the great deſign of the goſpel-contrivance is to exalt the free grace of God in Jeſus Chriſt, Rom. vi. 16. *Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace.* See Eph. i. 6. and chap. ii. 7. 9. All goſpel-truths centre in Chriſt: ſo that to learn the truth, is to learn Chriſt, Eph. iv. 20. and to be truly taught it, is to be taught as *the truth is in Jeſus*, verſe 21. All diſpenſations of grace and favour from heaven, whether to nations or particular perſons, have ſtill had ſomething about them proclaiming a freedom of grace; as in the very firſt ſeparation made by the divine favour, Cain the elder brother is rejected, and Abel the younger accepted. This ſhines through the whole hiſtory of the Bible: but as true it is, this has been the point principally oppoſed by corrupt nature. One may well ſay, that, of all errors in religion, ſince Chriſt, the ſeed of the woman, was preached, this of works, in oppoſition to free grace in him, was the firſt that lived; and, it is likely, will be the laſt that dies. There have been vaſt numbers of errors, which ſprung up, one after another; whereof, at length, the world became aſhamed and weary, ſo that they died out: but this has continued, from Cain, the firſt author of this hereſy, unto this day; and never wanted ſome that clave to it, even in the times of greateſt light. I do not, without ground, call Cain the author of it; who, when Abel brought a ſacrifice of atonement, a *bloody* offering of *the firſtlings of his flock*, (like the publican *ſmiting on his breaſt*, and ſaying, *God be merciful to me a ſinner*) advanced with his thank-offering *of the fruit of the ground*, (Gen. iv. 3. 4.) like the proud Phariſee, with his, *God I thank thee.* For what was the cauſe of Cain's

wrath, and of his murdering of Abel? was it not that he was not accepted of God for his work? Gen iv. 4. 5. *And wherefore ſlew he him? Becauſe his own works were evil, and his brothers righteous*, (1 John iii. 12.) that is, done in faith, and accepted, when his were done without faith, and therefore rejected, as the apoſtle teacheth, Heb. xi. 4. And ſo he wrote his indignation againſt juſtification and acceptance with God through faith, in oppoſition to works, in the blood of his brother, to convey it down to poſterity. And, ſince that time, the unbloody ſacrifice has often ſwimmed in the blood of thoſe that rejected it. The promiſe made to Abraham, of the ſeed in which all nations ſhould be bleſſed, was ſo overclouded among his poſterity in Egypt, that the generality of them ſaw no need of that way of obtaining the bleſſing, till God himſelf confuted their error by a fiery law from mount Sinai, which *was added becauſe of tranſgreſſions, till the ſeed ſhould come*, Gal. iii. 19. I need not inſiſt to tell you how Moſes and the prophets had ſtill much ado, to lead the people off the conceit of their own righteouſneſs. The 9th chapter of Deuteronomy is entirely ſpent on that purpoſe. They were very groſs in that point in our Saviour's time: in the time of the apoſtles, when the doctrine of free grace was moſt clearly preached, that error lifted up its head in face of cleareſt light; witneſs the epiſtles to the Romans and Galatians. And ſince that time it has not been wanting; Popery being the common ſink of former hereſies, and this the heart and life of that deluſion. And, finally, it may be obſerved, that always as the church declined from her purity otherwiſe, the doctrine of free grace was obſcured proportionably.

3. Such is the natural propenſity of man's heart to the way of the law in oppoſition to Chriſt; that, as the tainted veſſel turns the taſte of the pureſt liquor put into it, ſo the natural man turns the very goſpel into law; and transforms the covenant of grace into a covenant of works. The ceremonial law was to the Jews a real goſpel; which held blood, death, and tranſlation of guilt before their eyes continually, as the only way of ſalvation: yet their very table (i. e. their altar, with the ſeveral ordinances pertaining thereto, Mal. i. 12.) was *a ſnare unto them*, Rom. ii. 9. while they uſed it to make up the defects in their obedience to the moral law; and clave to it ſo, as to reject him, whom the altar and ſacrifices pointed them to, as the ſubſtance of all; even as Hagar, whoſe it was only to ſerve, was, by their father, brought into her miſtreſs's bed; not without a myſtery in the purpoſe of God. *For theſe are the two covenants.* Gal. iv. 24. Thus is the doctrine of the goſpel corrupted by Papiſts, and other enemies to the doctrine of free grace. And indeed, however natural mens heads may be ſet right in this point; as ſurely as they are out of Chriſt, their faith, repentance, and obedience, (ſuch as they are) are placed by them in the room of Chriſt and his righteouſneſs; and ſo truſted to, as if by theſe they fulfilled a new law.

4. Great is the difficulty in Adam's ſons their parting with the law as a covenant of works. None part with it in that reſpect, but theſe whom the power of the Spirit of grace ſeparates from it. The law is our firſt huſband, and gets every one's virgin love. When Chriſt comes to the ſoul, he finds it *married to the law:* ſo as it neither can nor will be *married to another*, till it be obliged to part with the firſt huſband, as the apoſtle teacheth, Rom. vii. 1, 2, 3, 4. Now, that ye may ſee what ſort of a parting this is, conſider,

(1.) It is a *death*, Rom. vii. 4. Gal. ii. 19. Intreaties will not prevail with the ſoul here; it ſaith to the firſt huſband, as Ruth to Naomi, *The Lord do ſo to me, and more alſo, if ought but death part thee and me.* And here ſinners are true to their word; they die to the law, ere they be married to Chriſt. Death is hard to every body: but what difficulty, do ye imagine, muſt a loving wife, on her death-bed, find in parting with her huſband, the huſband of her youth, and with the dear children ſhe has brought forth to him? The law is that huſband; all the duties performed by the natural man are theſe children. What a ſtruggle, as for life, will be in the heart, ere they be got parted? I may have occaſion to touch upon this afterwards: in the mean time, take the apoſtle's ſhort, but pithy deſcription of it, Rom. x. 3. *For they being ignorant of God's righteouſneſs, and going about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, have not ſubmitted themſelves to the righteouſneſs of God.* They go about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, like an eager diſputant in ſchools, ſeeking to eſtabliſh the point in queſtion; or, like a tormentor, extorting a confeſſion from one upon the rack. They go about to eſtabliſh it, to make it ſtand: their righteouſneſs is like a houſe built upon the ſand; it cannot ſtand, but they will have it to ſtand: it falls, they ſet it up again; but ſtill it tumbles down on them; yet they ceaſe not to go about to make it ſtand. But wherefore all this pains about a tottering righteouſneſs? Becauſe, ſuch as it is, it is their own. What ails them at Chriſt's righteouſneſs? Why, that would make them free grace's debtors for all; and that is what the proud heart by no means can ſubmit to. Here lies the ſtreſs of the matter, Pſal. x. 4. *The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not ſeek*, (to read it without the ſupplement); that is, in other terms, *He cannot dig, and to beg he is aſhamed.* Such is the ſtruggle ere the ſoul die to the law. But what ſpeaks yet more of this woful diſpoſition of the heart, nature oft-times gets the maſtery of the diſeaſe; inſomuch that the ſoul, which was like to have *died to the law*, while convictions were ſharp and piercing, fatally recovers of the happy and promiſing ſickneſs; and (what is very natural), cleaves more cloſely than ever to the law, even as a wife brought back from the gates of death, would cleave to her huſband. This is the iſſue of the exerciſes of many about their ſouls caſe: they are indeed brought to follow duties more cloſely; but they are as far from Chriſt as ever, if not farther.

(2.) It is a *violent death*, Rom vii. 4. *Ye are become dead to the law*, being killed, ſlain, or put to death, as the word bears. The law itſelf has a great hand in this; the huſband gives the wound, Gal. ii. 19. *I through the law am dead to the law.* The ſoul that dies this death, is like a loving wife matched with a rigorous huſband: ſhe does what ſhe can to pleaſe him, yet he is never pleaſed; but toſſeth, haraſſeth, and beats her, till ſhe breaks her heart, and death ſets her free: as will afterwards more fully appear. Thus it is made evident, that mens hearts are naturally bent to the way of the law, and ly croſs to the goſpel-contrivance: and the ſecond article of the charge, againſt you that are unregenerate, is verified, namely, that ye are *enemies to the Son of God.*

(3.) Ye are enemies to the Spirit of God. He is the Spirit of holineſs: the natural man is unholy, and loves to be ſo, and therefore *reſiſts the Holy Ghoſt*, Acts vii. 51. The work of the Spirit is to *convince the world of ſin, righteouſneſs, and judgment*, John xvii. 8. But O, how do men ſtrive to ward off theſe convictions, as ever they would ward off a blow, threatening the loſs of a right eye, or a right hand! If the Spirit of the Lord dart them in, ſo as they cannot evite them; the heart ſays, in effect, as Ahab to Elijah, whom he both hated and feared, *Haſt thou found me, O mine enemy!* And indeed they treat him as an enemy, doing their utmoſt to ſtifle convictions, and to murder theſe harbingers that come to prepare the Lord's way into the ſoul. Some fill their hands with buſineſs, to put their convictions out of their heads, as Cain, who fell a building of a city: Some put them off with delays and fair promiſes, as Felix did: ſome will ſport them away in company, and ſome ſleep them away. The holy Spirit is the Spirit of ſanctification; whoſe work it is to ſubdue luſts, and burn up corruption: how then can the natural man, whoſe luſts are to him as his limbs, yea, as his life, fail of being an enemy to him?

Laſtly, Ye are enemies to the law of God. Though the natural man *deſires to be under the law*, as a covenant of works, chuſing that way of ſalvation, in oppoſition to the *myſtery of Chriſt*; yet as it is a rule of life, requiring univerſal holineſs, and diſcharging all manner of impurity, he is an enemy to it; *is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*, Rom. viii. 7. (1.) There is no unrenewed man, who is not wedded to ſome one luſt or other, which his heart can by no means part with. Now that he cannot bring up his inclinations to the holy law, he would fain have the law brought down to his inclinations: a plain evidence of the enmity of the heart againſt it. And therefore, *to delight in the law of God after the inward man*, is propoſed in the word as a mark of a gracious ſoul, Rom. vii. 22. Pſal. i. 2. It is from this natural enmity of the heart againſt the law, that all the Phariſaical gloſſes upon it have ariſen; whereby the commandment, which is in itſelf exceeding broad, has been made very narrow, to the intent it might be the more agreeable to the natural diſpoſition of the heart.

(2.) The law laid home to the natural conſcience, in its ſpirituality, irritates corruption. The nearer it comes, nature riſeth the more againſt it. In that caſe it is as oil to the fire, which, inſtead of quenching it, makes it flame the more: *When the commandment came, ſin revived*, ſays the apoſtle, Rom. vii. 9. What reaſon can be aſſigned for this, but the natural enmity of the heart againſt the holy law? Unmortified corruption, the more it is oppoſed, the more it rageth. Let us conclude then that the unregenerate are heart-enemies to God, his Son, his Spirit, and his law; that there is a natural contrariety, oppoſition, and enmity in the will of man to God himſelf and his holy will.

Fifthly, There is in the will of man contumacy againſt the Lord. Man's will is naturally wilful in an evil courſe; he will have his will, though it ſhould ruin him: it is with him, as with the leviathan, (Job xli. 29) *Darts are counted as ſtubble: he laugheth at the ſhaking of a ſpear*. The Lord calls to him by his word, ſays to him, (as Paul to the jailor, when he was about to kill himſelf), *Do thyſelf no harm*: ſinners, *why will ye die?* Ezek. xviii. 31. But they will not hearken, *Every one turneth to his courſe, as the horſe ruſheth into the battle*, Jer. viii. 6. We have a promiſe of life, in form of a command, Prov. iv. 4. *Keep my commandments and live*, it ſpeaks impenitent ſinners to be ſelf-deſtroyers, wilful ſelf-murderers. They tranſgreſs the command of living; as if one's ſervant ſhould wilfully ſtarve himſelf to death, or greedily drink a cup of poiſon, which his maſter commands him to forbear: even ſo do they; they will not live, they will die, Prov. viii. 36. *All they that hate me, love death*. O what a heart is this! It is *a ſtony heart*, (Ezek. xxxvi. 26.) hard and inflexible, as a ſtone: mercies melt it not, judgments break it not; yet it will break ere it bow. It is an inſenſible heart: though there be upon the ſinner a weight of ſin, which makes the earth to ſtagger; although there is a weight of wrath on him, which makes the devils to tremble; yet he goes lightly under the burden; he feels not the weight more than a ſtone, till the Spirit of the Lord quicken him ſo far as to feel it.

Laſtly, The unrenewed will is wholly perverſe, in reference to man's chief and higheſt end. The natural man's chief end is not his God, but his ſelf. Man is a mere relative, dependent, borrowed being: he has no being nor goodneſs originally from himſelf; but all he hath is from God, as the firſt cauſe and ſpring of all perfection, natural or moral: dependence is woven into his very nature; ſo that if God ſhould totally withdraw from him, he would dwindle into a mere nothing. Seeing then whatever man is, he is of him; ſurely in whatever he is, he ſhould be to him; as the waters which came from the ſea, do of courſe return thither again. And thus man was created, directly looking to God, as his chief end: but falling into ſin, he fell off from God, and turned into himſelf; and, like a traitor uſurping the throne, he gathers in the rents of the crown to himſelf. Now, this infers a total apoſtaſy, and univerſal corruption in man; for where the chief and laſt end is changed, there can be no goodneſs there. This is the caſe of all men in their natural ſtate, Pſal. xiv. 2. 3. *The Lord looked down----to ſee if there were any that did ſeek God. They are all gone aſide*, to wit, from God; they ſeek not God but themſelves. And though many fair ſhreds of morality are to be found amongſt them, yet *there is none that doth good, no not one*; for though ſome of them run well, they are ſtill off the way; they never aim at the right mark. They are *lovers of their own ſelves*, (2 Tim. iii. 2.) *more than God*, verſ. 4. Wherefore Jeſus Chriſt, having come into the world to bring men back to God again, came to bring them out of themſelves, in the firſt place, Matth. xvi. 24. The godly groan under the remains of this woful diſpoſition of the heart; they acknowledge it, and ſet themſelves againſt it, in its ſubtile and dangerous inſinuations. The unregenerate, though moſt inſenſible of it, are under the power thereof; and whitherſoever they turn themſelves, they cannot move without the circle of ſelf: they ſeek themſelves, they act for themſelves: their natural, civil, and religious actions, from whatever ſprings they come, do all run into, and meet in the dead ſea of ſelf.

Moſt men are ſo far from making God their chief end, in their natural and civil actions; that in theſe matters, God is not in all their thoughts. Their eating and drinking, and ſuch like natural actions, are for themſelves; their own pleaſure or neceſſity, without any higher end, Zech. vii. 6. *Did ye not eat for yourſelves?* They have no eye to the glory of God in theſe things, as they ought to have, 1 Cor. x. 31. They do not eat and drink to keep up their bodies for the Lord's ſervice; they do them not, becauſe God has ſaid, *Thou ſhalt not kill*; neither do theſe drops of ſweetneſs God has put into the creature, raiſe up their ſouls towards that ocean of delights that is in the Creator; though they are indeed a ſign hung out at heaven's door, to tell men of the fulneſs of goodneſs that is in God himſelf, Acts xiv. 17. But it is ſelf, and not God, that is ſought in them, by natural men. And what are the unrenewed man's civil actions, ſuch as buying, ſelling, working, *&c.* but fruit to himſelf? Hoſ. x. 1. So *marrying, and giving in marriage*, are reckoned amongſt the ſins of the old world, (Matth. xxiv. 38.): for they had no eye to God therein, to pleaſe him; but all they had in view, was to pleaſe themſelves, Gen. vi. 3. Finally, ſelf is natural mens higheſt end, in their religious actions. They perform duties for a name, (Matth. vi. 1. 2.), or ſome other worldly intereſt, John vi. 26. Or if they be more refined, it is their peace, and at moſt their ſalvation from hell and wrath, or their own eternal happineſs, that is their chief and higheſt end, Matth. xix. 16.---22. Their eyes are held, that they ſee not the glory of God. They ſeek God indeed, but not for himſelf, but for themſelves. They ſeek him not at all, but for their own welfare: ſo their whole life is woven into one web of practical blaſphemy; making God the means, and ſelf their end, yea, their chief end.

And thus have I given you ſome rude draughts of man's will, in his natural ſtate, drawn by ſcripture and mens own experience. Call it no more *Naomi*, but *Marah*; for bitter it is, and a root of bitterneſs. Call it no more free-will, but ſlaviſh luſt; free to evil, but free from good, till regenerating grace looſe the bands of wickedneſs. Now ſince all muſt be wrong, and nothing can be right, where the underſtanding and will are ſo corrupt; I ſhall briefly diſpatch what remains, as following of courſe, on the corruption of theſe prime faculties of the ſoul.

The corruption of the affections, the conſcience, and the memory. The body partaker of this corruption.

III. The *affections* are corrupted. The unrenewed man's affections are wholly diſordered and diſtempered: they are as the unruly horſe, that either will not receive, or violently runs away with the rider. So man's heart naturally is a mother of abominations, Mark. vii. 21.

22. *For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetouſneſs, &c.* The natural man's affections are wretchedly miſplaced; he is a ſpiritual monſter. His heart is there, where his feet ſhould be, fixed on the earth; his heels are lifted up againſt heaven, which his heart ſhould be ſet on, Acts ix. 5. His face is towards hell, his back towards heaven; and therefore God calls him to turn. He loves what he ſhould hate, and hates what he ſhould love; joys in what he ought to mourn for, and mourns for what he ſhould rejoice in; glorieth in his ſhame, and is aſhamed of his glory; abhors what he ſhould deſire, and deſires what he ſhould abhor, Prov. ii. 13, 14, 15. They hit the point indeed, (as Caiaphas did in another caſe,) who cried out on the apoſtles, as men that *turned the world upſide down*, Acts xvii. 6.; for that is the work the goſpel has to do in the world, where ſin has put all things ſo out of order, that heaven lies under, and earth a-top. If the unrenewed man's affections be ſet on lawful objects, then they are either exceſſive or defective. Lawful enjoyments of the world have ſometimes too little, but moſtly too much of them; either they get not their due; or, if they do, it is meaſure preſſed down, and running over. Spiritual things have always too little of them. In a word, they are always in, or over; never right, *only evil.*

Now here is a threefold cord againſt heaven and holineſs, not eaſily broken; a blind *mind*, a perverſe *will*, and diſorderly, diſtempered *affections*. The mind, ſwelled with ſelf-conceit, ſays, The man ſhould not ſtoop, the will, oppoſite to the will of God, ſays, He will not; and the corrupt affections, riſing againſt the Lord, in defence of the corrupt will, ſay, He ſhall not. Thus the poor creature ſtands out againſt God and goodneſs; till a day of power come, in which he is made a new creature.

IV. *The conſcience* is corrupted and defiled, Tit. i. 15. It is an *evil eye*, that fills one's converſation with much darkneſs and confuſion, being naturally unable to do its office: till the Lord, by letting in a new light to the ſoul, awaken the conſcience, it remains ſleepy and unactive. Conſcience can never do its work, but according to the light it hath to work by. Wherefore, ſeeing the natural man cannot *ſpiritually diſcern* ſpiritual things, (1 Cor. ii. 14.) the conſcience naturally is quite uſeleſs in that point; being caſt in ſuch a deep ſleep, that nothing but a ſaving illumination from the Lord can ſet it on work in that matter. The light of the natural conſcience in good and evil, ſin and duty, is very defective: therefore, though it may check for groſſer ſins, yet as to the more ſubtile workings of ſin, it cannot check for them, becauſe it diſcerns them not. Thus conſcience will fly in the face of many, if at any time they be drunk, ſwear, neglect prayer, or be guilty of any groſs ſin; who otherwiſe have a profound peace, though they live in the ſin of unbelief, are ſtrangers to ſpiritual worſhip, and the life of faith. And natural light being but faint and languiſhing in many things which it doth reach, conſcience in that caſe ſhoots like a ſtitch in one's ſide, which quickly goes off: its incitements to duty, and checks for and ſtruggles againſt ſin, are very remiſs, which the natural man eaſily gets over. But becauſe there is a falſe light in the dark mind, the natural conſcience following the ſame, will call *evil good, and good evil*, Iſ. v. 20. And ſo it is often found like a blind and furious horſe, which doth violently run down himſelf, his rider, and all that doth come in his way, John xvi. 2. *Whoſoever killeth you, will think that he doth God ſervice.* When the natural conſcience is awakened by the Spirit of conviction, it will indeed rage and roar, and put the whole man in a dreadful conſternation; awfully ſummon all the powers of the ſoul to help in a ſtrait; make the ſtiff heart to tremble, and the knees to bow; ſet the eyes a-weeping, the tongue a-confeſſing; and oblige the man to caſt out the goods into the ſea, which it apprehends are like to ſink the ſhip of the ſoul, though the heart ſtill goes after them. But yet it is an evil conſcience, which natively leads to deſpair, and will do it effectually, as in Judas's caſe; unleſs either luſts prevail over it, to lull it aſleep, as in the caſe of Felix, Acts xxiv. 25. or the blood of Chriſt prevail over it, ſprinkling and purging it from dead works, as in the caſe of all true converts, Heb. ix. 14. and x. 22.

Laſtly, Even the *memory* bears evident marks of this corruption. What is good and worthy to be minded, as it makes but ſlender impreſſion, ſo that impreſſion eaſily wears off; the memory, as a leaking veſſel, lets it ſlip, Heb. ii. 1. As a ſieve that is full, when in the water, lets all go when it is taken out; ſo is the memory, with reſpect to ſpiritual things. But how does it retain what ought to be forgotten? naughty things ſo bear in themſelves upon it, that though men would fain have them out of mind, yet they ſtick there like glue. However forgetful men be in other things, it is hard to forget an injury. So the memory often furniſhes new fuel to old luſts; makes men in old age react the ſins of their youth, while it preſents them again to the mind with delight, which thereupon licks up the former vomit. And thus it is like the riddle, that lets through the pure grain, and keeps the refuſe. Thus far of the *corruption of the ſoul.*

The *body* itſelf alſo is partaker of this corruption and defilement, ſo far as it is capable thereof. Wherefore the ſcripture calls it *ſinful fleſh*, Rom. viii. 3. We may take this up in two things. (1.) The natural temper, or rather diſtemper of the bodies of Adam's children, as it is an effect of original ſin, leads the ſoul into ſnares, yea, is itſelf a ſnare to the ſoul. The body is a furious beaſt, of ſuch metal, that if it be not beat down, *kept under, and brought into ſubjection*, it will caſt the ſoul into much ſin and miſery, 1 Cor. ix. 27. There is a vileneſs in the body, (Philip. iii. 21.), which, as to the ſaints, will never be removed, until it be melted down in a grave, and caſt into a new mold, at the reſurrection, to come forth a ſpiritual body; and will never be carried off from the bodies of thoſe who are not partakers of the reſurrection to life. (2.) It ſerves the ſoul in many ſins. Its members are *inſtruments* or weapons *of unrighteouſneſs*, whereby men fight againſt God, Rom. vi. 13. The eyes and ears are open doors, by which impure motions and ſinful deſires enter the ſoul: the tongue is *a world of iniquity*, James iii. 6. *an unruly evil, full of deadly poiſon*, ver. 1. by it the impure heart vents a great deal of its filthineſs. *The throat is an open ſepulchre*, Rom. iii. 13. The feet run the devil's errands, ver. 15. The belly is made a god, Phil. iii. 19. not only by drunkards and riotous livers, but by every natural man, Zech. vii. 6. So the body naturally is an agent for the devil, and a magazine of armour againſt the Lord.

To conclude, man by nature is wholly corrupted: *From the ſole of the foot even unto the head, there is no ſoundneſs in him.* And, as in a dunghill, every part contributes to the corruption of the whole; ſo the natural man, while in that ſtate, grows ſtill worſe and worſe: the ſoul is made worſe by the body, and the body by the ſoul; and every faculty of the ſoul ſerves to corrupt another more and more. Thus much for the ſecond general head.

How man's nature was corrupted.

THIRDLY, I ſhall ſhew *how* man's nature comes to be thus corrupted. The Heathens perceived that man's nature was corrupted; but *how* ſin had entered, they could not tell. But the ſcripture is very plain in that point, Rom. v. 12. *By one man ſin entered into the world*, ver. 19. *By one man's diſobedience, many were made ſinners.* Adam's ſin corrupted man's nature, and leavened the whole lump of mankind. We putrified in Adam, as our root. The root was poiſoned, and ſo the branches were envenomed: the vine turned the vine of

Sodom, and ſo the grapes became grapes of gall. Adam, by his ſin, became not only guilty, but corrupt; and ſo tranſmits guilt and corruption to his poſterity, Gen. v. 3. Job. xiv. 4. By his ſin he ſtript himſelf of his original righteouſneſs, and corrupted himſelf. We were in him repreſentatively, being repreſented by him as our moral head, in the covenant of works: we were in him ſeminally, as our natural head; hence we fell in him, and by his *diſobedience were made ſinners*; as *Levi, in the loins of Abraham, paid tithes*, Heb. vii. 9 10. His firſt ſin is imputed to us; therefore juſtly are we left under the want of his original righteouſneſs, which being given to him as a common perſon, he caſt off by his ſin: and this is neceſſarily followed, in him and us, by the corruption of the whole nature; righteouſneſs and corruption being two contraries, one of which muſt needs always be in man, as a ſubject capable thereof. And Adam our common father being corrupt, we are ſo too; for *who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?*

Although it is ſufficient to evince the righteouſneſs of this diſpenſation, that it was from the Lord, who doth all things well; yet, to ſilence the murmurings of proud nature, let theſe few things farther be conſidered. (1.) In the covenant wherein Adam repreſented us, eternal happineſs was promiſed to him and his poſterity, upon condition of his, that is, Adam's perfect obedience, as the repreſentative for all mankind: whereas, if there had been no covenant, they could not have pleaded eternal life upon their moſt perfect obedience, but might have been, after all, reduced to nothing; notwithſtanding, by natural juſtice, they would have been liable to God's eternal wrath, in caſe of ſin. Who in that caſe would not have conſented to that repreſentation? (2.) Adam had a power to ſtand given him, being made upright. He was as capable to ſtand for himſelf, and all his poſterity, as any after him could be for themſelves. This trial of mankind in their head, would ſoon have been over, and the crown won to them all, had he ſtood: whereas, had his poſterity been independent on him, and every one left to act for himſelf, the trial would have been continually a-carrying on, as men came into the world. (3.) He *had natural affection* the ſtrongeſt to engage him, being our common father. (4.) His own ſtock was in the ſhip, his all lay at ſtake, as well as ours. He had no ſeparate intereſt from ours; but if he forgot ours, he behoved to have forgot his own. (5.) If he had ſtood, we ſhould have had the light of his mind, the righteouſneſs of his will, and holineſs of his affections, with entire purity tranſmitted unto us; we could not have fallen; the crown of glory, by his obedience, would have been for ever ſecured to him and his. This is evident from the nature of a federal repreſentation: and no reaſon can be given why, ſeeing we are loſt by Adam's ſin, we ſhould not have been ſaved by his obedience. On the other hand, it is reaſonable, that he falling, we ſhould with him bear the loſs. Laſtly, Such as quarrel this diſpenſation, muſt renounce their part in Chriſt; for we are no otherwiſe made ſinners by Adam, than we are made righteous by Chriſt, from whom we have both imputed and inherent righteouſneſs. We no more made choice of the ſecond Adam for our head and repreſentative in the ſecond covenant, than we did of the firſt Adam in the firſt covenant.

Let none wonder that ſuch an horrible change could be brought on, by one ſin of our firſt parents; for thereby they turned away from God, as their chief end, which neceſſarily infers an univerſal depravation. Their ſin was a complication of evils, a total apoſtaſy from God, a violation of the whole law: by it they broke all the ten commands at once. (1.) They choſe *new gods*. They made their belly their god, by their ſenſuality; ſelf their god, by their ambition; yea, and the devil their god, by believing him, and diſbelieving their Maker. (2.) Though they received, yet they *obſerved* not that *ordinance* of God, about the forbidden fruit. They contemned that ordinance ſo plainly enjoined them, and would needs carve out to themſelves, *how* to ſerve the Lord. (3.) They *took the name of the Lord their God in vain*; deſpiſing his attributes, his juſtice, truth, power, *&c.* They groſsly profaned that ſacramental tree; abuſed his word, by not giving credit to it; abuſed that creature of his, which they ſhould not have touched; and violently miſconſtrued his providence, as if God, by forbidding them that tree, had been ſtanding in the way of their happineſs; and therefore he ſuffered them not to eſcape his righteous judgment. (4.) They *remembered* not *the Sabbath to keep it holy*, but put themſelves out of a condition to ſerve God aright on his own day: neither kept they that ſtate of holy reſt wherein God had put them. (5.) They caſt off their *relative* duties: Eve forgets herſelf, and acts without advice of her *huſband*, to the ruin of both; Adam, inſtead of admoniſhing her to repent, yields to the temptation, and confirms her in her wickedneſs. They forgot all duty to their poſterity. They honoured not their Father in heaven; and therefore their days were not long in the land which the Lord their God gave them. (6.) They *ruined* themſelves, and all their poſterity. (7.) Gave up themſelves to *luxury* and *ſenſuality*. (8.) *Took away* what was not their own, againſt the expreſs will of the great Owner. (9.) They bore *falſe witneſs*, and lied againſt the Lord, before angels, devils, and one another; in effect giving out, that they were hardly dealt by, and that Heaven grudged their happineſs. (10.) They were *diſcontent* with their lot, and coveted an evil covetouſneſs to their houſe; which ruined both them and theirs. Thus was the image of God on man defaced all at once.

The doctrine of the corruption of nature applied.

USE I. For *information*. Is man's nature wholly corrupted? Then,

1. No wonder the grave open its devouring mouth for us, as ſoon as the womb hath caſt us forth; and that the cradle be turned into a coffin, to receive the corrupt lump: for we are all, in a ſpiritual ſenſe, dead-born; yea, and *filthy*, (Pſal. xiv. 3.) noiſome, rank, and ſtinking as a corrupt thing, as the word imports. Let us not complain of the miſeries we are expoſed to at our entrance, nor of the continuance of them while we are in the world. Here is the venom that has poiſoned all the ſprings of earthly enjoyments we have to drink of. It is the corruption of man's nature, that brings forth all the miſeries of human life in churches, ſtates, families, in mens ſouls and bodies.

2. Behold here, as in a glaſs, the ſpring of all the wickedneſs, profanity, and formality in the world; the ſource of all the diſorders in thy own heart and life. Every thing acts like itſelf, agreeable to its own nature; and ſo corrupt man acts corruptly. You need not wonder at the ſinfulneſs of your own heart and life, nor at the ſinfulneſs and perverſeneſs of others; if a man be crooked, he cannot but halt; and if the clock be ſet wrong, how can it point the hour right?

3. See here, why ſin is ſo pleaſant, and religion ſuch a burden to carnal ſpirits: ſin is natural, holineſs not ſo. Oxen cannot feed in the ſea, nor fiſhes in the fruitful fields. A ſwine brought into a palace would get away again, to wallow in the mire; and corrupt nature tends ever to impurity.

4. Learn from this the nature and neceſſity of regeneration. Firſt, This diſcovers the nature of regeneration, in theſe two things: (1.) It is not a partial, but a total change, though imperfect in this life. Thy whole nature is corrupted, and therefore the cure muſt go through every part. Regeneration makes not only a new head for knowledge, but a new heart, and new affections for holineſs. *All things become new*, 2 Cor. v. 17. If one having received many wounds, ſhould be cured of them all, ſave one only; he might bleed to death, by that one,

as well as a thouſand: ſo if the change go not through the whole man, it is naught. (2.) It is not a change made by human induſtry, but by the mighty power of the Spirit of God. A man muſt be *born of the Spirit*, John iii. 5. Accidental diſeaſes may be cured by men: but theſe which are natural, not without a miracle, John ix. 32. The change brought upon men by good education, or forced upon them by a natural conſcience, though it may paſs among men for a ſaving change, it is not ſo; for our nature is corrupt, and none but the God of nature can change it. Though a gardener, ingrafting a pear-branch into an apple-tree, may make the apple-tree bear pears; yet the art of man cannot change the nature of the apple-tree: ſo one may pin a new life to his old heart; but he can never change the heart. Secondly, This alſo ſhews the neceſſity of regeneration. It is abſolutely neceſſary in order to ſalvation, John iii. 3. *Except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God.* No unclean thing can enter the new Jeruſalem: but thou art wholly unclean, while in thy natural ſtate. If every member of thy body were disjointed, each joint behoved to be looſed, ere the members could be ſet right again. This is the caſe of thy ſoul, as thou haſt heard: and therefore thou muſt be *born again*; elſe thou ſhalt never ſee heaven, unleſs it be *afar off*, as the rich man in hell did. Deceive not thyſelf: no mercy of God, no blood Chriſt will bring thee to heaven in thy unregenerate ſtate: for God will never open a fountain of mercy to waſh away his own holineſs and truth; nor did Chriſt ſhed his precious blood, to blot out the truths of God, or to overturn God's meaſures about the ſalvation of ſinners. Heaven! what would ye do there, that are not *born again?* ye that are no ways fitted for Chriſt the head? That would be a ſtrange ſight! a holy head, and members *wholly corrupt!* a head full of treaſures of grace, members wherein nothing but treaſures of wickedneſs! a head obedient to the death, and heels kicking againſt heaven! Ye are no ways adapted to the ſociety above, more than beaſts for converſe with men. Thou art a hater of true holineſs; and at the firſt ſight of a ſaint there, wouldſt cry out, *Haſt thou found me, O mine enemy!* Nay, the unrenewed man, if it were poſſible he could go to heaven in that ſtate, he would no otherwiſe go to it, than now he comes to the duties of holineſs, that is, leaving his heart behind him.

USE II. For *lamentation.* Well may we lament thy caſe, O natural man, for it is the ſaddeſt caſe one can be in out of hell. It is time to lament for thee; for thou art dead already, dead while thou liveſt; thou carrieſt about with thee a dead ſoul in a living body: and becauſe thou art dead, thou canſt not lament thy own caſe. Thou art lothſome in the ſight of God; for thou art altogether corrupt: thou haſt no good in thee. Thy ſoul is a maſs of darkneſs, rebellion, and vileneſs, before the Lord. Thou thinkeſt perhaps, that thou haſt a good heart to God, good inclinations, and good deſires: but God knows there is nothing good in thee, but *every imagination of thine heart is only evil.* Thou canſt do no good; thou canſt do nothing but ſin. For,

Firſt, Thou art *the ſervant of ſin*, Rom. vi. 17. and therefore *free from righteouſneſs*, ver. 20. Whatever righteouſneſs be, (poor ſoul!), thou art free of it; thou doſt not, thou canſt not meddle with it. Thou art under the dominion of ſin, a dominion where righteouſneſs can have no place. Thou art a child and ſervant of the devil, though thou be neither wizard nor witch; ſeeing thou art yet in the ſtate of nature, John viii. 44. *Ye are of your father the devil.* And, to prevent any miſtake, conſider, that ſin and Satan have two ſorts of ſervants: (1.) There are ſome employed as it were in coarſer work: thoſe bear the devil's mark in their foreheads, having no form of godlineſs; but are profane, groſsly ignorant, mere moraliſts, not ſo much as performing the external duties of religion, but living to the view of the world, as ſons of earth, only *minding earthly things*, Phil. iii. 19. (2.) There are ſome employed in a more refined ſort of ſervice to ſin, who carry the devil's mark in their right hand, which they can and do hide from the view of the world. Theſe are cloſe hypocrites, who ſacrifice as much to the corrupt mind, as the other to the fleſh, Eph. ii. 3. Theſe are ruined by a more undiſcernible trade of ſin: pride, unbelief, ſelf-ſeeking, and the like, ſwarm in, and prey upon their corrupted, wholly corrupted ſouls. Both are ſervants of the ſame houſe; the latter as far as the former from righteouſneſs.

Secondly, How is it poſſible thou ſhouldſt be able to do any good, thou whoſe nature is wholly corrupt? Can fruit grow where there is no root? or can there be an effect without a cauſe? *Can the fig-tree bear olive-berries? either a vine, figs?* If thy nature be wholly corrupt, as indeed it is, all thou doſt is certainly ſo too; for no effect can exceed the virtue of its cauſe. *Can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit?* Matth. vii. 18.

Ah! what a miſerable ſpectacle is he that can do nothing but ſin? Thou art the man, whoſoever thou art, that art yet in thy natural ſtate. Hear, O ſinner, what is thy caſe.

Firſt, Innumerable ſins compaſs thee about: mountains of guilt are lying upon thee; floods of impurities overwhelm thee; living luſts of all ſorts roll up and down in the dead ſea of thy ſoul, where no good can breathe, becauſe of the corruption there. Thy lips are unclean; the opening of thy mouth is as the opening of an unripe grave full of ſtench and rottenneſs, Rom. iii. 13. *Their throat is an open ſepulchre.* Thy natural actions are ſin; for *when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat for yourſelves, and drink for yourſelves?* Zech. vii. 6. Thy civil actions are ſin, Prov. xxi. 4. *The plowing of the wicked is ſin.* Thy religious actions are ſin, Prov. xv. 8. *The ſacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord.* The thoughts and imaginations of thy heart are only evil. A deed may be ſoon done, a word ſoon ſpoken, a thought ſwiftly paſſeth through the heart; but each of theſe is an item in thy accounts. O ſad reckoning! as many thoughts, words, actions, as many ſins. The longer thou liveſt, thy accounts ſwell the more. Should a tear be dropt for every ſin, thine *head* behoved to be *waters*, and thine *eyes a fountain of tears:* for nothing but ſin comes from thee. Thy heart frames nothing but *evil imaginations:* there is nothing in thy life but what is framed by thine heart; and therefore there is nothing in thy heart or life, but evil.

Secondly, All thy religion, if thou haſt any, is loſt labour, as to acceptance with God, or any ſaving effect to thyſelf. Art thou yet in thy natural ſtate? Truly then thy duties are ſins, as was juſt now hinted. Would not the beſt wine be lothſome, in a *veſſel wherein there is no pleaſure?* So is the religion of an unregenerate man. Under the law, the garment which the fleſh of the ſacrifice was carried in, though it touched other things, did not make them holy: but he that was unclean touching any thing, whether common or ſacred, made it unclean. Even ſo thy duties cannot make thy corrupt ſoul holy, though they in themſelves be good; but thy corrupt heart defiles them, and makes them unclean, Hag. ii. 12. 13. 14. Thou was wont to divide thy works into two ſorts; ſome good, ſome evil; but thou muſt count again, and put them all under one head; for God writes on them all, Only evil. This is lamentable: it will be no wonder to ſee thoſe beg in harveſt, who fold their hands, and ſleep in ſeed-time: but to be labouring with others in the ſpring, and yet have nothing to reap when the harveſt comes, is a very ſad caſe; and will be the caſe of all profeſſors living and dying in their natural ſtate.

Laſtly, Thou canſt not help thyſelf. What canſt thou do, to take away thy ſin, who art wholly corrupt? Nothing, truly, but ſin. If a natural man begin to relent, drop a tear for his ſin, and reform, preſently the corrupt heart apprehends, at leaſt, a merit of congruity: he has done much himſelf, (he thinks), and God cannot but do more for him on that account. In the mean time he does nothing but ſin : ſo that the congruous merit is, that the leper be put out of the camp, the dead ſoul buried out of ſight, and the corrupt lump caſt into the pit. How canſt thou think to recover thyſelf by any thing thou canſt do? Will mud and filth waſh out filthineſs ? and wilt thou purge out ſin by ſinning ? Job took a potſherd to ſcrape himſelf, becauſe his hands were as full of boils as his body. This is the caſe of thy corrupt ſoul ; not to be recovered but by Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe *ſtrength was dried up like a potſherd*, Pſal. xxii. 15. Thou art *poor* indeed, extremely *miſerable and poor*, Rev. iii. 17. Thou haſt no ſhelter, but *a refuge of lies* ; no garment for thy ſoul, but *filthy rags* ; nothing to nouriſh it, but *huſks* that cannot ſatisfy. More than that, thou haſt got ſuch a bruiſe in the loins of Adam, which is not as yet cured, that thou art *without ſtrength*, Rom. v. 6. unable to do, or work for thyſelf ; nay, more than all this, thou canſt not ſo much as ſeek aright, but lieſt helpleſs, as an infant expoſed in the open field, Ezek. xvi. 5.

Uſe III. I *exhort* you to believe this ſad truth. Alas! it is evident, it is very little believed in the world. Few are concerned to get their corrupt converſation changed; but fewer, by far, to get their nature changed. Moſt men know not what they are, nor what ſpirits they are of ; they are as the eye, which, ſeeing many things, never ſees itſelf. But until ye know, every one *the plague of his own heart*, there is no hope of your recovery. Why will ye not believe it ? Ye have plain ſcripture teſtimony for it ; but you are loth to entertain ſuch an ill opinion of yourſelves. Alas ! that is the nature of your diſeaſe, Rev. iii. 17. *Thou---knoweſt not that thou art wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked.* Lord, open their eyes to ſee it, before they die of it, and in hell lift up their eyes, and ſee what they will not ſee now.

I ſhall ſhut up this weighty point, of the corruption of man's nature, with a few words to another doctrine from the text.

Doctrine, *God takes ſpecial notice of our natural corruption, or the ſin of our nature.* This he teſtifies two ways : 1. By his *word*, as in the text, *God ſaw---that every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually.* See Pſal. xiv. 2. 3. 2. By his *works* God writes his particular notice of it, and diſpleaſure with it, as in many of his works, ſo eſpecially in theſe two.

(1.) In the death of the infant-children of men. Many miſeries they have been expoſed to ; they were drowned in the deluge, conſumed in Sodom by fire and brimſtone ; they have been ſlain with the ſword, daſhed againſt the ſtones, and are ſtill dying ordinary deaths. What is the true cauſe of this ? on what ground doth a holy God thus purſue them ? Is it the ſin of their parents ? That may be the occaſion of the Lord's raiſing the proceſs againſt them ; but it muſt be their own ſin that is the ground of the ſentence paſſing on them : for *the ſoul that ſinneth, it ſhall die*, ſaith God, Ezek. xviii. 4. Is it their own actual ſin ? They have none. But as men do with toads and ſerpents, which they kill at firſt ſight, before they have done any hurt, becauſe of their venemous nature ; ſo it is in this caſe.

(2.) In the birth of the elect children of God. When the Lord is about to change their nature, he makes the ſin of their nature lie heavy on their ſpirits. When he minds to let out the corruption, the lance gets full depth in their ſouls, reaching to the root of ſin, Rom. vii. 7. 8. 9. *The fleſh*, or corruption of nature, is pierced, being *crucified*, as well as *the affections and luſts*, Gal. v. 24.

Uſe. Let us then have a ſpecial eye upon the corruption and ſin of our nature. God ſees it : O that we ſaw it too and *that ſin were ever before us !* What avails it to notice other ſins, while this mother-ſin is not noticed ? Turn your eyes inward to the ſin of your nature. It is to be feared, many have this work to begin yet ; that they have ſhut the door, while the grand thief is yet in the houſe undiſcovered. This is a weighty point ; and in handling of it,

I. I ſhall, for conviction, point at ſome evidences of mens overlooking the ſin of their nature, which yet the Lord takes particular notice of. (1.) Mens looking on themſelves with ſuch confidence, as if they were in no hazard of groſs ſins. Many would take it very ill to get ſuch a caution, as Chriſt gave his apoſtles, Luke xxi. 34. *Take heed of ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs.* If any ſhould ſuppoſe them to break out in groſs abominations, they would be ready to ſay, *Am I a dog ?* It would raiſe the pride of their hearts, but not their fear and trembling, becauſe they know not the corruption of their nature. (2) Untenderneſs towards thoſe that fall. Many, in that caſe, caſt off all bowels of Chriſtian compaſſion ; for they do not *conſider themſelves, leſt they alſo be tempted*, Gal. vi. 1. Mens paſſions are often higheſt againſt the faults of others, when ſin ſleeps ſoundly in their own breaſts. Even good David, when he was at his worſt, was moſt violent againſt the faults of others. While his conſcience was aſleep under his guilt, in the matter of Uriah ; the Spirit of the Lord takes notice, that his *anger was greatly kindled againſt the man*, in the parable, 2 Sam. xii. 5. And, on good grounds, it is thought, it was at the ſame time that he treated the Ammonites ſo cruelly, as is related, verſ. 31. *Putting them under ſaws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and making them paſs through the brick-kiln.* Grace makes men zealous againſt ſin in others, as well as in themſelves : but eyes turned inward to the corruption of nature, clothe them with pity and compaſſion ; and fill them with thankfulneſs to the Lord, that they themſelves were not the perſons left to be ſuch ſpectacles of human frailty. (3.) There are not a few, who, if they be kept from afflictions in worldly things, and from groſs outbreakings in their converſation, know not what it is to have a ſad heart. If they meet with a croſs, which their proud hearts cannot ſtoop to bear, they will be ready to ſay, O to be gone ! but the corruption of their nature never makes them long for heaven. Luſts, ſcandalouſly breaking out at a time, will mar their peace : but the ſin of their nature never makes them a heavy heart. (4.) Delaying of repentance, in hopes to ſet about it afterwards. Many have their own appointed time for repentance and reformation : as if they were ſuch complete maſters over their luſts, that they can allow them to gather more ſtrength, and yet overcome them. They take up reſolutions to amend, without an eye to Jeſus Chriſt, union with him, and ſtrength from him ; a plain evidence they are ſtrangers to themſelves : and ſo they are left to themſelves, and their flouriſhing reſolutions wither ; for as they ſee not the neceſſity, ſo they get not the benefit, of the dew from heaven, to water them. (5.) Mens venturing frankly on temptations, and promiſing liberally on their own heads. They caſt themſelves fearleſsly into temptations, in confidence of their coming off fairly : but, were they ſenſible of the corruption of their nature, they would beware of entering on the devil's ground : as one girt about with bags of gun-powder, would be loath to walk where ſparks of fire are flying, leſt he ſhould be blown up. Self-jealouſing well becomes Chriſtians. *Lord, is it I ?* They that know the deceit of their bow, will not be very confident that they ſhall hit the mark. (6.) Unacquaintedneſs with heart-plagues. The knowledge of the plagues of the heart is a rare qualification. There are indeed ſome of them written in ſuch great characters, that he who runs may read them : but there are others more ſubtile, which few do diſcern. How few are there, to whom the bias of the heart to unbelief is a burden ? Nay, they perceive it not. Many have had ſharp convictions of other ſins, that were never to this day convinced of their unbelief ; though that is the ſin ſpecially aimed at in a thorough conviction, John xvi. 8. 9.--- *He will reprove the world* *of ſin,------becauſe they believe not on me.* A diſpoſition to eſtabliſh our own righteouſneſs, is a weed that naturally grows in every man's heart; but few ſweat at the plucking of it up: it lurks undiſcovered. The bias of the heart, to the way of the covenant of works, is a hidden plague of the heart to many. All the difficulty they find is, in getting up their hearts to duties: they find no difficulty in getting their hearts off them, and over them to Jeſus Chriſt. How hard is it to ſtave men off from their own righteouſneſs? Yet it is very hard to convince them of their leaning to it at all. Laſtly, Pride and ſelf-conceit. A view of the corruption of nature would be very humbling, and oblige him that has it to reckon himſelf *the chief of ſinners.* Under greateſt attainments and enlargements, it would be ballaſt to his heart, and *hide pride from his eyes.* The want of thorough humiliation, piercing to the ſin of one's nature, is the ruin of many profeſſors: for *digging deep* makes great difference betwixt *wiſe* and *fooliſh builders*, Luke vi. 48. 49.

II. I will lay before you a few things, in which ye would have a ſpecial eye to the ſin of your nature. (1.) Have a ſpecial eye to it in your *application to Jeſus Chriſt.* Do you find any need of Chriſt, which ſends you to him as the Phyſician of ſouls? O forget not this diſeaſe, when ye are with the Phyſician. They never yet knew well their errand to Chriſt, that went not to him for the ſin of their nature; for his blood to take away the guilt of it, and his Spirit to break the power of it. Though in the bitterneſs of your ſouls, ye ſhould lay before him a catalogue of your ſins of omiſſion and commiſſion, which might reach from earth to heaven; yet if the ſin of your nature were wanting in it, aſſure yourſelves you have forgot the beſt part of the errand a poor ſinner has to the Phyſician of ſouls. What would it have availed the people of Jericho, to have ſet before Eliſha all the veſſels in their city, full of *the water that was naught*, if they had not led him forth to the ſpring, to caſt in the ſalt there? 2 Kings ii. 19. 20. 21. The application is eaſy. (2.) Have a ſpecial eye to it in your *repentance*, whether *initial* or *progreſſive*; in your firſt repentance, and in the renewing of your repentance afterwards. Though a man be ſick, there is no fear of death, if the ſickneſs ſtrike not to his heart: and there is as little fear of the death of ſin, as long as the ſin of our nature is not touched. But if ye would repent indeed, let the ſtreams lead you up to the fountain; and mourn over your corrupt nature, as the cauſe of all ſin, in heart, lip, and life, Pſal. li. 4. 5. *Againſt thee, thee only have I ſinned, and done this evil in thy ſight.---Behold I was ſhapen in iniquity, and in ſin did my mother conceive me.* (3.) Have a ſpecial eye upon it in your *mortification*, Gal. v. 24. *And they that are Chriſt's have crucified the fleſh.* It is the root of bitterneſs that muſt be ſtruck at; which the ax of mortification muſt be laid to, elſe we labour in vain. In vain do men go about to purge the ſtreams, while they are at no pains about the muddy fountain: it is vain religion to attempt to make the life truly good, while the corruption of nature retains its ancient vigour and the power of it is not broken. Laſtly, Ye are to eye it in your *daily walk.* He that would walk aright, muſt have one eye upward to Jeſus Chriſt; and another inward to the corruption of his own nature. It is not enough that we look about us, we muſt alſo look within us. There the wall is weakeſt; there our greateſt enemy lies; and there are grounds for daily watching and mourning.

III. I ſhall offer ſome reaſons, why we ſhould eſpecially notice the ſin of our nature.

1. Becauſe of all ſins, it is the moſt extenſive and diffuſive. It goes through the whole man, and ſpoils all. Other ſins mar particular parts of the image of God; but this doth at once deface the whole. A diſeaſe, affecting any particular member of the body, is ill: but that which affects the whole is worſe. The corruption of nature is the poiſon of the old ſerpent, caſt into the fountain of action: and ſo infects every action, every breathing of the ſoul.

2. It is the cauſe of all particular luſts, and actual ſins, in our hearts and lives. It is the ſpawn which the great leviathan has left in the ſouls of men; from whence comes all the fry of actual ſins and abominations, Mark vii. 21. *Out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, &c.* It is the bitter fountain: particular luſts are but rivulets running from it, which bring forth into the life a part only, and not the whole of what is within. Now the fountain is ſtill above the ſtreams: ſo where the water is good, it is beſt in the fountain; where it is ill, it is worſt there. The corruption of nature being that which defiles all, itſelf muſt needs be the moſt abominable thing.

3. It is virtually all ſin! for it is the ſeed of all ſins, which want but the occaſion to ſet up their heads; being in the corruption of nature, as the effect in the virtue of its cauſe. Hence it is called *a body of death*, (Rom. vii. 24.) as conſiſting of the ſeveral members belonging to ſuch a body of ſins, (Col. ii. 11.) whoſe life lies in ſpiritual death. It is the curſed ground, fit to bring forth all manner of noxious weeds. As the whole neſt of venomous creatures muſt needs be more dreadful, than any few of them that come creeping forth; ſo the ſin of thy nature, that mother of abominations, muſt be worſe than any particular luſts that appear ſtirring in thy heart and life. Never did every ſin appear in the converſation of the vileſt wretch that ever lived; but look thou into thy corrupt nature, and there thou mayeſt ſee all and every ſin in the ſeed and root thereof. There is a fulneſs of all unrighteouſneſs there, Rom. i. 29. There is Atheiſm, idolatry, blaſphemy, murder, adultery, and whatſoever is vile. Poſſibly none of theſe appear to thee in thy heart: but there is more in that unfathomable depth of wickedneſs, than thou knoweſt. Thy corrupt heart is like an ant's neſt, on which, while the ſtone lieth, none of them appear: but take off the ſtone, and ſtir them up but with the point of a ſtraw, you will ſee what a ſwarm is there, and how lively they be. Juſt ſuch a ſight would thy heart afford thee; did the Lord but withdraw the reſtraint he has upon it, and ſuffer Satan to ſtir it up by temptation.

4. The ſin of our nature is, of all ſins, the moſt fixed and abiding. Sinful actions, though the guilt and ſtain of them may remain, yet, in themſelves, they are paſſing. The drunkard is not always at his cups, nor the unclean perſon always acting lewdneſs. But the corruption of nature is an abiding ſin; it remains with men, in its full power, by night and by day; at all times fixed, as with bands of iron and braſs, till their nature be changed by converting grace: and the remains of it continue with the godly, until the death of the body. Pride, envy, covetouſneſs, and the like, are not always ſtirring in thee. But the proud, envious, carnal nature is ſtill with thee: even as the clock that is wrong, is not always ſtriking wrong; but the wrong ſet continues with it, without intermiſſion.

5. It is the great reigning ſin, Rom. vi. 12. *Let not ſin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye ſhould obey it in the luſts thereof.* There are three things you may obſerve in the corrupt heart. (1.) There is the corrupt nature; the corrupt ſet of the heart, whereby men are unapt for all good, and fitted for all evil. This the apoſtle here calls ſin, which reigns. (2.) There are particular luſts, or diſpoſitions of that corrupt nature, which the apoſtle calls *the luſts thereof*; ſuch as pride, covetouſneſs, &c. (3.) There is one among theſe, which is (like Saul among the people) higher by far than the reſt, namely, *the ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet us*, Heb. xii. 1. This we uſually call the predominant ſin, becauſe it doth as it were, reign over other particular luſts; ſo that other luſts muſt yield to it. Theſe three are like a river, which divides itſelf into many ſtreams, whereof one is greater than the reſt. The corruption of nature is the river head, which has many particular luſts, in which it runs; but it mainly diſburdens itſelf into what is commonly called one's predominant ſin. Now all of theſe being fed by

the ſin of our nature, it is evident, that ſin is the great reigning ſin, which never loſeth its ſuperiority over particular luſts, that live and die with it, and by it. But, as in ſome rivers, the main ſtream runs not always in one and the ſame channel ; ſo particular predominants may be changed, as luſt in youth may be ſucceeded by covetouſneſs in old age. Now what doth it avail to reform in other things, while the great reigning ſin remains in its full power ? What though ſome particular luſt be broken ? If that ſin, the ſin of our nature, keep the throne, it will ſet up another in its ſtead ; as when a water-courſe is ſtopped in one place, while the fountain is not dammed up, it will ſtream forth another way. And thus ſome caſt off their prodigality, but covetouſneſs comes up in its ſtead : ſome caſt away their profanity, and the corruption of nature ſends not its main ſtream that way as before ; but it runs in another channel, namely, in that of a legal diſpoſition, ſelf-righteouſneſs, or the like. So that people are ruined, by their not eying the ſin of their nature.

Laſtly, It is an hereditary evil, Pſal. li. 5. *In ſin did my mother conceive me.* Particular luſts are not ſo, but in the virtue of their cauſe. A prodigal father may have a frugal ſon : but this diſeaſe is neceſſarily propagated in nature, and therefore hardeſt to cure. Surely then the word ſhould be given out againſt this ſin, as againſt the king of Iſrael, 1 Kings xxii. 31. *Fight neither with ſmall nor great, ſave only with this* : for this ſin being broke, all other ſins are broken with it ; and while it ſtands entire, there is no victory.

IV. That ye may get a view of the corruption of your nature, I would recommend to you three things. (1.) Study to know the *ſpirituality* and *extent* of the *law* of God, for that is the glaſs wherein you may ſee yourſelves. (2.) Obſerve your hearts at all times, but eſpecially under temptation. Temptation is a fire that brings up the ſcum of the vile heart : do ye carefully mark the firſt riſings of corruption. Laſtly, Go to God, through Jeſus Chriſt, for *illumination* by his Spirit. Lay out your ſoul before the Lord, as willing to know the vileneſs of your nature : ſay unto him, *That which I know not teach thou me.* And be willing to take in light from the word Believe, and you ſhall ſee. It is by the word the Spirit teacheth, but without the Spirit's teaching, all other teaching will be to little purpoſe. Though the goſpel ſhould ſhine about you, like the ſun at noon-day ; and this great truth be never ſo plainly preached, ye will never ſee yourſelves aright, until the Spirit of the Lord light his candle within your breaſt : the fulneſs and glory of Chriſt, the corruption and vileneſs of our nature, are never rightly learned, but where the Spirit of Chriſt is the teacher.

And now to ſhut up this weighty point, let the conſideration of what is ſaid, commend Chriſt to you all. Ye that are brought out of your natural ſtate of corruption unto Chriſt, be humble ; ſtill coming to Chriſt, and improving your union with him, to the further weakening of the remains of this natural corruption. Is your nature changed ? It is but in part ſo. The day was ye could not ſtir : now ye are cured ; but remember the cure is not yet perfected, ye ſtill go halting. And though it were better with you than it is, the remembrance of what you were by nature ſhould keep you low. Ye that are yet in your natural ſtate, take with it : believe the corruption of your nature ; and let Chriſt, and his grace, be precious in your eyes. O that ye would at length be ſerious about the ſtate of your ſouls ; What mind ye to do ! Ye muſt die, ye muſt appear before the judgment-ſeat of God. Will ye lie down, and ſleep another night at eaſe, in this caſe. Do it not : for before another day, ye may be ſiſted before God's dreadful tribunal, in the grave-cloaths of your corrupt ſtate ; and your vile ſouls caſt into the pit of deſtruction, as a corrupt lump, to be for ever buried out of God's ſight. For I teſtify unto you all, there is no peace with God, no pardon, no heaven for you, in this ſtate : there is but a ſtep betwixt you and eternal deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord : if the brittle thread of your life, which may be broke with a touch, ere you are aware, be indeed broken while you are in this ſtate ; you are ruined for ever, and without remedy. But come ſpeedily to Jeſus Chriſt ; he has cleanſed as vile ſouls as yours ; and he will yet *cleanſe the blood that he hath not cleanſed*, Joel. iii. 21. Thus far of the *ſinfulneſs of man's natural ſtate.*

HEAD II.

The MISERY of MAN's *Natural State.*

EPHESIANS ii. 3.

We—— were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

HAving ſhewed you the ſinfulneſs of man's natural ſtate, I come now to lay before you the miſery of it. A ſinful ſtate cannot be but a miſerable ſtate. If ſin go before, wrath follows of courſe. Corruption and deſtruction are ſo knit together, that the Holy Ghoſt calls deſtruction, even eternal deſtruction, corruption, Gal. vi. 8. *He that ſoweth to his fleſh, ſhall of the fleſh reap corruption*, that is *everlaſting deſtruction* ; as is clear from its being oppoſed to *life everlaſting*, in the following clauſe. And ſo the apoſtle having ſhown the Epheſians their real ſtate by nature, to wit, that they were *dead in ſins and treſpaſſes*, altogether corrupt, he tells them, in the words of the text, their relative ſtate, namely, that the pit was digged for them, while in that ſtate of corruption : being dead in ſins, they *were by nature children of wrath, even as others.*

In the words we have four things,

1. The miſery of a natural ſtate : it is a ſtate of wrath, as well as a ſtate of ſin. *We were*, ſays the apoſtle, *children of wrath*, bound over, and liable, to the wrath of God ; under wrath in ſome meaſure ; and, in wrath, bound over to more, even the full meaſure of it, in hell where the floods of it go over the priſoners for ever. Thus Saul, in his wrath, adjudging David to die, (1 Sam. xx. 31.) and David, in his wrath, paſſing ſentence of death againſt the man in the parable, (2 Sam. xii. 5.) ſay, each of them of his ſuppoſed criminal, *He ſhall ſurely die* ; or as, the words in the firſt language are, *He is a ſon of death.* So the natural man is a *child of wrath, a ſon of death.* He is a malefactor, dead in law, lying in chains of guilt ; a criminal held faſt in his fetters, till the day of execution ; which will not fail, unleſs a pardon be obtained from his God, who is his Judge and Party too. By that means indeed, children of wrath may become children of the kingdom. The phraſe in the text, however common it is in the holy language, is very ſignificant. And as it is evident, that the apoſtle, calling natural men the *children of diſobedience*, (verſ. 2.) means more that they were diſobedient children : for ſuch may the Lord's own children be : ſo, to be children of wrath is more, than ſimply to be liable to, and under wrath. Jeſus Chriſt was liable to, and under wrath : but I doubt we have any warrant to ſay, he was a child of wrath. The phraſe ſeems to intimate, that men are, whatſoever they are in their natural ſtate, under the wrath of God ; that they are wholly under wrath : wrath is, as it were, woven into their very nature, and mixeth itſelf with the whole of the man, who is (if I may ſo ſpeak) a very lump of wrath, a child of hell, as the iron in the fire is all fire. For men naturally are children of wrath ; come forth

ſo to ſpeak, out of the womb of wrath; as Jonah's gourd was the *ſon of a night*, (which we render, *came up in a night*, Jonah iv. 10.) as if it had come out of the womb of the night, (as we read of the *womb of the morning*, Pſal. cx. 3.) and ſo, the birth following the belly whence it came, was *ſoon gone*. Thus ſparks of fire are called *ſons of burning coal*, Job. v. 7. Marg. Iſ. xxi. 10. *O my threſhing, and the corn, (or ſon) of my floor*, threſhen in the floor of wrath, and, as it were, brought forth by it. Thus the natural man is a child of wrath: it *comes into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones*, Pſal. cxix. 18. For, though Judas was the only ſon of perdition amongſt the apoſtles; yet all men, by nature, are of the ſame family.

2. There is the riſe of this miſery; men have it by nature. They owe it to their nature; not to their ſubſtance or eſſence: for that neither is nor was ſin, and therefore cannot make them children of wrath; though for ſin, it may be under wrath: not to their nature, as qualified, at man's creation, by his Maker; but to their nature, as vitiated and corrupted by the fall: to the vitious quality, or corruption of their nature, (whereof before,) which is their principle of action, and ceaſing from action, the only principle in an unregenerate ſtate. Now by this nature, men are children of wrath; as, in time of peſtilential infection, one draws in death together with the diſeaſe then raging. Wherefore, ſeeing from our firſt being, as children of Adam, we be corrupt children, *ſhapen in iniquity, conceived in ſin*: we are alſo from that moment children of wrath.

3. The univerſality of this miſery. All are by nature children of wrath; *we*, ſaith the apoſtle, *even as others*; Jews, as well as Gentiles. Thoſe that are now by grace, the children of God, were by nature, in no better caſe than thoſe that are ſtill in their natural ſtate.

Laſtly There is a glorious and happy change intimated here; we were children of wrath, but are not ſo now; grace has brought us out of that fearful ſtate. This the apoſtle ſays of himſelf, and other believers. And thus, it well becomes the people of God to be often ſtanding on the ſhore, and looking back to the Red ſea of the ſtate of wrath, they were ſometimes weltering in, *even as others*

Man's natural ſtate a ſtate of wrath.

Doctrine, *The ſtate of nature is a ſtate of wrath.* Every one in a natural, unregenerate ſtate, is in a ſtate of wrath. We are born children of wrath; and continue ſo, till we be born again. Nay, as ſoon as we are children of Adam, we are children of wrath.

I ſhall uſher in what I am to ſay on this point, with a few obſerves, touching the univerſality of this ſtate of wrath, which may ſerve to prepare the way of the word into your conſciences.

Wrath has gone as wide as ever ſin went. When angels ſinned, the wrath of God brake in upon them as a flood. *God ſpared not the angels that ſinned, but caſt them down to hell*, 2 Pet. ii. 4. And thereby it was demonſtrated, that no natural excellency in the creature will ſhield it from the wrath of God, if once it become a ſinful creature. The fineſt and niceſt piece of the workmanſhip of Heaven, if once the Creator's image upon it be defaced by ſin, God can and will daſh in pieces in his wrath, unleſs ſatisfaction be made to juſtice, and that image be repaired; neither of which the ſinner himſelf can do. Adam ſinned; and the whole lump of mankind was leavened, and bound over to the fiery oven of God's wrath. And from the text ye may learn, (1.) That ignorance of that ſtate cannot free men from it: the Gentiles, that knew not God, *were by nature children of wrath, even as others*. A man's houſe may be on fire, his wife and children periſhing in the flames, while he knows nothing of it; and therefore is not concerned about it. Such is your caſe, O ye that are ignorant of theſe things! Wrath is ſilently ſinking into your ſouls, while you are bleſſing yourſelves, ſaying, *Ye ſhall have peace.* Ye need not a more certain token that ye are children of wrath, than that ye never yet ſaw yourſelves ſuch. Ye cannot be the children of God, that never ſaw yourſelves children of the devil. Ye cannot be in the way to heaven, that never ſaw yourſelves by nature in the high road to hell. Ye are groſsly ignorant of your ſtate by nature; and ſo ignorant of God, and of Chriſt, and your need of him; and though ye look on your ignorance as a covert from wrath; yet, take it out of the mouth of God himſelf, that it will ruin you, if it be not removed, Iſ. xxvii. 11. *It is a people of no underſtanding: therefore he that made them, will not have mercy on them.* See 2 Theſſ. i. 8. Hoſ. iv. 6. (2.) No outward privileges can exempt men from this ſtate of wrath: for the Jews, the children of the kingdom, God's peculiar people, were *children of wrath, even as others.* Though ye be church-members, partakers of all church-privileges; though ye be deſcended of godly parents, of great and honourable families, be what ye will, ye are, *by nature* heirs of hell *children of wrath.* (3.) No profeſſion, nor attainments in a profeſſion of religion, do or can exempt a man from this ſtate of wrath. Paul was one of the *ſtraiteſt ſect* of the Jewiſh religion, Acts xxvi. 5. yet *a child of wrath even as others*, till he was converted. The cloſe hypocrite, and the profane, are alike, as to their ſtate; however different their converſations be: and they will be alike in their fatal end, Pſal cxxv. 5. *As for ſuch as turn aſide unto their crooked ways, the Lord ſhall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity.* (4.) Young ones, that are yet but ſetting out into the world, have not that to do, to make themſelves children of wrath, by following the graceleſs multitude. They are *children of wrath by nature*; ſo it is done already: they were born heirs of hell; they will indeed make themſelves more ſo, if they do not, while they are young, flee from that wrath they were born to, by fleeing to Jeſus Chriſt. Laſtly, Whatever men are now, by grace; they were *even as others*, by nature. And this may be a ſad meditation to them, that have been at *eaſe from their youth*, and have had *no changes.*

Now theſe things being premiſed, I ſhall in the firſt place, ſhew what this ſtate of wrath is: next, confirm the doctrine; and then apply it.

I. I am to ſhew what this ſtate of wrath is. But who can fully deſcribe the wrath of an angry God? None can do it. Yet ſo much of it may be diſcovered, as may ſerve to convince men of the abſolute neceſſity of fleeing to Jeſus Chriſt, out of that ſtate of wrath. Anger in men is a paſſion and commotion of the ſpirit, for an injury received; with a deſire to reſent the ſame. When it comes to a height, and is fixed in one's ſpirit, it is called wrath. Now there are no paſſions in God, properly ſpeaking: they are inconſiſtent with his abſolute unchangeableneſs, and independency: and therefore Paul and Barnabas (to remove the miſtake of the Lycaonians, who thought they were gods) tell them, *they were men of like paſſions with themſelves*, Acts xiv. 15. Wrath then is attributed to God, not in reſpect of the affection of wrath, but the effects thereof. Wrath is a fire in the bowels of a man, tormenting the man himſelf: but there is no perturbation in God. His wrath does not in the leaſt mar that infinite repoſe and happineſs which he hath in himſelf. It is a moſt pure, undiſturbed act of his will, producing dreadful effects againſt the ſinner. It is little we know of an infinite God; but, condeſcending to our weakneſs, he is pleaſed to ſpeak of himſelf to us after the manner of men. Let us therefore notice man's wrath, but remove every thing, in our conſideration of the wrath of God, that argues imperfection; and ſo we may attain to ſome view of it, however ſcanty. By this means we are led to take up the wrath of God againſt the natural man in theſe three.

Firſt. There is wrath in the heart of God againſt him. The Lord approves him not, but is diſpleaſed with him. Every natural man lies under the diſpleaſure of God;

and that is heavier than mountains of braſs. Although he be pleaſed with himſelf, and others be pleaſed with him too, yet God looks down on him as diſpleaſed. Firſt His perſon is under God's diſpleaſure; *thou hateſt all worker's of iniquity*, Pſal. v. 5. A godly man's ſin diſpleaſes God, yet his perſon is ſtill *accepted in the beloved*, Eph. i. 6. But *God is angry with the wicked every day*, Pſal. vii. 11. The fire of wrath burns continually againſt him, in the heart of God. They are as dogs and ſwine, moſt abominable creatures in the ſight of God. Though their natural ſtate be gilded over with a ſhining profeſſion, yet they are abhorred of God; they are to him as *ſmoke in his noſe*, Iſ. lxv. 5. and *lukewarm water*, to be *ſpewed out of his mouth*, Rev. iii. 16. *whited ſepulchres*, Matth. xxiii. 27. *a generation of vipers*, Matth. xii. 34. and *a people of his wrath*, Iſ. x. 6. Secondly, He is diſpleaſed with all they do: it is impoſſible for them to pleaſe him being unbelievers, Heb. xi. 6. He hates their perſons; and ſo hath no pleaſure in, but is diſpleaſed with, their beſt works. Iſ. lxvi. 6. *He that ſacrificeth a lamb, is as if he cut off a dog's neck*, &c. Their duty, as done by them, *is an abomination to the Lord*, Prov. xv. 8. And as men turn their back on them whom they are angry with, ſo the Lord's refuſing communion with the natural man in his duties, is a plain indication of this wrath.

Secondly, There is wrath in the word of God againſt him. When wrath is in the heart, it ſeeks a vent by the lips: ſo God fights againſt the natural man with *the ſword of his mouth*, Rev. ii. 16. The Lord's word never ſpeaks good of him, but always curſeth and condemneth him. Hence it is, that when he is awakened, the word read or preached often increaſeth his horror. Firſt, It condemns all his actions, together with his corrupt nature: There is nothing he does, but the law declares it to be ſin. It is a rule of perfect obedience, from which he always, in all things, declines; and ſo it rejects every thing he doth, as ſin. Secondly, It pronounceth his doom, and denounceth God's curſe againſt him, Gal. iii. 10. *For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curſe: for it is written, Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* Be he never ſo well in the world, it pronounceth a woe from heaven againſt him, Iſ. iii. 11. The Bible is a quiver filled with arrows of wrath againſt him; ready to be poured in on his ſoul. God's threatnings, in his word, hang over his head as a black cloud, ready to ſhower down on him every moment. The word is indeed the ſaints ſecurity againſt wrath: but it binds the natural man's ſin and wrath together, as a certain pledge of his ruin, if he continue in that ſtate. So the conſcience being awakened, and perceiving this tie made by the law, the man is filled with terrors in his ſoul.

Thirdly, There is wrath in the hand of God againſt the natural man. He is under heavy ſtrokes of wrath already, and is liable to more.

Firſt, There is wrath on his body. It is a piece of curſed clay, which wrath is ſinking into, by virtue of the threatening of the firſt covenant, Gen. ii. 17. *In the day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.* There is never a diſeaſe, gripe nor ſtitch, that affects him, but it comes on him with the ſting of God's indignation in it. They are all cords of death, ſent before to bind the priſoner.

Secondly, There is wrath upon his ſoul. (1.) He can have no communion with God; he is *fooliſh, and ſhall not ſtand in God's ſight*, Pſal. v. 5. When Adam ſinned, God turned him out of Paradiſe: and natural men are, as Adam left them, baniſhed from the gracious preſence of the Lord; and can have no acceſs to him, in that ſtate. There is war betwixt heaven and them: and ſo all commerce is cut off. *They are without God in the world*, Eph. ii. 12. The ſun is gone down on them, and there is not the leaſt glimpſe of favour towards them from heaven. (2.) Hence the ſoul is left to pine away in its iniquity. The natural darkneſs of their minds, the averſeneſs to good in their wills, the diſorder of their affections, and diſtemper of their conſciences, and all their natural plagues, are left upon them in a penal way; and, being ſo left, increaſe daily. God caſts a portion of worldly goods to them, more or leſs, as a bone is thrown to a dog: but, alas! his wrath againſt them appears, in that they get no grace. The phyſician of ſouls comes by them, and goes by them, and cures others beſide them, while they are conſuming away in their iniquity, and ripening daily for utter deſtruction. (3.) They lie open to fearful additional plagues on their ſouls, even in this life. Firſt. Sometimes they meet with deadening ſtrokes, ſilent blows, from the hand of an angry God: arrows of wrath, that enter into their ſouls without noiſe; Iſ. vi. 10. *Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and ſhut their eyes; leſt they ſee with their eyes*, &c. God ſtrives with them for a while, and convictions enter their conſciences; but they rebel againſt the light: and, by a ſecret judgment, they are knockt in the head; ſo that, from that time, they do, as it were, live and rot above the ground. Their hearts are deadened; their affections withered; their conſciences ſtupified; and their whole ſouls blaſted; *caſt forth as a branch, and withered*, John xv. 16. They are plagued with judicial blindneſs. They ſhut their eyes againſt the light; and they are given over to the devil, the god of this world, to be blinded more, 2 Cor. iv. 4. Yea, *God ſends them ſtrong deluſions, that they ſhould believe a lie*, 2 Theſſ. ii. 11. Even conſcience, like a falſe light on the ſhore, leads them upon rocks; by which they are broken in pieces. They harden themſelves againſt God; and he gives up with them, and leaves them to Satan and their own hearts, whereby they are hardened more and more. They are often *given up unto vile affections*. Rom. i. 26. The reins are laid on their necks; and they are left to run into all exceſs, as their furious luſts draw them. Secondly. Sometimes they meet with quickning strokes, whereby their ſouls become like mount Sinai, where nothing is ſeen but fire and ſmoke; nothing heard but the thunder of God's wrath, and the voice of the trumpet of a broken law waxing louder and louder: which makes them like Paſhur, (Jer. xx. 4.) *a terror to themſelves.* God takes the filthy garments of their ſins, which they were wont to ſleep in ſecurely; overlays them with brimſtone, and ſets them on fire about their ears: ſo they have a hell within them.

Thirdly. There is wrath on the natural man's enjoyments. Whatever be wanting in his houſe, there is one thing that is never wanting there, Prov. iii. 33. *The curſe of the Lord is in the houſe of the wicked.* Wrath is on all that he has; on the bread that he eats, the liquor he drinks, the cloaths which he wears, *His baſket and ſtore are curſed*, Deut. xxviii. 17. Some things fall wrong with him; and that comes to paſs by virtue of this wrath: other things go according to his wiſh, and there is wrath in that too; for it is a ſnare to his ſoul, Prov. i. 32. *The proſperity of fools ſhall deſtroy them.* This wrath turns his bleſſings into curſes, Mal. ii. 2. *I will curſe your bleſſings; yea, I have curſed them already.* The holy law is *a killing letter to him*, 2 Cor. iii. 6. The miniſtry of the goſpel *a ſavour of death unto death*, chap. ii. 16. In the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, *he eateth and drinketh damnation to himſelf*, 1 Cor. xi. 29. Nay, more than all that, Chriſt himſelf is to him, *a ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock of offence*, 1 Pet. ii. 8. Thus wrath follows the natural man, as his ſhadow doth his body.

Fourthly, He is under *the power of Satan*, Acts xxvi. 18. The devil has overcome him, ſo he is his by conqueſt, his *lawful captive*, Iſ. xlix. 24. The natural man is *condemned already*, John iii. 18. and therefore under the heavy hand of *him that hath the power of death, that is the devil.* And he keeps his priſoners in the priſon of a natural ſtate, bound hand and foot, Iſ. lxi. 1. laden with divers luſts, as chains wherewithal he holds them faſt. Thou needeſt not, as many do, call on the devil to take thee; for he has a faſt hold of thee already, as a child of wrath.

Laſtly, The natural man hath no ſecurity for a moment's ſafety, from the wrath of God its coming on him to the uttermoſt. The curſe of the law, denounced againſt him, has already tied him to the ſtake: ſo that the arrows of juſtice may pierce his ſoul; and, in him, may meet all the miſeries and plagues that flow from the avenging wrath of God. See how he is ſet as a mark to the arrows of wrath, Pſal. vii. 11. 12. 13. *God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his ſword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready; he hath alſo prepared for him the inſtruments of death.* Doth he lie down to ſleep? There is not a promiſe he knows of, or can know, to ſecure him that he ſhall not be in hell ere he awake. Juſtice is purſuing, and cries for vengeance on the ſinner: the law caſts the fire-balls of its curſes continually upon him: waſted and long-tired patience is that which keeps in his life. He walks amidſt enemies armed againſt him; his name may be *Magor-miſſabib*, i. e. *terror round about*. Jer. xx. 3. Angels, devils, men, beaſts, ſtones, heaven, and earth, are in readineſs, on a word of command from the Lord, to ruin him.

Thus the natural man lives, but he muſt die too; and death is a dreadful meſſenger to him. It comes upon him armed with wrath, and puts three ſad charges in his hand. (1.) Death chargeth him to bid an eternal farewell to all things in this world; to leave it, and make away to another world. Ah! what a dreadful charge muſt this be to *a child of wrath!* He can have no comfort from heaven; for God is his enemy: and, as for the things of the world, and the enjoyments of his luſts, which were the only ſprings of his comfort; theſe are in a moment dried up to him for ever. He is not ready for another world: he was not thinking of removing ſo ſoon; or, if he was, yet he has no portion ſecured to him in the other world, but that which he was born to, and was increaſing all his days, namely, *a treaſure of wrath*. But go he muſt; his clay-god, the world, muſt be parted with, and what has he more? There was never a glimmering of light, or favour from heaven, to his ſoul: and now the wrath that did hang in the threatening, as *a cloud like a man's hand*, is darkening the face of the whole heaven above him: and if he *look unto the earth*, (from whence all his light was wont to come), *behold, trouble and darkneſs, dimneſs of anguiſh; and he ſhall be driven to darkneſs*, Iſ. viii. 22. (2.) Death chargeth ſoul and body to part, till the great day. His ſoul is required of him, Luke. xii. 20. O what a miſerable parting muſt this be to a child of wrath! Care was indeed taken to provide for the body things neceſſary for this life: but alas! there is nothing laid up for another life, to it; nothing to be a ſeed of a glorious reſurrection: as it lived, ſo it muſt die and riſe again, ſinful fleſh, fuel for the fire of God's wrath. As for the ſoul, he was never ſolicitous to provide for it. It lay in the body, dead to God, and all things truly good; and ſo muſt be carried out into the pit, in the grave-cloaths of its natural ſtate: for now that death comes, the companions in ſin muſt part. (3.) Death chargeth the ſoul to compear before the tribunal of God, while the body lies to be carried to the grave, Eccleſ. xii. 7. *The ſpirit ſhall return unto God who gave it.* Heb. ix. 27. *It is appointed unto all men once to die, but after this the judgment.* Well were it for the ſinful ſoul, if it might be buried together with the body. But that cannot be: it muſt go and receive its ſentence; and ſhall be ſhut up in the priſon of hell, while the curſed body lies impriſoned in the grave, till the day of the general judgment.

When the end of the world, appointed of God, is come; the trumpet ſhall ſound, and the dead ariſe. Then ſhall the weary earth, at the command of the Judge, caſt forth the bodies, the curſed bodies of thoſe that lived and died in their natural ſtate: *The ſea, death, and hell, ſhall deliver up their dead*, Rev. xx. 13. Their miſerable bodies and ſouls ſhall be reunited, and they ſiſted before the tribunal of Chriſt. Then ſhall they receive that fearful ſentence, *Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*, Matth. xxv. 41. Whereupon *they ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment*, ver. 46. They ſhall be eternally ſhut up in hell, never to get the leaſt drop of comfort, nor the leaſt eaſe of their torment. There they will be puniſhed with the puniſhment of loſs, being excommunicated for ever from the preſence of God, his angels and ſaints. All means of grace, all hopes of a delivery, ſhall be for ever cut off from their eyes. They ſhall not have *a drop of water to cool their tongues*, Luke xvi. 24. 25. They ſhall be puniſhed with the puniſhment of ſenſe. They muſt not only depart from God, but depart into fire, into everlaſting fire. There *the worm*, that ſhall gnaw them, ſhall *never die; the fire* that ſhall ſcorch them, ſhall *never be quenched*. God ſhall, through all eternity, hold them up with the one hand, and pour the full vials of wrath into them with the other.

This is that ſtate of wrath natural men live in; being under much of the wrath of God, and liable to more. But, for a further view of it, let us conſider the qualities of that wrath. (1.) It is irreſiſtible; there is no ſtanding before it: *Who may ſtand in thy ſight, when once thou art angry?* Pſal. lxxvi. 7. Can the worm, or the moth, defend itſelf againſt him that deſigns to cruſh it? As little can worm man ſtand before an angry God. Fooliſh men indeed practically bid a defiance to Heaven: but the Lord often, even in this world, opens ſuch ſluices of wrath upon them, as all their might cannot ſtop; but they are carried away thereby, as with a flood. How much more will it be ſo in hell? (2.) It is inſupportable. What one cannot reſiſt, he will ſet himſelf to bear: but, *who ſhall dwell with devouring fire? who ſhall dwell with everlaſting burnings?* God's wrath is a weight that will ſink men into the loweſt hell. It is a burden no man is able to ſtand under. *A wounded ſpirit who can bear it?* Prov. xviii. 14. (3.) It is unavoidable to ſuch as will go on impenitently in their ſinful courſe. *He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, ſhall ſuddenly be deſtroyed, and that without remedy*, Prov. xxix. 1. We may now fly from it indeed, by flying to Jeſus Chriſt, but ſuch as fly from Chriſt, ſhall never be able to avoid it. Whither can men fly from an avenging God? Where will they find a ſhelter? The hills will not hear them. The mountains will be deaf to their loudeſt cries, when they cry to them, to *hide them from the wrath of the Lamb*. (4.) It is powerful and fierce wrath, Pſal. xc. 11. *Who knoweth the power of thine anger? Even according to thy fear, ſo is thy wrath.* We are apt to fear the wrath of man more than we ought: but no man can apprehend the wrath of God to be more dreadful than it really is: the power of it can never be known to the utmoſt; ſeeing it is infinite, and (properly ſpeaking) has no utmoſt. How fierce ſoever it be, either on earth, or in hell, God can ſtill carry it further. Every thing in God is moſt perfect in its kind; and therefore no wrath is ſo fierce as his. O ſinner! how wilt thou be able to endure that wrath, which will *tear thee in pieces*, Pſal. l. 22. and *grind thee to powder!* Luke xx. 18. The hiſtory of the two ſhe-bears, that tare the children of Bethel, is an awful one, 2 Kings ii. 23. 24. But the united force of the rage of lions, leopards, and ſhe-bears, bereaved of their whelps, is not ſufficient to give us even a ſcanty view of the power of the wrath of God, Hoſ. xiii. 7. 8. *Therefore I will be unto them as a lion: as a leopard by the way will I obſerve them. I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rent the caul of their heart, &c.* (5.) It is penetrating and piercing wrath. It is *burning wrath*, and *fiery indignation*. There is no pain more exquiſite than that which is cauſed by fire: and no fire ſo piercing as the fire of God's indignation, that *burns unto the loweſt hell*, Deut. xxxii. 22. The arrows of mens wrath can pierce fleſh, blood and bones; but cannot reach the ſoul: but the wrath of God will ſink into the ſoul, and ſo pierce a man in the moſt tender part: likeas, when a perſon is thunder-ſtruck, oft-times there is not a wound to be ſeen in the ſkin; yet life is gone, and the bones are, as it were, melted: ſo God's wrath can penetrate into, and melt one's ſoul within him, when his earthly comforts ſtand about him entire, and untouched; as in Belſhazzar's caſe, Dan. v. 6. (6.) It is conſtant wrath, running parallel with the man's continuance in an unregenerate ſtate; conſtantly attending him from the womb to the grave. There are few ſo dark days, but the ſun ſometimes looketh out from under the clouds: but the wrath of God is an abiding cloud on the objects of it, John iii. 36. *The wrath of God abideth on him* that believes not. (7.) It is eternal. O miſerable ſoul! if thou fly not from this wrath, unto Jeſus Chriſt, thy miſery had a beginning, but it ſhall never have an end. Should devouring death wholly ſwallow thee up, and for ever hold thee faſt in a grave, it would be kind; but thou muſt live again, and never die; that thou mayſt be ever dying, *in the hands of the living God.* Cold death will quench the flame of man's wrath againſt us, if nothing elſe do it: but *God's wrath*, when it has come on the ſinner millions of ages, will ſtill be *the wrath to come*, Matth. iii. 7. 1 Theſſ. i. 10. as the water of a river is ſtill coming, how much ſoever of it has paſſed. While God is, he will purſue the quarrel. Laſtly, Howſoever dreadful it is, and though it be eternal, yet it is moſt juſt wrath: it is a clear fire, without the leaſt ſmoke of injuſtice. The ſea of wrath, raging with greateſt fury againſt the ſinner, is clear as cryſtal. The Judge of all the earth can do no wrong: he knows no tranſports of paſſion, for they are inconſiſtent with the perfection of his nature. *Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I ſpeak as a man) God forbid; for then how ſhall God judge the world?* Rom. iii. 5. 6.

The doctrine of the ſtate of wrath confirmed and vindicated.

II. I ſhall confirm the doctrine. Conſider, (1.) How peremptory the threatening of the firſt covenant is, *In the day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die*, Gen. ii. 17. Hereby ſin and puniſhment being connected, the veracity of God aſcertains the execution of the threatning. Now, all men being by nature under this covenant, the breach of it lays them under the curſe. (2.) The juſtice of God requires, that a child of ſin be a child of wrath; that the law being broken, the ſanction thereof ſhould take place. God, as man's ruler and judge, cannot but do right, Gen. xviii. 25. Now it is *a righteous thing with God to recompence ſin* with wrath, 2 Theſſ. i. 6. He is *of purer eyes than to behold evil*, Hab. i. 13. And *he hates all the workers of iniquity*, Pſal. v. 6. (3.) The horrors of a natural conſcience prove this. There is a conſcience in the breaſts of men, which can tell them, they are ſinners, and therefore liable to the wrath of God. Let men, at any time, ſoberly commune with themſelves, and they will find they have the witneſs in themſelves, *knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit ſuch things are worthy of death*, Rom. i. 32. (4.) The pangs of the new-birth, the work of the Spirit of bondage on elect ſouls, in order to their converſion, demonſtrate this. Hereby their natural ſinfulneſs and miſery, as liable to the wrath of God, are plainly taught them; filling their hearts with fear of that wrath. Now that this Spirit of bondage is no other than the Spirit of God, whoſe work is to *convince of ſin, righteouſneſs, and judgment*, (John xvi. 8.) this teſtimony muſt needs be true; for the Spirit of truth cannot witneſs an untruth. Mean while, true believers, being freed from the ſtate of wrath, *receive not the Spirit of bondage again to fear, but receive the Spirit of adoption*, Rom. viii. 15. And therefore, if fears of that nature do ariſe, after the ſoul's union with Chriſt, they come from the ſaint's own ſpirit, or from a worſe. Laſtly, The ſufferings of Chriſt plainly prove this doctrine. Wherefore was the Son of God a ſon under wrath, but becauſe the children of men were children of wrath? He ſuffered the wrath of God; not for himſelf, but for thoſe that were liable to it in their own perſons. Nay, this not only ſpeaks us to have been liable to wrath; but alſo that wrath muſt have a vent, in the puniſhing of ſin. If this was done in the green tree, what will become of the dry? What a miſerable caſe muſt a ſinner be in that is out of Chriſt; that is not vitally united to Chriſt, and partakes not of his Spirit? God, who ſpared not his own Son, ſurely will not ſpare ſuch a one.

But the unregenerate man, who has no great value for the honour of God, will be apt to riſe up againſt his Judge, and in his own heart condemn his procedure. Nevertheleſs, the Judge being infinitely juſt, the ſentence muſt be righteous. And therefore, to ſtop thy mouth, O proud ſinner, and to ſtill thy clamour againſt thy righteous Judge; conſider, Firſt, Thou art a ſinner by nature; and it is highly reaſonable that guilt and wrath be as old as ſin. Why ſhould not God begin to vindicate his honour, as ſoon as vile worms begin to impair it? Why ſhall not a ſerpent bite the thief, as ſoon as he leaps over the hedge? Why ſhould not the threatening take hold of the ſinner, as ſoon as he caſts away the command? the poiſonous nature of the ſerpent affords a man ſufficient ground to kill it, as ſoon as ever he can reach it: and, by this time, thou mayſt be convinced, that thy nature is a very compound of enmity againſt God. Secondly, Thou haſt not only an enmity againſt God, in thy nature; but haſt diſcovered it, by actual ſins, which are in his eye acts of hoſtility. Thou haſt brought forth thy luſts into the field of battle, againſt thy Sovereign Lord. And now that thou art ſuch a criminal, thy condemnation is juſt; for, beſides the ſin of thy nature, thou haſt done that againſt Heaven, which if thou hadſt done againſt men, thy life behoved to have gone for it; and ſhall not wrath from heaven overtake thee? (1.) Thou art guilty of high treaſon, and rebellion, againſt the King of heaven. The thought and wiſh of thy heart, which he knows as well as the language of thy mouth, has been, *No God*, Pſal. xiv. 1. Thou haſt rejected his government, blown the trumpet, and ſet up the ſtandard of rebellion againſt him; being one of thoſe that ſay, *We will not have this man to reign over us*, Luke xix. 14. Thou haſt ſtriven againſt, and quenched his Spirit; practically diſowned his laws, proclaimed by his meſſengers; ſtopped thine ears at their voice, and ſent them away mourning for thy pride. Thou haſt conſpired with his grand enemy the devil. Although thou art a ſworn ſervant of the King of glory, daily receiving of his favours, and living on his bounty; thou art holding a correſpondence, and haſt contracted a friendſhip with his greateſt enemy, and art acting for him againſt thy Lord; for *the luſts of the devil you will do*, John viii. 44. (2.) Thou art a murderer before the Lord. Thou haſt laid the ſtumbling-block of thine iniquity, before the blind world; and haſt ruined the ſouls of others, by thy ſinful courſe. And though thou doſt not ſee now; the time may come, when thou ſhalt ſee the blood of thy relations, neighbours, acquaintances, and others, upon thy head, Matth. xviii. 7. *Wo unto the world becauſe of offences; Wo to that man by whom the offence cometh.* Yea, thou art a ſelf-murderer before God, Prov. viii. 36. *He that ſinneth againſt me, wrongeth his own ſoul; all they that hate me, love death.* Ezek. xviii. 31. *Why will ye die.* The laws of men go as far as they can againſt the ſelf-murderer, denying his body a burial-place amongſt others, and confiſcating his goods: what wonder is it the law of God is ſo ſevere againſt ſoul-murderers? Is it ſtrange, that they who will needs depart from God now, coſt what it will, be forced to depart from him at laſt into everlaſting fire? But what is yet more criminal, thou art guilty of the murder of the Son of God; for the LORD will reckon thee amongſt thoſe that *pierced him*, Rev. i. 7. Thou haſt rejected him, as well as the Jews did; and, by thy rejecting him, thou haſt juſtified their deed. They indeed did not acknowledge him to be the Son of God, but thou doſt. What they did againſt him, was in his ſtate of humiliation; but thou haſt acted againſt him, in his ſtate of exaltation. Theſe things will aggravate thy condemnation. What wonder then, if the voice of the Lamb change to the roaring of the Lion, againſt the traitor and murderer?

Object. But ſome will ſay, *Is there not a vaſt diſproportion betwixt our ſin, and that wrath you talk of?* I anſwer, No; God puniſheth no more than the ſinner deſerves. To rectify your miſtake in this matter, conſider, (1.) The vaſt rewards God has annexed to obedience. His word is no more full of fiery wrath againſt ſin, than it is of gracious rewards to the obedience it requires. If heaven be in the promiſes, it is altogether equal that hell be in the threatenings. If death were not in the balance with life, eternal miſery with eternal happineſs, where were the proportion? Moreover, ſin deſerves the miſery, but our beſt works do not deſerve the happineſs: yet both are ſet before us; ſin and miſery, holineſs and happineſs. What reaſon is there then to complain? (2.) How ſevere ſoever the threatnings be, yet all has enough ado to reach the end of the law, *Fear him*, ſays our Lord, *which after he hath killed hath power to caſt into hell; yea I ſay unto you, Fear him*, Luke xii. 5. This beſpeaks our dread of divine power and majeſty; but yet how few fear him indeed! The Lord knows the ſinners hearts to be exceedingly intent upon fulfilling their luſts; they cleave ſo fondly to thoſe fulſome breaſts, that a ſmall force does not ſuffice to draw them away from them. They that travel through deſarts, where they are in hazard from wild beaſts, have need to carry fire along with them; and they have need of a hard wedge that have knotty timber to cleave: ſo a holy law muſt be fenced with dreadful wrath, in a world lying in wickedneſs. But who are they that complain of that wrath as too great, but thoſe to whom it is too little to draw them off from their ſinful courſes? It was the man who pretended to fear his Lord, becauſe he was an *auſtere man* that kept his *pound laid up in a napkin:* and ſo he was *condemned out of his own mouth*, Luke xix. 20. 21. 22. Thou art that man, even thou whoſe objection I am anſwering. How can the wrath thou art under, and liable to, be too great, while yet it is not ſufficient to awaken thee to flee from it? Is it time to relax the penalties of the law, when men are trampling the commands of it under foot? (3.) Conſider how God dealt with his own Son, whom he ſpared not, Rom. viii. 32. The wrath of God ſeized on his ſoul and body both, and brought him into the duſt of death. That his ſufferings were not eternal flowed from the quality of the ſufferer, who was infinite; and therefore able to bear, at once, the whole load of wrath: and, upon that account, his ſufferings were infinite in value. But now that the ſufferings of a mere creature cannot be infinite in value, they muſt be protracted to an eternity. And what confidence can a rebel ſubject have to quarrel (for his part) a puniſhment execute on the king's ſon? (4.) The ſinner doth againſt God what he can. *Behold, thou haſt done evil things as thou couldſt*, Jer. iii. 5. That thou haſt not done more, and worſe, thanks to him who reſtrained thee; to the chain which the wolf was kept in by, not to thyſelf. No wonder God ſhew his power on the ſinner, who puts forth his power againſt God as far as it will reach. The unregenerate man puts no period to his ſinful courſe; and would put no bounds to it neither, if he were not reſtrained by divine power for wiſe ends: and therefore it is juſt he be for ever under wrath. (5.) It is infinite majeſty ſin ſtrikes againſt; and ſo it is, in ſome ſort, an infinite evil. Sin riſeth in its demerit, according to the quality of the party offended. If a man wound his neighbour, his goods muſt go for it; but if he wound his prince, his life muſt go to make amends for that. The infinity of God makes infinite wrath the juſt demerit of ſin. God is infinitely diſpleaſed with ſin: and when he acts, he muſt act like himſelf, and ſhew his diſpleaſure by proportionable means. Laſtly, Thoſe that ſhall lie for ever under this wrath, will be eternally ſinning; and therefore muſt eternally ſuffer; not only in reſpect of divine judicial procedure; but becauſe ſin is its own puniſhment, in the ſame manner as holy obedience is its own reward.

The doctrine of the miſery of man's natural ſtate applied.

Uſe (1.) Of information. Is our ſtate by nature a ſtate of wrath? Then,

1. Surely we are not born innocent. Theſe chains of wrath, which by nature are upon us, ſpeak us to be born criminals. The ſwadling-bands, wherewith infants are bound hand and foot, as ſoon as they are born, may put us in mind of the cords of wrath, with which they are held priſoners, as children of wrath.

2. What deſperate madneſs is it, for ſinners to go on in their ſinful courſe? What is it but to heap coals of fire on thine own head, to lay more and more fuel to the fire of wrath; to *treaſure up unto thyſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath?* Rom. ii. 5. Thou mayeſt *periſh, when his wrath is kindled but a little*, Pſal. ii. 12. why wilt thou increaſe it yet more? Thou art already bound with ſuch cords of death, as will not eaſily be looſed: what need is there of more? Stand, careleſs ſinner, and conſider this.

3. Thou haſt no reaſon to complain, as long as thou art out of hell, *Wherefore doth a living man complain?* Lam. iii. 39. If one who has forfeited his life, be baniſhed his native country, and expoſed to many hardſhips; he may well bear all patiently, ſeeing his life is ſpared. Do ye murmur, for that ye are under pain or ſickneſs? Nay, bleſs God ye are not there where the worm never dieth. Doſt thou grudge, that thou art not in ſo good a condition in the world as ſome of thy neighbours are? Be thankful rather, that ye are not in the caſe of the damned. Is thy ſubſtance gone from thee? Wonder that the fire of God's wrath hath not conſumed thy ſelf. Kiſs the rod, O ſinner, and acknowledge mercy; for God *puniſheth us leſs than our iniquities deſerve*, Ezra ix. 13.

4. Here is a memorandum, both for poor and rich. (1.) The pooreſt, that go from door to door, and had not one penny left them by their parents, were born to an inheritance. Their firſt father Adam left them children of wrath; and, continuing in their natural ſtate, they cannot miſs of it; for *this is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed to him by God*, Job. xx. 29. An heritage that will furniſh them with a habitation, who have not where to lay their head; they ſhall be *caſt into utter darkneſs*, Matth. xxv 30. for to them *is reſerved the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever*, Jude 6. where their bed ſhall be ſorrow; *they ſhall lie down in ſorrow*, Iſ. l. 11. their food ſhall be judgment, for God will *feed them with judgment*, Ezek. xxxiv. 16. and their drink ſhall be the red wine of God's wrath, *the dregs whereof all the wicked of the earth ſhall wring out, and drink them*, Pſal lxxv. 8. I know that theſe who are deſtitute of worldly goods, and withal void of the knowledge and grace of God, who therefore may be called the devil's poor, will be apt to ſay here, *We hope God will make us ſuffer all our miſery in this world, and we ſhall be happy in the next:* as if their miſerable outward condition in time, would ſecure their happineſs in eternity. A groſs and fatal miſtake! and this is another inheritance they have, viz. *Lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit*, Jer xvi. 19. But *the hail ſhall ſweep away the refuge of lies*, Iſ. xxviii. 17. Doſt thou think O ſinner, that God, who commands judges on earth *not to reſpect the perſon of the poor in judgment*, Lev. xix. 15. will pervert judgment for thee? Nay, know for certain, that however miſerable thou art here, thou ſhalt be eternally miſerable hereafter, if thou liveſt and dieſt in thy natural ſtate. (2.) Many that have enough in the world, have far more than they know of. Thou hadſt

(it may be), O unregenerate man, an eſtate, a good portion, or large ſtock left thee by thy father; thou haſt improven it, and the ſun of proſperity ſhines upon thee; ſo that thou canſt ſay, with Eſau, Gen xxxiii. 9. *I have enough.* But know, thou haſt more than all that, an inheritance thou doſt not conſider of: thou art a child of wrath, an heir of hell. That is an heritage which will abide with thee, amidſt all the changes in the world, as long as thou continueſt in an unregenerate ſtate. When thou ſhalt leave thy ſubſtance to others, this ſhall go along with thyſelf, into another world. It is no wonder a ſlaughter-ox is fed to the full, and is not toiled as others are, Job xxi. 30. *The wicked is reſerved to the day of deſtruction; they ſhall be brought forth to the day of wrath.* Well then, *Rejoice, let thine heart cheer thee, walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the ſight of thine eyes.* Live above reproofs and warnings from the word of God: ſhew thyſelf a man of a fine ſpirit, by caſting off all fear of God; mock at ſeriouſneſs; live like thyſelf, a child of wrath, an heir of hell: *But know thou, that for all theſe things God will bring thee into judgment,* Eccleſ. xi. 9. Aſſure thyſelf, thy *breaking ſhall come ſuddenly at an inſtant,* Iſ. xxx. 13. *For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, ſo is the laughter of a fool,* Eccleſ. vii. 6. The fair blaze, and great noiſe they make is quickly gone; ſo ſhall thy mirth be. And then that wrath, that is now ſilently ſinking into thy ſoul, ſhall make a fearful hiſſing.

5. Wo to him, that, like Moab, *hath been at eaſe from his youth,* Jer. xlviii. 11. and never ſaw the black cloud of wrath hanging over his head. There are many who *have no changes, therefore they fear not God,* Pſal. lv. 19. They have lived in a good belief (as they call it) all their days; that is, they never had power to believe an ill report of their ſoul's ſtate. Many have come by their religion too eaſily: and as it came lightly to them, ſo it will go from them, when the trial comes. Do ye think men flee from wrath in a morning-dream? Or will they flee from the wrath they never ſaw purſuing them?

6. Think it not ſtrange, if ye ſee one in great diſtreſs about his ſoul's condition, who was wont to be as jovial and as little concerned for ſalvation as any of his neighbours. Can one get a right view of himſelf, as in a ſtate of wrath, and not be pierced with ſorrows, terrors, anxiety? When a weight, quite above one's ſtrength, lies upon him, and he is alone, he can neither ſtir hand nor foot; but when one comes to lift it off him, he will ſtruggle, to get from under it. Thunder-claps of wrath from the word of God, conveyed to the ſoul by the Spirit of the Lord, will ſurely keep a man awake.

Laſtly, It is no wonder wrath come upon churches and nations, and upon us in this land, and that infants and children yet unborn ſmart under it. Moſt of the ſociety are yet children of wrath; few are flying from it, or taking the way to prevent it; but people of all ranks are helping it on. The Jews rejected Chriſt: and their children have been ſmarting under wrath theſe ſixteen hundred years. God grant, that the bad entertainment given to Chriſt and his goſpel by this generation, be not purſued with wrath on the ſucceeding one.

Uſe (2.) Of Exhortation. And here, (1.) I ſhall drop a word to theſe who are yet in an unregenerate ſtate. (2.) To thoſe that are brought out of it. (3.) To all indifferently.

I. To you that are yet in an unregenerate ſtate, I would ſound the alarm, and warn you to ſee to yourſelves, while yet there is hope. O ye children of wrath take no reſt in this diſmal ſtate; but flee to Jeſus Chriſt, the only refuge; haſte, and make your eſcape thither. The ſtate of wrath is too hot a climate for you to live in, Mic. ii. 10. *Ariſe ye and depart, for this is not your reſt.* O ſinner, knoweſt thou where thou art? doſt thou not ſee thy danger? the curſe has entered into thy ſoul: wrath is thy covering: the heavens are growing blacker and blacker above thy head: the earth is weary of thee: the pit is opening her mouth for thee; and ſhould the thread of thy life be cut this moment, thou art henceforth paſt all hope for ever. Sirs, if we ſaw you putting a cup of poiſon to your mouth, we would fly to you and ſnatch it out of your hands. If we ſaw the houſe on fire about you, while ye were faſt aſleep in it, we would run to you, and drag you out of it. But, alas! ye are in ten thouſand times greater hazard: yet we can do no more, but tell you your danger; invite, exhort, beſeech, and obteſt you, to look to yourſelves; and lament your ſtupidity and obſtinacy, when we cannot prevail with you to take warning. If there were no hope of your recovery, we ſhould be ſilent, and would not torment you before the time: but though ye be loſt and undone, there is hope in Iſrael concerning this thing. Wherefore, I cry unto you in the name of the Lord, and in the word of the prophet, Zech. ix. 12. *Turn ye to the ſtrong hold, ye priſoners of hope.* Flee to Jeſus Chriſt out of this your natural ſtate.

Motive 1. While ye are in this ſtate, ye muſt ſtand or fall, according to the law, or covenant of works. If ye underſtood this aright, it would ſtrike through your hearts as a thouſand darts. One had better be a ſlave to the Turks, condemned to the gallies, or under Egyptian bondage, than be under the covenant of works now. All mankind were brought under it in Adam, as we heard before: and thou, in thy unregenerate ſtate, art ſtill where Adam left thee. It is true, there is another covenant brought in: but what is that to thee, who art not brought into it? Thou muſt needs be under one of the two covenants; either under *the law,* or *under grace.* That thou art not *under grace, the dominion of ſin* over thee manifeſtly evinceth; therefore thou art under the law, Rom. vi. 14. Do not think God has laid aſide the firſt covenant, Matth. v. 17. 18. Gal. iii. 10. No, he will *magnify the law, and make it honourable.* It is broken indeed on thy part; but it is abſurd to think, that therefore your obligation is diſſolved. Nay, thou muſt ſtand and fall by it, till thou canſt produce thy diſcharge from God himſelf, who is thy party in that covenant; and this thou canſt not pretend to, ſeeing thou art not in Chriſt.

Now, to give you a view of your miſery, in this reſpect, conſider theſe following things. (1.) Hereby ye are bound over to death, in virtue of the threatening of death in that covenant, Gen. ii. 17. The condition being broken, ye fall under the penalty. So it concludes you under wrath. (2.) There is no ſalvation for you under this covenant, but on a condition impoſſible to be performed by you. The juſtice of God muſt be ſatisfied for the wrong you have done already. God has written this truth in characters of the blood of his own Son. Yea, and you muſt perfectly obey the law for the time to come. So ſaith the law, Gal. iii. 12. *The man that doth them ſhall live in them.* Come then, O ſinner, ſee if thou canſt make a ladder, whereby thou mayſt reach the throne of God: ſtretch forth thine arms, and try if thou canſt fly on the wings of the wind, catch hold of the clouds, and pierce through theſe viſible heavens; and then either climb over, or break through, the jaſper walls of the city above. Theſe things ſhalt thou do, as ſoon as thou ſhalt reach heaven in thy natural ſtate, or under this covenant. (3.) There is no pardon under this covenant. Pardon is the benefit of another covenant, with which thou haſt nothing to do, Acts xiii. 39. *And by him all that believe are juſtified from all things, from which ye could not be juſtified by the law of Moſes.* As for thee, thou art in the hand of a mercileſs creditor, which will take thee by the throat, ſaying, *Pay what thou oweſt;* and caſt thee into priſon, there to remain till thou haſt paid the uttermoſt farthing: unleſs thou be ſo wiſe as to get a cautioner in time, who is able to anſwer for all thy debt, and get up thy diſcharge. This Jeſus Chriſt alone can do. Thou abideſt under this covenant, and pleadeſt mercy; but what is thy plea founded on? There is not one promiſe of mercy or pardon in that covenant. Doſt thou plead mercy for mercy's ſake?

Juſtice will ſtep in betwixt it and thee; and plead God's covenant-threatening, which he cannot deny. (4.) There is no place for repentance in this covenant, ſo as the ſinner can be helped by it. For as ſoon as ever thou ſinneſt, the law lays its curſe on thee, which is a dead weight thou canſt by no means throw off; no, not though thine *head were waters, and thine eyes a fountain of tears, to weep day and night* for thy ſin. That is *what the law cannot do, in that it is weak through the fleſh*, Rom. viii. 3. Now thou art another profane Eſau, that hath ſold the bleſſing; and there is no place for repentance, though thou ſeekeſt it carefully with tears, while under that covenant. (5.) There is no accepting of the will for the deed under this covenant, which was not made for good will, but good works. The miſtake in this point ruins many. They are not in Chriſt, but ſtand under the firſt covenant; and yet they will plead this privilege. This is juſt as if one having made a feaſt for thoſe of his own family, when they ſit down at table, another-man's ſervant that has run away from his maſter, ſhould preſumptuouſly come forward, and ſit down among them: would not the maſter of the feaſt give ſuch a ſtranger that check, *Friend, how cameſt thou in hither?* and, ſince he is none of his family, command him to be gone quickly. Though a maſter accept the good will of his own child for the deed, can a hired ſervant expect that privilege? (6.) Ye have nothing to do with Chriſt, while under that covenant. By the law of God a woman cannot be married to two huſbands at once: either death or divorce muſt diſſolve the firſt marriage, ere ſhe can marry another. So we muſt firſt be *dead to the law*, ere we can be *married to Chriſt*, Rom. vii. 4. The law is the firſt huſband; Jeſus Chriſt, who raiſeth the dead, marries the widow, that was heart-broken, and ſlain by the firſt huſband. But while the ſoul is in the houſe with the firſt huſband, it cannot plead a marriage-relation to Chriſt; nor the benefit of a marriage-covenant, which is not yet entered into, Gal. v. 4. *Chriſt is become of no effect to you, whoſoever of you are juſtified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.* Peace, pardon, and ſuch like benefits, are all benefits of the covenant of grace. And ye muſt not think to ſtand off from Chriſt, and the marriage-covenant with him, and yet plead theſe benefits; more than one man's wife can plead the benefit of a contract of marriage paſt betwixt another man and his own wife. Laſtly, See the bill of excluſion, paſſed in the court of Heaven, againſt all under the covenant of works, Gal. iv. 30. *The ſon of the bond-woman ſhall not be heir.* Compare ver. 24. Heirs of wrath muſt not be heirs of glory. Whom the firſt covenant has power to exclude out of heaven, the ſecond covenant cannot bring into it.

Objection. Then it is impoſſible for us to be ſaved. *Anſwer.* It is ſo, while you are in that ſtate. But if ye would be out of that dreadful condition, haſten out of that ſtate. If a murderer be under ſentence of death; ſo long as he lives within the kingdom, the laws will reach his life: but if he can make his eſcape, and get over the ſea, into the dominions of another prince, our laws cannot reach him there. This is what we would have you to do: flee out of the kingdom of darkneſs into *the kingdom of God's dear Son;* out of the dominion of the law, into the dominion of grace: then all the curſes of the law, or covenant of works, ſhall never be able to reach you.

Motive 2. O ye children of wrath, your ſtate is wretched, for ye have loſt God, and that is an unſpeakable loſs. Ye are *without God in the world*, Eph. ii. 12. Whatever you may calls yours, ye cannot call God yours. If ye look to the earth; perhaps ye can tell us, that land, that houſe, or that herd of cattle, is yours. But let us look upward to heaven; is that God, that grace, that glory, yours? Truly, you have *neither part nor lot in that matter*. When Nebuchadnezzar talks of cities and kingdoms, O how big does he ſpeak! *Great Babylon that I have built; my power; my majeſty:* but he tells a poor tale, when he comes to ſpeak of God, ſaying, *your God*, Dan. ii. 47. and iv. 30. Alas! ſinner, whatever thou haſt, God is gone from thee. O the miſery of a godleſs ſoul! Haſt thou loſt God? Then, (1.) The ſap and ſubſtance of all thou haſt in the world, is gone The godleſs man, have what he will, is one *that hath not* Matth. xxv. 29. I defy the unregenerate man to attain to ſoul-ſatisfaction, whatever he poſſeſſeth; ſince God is not his God. All his days he eateth in darkneſs; in every condition there is a ſecret diſſatisfaction haunts his heart, like a ghoſt: the ſoul wants ſomething, though perhaps it knoweth not what it is; and ſo it will be always, till the ſoul return to God, the fountain of ſatisfaction. (2.) Thou canſt do nothing to purpoſe for thyſelf; for God is gone, *his ſoul is departed from thee*, Jer. vi. 8. like a leg out of joint hanging by, whereof a man has no uſe, as the word there uſed doth bear. Loſing God, thou haſt loſt the fountain of good; and ſo all grace, all goodneſs, all the ſaving influences of his Spirit. What canſt thou do then? What fruit canſt thou bring forth, more than a branch cut off from the ſtock? John xv. 5. Thou art *become unprofitable*, Rom. iii. 12. as a filthy rotten thing, fit only for the dunghill. (3.) Death has come up into thy windows, yea, and has ſettled on thy face; for God, *in whoſe favour is life*, Pſal. xxx. 5. is gone from thee, and ſo the ſoul of thy ſoul is departed. What a loathſome lump is the body, when the ſoul is gone? Far more loathſome is thy ſoul in this caſe. Thou art dead while thou liveſt. Do not deny it, ſeeing thy ſpeech is laid, thine eyes cloſed, and all ſpiritual motion in thee ceaſeth. Thy true friends, who ſee thy caſe, do lament; becauſe thou art gone into the land of ſilence. (4.) Thou haſt not a ſteady friend among all the creatures of God; for now that thou haſt loſt the Maſter's favour, all the family is ſet againſt thee. Conſcience is thine enemy: the word never ſpeaks good of thee: God's people loath thee, ſo far as they ſee what thou art, Pſal. xv. 4. The beaſts and ſtones of the field are banded together againſt thee, Job v. 23. Hoſ. ii. 18. Thy meat, drink, cloaths, grudge to be ſerviceable to the wretch that has loſt God, and abuſeth them to his diſhonour. The earth groaneth under thee; yea, *the whole creation groaneth, and travelleth in pain together*, becauſe of thee, and ſuch as thou art, Rom. viii. 22. Heaven will have nothing to do with thee; for *there ſhall in no wiſe enter into it any thing that defileth*, Rev. xxi. 27. Only *hell from beneath is moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming*, Iſ. xiv. 9. Laſtly, Thy hell is begun already. What makes hell, but excluſion from the preſence of God? *Depart from me, ye curſed.* Now ye are gone from God already, with the curſe upon you. That ſhall be your puniſhment at length (if ye return not) which is now your choice. As a gracious ſtate is a ſtate of glory in the bud: ſo a graceleſs ſtate is hell in the bud, which, if it continue, will come to perfection at length.

Motive 3. Conſider the dreadful inſtances of the wrath of God; and let them ſerve to awaken thee, to flee out of this ſtate. Conſider, (1.) How it has fallen on men. Even, in this world, many have been ſet up as monuments of divine vengeance, that others might fear. Wrath has ſwept away multitudes, who have fallen together by the hand of an angry God. Conſider how the Lord *ſpared not the old world, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly: and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into aſhes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto thoſe that after ſhould live ungodly*, 2 Pet. ii. 5. 6. But it is yet more dreadful to think of that weeping, wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth, amongſt thoſe, who *in hell lift up their eyes*, but cannot get a *drop of water to cool their tongues*. Believe theſe things, and be warned by them, leſt deſtruction come upon thee, for a warning to others. 2. Conſider how wrath fell upon the fallen angels, whoſe caſe is abſolutely hopeleſs. They were the firſt that ventured to break the hedge of the divine law; and God ſet them up for monuments of his wrath againſt ſin. They once *left their own habitation*, and were never allowed to look in again at the hole of the door; but they are *reſerved in everlaſting chains under darkneſs, unto the judgment of the great day,* Jude 6. Laſtly, Behold how an angry God dealt with his own Son, ſtanding in the room of elect ſinners, Rom. viii. 23. *God ſpared not his own Son.* Sparing mercy might have been expected, if any at all. If any perſon could have obtained it, ſurely his own Son would have got it: but he ſpared him not. The Father's delight is made a man of ſorrows: he who is the wiſdom of God becomes ſore amazed, ready to faint away in a fit of horror. The weight of this wrath makes him ſweat great drops of blood. By the fierceneſs of this fire, his heart was *like wax melted in the midſt of his bowels.* Behold here how ſevere God is againſt ſin! The ſun was ſtruck blind with this terrible ſight, rocks were rent, graves opened, death, as it were, in the exceſs of aſtoniſhment, letting its priſoners ſlip away. What is a deluge, a ſhower of fire and brimſtone on Sodomites, the terrible noiſe of a diſſolving world, the whole fabric of heaven and earth falling down at once, angels caſt down from heaven into the bottomleſs pit! What are all theſe, I ſay, in compariſon with this, GOD ſuffering! groaning! dying upon a croſs! Infinite holineſs did it, to make ſin look like itſelf, viz. infinitely odious. And will men live at eaſe, while expoſed to this wrath?

Laſtly, Conſider what a God he is with whom thou haſt to do, whoſe wrath thou art liable unto. He is a God of infinite knowledge and wiſdom: ſo that none of thy ſins, however ſecret, can be hid from him. He infallibly finds out all means, whereby wrath may be executed, toward the ſatisfying of juſtice. He is of infinite power, and ſo can do what he will againſt the ſinner. How heavy muſt the ſtrokes of wrath be, which are laid on by an omnipotent hand! Infinite power can make the ſinner priſoner, even when he is in his greateſt rage againſt Heaven. It can bring again the ſeveral parcels of duſt out of the grave, put them together again, reunite the ſoul and body, ſiſt them before the tribunal, hurry them away to the pit, and hold them up with the one hand, through eternity, while they are laſhed with the other. He is infinitely juſt, and therefore muſt puniſh; it were acting contrary to his nature to ſuffer the ſinner to eſcape wrath. Hence the executing of this wrath is pleaſing to him: for, though the Lord hath no delight in the death of a ſinner, as it is the deſtruction of his own creature; yet he delights in it, as it is the execution of juſtice. *Upon the wicked he ſhall rain ſnares, fire and brimſtone, and an horrible tempeſt.* Mark the reaſon: *For the righteous Lord loveth righteouſneſs,* Pſal. xi. 6, 7. *I will cauſe my fury to reſt upon them, and I will be comforted,* Ezek. v. 13. *I alſo will laugh at their calamity,* Prov. i. 26. Finally, He lives for ever, to purſue the quarrel. Let us therefore conclude, *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

Be awakened then, O young ſinner; be awakened O old ſinner, who art yet in the ſtate thou waſt born in. Your ſecurity is none of God's allowance; it is the ſleep of death: riſe out of it, ere the pit cloſe its mouth on you. It is true, you may put on a breaſt-plate of iron, make your brow braſs, and your heart as an adamant: who can help it? But God will break that brazen brow and make that adamantine heart, at laſt, to fly into a thouſand pieces. Ye may, if ye will, labour to put theſe things out of your heads, that ye may yet ſleep in a ſound ſkin, though in a ſtate of wrath. Ye may run away, with the arrows ſticking in your conſciences, to your work, to work them away! or to your beds to ſleep them out; or to company, to ſport and laugh them away: but convictions, ſo ſtifled, will have a fearful reſurrection; and the day is coming, when the arrows of wrath ſhall ſo ſtick in thy ſoul, as thou ſhalt never be able to pluck them out through the ages of eternity, unleſs thou take warning in time.

But, if any deſire to flee from the wrath to come, and for that end, to know what courſe to take, I offer them theſe few advices; and obteſt and beſeech them, as they love their own ſouls, to fall in with them. (1.) Retire by yourſelves into ſome ſecret place, and there meditate on this your miſery. Believe it, and fix your thoughts on it. Let each put the queſtion to himſelf, How can I live in this ſtate? how can I die in it? how will I riſe again and ſtand before the tribunal of God in it? (2.) Conſider ſeriouſly the ſin of your nature, heart and life. A kindly ſight of wrath flows from a deep ſenſe of ſin. They who ſee themſelves exceeding ſinful, will find no great difficulty to perceive themſelves to be heirs of wrath. (3.) Labour to juſtify God in this matter. To quarrel with God about it, and to rage like a wild bull in a net, will but fix you the more in it. Humiliation of ſoul, before the Lord, is neceſſary for an eſcape. God will not ſell deliverance, but freely gives it to thoſe, who ſee themſelves altogether unworthy of his favour. Laſtly, Turn your eyes, O priſoners of hope, towards the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and embrace him, as he offereth himſelf in the goſpel. *There is no ſalvation in any other,* Acts iv. 12. God is a conſuming fire; ye are the children of wrath: if the Mediator interpoſe not betwixt him and you, ye are undone for ever. If ye would be ſafe, come under his ſhadow: one drop of that wrath cannot fall there, for he *delivereth us from the wrath to come,* 1 Theſſ. i. 10. Accept of him in his covenant, wherein he offereth himſelf to thee: and ſo thou ſhalt, as the captive woman, redeem thy life, by marrying the conqueror. His blood will quench that fire of wrath, which burns againſt thee: in the white raiment of his righteouſneſs thou ſhalt be ſafe; for no ſtorm of wrath can pierce it.

II. I ſhall drop a few words to the ſaints.

Firſt, *Remember ---that at that time* (namely, when ye were in your natural ſtate) *ye were without Chriſt,---having no hope, and without God in the world.* Call to mind that ſtate ye were in formerly; and review the miſery of it. There are five memorials I may thence give in to the whole aſſembly of the ſaints, who are no more children of wrath; but *heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt,* though as yet in their minority. (1.) Remember, that, in the day our Lord took you by the hand, ye were in no better condition than others. O what moved him to take you, when he paſſed by your neighbours! he found you children of wrath, even as others; but he did not leave you ſo. He came into the common priſon, where ye lay in your fetters, even as others: and, from amongſt the multitude of condemned malefactors, he picked out you, commanded your fetters to be taken off, put a pardon in your hand, and brought you into *the glorious liberty of the children of God,* while he left others in the devil's fetters. (2.) Remember, there was nothing in you to engage him to love you, in the day he firſt appeared for your deliverance. Ye were *children of wrath even as others;* fit for hell, and altogether unfit for heaven: yet the King brought you into the palace; the King's ſon made love to you, a condemned criminal, and eſpouſed you to himſelf, on the day in which ye might have been led forth to execution. *Even ſo, Father, for ſo it ſeemeth good in thy ſight,* Matth. xi. 26. (3.) Remember, ye were fitter to be loathed than loved in that day. Wonder that, when he ſaw you in your blood he looked not at you with abhorrence, and paſſed by you. Wonder, that ever ſuch a time could be a time of love, Ezek. xvi. 8. (4.) Remember ye are decked with borrowed feathers. It is his comelineſs which is upon you, verſ. 14. It was he that took off your priſon-garments, and cloathed you with robes of righteouſneſs, garments of ſalvation; garments wherewith ye are arrayed as *the lilies,* which *toil not, neither do they ſpin.* He took the chains from off your arms, the rope from about your neck: put you in ſuch a dreſs, as ye might be fit for the court of Heaven, even to eat at the Kings table. (5.) *Remember your faults this day,* as Pharaoh's butler, who had forgoten Joſeph. Mind how ye have forgotten, and how unkindly you have treated him, who remembred you in your low eſtate. *Is this your kindneſs to your friend?* In the day of your deliverance, did ye think ye could have thus requited him your Lord.

Secondly. Pity the children of wrath, the world that lies in wickedneſs. Can ye be unconcerned for them, ye who were once in the ſame condition? Ye have got aſhore indeed, but your fellows are yet in hazard of periſhing; and will not ye make them all poſſible help for their deliverance? What they are, ye ſometimes were. This may draw pity from you, and engage you to uſe all means for their recovery. See Tit. iii. 1. 2. 3.

Thirdly. Admire that matchleſs love, which brought you out of the ſtate of wrath. Chriſt's love was active love; he *loved thy ſoul from the pit of corruption.* It was no eaſy work to purchaſe the life of the condemned ſinner; but he gave his life for thy life. He gave his precious blood to quench that flame of wrath, which otherwiſe would have burnt thee up. Men get the beſt view of the ſtars from the bottom of a deep pit: and from this pit of miſery, into which thou waſt caſt by the firſt Adam, thou mayeſt get the beſt view of the Sun of righteouſneſs, in all its dimenſions. He is the ſecond Adam, who took thee out of the *horrible pit*, and out of the *miry clay.* How broad were the ſkirts of that love, which covered ſuch a multitude of ſins! Behold the length of it, reaching *from everlaſting to everlaſting*, Pſ. ciii. 17. the depth of it, going ſo low as to deliver thee *from the loweſt hell*, Pſal. lxxxvi. 13. the height of it, in raiſing thee up to *ſit in heavenly places*, Eph. ii. 6.

Fourthly. Be humble, carry low ſails, *walk ſoftly all your years.* Be not proud of your gifts, graces, privileges, or attainments: but remember ye *were children of wrath, even as others.* The peacock walks ſlowly, hangs down his ſtarry feathers, while he looks to his black feet. *Look ye to the hole of the pit, whence ye are digged;* and walk humbly, as it becomes free grace's debtors.

Laſtly. Be wholly for your Lord. Every wife is obliged to be dutiful to her huſband; but double ties lie upon her who was taken from a priſon, or a dunghill. If your Lord has delivered you from wrath, ye ought, upon that very account, to be wholly his; to act for him, to ſuffer for him, and to do whatever he calls you to. The ſaints have no reaſon to complain of their lot in the world, whatever it be. Well may they bear the croſs for him; by whom the curſe was born away from them. Well may they bear the wrath of men in his cauſe, who has freed them from the wrath of God; and cheerfully go to a fire for him, by whom hell-fire is quenched to them. Soul and body, and all thou hadſt in the world were ſometime under wrath: he has removed that wrath; ſhall not all theſe be at his ſervice? That thy ſoul is not overwhelmed with the wrath of God, is owing purely to Jeſus Chriſt; and ſhall it not then be a temple for his Spirit? That thy heart is not filled with horror and deſpair, is owing to him only; to whom then ſhould it be devoted, but to him alone? That thine eyes are not blinded with the ſmoke of the pit, thy hands are not fettered with chains of darkneſs, thy tongue is not broiling in the fire of hell, and thy feet are not ſtanding in that lake that burns with fire and brimſtone, is owing purely to Jeſus Chriſt: and ſhall not theſe eyes be employed for him, theſe hands act for him, that tongue ſpeak for him, and theſe feet ſpeedily run his errands? To him who believes that he was a child of wrath, even as others; but is now delivered by the bleſſed Jeſus: nothing will appear too much, to do or ſuffer for his deliverer, when he has a fair call to it.

III. To conclude with a word to all; let no man think ſlightly of ſin, which lays the ſinner open to the wrath of God. Let not the ſin of our nature, which wreathes the yoke of God's wrath, ſo early, about our necks, ſeem a ſmall thing in our eyes. Fear the Lord, becauſe of his dreadful wrath. Tremble at the thoughts of ſin, againſt which God has ſuch fiery indignation. Look on his wrath, and ſtand in awe, and ſin not. Do you think this is to preſs you to ſlaviſh fear? If it were ſo, one had better be a ſlave to God with a trembling heart, than a free man to the devil, with a ſeared conſcience, and a heart of adamant. But it is not ſo, you may love him, and thus fear him too; yea, ye ought to do it, though ye were ſaints of the firſt magnitude. See Pſal. cxix. 120. Matth. x. 28. Luke xii. 5. Heb. xii. 28. 29. Although ye have paſſed the gulph of wrath, being in Jeſus Chriſt; yet it is but reaſonable your hearts ſhiver, when you look back to it. Your ſin ſtill deſerves wrath, even as the ſins of others: and it would be terrible to be in a fiery furnace; although, by a miracle, we were ſo fenced againſt it, as that it could not harm us.

HEAD III.

Man's *utter inability* to recover himſelf.

ROMANS v. 6.

For when we were yet without ſtrength, in due time Chriſt died for the ungodly.

JOHN vi. 44.

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath ſent me, draw him.

We have now had a view of the total corruption of man's nature, and that load of wrath which lies on him, that gulf of miſery he is plunged into in his natural ſtate. But there is one part of his miſery that deſerves particular conſideration; namely, his *utter inability to recover himſelf*, the knowledge of which is neceſſary for the due humiliation of a ſinner. What I deſign here is only to propoſe a few things, whereby to convince the unregenerate man of this his inability; that he may ſee an abſolute need of Chriſt, and of the power of his grace.

As a man that is fallen into a pit, cannot be ſuppoſed to help himſelf out of it, but by one of two ways; either by doing all himſelf alone, or taking hold of, and improving the help offered him by others; ſo an unconverted man cannot be ſuppoſed to help himſelf out of that ſtate but either in the way of the law, or covenant of works, by doing all himſelf without Chriſt, or elſe in the way of the goſpel, or covenant of grace, by exerting his own ſtrength to lay hold upon, and to make uſe of the help offered him by a Saviour. But, alas! the unconverted man is dead in the pit, and cannot help himſelf either of theſe ways: not the firſt way; for the firſt text tells us that when our Lord came to help us, we were without ſtrength, unable to recover ourſelves. We were ungodly, therefore under a burden of guilt and wrath; yet without ſtrength, unable to ſtand under it; and unable to throw it off, or get from under it: ſo that all mankind had undoubtedly periſhed, had not Chriſt died for the ungodly, and brought help to them, who could never have recovered themſelves. But when Chriſt comes, and offereth help to ſinners, cannot they take it? cannot they improve help, when it comes to their hands? No; the ſecond text tells us, they cannot; *No man can come unto me*, (i. e. believe in me, John vi. 35.) *except the father draw him.* This is a drawing which enables them to come, who, till then, could not come; and therefore could not help themſelves, by improving the help offered. It is a drawing, which is always effectual; for it can be no leſs than hearing and learning of the Father, which whoſo partakes of, cometh to Chriſt, ver. 25. Therefore it is not drawing in the way of mere moral ſuaſion, which may be, yea, and always is, ineffectual. But it is drawing by mighty power, Eph. i. 19. abſolutely neceſſary for them that have no power in themſelves, to come and take hold of the offered help.

Hearken then, O unregenerate man, and be convinced, that as thou art in a moſt miſerable ſtate by nature; ſo thou art utterly unable to recover thyſelf any manner of way. Thou art ruined, and what way wilt thou go to work, to recover thyſelf? Which of the two ways wilt thou chuſe? Wilt thou try it alone, or wilt thou make uſe of help? Wilt thou fall on the way of works, or on the way of the goſpel? I know very well, thou wilt not ſo much as try the way of the goſpel, till once thou haſt found the recovery impracticable, in the way of the law. Therefore we ſhall begin where corrupt nature teaches men to begin, viz. at the way of the law of works.

I. Sinner, I would have thee believe that thy working will never effect it. Work, and do thy beſt; thou ſhalt never be able to work thyſelf out of this ſtate of corruption and wrath. Thou muſt have Chriſt, elſe thou ſhalt periſh eternally. It is only Chriſt in you, can be the hope of glory. But if thou wilt needs try it, then I muſt lay before thee, from the unalterable word of the living God, two things which thou muſt do for thyſelf. And if thou canſt do them, it muſt be yielded that thou art able to recover thyſelf: but if not, then thou canſt do nothing this way for thy recovery.

FIRST, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments*, Matth. xix. 17. That is, if thou wilt by doing, enter into life, then perfectly keep the ten commands; for the ſcope of theſe words is to beat down the pride of the man's heart, and to let him ſee an abſolute need of a Saviour, from the impoſſibility of keeping the law. The anſwer is given ſuitable to the addreſs. Our Lord checks him for his compliment, Good Maſter, ver. 16. telling him, *There is none good but one, that is God*, ver. 17. As if he had ſaid, You think yourſelf a good man and me another; but where goodneſs is ſpoken of, men and angels may vail their faces before the good God. And as to his queſtion, wherein he diſcovered his legal diſpoſition, Chriſt does not anſwer him, ſaying, *Believe and thou ſhalt be ſaved;* that would not have been ſo ſeaſonable in the caſe of one, who thought he could do well enough for himſelf, if he but knew *what thing he ſhould do:* but, ſuitable to the humour the man was in, he bids him *keep the commandments;* keep them nicely and accurately, as thoſe that watch malefactors in priſon, leſt any of them eſcape, and their life go for theirs. See then, O unregenerate man, what thou canſt do in this matter; for if thou wilt recover thyſelf in this way, thou muſt perfectly keep the commandments of God.

And, (1.) Thy obedience muſt be perfect, in reſpect of the principle of it; that is, thy ſoul, the principle of action, muſt be perfectly pure, and altogether without ſin. For the law requires all moral perfection, not only actual, but habitual: and ſo condemns original ſin; impurity of nature, as well as of actions. Now, if thou canſt bring this to paſs, thou ſhalt be able to anſwer that queſtion of Solomon's, ſo as never one of Adam's poſterity could yet anſwer it, Prov. xx. 9. *Who can ſay, I have made my heart clean.* But if thou canſt not, the very want of this perfection is a ſin, and ſo lays thee open to the curſe, and cuts thee off from life. Yea, it makes all thine actions, even thy beſt actions ſinful; *For who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?* Job xiv. 4. And doſt thou think by ſin, to help thyſelf out of ſin and miſery? (2.) Thy obedience muſt alſo be perfect in parts. It muſt be as broad as the whole law of God: if thou lackeſt one thing, thou art undone; for the law denounceth the curſe on him that continueth not in every thing written therein, Gal. iii. 10. Thou muſt give internal and external obedience to the whole law; keep all the commandments in heart and life. If thou breakeſt any one of them, that will inſure thy ruin. A vain thought or idle word, will ſtill ſhut thee up under the curſe. (3.) It muſt be perfect in reſpect of degrees; as was the obedience of Adam, while he ſtood in his innocence. This the law requires, and will accept of no leſs, Matth. xxii. 37. *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind.* If one degree of that love required by the law be wanting; if each part of thy obedience be not ſcrewed up to the greateſt height commanded; that want is a breach of the law, and ſo leaves thee ſtill under the curſe. One may bring as many buckets of water to a houſe that is on fire, as he is able to carry: and yet it may be conſumed; and will be ſo, if he bring not as many as will quench the fire. Even ſo, although thou ſhouldſt do what thou art able, in keeping the commands; if thou fail in the leaſt degree of obedience, which the law enjoins; thou art certainly ruined for ever: unleſs thou take hold of Chriſt, renouncing all thy righteouſneſs as filthy rags. See Rom. x. 5. Gal. iii. 10. Laſtly, It muſt be perpetual, as the man Chriſt's obedience was, who always did the things that pleaſed the Father; for the tenor of the law is, *Curſed is he that continueth not in all things written in the law to do them.* Hence, though Adam's obedience was for a while abſolutely perfect; yet, becauſe at length he tripped in one point, viz. in eating the forbidden fruit, he fell under the curſe of the law. If one ſhould live a dutiful ſubject to his prince, till the cloſe of his days, and then conſpire againſt him, he muſt die for his treaſon. Even ſo, though thou ſhouldſt, all the time of thy life, live in perfect obedience to the law of God; and only at the hour of death entertain a vain thought, or pronounce an idle word: that idle word, or vain thought, would blot out all thy former righteouſneſs, and ruin thee; namely, in this way, in which thou art ſeeking to recover thyſelf.

Now, ſuch is the obedience thou muſt perform, if thou wouldſt recover thyſelf in the way of the law. But, though thou ſhouldſt thus obey; the law ſtakes thee down in the ſtate of wrath, till another demand of it be ſatisfied, viz.

SECONDLY. Thou muſt *pay what thou oweſt.* It is undeniable thou art a ſinner: and whatever thou mayſt be in time to come, juſtice muſt be ſatisfied for thy ſin already committed. The honour of the law muſt be maintained, by thy ſuffering the denounced wrath. It may be thou haſt changed thy courſe of life, or art now reſolved to do it, and ſet about the keeping of the commands of God: but what haſt thou done, or what wilt thou do with the old debt? Your obedience to God, though it were perfect, is a debt due to him, for the time wherein it is performed; and can no more ſatisfy for former ſins, than a tenant's paying the current year's rent, can ſatisfy the maſter for all bygones. Can the paying of new debts acquit a man from old accounts? Nay, deceive not yourſelves, you will find theſe *laid up in ſtore with* God, *and ſealed up among his treaſures*, Deut. xxxii. 34. It remains then, that either thou muſt bear that wrath, to which for thy ſin thou art liable, according to the law; or elſe thou muſt acknowledge thou canſt not bear it, and thereupon have recourſe to the ſurety, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Let me now aſk thee, Art thou able to ſatisfy the juſtice of God? Canſt thou pay thy own debt? Surely not: for, ſeeing he is an infinite God, whom thou haſt offended; the puniſhment, being ſuited to the quality of the offence, muſt be infinite. But ſo it is, thy puniſhment or ſufferings for ſin cannot be infinite in value, ſeeing thou art a finite creature: therefore, they muſt be infinite in duration or continuance; that is, they muſt be eternal. And ſo all thy ſufferings in this world are but an earneſt of what thou muſt ſuffer in the world to come.

Now, ſinner, if thou canſt anſwer theſe demands, thou mayſt recover thyſelf in the way of the law. But art thou not conſcious of thy inability to do any of theſe things; much more, to do them all? yet if thou do not all, thou doſt nothing. Turn then to what courſe of life thou wilt, thou art ſtill in a ſtate of wrath. Screw up thy obedience to the greateſt height thou canſt; ſuffer what God lays upon thee, yea, add, if thou wilt, to the burden, and walk under all, without the leaſt impatience: yet all this will not ſatisfy the demands of the law; and therefore thou art ſtill a ruined creature. Alas! ſinner, what art thou doing, while thou ſtriveſt to help thyſelf; but doſt not receive, and unite with Jeſus Chriſt? Thou art labouring in the fire, wearying thyſelf for very vanity; labouring to enter into heaven by the door which Adam's ſin ſo bolted, as neither he, nor any of his loſt poſterity can ever enter by it. Doſt thou not ſee the flaming ſword of juſtice, keeping thee off from the tree of life? Doſt thou not hear the law denouncing a curſe on thee, for all thou art doing; even for thy obedience, thy prayers, thy tears, thy reformation of life, *&c.* becauſe, being under the law's dominion, thy beſt works are not ſo good, as it requires them to be, under the pain of the curſe? Believe it, Sirs, if you live and die out of Chriſt, without being actually united to him as the ſecond Adam, a life-giving ſpirit, and without coming under the covert of his atoning blood; though ye ſhould do the utmoſt that any man on earth can do, in keeping the commands of God, ye ſhall never ſee the face of God in peace. If you ſhould, from this moment, bid an eternal farewell to this world's joy, and all the affairs thereof; and henceforth buſy yourſelves with nothing, but the ſalvation of your ſouls: if you ſhould go into ſome wilderneſs, live upon the graſs of the field, and be companions to dragons and owls; if you ſhould retire to ſome dark cavern of the earth, and weep there for your ſins, until you have wept yourſelves blind, yea, wept out all the moiſture of your body; if ye ſhould confeſs with your tongue, untill it cleave to the roof of your mouth; pray, till your knees grow hard as horns; faſt, till your body become like a ſkeleton; and after all this, give it to be burnt: the word is gone out of the Lord's mouth in righteouſneſs, and cannot return, you ſhould periſh for ever, notwithſtanding of all this, as not being in Chriſt, John xiv. 6. *No man cometh unto the Father, but by me,* Acts iv. 12. *Neither is there ſalvation in any other.* Mark xvi. 6. *He that believeth not ſhall be damned.*

Object. But God is a merciful God, and he knows we are not able to anſwer theſe demands: we hope therefore to be ſaved, if we do as well as we can, and keep the commands as well as we are able. *Anſw.* (1.) Though thou art able to do many things, thou art not able to do one thing aright: thou canſt do nothing acceptable to God, being out of Chriſt, John xv. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing.* An unrenewed man, as thou art, can do nothing but ſin; as we have already evinced. Thy beſt actions are ſin, and ſo they increaſe thy debt to juſtice: how then can it be expected they ſhould leſſen it? (2.) If God ſhould offer to ſave men, upon condition that they did all they could do, in obedience to his commands, we have ground to think, that theſe who would betake themſelves to that way, ſhould never be ſaved: for where is the man, that does as well as he can? Who ſees not many falſe ſteps he has made, which he might have evited? There are ſo many things to be done, ſo many temptations to carry us out of the road of duty, and our nature is ſo very apt to be ſet on fire of hell, that we would ſurely fail, even in ſome point, that is within the compaſs of our natural abilities. But, (3.) Though thou ſhouldſt do all thou art able to do, in vain doſt thou hope to be ſaved in that way. What word of God is this hope of thine founded on? It is neither founded on law nor goſpel; and therefore it is but a deluſion. It is not founded on the goſpel; for the goſpel leads the ſoul out of itſelf, to Jeſus Chriſt for all; and it eſtabliſheth the law, Rom. iii. 31. Whereas this hope of yours cannot be eſtabliſhed, but on the ruins of the law, which God will magnify and make honourable. And hence it appears, that it is not founded on the law neither. When God ſet Adam a working for happineſs to himſelf, and his poſterity, perfect obedience was the condition required of him; and a curſe was denounced in caſe of diſobedience. The law being broken by him, he and his poſterity were ſubjected to the penalty, for ſin committed; and withal ſtill bound to perfect obedience: for it is abſurd to think, that man's ſinning, and ſuffering for his ſin, ſhould free him from his duty of obedience to his Creator. When Chriſt came in the room of the elect, to purchaſe their ſalvation, the ſame were the terms. Juſtice had the elect under arreſt: if he minds to deliver them, the terms are known. He muſt ſatisfy for their ſin, by ſuffering the puniſhment due to it; he muſt do what they cannot do, to wit, obey the law perfectly; and ſo fulfil all righteouſneſs. Accordingly, all this he did, and ſo became *the end of the law for righteouſneſs, to every one that believeth,* Rom. x. 4. And now doſt thou think, God will abate of theſe terms to thee, when his own Son got no abatement of them? Expect it not, though thou ſhouldſt beg it with tears of blood; for if they prevailed, they behoved to prevail againſt the truth, juſtice, and honour of God, Gal. iii. 10. *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law to do them,* ver. 12. *And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doth them, ſhall live in them.* It is true, that God is merciful: but cannot he be merciful, unleſs he ſave you in a way that is neither conſiſtent with his law, nor goſpel? Hath not his goodneſs and mercy ſufficiently appeared, in ſending the Son of his love, to do *what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the fleſh?* He has provided help for them that cannot help themſelves: but thou, inſenſible of thine own weakneſs, wilt needs think to recover thyſelf by thine own works, while thou art no more able to do it, than to remove mountains of braſs out of their place. Wherefore I conclude, thou art utterly unable to recover thyſelf by the way of works, or of the law. O that thou wouldſt conclude the ſame concerning thyſelf.

II. Let us try next, what the ſinner can do to recover himſelf, in the way of the goſpel. It is likely, thou thinkeſt, that howbeit thou canſt not do all by thyſelf alone; yet Jeſus Chriſt offering thee help, thou canſt of thyſelf embrace it, and uſe it to thy recovery. But, O ſinner, be convinced of thine abſolute need of the grace of Chriſt: for truly, there is help offered, but thou canſt not accept of it: there is a rope caſt out to hale ſhipwrecked ſinners to land: but, alas! they have no hands to catch hold of it. They are like infants expoſed in the open field, that muſt ſtarve, though their food be lying by them, unleſs one put it into their mouths. To convince natural men of this, let it be conſidered,

Firſt, That although Chriſt is offered in the goſpel, yet they cannot believe in him. Saving faith is the faith of God's elect; the ſpecial gift of God to them, wrought in them by his Spirit. Salvation is offered to them that will believe in Chriſt, but *how can ye believe?* John v. 44. It is offered to theſe that will come to Chriſt; but *no man can come unto him, except the Father draw him.*

It is offered to them that will look to him, as liſted up on the pole of the goſpel, Iſ. xlv. 22. but the natural man is ſpiritually blind, Rev. iii. 17. and as to the things of the Spirit of God, he *cannot know them*, for they are *ſpiritually diſcerned*, 1 Cor. ii. 14. Nay, *whoſoever will*, he is welcome; *let him come*, Rev. xxii. 17. but there muſt be *a day of power* on the ſinner, before he will be *willing*, Pſal. cx. 3.

Secondly, Man naturally has nothing, wherewithal to improve, to his recovery, the help brought in by the goſpel. He is caſt away in a ſtate of wrath; but is bound hand and foot, ſo that he cannot lay hold of the cords of love, thrown out to him in the goſpel. The moſt ſkilful artificer cannot work without inſtruments; nor can the moſt cunning muſician play well on an inſtrument that is out of tune. How can one believe, how can he repent, whoſe underſtanding is darkneſs, Eph. v. 8. whoſe heart is a ſtony heart, inflexible, inſenſible, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. whoſe affections are wholly diſordered and diſtempered; who is averſe to good, and bent to evil? The arms of natural abilities are too ſhort, to reach ſupernatural help: hence thoſe who moſt excel in them, are oft-times moſt eſtranged from ſpiritual things, Matth. xi. 25. *Thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent.*

Thirdly, Man cannot work a ſaving change on himſelf; but ſo changed he muſt be, elſe he can neither believe nor repent, nor ever ſee heaven. No action can be without a ſuitable principle. Believing, repenting, and the like, are the product of the new nature; and can never be produced by the old corrupt nature. Now, what can the natural man do in this matter? He muſt be regenerate, *begotten again unto a lively hope*: but as the child cannot be active in his own generation, ſo a man cannot be active, but paſſive only, in his own regeneration. The heart is ſhut againſt Chriſt: man cannot open it, only God can do it by his grace, Acts xvi. 14. He is *dead in ſin*: he muſt be quickened, raiſed out of his grave; who can do this but God himſelf? Eph. ii. 1. 5. Nay, he muſt be *created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works*, Eph. ii. 10. Theſe are works of omnipotency, and can be done by no leſs power.

Fourthly, Man, in his depraved ſtate, is under an utter inability to do any thing truly good, as was cleared before at large: how then can he obey the goſpel? His nature is the very reverſe of the goſpel: how can he, of himſelf fall in with that device of ſalvation, and accept the offered remedy? The corruption of man's nature infallibly concludes his utter inability, to recover himſelf any manner of way: and whoſo is convinced of the one, muſt needs admit the other; for they ſtand and fall together. Were all the purchaſe of Chriſt offered to the unregenerate man, for one good thought, he cannot command it, 2 Cor. iii. 5. *Not that we are ſufficient of ourſelves, to think any thing as of ourſelves.* Were it offered on condition of a good word, yet *how can ye being evil, ſpeak good things?* Matth. xii. 35. Nay, were it left to yourſelves, to chuſe what is eaſieſt, Chriſt himſelf tells you, John xv. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing.*

Laſtly, The natural man cannot but reſiſt the Lord, offering to help him; howbeit that reſiſtance is infallibly overcome in the elect, by converting grace. Can the ſtony heart chuſe but reſiſt the ſtroke? There is not only an inability, but an enmity and obſtinacy in man's will by nature. God knows, O natural man, (whether thou knoweſt it or not,) that *thou art obſtinate, and thy neck is an iron ſinew, and thy brow braſs*, Iſ. xlviii. 4. and cannot be overcome, but by him, who hath *broken the gates of braſs, and cut the bars of iron in ſunder*. Hence is there ſuch hard work in converting of a ſinner. Sometimes he ſeems to be caught in the net of the goſpel; yet quickly he ſlips away again. The hook catcheth hold of him; but he ſtruggles, till getting free of it, he makes away with a bleeding wound. When good hopes are conceived of him, by theſe that travel in birth, for the forming of Chriſt in him; there is oft-times nothing brought forth but wind. The deceitful heart makes many a ſhift to avoid a Saviour, and to cheat the man of his eternal happineſs. Thus the natural man lies ſunk in a ſtate of ſin and wrath, utterly unable to recover himſelf.

Object. (1.) If we be under an utter inability to do any good, how can God require us to do it? *Anſw.* God making man upright, Eccl. vii. 29. gave him a power to do every thing he ſhould require of him: this power man loſt by his own fault. We were bound to ſerve God and to do whatſoever he commanded us, as being his creatures; and alſo we were under the ſuperadded tie of a covenant, for that effect. Now, we having, by our own fault, diſabled ourſelves; ſhall God loſe his right of requiring our taſk, becauſe we have thrown away the ſtrength he gave us, wherewithal to perform it? Has the creditor no right to require payment of his money, becauſe the debtor has ſquandered it away, and is not able to pay him? Truly, if God can require no more of us than we are able to do, we need no more to ſave us from wrath, but to make ourſelves unable for every duty, and to incapacitate ourſelves for ſerving of God any manner of way, as profane men frequently do: and ſo the deeper one is immerſed in ſin, he will be the more ſecure from wrath; for where God can require no duty of us, we do not ſin in omitting it; and where there is no ſin, there can be no wrath. (As to what may be urged by the unhumbled ſoul, againſt the putting of our ſtock in Adam's hand; the righteouſneſs of that diſpenſation was cleared before.) But moreover, the unrenewed man is daily throwing away the very remains of natural abilities; that light and ſtrength which are to be found amongſt the ruins of mankind. Nay, farther, he will not believe his own utter inability to help himſelf; ſo that out of his own mouth he will be condemned. Even thoſe who make their natural impotency to good, a covert to their ſloth, do, with others, delay the work of turning to God from time to time; under convictions, make large promiſes of reformation, which afterward they never regard; and delay their repentance to a death-bed, as if they could help themſelves in a moment, which ſpeaks them to be far from a due ſenſe of their natural inability, whatever they pretend.

Now, if God can require of men the duty they are not able to do; he can in juſtice puniſh them for their not doing it, notwithſtanding of their inability. If he have power to exact the debt of obedience, he has alſo power to caſt the inſolvent debtor into priſon, for his not paying of it. Further, though unregenerate men have no gracious abilities; yet they want not natural abilities, which nevertheleſs they will not improve. There are many things they can do, which they do not, they will not do them; and therefore their condemnation will be juſt. Nay, all their inability to good is voluntary; they will not come to Chriſt, John v. 40. They will not repent, they will die, Ezek. xviii. 15. So they will be juſtly condemned; becauſe they will not turn to God, nor come to Chriſt; but love their chains better than their liberty, and darkneſs rather than light, John iii. 19.

Object. (2.) Why do you then preach Chriſt to us; call us to come to him, to believe, repent, and uſe the means of ſalvation? *Anſw.* Becauſe it is your duty ſo to do. It is your duty to accept of Chriſt, as he is offered in the goſpel; to repent of your ſins, and to be holy in all manner of converſation: theſe things are commanded you of God; and his command, not your ability, is the meaſure of your duty. Moreover, theſe calls and exhortations are the means, that God is pleaſed to make uſe of, for converting his elect, and working grace in their hearts: to them, *faith cometh by hearing*, Rom. x. 17. while they are as unable to help themſelves as the reſt of mankind are. Upon very good grounds may we, at the command of God, who raiſeth the dead, go to their graves and cry in his name, *Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee light*, Eph. v. 14. And ſeeing the elect are not to be known, and diſtinguiſhed from others before converſion: as the ſun ſhines on the blind man's face, and the rain falls on the rocks as well as on the fruitful plains; ſo we preach Chriſt to all, and ſhoot the arrow at a venture, which God himſelf directs, as he ſees meet. Moreover, theſe calls and exhortations are not altogether in vain, even to thoſe that are not converted by them. Such perſons may be convinced, though they be not converted: although they be not ſanctified by theſe means; yet they may be reſtrained by them, from running into that exceſs of wickedneſs, which otherwiſe they would arrive at. The means of grace ſerve, as it were, to embalm many dead ſouls which are never quickened by them: though they do not reſtore them to life; yet they keep them from ſmelling ſo rank as otherwiſe they would do. Finally, Though ye cannot recover yourſelves, nor take hold of the ſaving help offered to you in the goſpel: yet even by the power of nature, ye may uſe the outward and ordinary means, whereby Chriſt communicates the benefits of redemption to ruined ſinners; who are utterly unable to recover themſelves out of the ſtate of ſin and wrath. Ye may and can, if ye pleaſe, do many things, that would ſet you in a fair way for help from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Ye may go ſo far on, as to be *not far from the kingdom of God*, as the diſcreet ſcribe had done, Mark xii. 34. though (it would ſeem) he was deſtitute of ſupernatural abilities. Though ye cannot cure yourſelves; yet ye may come to the pool, where many ſuch diſeaſed perſons as ye are, have been cured: though ye have none to put you into it, yet ye may lie at the ſide of it: and *who knows but the Lord may return, and leave a bleſſing behind him?* as in the caſe of the impotent man recorded, John v. 5. 6. 7. 8. I hope Satan does not chain you to your houſes, nor ſtake you down in your fields on the Lord's day; but ye are at liberty, and can wait at *the poſts of wiſdom's doors*, if ye will. And when ye come thither, he doth not beat drums at your ears, that ye cannot hear what is ſaid: there is no force upon you, obliging you to apply all you hear to others; ye may apply to yourſelves what belongs to your ſtate and condition: and when ye go home, ye are not fettered in your houſes, where perhaps no religious diſcourſe is to be heard; but ye may retire to ſome ſeparate place, where ye can meditate, and poſe your conſcience with pertinent queſtions, upon what ye have heard. Ye are not poſſeſſed with a dumb devil, that ye cannot get your mouths opened in prayer to God. Ye are not ſo driven out of your beds to your worldly buſineſs, and from your worldly buſineſs to your beds again; but ye might, if ye would, beſtow ſome prayers to God upon the caſe of your periſhing ſouls. Ye may examine yourſelves as to the ſtate of your ſouls, in a ſolemn manner, as in the preſence of God; ye may diſcern that ye have no grace, and that ye are loſt and undone without it; and ye may cry unto God for it. Theſe things are within the compaſs of natural abilities, and may be practiſed where there is no grace. It muſt aggravate your guilt, that you will not be at ſo much pains about the ſtate and caſe of your precious ſouls. And if ye do not what ye can do; ye will be condemned, not only for your want of grace, but for your deſpiſing of it.

Object. (3.) But all this is needleſs, ſeeing we are utterly unable to help ourſelves out of the ſtate of ſin and wrath. *Anſw.* Give not place to that deluſion, which puts aſunder what God hath joined, namely, the uſe of means, and a ſenſe of our own impotency. If ever the Spirit of God graciouſly influence your ſouls, ye will become thoroughly ſenſible of your abſolute inability, and yet enter upon a vigorous uſe of means. Ye will do for yourſelves, as if ye were to do all; and yet over look all ye do, as if ye had done nothing. Will ye do nothing for yourſelves, becauſe ye cannot do all? Lay down no ſuch impious concluſion againſt your own ſouls. Do what you can; and, it may be, while ye are doing what ye can for yourſelves, God will do for you what ye cannot. *Underſtandeſt thou what thou readeſt?* ſaid Philip to the Eunuch: *How can I*, ſaith he, *except ſome man ſhould guide me?* Acts viii. 30. 31. He could not underſtand the ſcripture he read; yet he could read it: he did what he could, he read; and, while he was reading, God ſent him an interpreter. The Iſraelites were in a great ſtrait at the Red ſea: and how could they help themſelves, when upon the one hand were mountains, and on the other the enemies garriſon; when Pharaoh and his hoſt were behind them, and the Red ſea before them? what could they do? *Speak unto the children of Iſrael*, ſaith the Lord to Moſes, *that they go forward*, Exod. xiv. 15. For what end ſhould they go forward? Can they make a paſſage to themſelves through the ſea? No; but let them go forward, ſaith the Lord; though they cannot turn ſea to dry land, yet they can go forward to the ſhore: and ſo they did; and when they did what they could, God did for them what they could not do.

Queſt. Has God promiſed to convert and ſave them, who, in the uſe of means, do what they can towards their own relief? *Anſw.* We may not ſpeak wickedly for God: natural men being *ſtrangers to the covenant of promiſe*, Eph. ii. 12. have no ſuch promiſe made to them. Nevertheleſs they do not act rationally, unleſs they exert the powers they have, and do what they can. For, (1.) It is poſſible this courſe may ſucceed with them. If ye do what ye can, it may be, God will do for you what you cannot do for yourſelves. This is ſufficient to determine a man, in a matter of the utmoſt importance, ſuch as this is, Acts viii. 22. *Pray God, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee*, Joel ii. 14. *Who knoweth if he will return?* If ſucceſs may be, the trial ſhould be. If, in a wreck at ſea, all the ſailors and paſſengers had betaken themſelves each to a broken board for ſafety; and one of them ſhall ſee all the reſt periſh, notwithſtanding of their utmoſt endeavours to ſave themſelves: yet the very poſſibility of eſcaping by that means, would determine that one, ſtill to do his beſt with his board. Why then do not ye reaſon with yourſelves, as the four lepers did, who ſat at the gate of Samaria? 2 Kings vii. 3. 4. Why do ye not ſay, If we ſit ſtill, not doing what we can, we die; let us put it to a trial; if we be ſaved, we ſhall live; if not, we ſhall but die? (2.) It is probable this courſe may ſucceed. God is good and merciful; he loves to ſurprize men with his grace, and is often *found of them that ſought him not*, Iſ. lxv. 1. If ye do this, ye are ſo far in the road of your duty: and ye are uſing the means, which the Lord is wont to bleſs, for mens ſpiritual recovery: ye lay yourſelves in the way of the great Phyſician; and ſo it is probable ye may be healed. Lydia went, with others to the place *where prayer was wont to be made; and the Lord opened her heart*, Acts xvi. 13. 14. Ye plow and ſow, though no body can tell you for certain, that ye will get ſo much as your ſeed again: ye uſe means for the recovery of your health, though ye are not ſure they will ſucceed. In theſe caſes probability determines you; and why not in this alſo? Importunity, we ſee, does very much with men: therefore pray, meditate, deſire help of God; be much at the throne of grace, ſupplicating for grace; and do not faint. Though God regard not you, who, in your preſent ſtate, are but one maſs of ſin, univerſally depraved, and vitiated in all the powers of your ſoul: yet he may regard his own ordinance. Tho' he regards not your prayers, your meditations, &c. yet he may regard prayer, meditation, and the like means of his own appointment, and ſo bleſs them to you. Wherefore, if ye will not do what ye can; ye are not only dead, but ye declare yourſelves unworthy of eternal life.

To conclude, Let the ſaints admire the freedom and power of grace, which came to them in their helpleſs condition, made their chains fall off, the iron gate to open to them, raiſed the fallen creatures; and brought them out of the ſtate of ſin and wrath, wherein they would have lain and periſhed, had they not been mercifully viſited. Let the natural man be ſenſible of his utter inability to recover himſelf. Know thou art without ſtrength; and canſt not come to Chriſt till thou be drawn. Thou art loſt, and canſt not help thyſelf. This may ſhake the foundation of thy hopes, who never ſaweſt thy abſolute need of Chriſt, and his grace; but thinkeſt to ſhift for thyſelf by thy civility, morality, drowſy wiſhes and duties; and by a faith and repentance, which have ſprung up out of thy natural powers, without the power and efficacy of the grace of Chriſt. O be convinced of thy abſolute need of Chriſt, and his overcoming grace: believe thy utter inability to recover thyſelf; that ſo thou mayſt be humbled, ſhaken out of thy ſelf-confidence and lie down in duſt and aſhes, groaning out thy miſerable caſe before the Lord. A kindly ſenſe of thy natural impotency, the impotency of depraved human nature, would be a ſtep towards a delivery.

Thus far of man's natural ſtate, the ſtate of entire depravation.

STATE III.

NAMELY,

The STATE of GRACE, or BEGUN RECOVERY.

HEAD I.

REGENERATION.

1 PETER i. 23.

Being born again, not of corruptible ſeed, but of incorruptible; by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

WE proceed now to the *ſtate of grace*, the ſtate of *begun recovery* of human nature, into which all that ſhall partake of eternal happineſs, are tranſlated, ſooner or later, while in this world. It is the reſult of a gracious change, made upon thoſe who ſhall inherit eternal life; which change may be taken up in theſe two. (1.) In oppoſition to their natural real ſtate, the ſtate of corruption, there is a change made upon them in regeneration; whereby their nature is changed. (2.) In oppoſition to their natural relative ſtate, the ſtate of wrath, there is a change made upon them, in their union with the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; by which they are ſet beyond the reach of condemnation. Theſe therefore, namely, regeneration, and union with Chriſt, I deſign to handle, as the great and comprehenſive changes on a ſinner, conſtituting him in the ſtate of grace.

The firſt of theſe we have in the text; together with the outward and ordinary means, by which it is brought about. The apoſtle here, to excite the ſaints to the ſtudy of holineſs, and particularly of brotherly love, puts them in mind of their ſpiritual original. He tells them, they were born again; and that of one *incorruptible ſeed, the word of God.* This ſpeaks them to be brethren, partakers of the ſame new nature; which is the root from which holineſs, and particularly brotherly love, doth ſpring. We are once born ſinners; we muſt be born again, that we may be ſaints. The ſimple world ſignifies *to be begotten;* and ſo it may be read, Matth. xi. 11. *to be conceived*, Matth. i. 20. and *to be born*, Matth. ii. 1. Accordingly the compound word uſed in the text, may be taken in its full latitude, the laſt notion preſuppoſing the two former: and ſo regeneration is a ſupernatural real change on the whole man, fitly compared to natural or corporal generation, as will afterwards appear. The ordinary means of regeneration called the ſeed, whereof the new creature is formed, is not corruptible ſeed. Of ſuch indeed our bodies are generated: but the ſpiritual ſeed, of which the new creature is generated, is incorruptible; namely, *the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.* The ſound of the word of God paſſeth, even as other ſounds do: but the word laſteth, liveth and abideth, in reſpect of its everlaſting effects, on all upon whom it operates. This *word, which by the goſpel is preached unto you.* (verſ. 25.) impregnated by the Spirit of God, is the means of regeneration; and by it are dead ſinners raiſed to life.

DOCT. *All men in the ſtate of grace are born again.* All gracious perſons, namely, ſuch as are in a ſtate of favour with God, and endowed with gracious qualities and diſpoſitions, are regenerate perſons. In diſcourſing this ſubject, I ſhall ſhew what regeneration is; next, Why it is ſo called; and then apply the doctrine.

Of the nature of regeneration.

I. For the better underſtanding of the nature of regeneration, take this along with you in the firſt place; that as there are falſe conceptions in nature, ſo there are alſo in grace: and by theſe many are deluded, miſtaking ſome partial changes made upon them for this great and thorough change. To remove ſuch miſtakes, let theſe few things be conſidered. (1.) Many call the church their mother, whom God will not own to be his children, Cant. i. 6. *My mother's children* (i. e. falſe brethren) *were angry with me.* All that are baptized are not born again. Simon was baptized, yet ſtill *in the gall of bitterneſs, and in the bond of iniquity*, Acts viii. 13. 23. Where Chriſtianity is the religion of the country, many will be called by the name of Chriſt, who have no more of him but the name: and no wonder, ſeeing the devil had his goats among Chriſt's ſheep, in theſe places where but few profeſſed the Chriſtian religion; 1 John ii. 12. *They went out from us, but they were not of us.* (2.) Good education is not regeneration. Education may chain up mens luſts, but cannot change their hearts. A wolf is ſtill a ravenous beaſt, though it be in chains. Joaſh was very devout during the life of his good tutor Jehoiada; but afterward he quickly ſhewed what ſpirit he was of, by his ſudden apoſtaſy, 2 Chron. xxiv. 2. 17. 18. Good example is of mighty influence to change the outward man: but that change often goes off, when one changes his company; of which the world affords many ſad inſtances. (3.) A turning from open profanity, to civility and ſobriety, falls ſhort of this ſaving change. Some are, for a while, very looſe, eſpecially in their younger years: but at length they reform, and leave their profane courſes. Here is a change, yet but ſuch an one as may be found in men utterly void of the grace of God, and whoſe righteouſneſs is ſo far from *exceeding*, that it doth not come up to the *righteouſneſs of the ſcribes and Phariſees.* (4.) One may engage in all the outward duties of religion, and yet not be born again. Though lead be caſt into various ſhapes, it remains ſtill but a baſe metal. Men may *eſcape the pollutions of the world*, and yet be but dogs and ſwine, 2 Pet. ii. 20. 22. All the external acts of religion are within the compaſs of natural abilities. Yea, hypocrites may have the counterfeit of all the graces of the Spirit: for we read of true holineſs, Eph. iv. 23. and faith unfeigned, 1 Tim. i. 5.; which ſhews us, that there is a counterfeit holineſs, and a feigned faith. (5.) Men may advance to a great deal of ſtrictneſs in their own way of religion; and yet be ſtrangers to the new-birth, Acts xxvi. 5. *After the moſt ſtraiteſt ſect of our religion, I lived a Phariſee.* Nature has its own unſanctified ſtrictneſs in religion. The Phariſees had ſo much of it, that they looked on Chriſt as little better than a mere libertine. A man whoſe conſcience hath been awakened, and who lives under the ſelf influence of the covenant of works, what will he not do that is within the compaſs of natural abilities? It was a truth, though it came out of a helliſh mouth, that *ſkin for ſkin, all that a man hath will he give for his life*, Job ii. 4. (6.) One may have ſharp ſoul-exerciſe and pangs, and yet die in the birth. Many *have been in pain*, that have but *as it were brought forth wind*. There may be ſore pangs and throws of conſcience, which turn to nothing at laſt. Pharaoh and Simon Magus had ſuch convictions, as made them deſire the prayers of others for them. Judas repented himſelf; and under terrors of conſcience, gave back his ill-gotten pieces of ſilver. All is not gold that gliſters. Trees may bloſſom fairly in the ſpring, on which no fruit is to be found in the harveſt: and ſome have ſharp ſoul-exerciſes, which are nothing but foretaſtes of hell.

The new-birth, howſoever in appearance hopefully begun, may be marred two ways. Firſt, Some, like Zarah, Gen. xxxviii. 28. 29. are brought to the birth, but go back again. They have ſharp convictions for a while: but theſe go off, and they turn as careleſs about their ſalvation, as profane as ever; and uſually worſe than ever; *their laſt ſtate is worſe than their firſt*, Matth. xii. 45. They get awakening grace, but not converting grace; and that goes off by degrees, as the light of the declining day, till it iſſue in midnight darkneſs. Secondly, Some, like Iſhmael, come forth too ſoon; they are born before the time of the promiſe, Gen. xvi. 2. compare Gal. iv. 22. and downward. They take up with a mere law-work, and ſtay not till the time of the promiſe of the goſpel. They ſnatch at conſolation, not waiting till it be given them; and fooliſhly draw their comfort from the law that wounded them. They apply the healing plaiſter to themſelves, before their wound be ſufficiently ſearched. The law, that rigorous huſband, ſeverely beats them, and throws in curſes and vengeance upon their ſouls: then they fall a reforming, praying, mourning, promiſing, and vowing, till this ghoſt be laid; which done, they fall aſleep again in the arms of the law: but they are never ſhaken out of themſelves and their own righteouſneſs, nor brought forward to Jeſus Chriſt.

Laſtly, There may be a wonderful moving of the affections, in ſouls that are not at all touched with regenerating grace. Where there is no grace, there may notwithſtanding be a flood of tears, as in Eſau, who *found no place of repentance, though he ſought it carefully with tears*, Heb. xii. 17. There may be great flaſhes of joy; as in the hearers of the word, repreſented in the parable by the ſtony ground, who *anon with joy receive it*, Matth. xiii. 20. There may alſo be great deſires after good things, and great delight in them too; as in theſe hypocrites deſcribed, Iſ. lviii. 2. *Yet they ſeek me daily, and delight to know my ways ;---they take delight in approaching to God.* See how high they may ſometimes ſtand, who yet fall away, Heb. vi. 4. 5. 6. They may be *enlightened, taſte of the heavenly gift, be partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, taſte the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come.* Common operations of the divine Spirit, like a land-flood, make a ſtrange turning of things upſide down: and when they are over, all run again in the ordinary channel. All theſe things may be, where the ſanctifying Spirit of Chriſt never reſts upon the ſoul; but the ſtony heart ſtill remains; and in that caſe theſe affections cannot but wither, becauſe they have no root.

But regeneration is a real thorough change, whereby the man is made a new creature, 2 Cor. v. 17. The Lord God makes the creature a new creature, as the goldſmith melts down the veſſel of diſhonour, and makes it a veſſel of honour. Man is, in reſpect of his ſpiritual ſtate, altogether disjointed by the fall; every faculty of the ſoul is, as it were, diſlocate: in regeneration the Lord looſeth every joint, and ſets it right again. Now this change made in regeneration is,

1. A change of qualities or diſpoſitions: it is not a change of the ſubſtance, but of the qualities of the ſoul. Vitious qualities are removed, and the contrary diſpoſitions are brought in, in their room. *The old man is put off*, Eph. iv. 22. *the new man put on*, ver. 24. Man loſt none of the rational faculties of his ſoul by ſin: he had an underſtanding ſtill, but it was darkened; he had ſtill a will, but it was contrary to the will of God. So in regeneration, there is not a new ſubſtance created, but new qualities are infuſed; light inſtead of darkneſs, righteouſneſs inſtead of unrighteouſneſs.

2. It is a ſupernatural change; he that is *born again*, is *born of the Spirit*, John iii. 5. Great changes may be made, by the power of nature, eſpecially when aſſiſted by external revelation. And nature may be ſo elevated by the common influences of the Spirit, that one may thereby be *turned into another man*, (as Saul was, 1 Sam. x. 6.) who yet never becomes *a new man*. But in regeneration, nature itſelf is changed, and we become *partakers of the divine nature*; and this muſt needs be a ſupernatural change. How can we that are *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*, renew ourſelves, more than a dead man can raiſe himſelf out of his grave? Who but the ſanctifying Spirit of Chriſt, can form Chriſt in a ſoul, changing it into the ſame image? Who, but the Spirit of ſanctification can give the new heart? Well may we ſay, when we ſee a man thus changed, *This is the finger of God.*

3. It is a change into the likeneſs of God, 2 Cor. iii. 18. *We-----beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image.* Every thing that generates, generates its like: the child bears the image of the parent; and they that are born of God, bear God's image. Man aſpiring to be as God, made himſelf like the devil. In his natural ſtate he reſembles the devil, as a child doth the father, John viii. 44. *Ye are of your father the devil.* But when this happy change comes, that image of Satan is defaced and the image of God reſtored. Chriſt himſelf, who is the brightneſs of his Father's glory, is the pattern, after which the new creature is made, Rom. viii. 29. *For whom he did foreknow, he alſo did predeſtinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.* Hence he is ſaid to be formed in the regenerate, Gal. iv. 19.

4. It is an univerſal change; *all things become new*, 2 Cor. v. 17. It is a bleſſed leaven, that leavens the whole lump, the whole ſpirit, and ſoul and body. Original ſin infects the whole man; and regenerating grace, which is the ſalve, goes as far as the ſore. This fruit of the Spirit is in all goodneſs; goodneſs of the mind, goodneſs of the will, goodneſs of the affections, goodneſs of the whole man; One gets not only a new head, to know religion, or a new tongue to talk of it; but a new heart to love and embrace it, in the whole of his converſation. When the Lord opens the ſluice of grace on the ſoul's new-birth-day, the waters run through the whole man, to purify and make him fruitful. In theſe natural changes ſpoken of before, there are, as it were, pieces of new cloth put into an old garment: a new life ſewed to an old heart; but the gracious change is a thorough change, a change both of heart and life.

5. Yet it is but an imperfect change. Though every part of the man is renewed, there is no part of him perfectly renewed. As an infant has all the parts of a man

but none of them are come to their perfect growth; ſo regeneration brings a perfection of parts, to be brought forward in the gradual advances of ſanctification, 1 Pet. ii. 2. *As new born babes deſire the ſincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.* Although in regeneration, there is a heavenly light let into the mind; yet there is ſtill ſome darkneſs there; though the will is renewed, it is not perfectly renewed; there is ſtill ſome of the old inclination to ſin remaining: and thus it will be, till that which is in part be done away, and the light of glory come. Adam was created at his full ſtature; but they that are born, muſt have their time to grow up: ſo theſe that are born again, do come forth into the new world of grace, but imperfectly holy; though Adam being created upright, was at the ſame time perfectly righteous, without the leaſt mixture of ſinful imperfection.

Laſtly, Neverthleſs, it is a laſting change, which never goes off. The ſeed is incorruptible, ſaith the text; and ſo is the creature that is formed of it. The life given in regeneration, whatever decays it may fall under, can never be utterly loſt. *His ſeed remaineth in him* who *is born of God*, 1 John iii. 19. Though the branches ſhould be cut down, the root ſhall abide in the earth; and being watered with the dew of heaven, ſhall ſprout again: for *the root of the righteous ſhall not be moved*, Prov. xii. 3.

But to come to particulars,

First, In regeneration the mind is ſavingly enlightened. There is a new light let into the underſtanding; ſo that they who were *ſometime darkneſs, are now light in the Lord*, Eph. v. 8. The beams of the light of life, make their way into the dark dungeon of the heart: then the night is over, and the morning-light is come, which will ſhine more and more unto the perfect day. Now the man is illuminated,

1. In the knowledge of God. He has far other thoughts of God, than ever he had before, Hoſ. ii. 20. *I will even betrothe thee unto me in faithfulneſs, and thou ſhalt know the Lord.* The Spirit of the Lord brings him back to that queſtion, *What is God?* and catechiſeth him anew upon that grand point, ſo as he is made to ſay, *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye ſeeth thee*, Job xliii. 5. The ſpotleſs purity of God, his exact juſtice, his all ſufficiency, and other glorious perfections revealed in his word, are by this new light diſcovered to the ſoul, with a plainneſs and certainty, that doth as far exceed the knowledge it had of theſe things before, as ocular demonſtration exceeds common fame. For now he ſees what he only heard of before.

2. He is enlightened in the knowledge of ſin. He hath other thoughts of it, than he was wont to have. Formerly his ſight could not pierce through the cover Satan laid over it: but now the Spirit of God ſtrips it before him, wipes off the paint and fairding; and he ſees it in its native colours, as the worſt of evils, exceeding ſinful, Rom. vii. 13. O what deformed monſters do formerly beloved luſts appear! were they right eyes, he would pluck them out: were they right hands, he would conſent to their cutting off. He ſees how offenſive ſin is to God, how deſtructive it is to the ſoul; and calls himſelf fool, for fighting ſo long againſt the Lord, and harbouring that deſtroyer as a boſom friend.

3. He is inſtructed in the knowledge of himſelf. Regenerating grace cauſeth the prodigal to come to himſelf, Luke xv. 17. and makes men full of eyes within, knowing every one the plague of his own heart. The mind being ſavingly enlightened, the man ſees how deſperately corrupt his nature is; what enmity againſt God and his holy law, has long lodged there: ſo that his ſoul loaths itſelf. No open ſepulchre, no puddle ſo vile and loathſome in his eyes as himſelf, Ezek. xxxvi. 31. *Then ſhall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and ſhall loath yourſelves in your own ſight.* He is no worſe than he was before: but the ſun is ſhining; and ſo theſe pollutions are ſeen, which he could not diſcern, when there was no dawning in him; as the word is, Iſ. viii. 20. while as yet the day of grace was not broken with him.

4. He is enlightened in the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, 1 Cor. i. 23. 24. *But we preach Chriſt crucified, unto the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and unto the Greeks fooliſhneſs: but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Chriſt the power of God, and the wiſdom of God.* The truth is, unregenerate men, though capable of preaching Chriſt have not (properly ſpeaking) the knowledge of him, but only an opinion, a good opinion of him; as one has of many controverted points of doctrine, wherein he is far from certainty. As when ye meet with a ſtranger by the road, he behaving himſelf diſcreetly, ye conceive a good opinion of him; and therefore willingly converſe with him: but yet ye will not commit your money to him; becauſe, though ye have a good opinion of the man, he is a ſtranger to you, ye do not know him; ſo may they think well of Chriſt; but they will never commit themſelves to him, ſeeing they know him not. But ſaving illumination carries the ſoul beyond opinion, to the certain knowledge of Chriſt, and his excellency, 1 Theſſ. i. 5. *For our goſpel came not unto you in word only, but alſo in power, and in the holy Ghoſt, and in much aſſurance.* The light of grace thus diſcovers the ſuitableneſs of the myſtery of Chriſt, to the divine perfections, and to the ſinner's caſe. Hence the regenerate admire the glorious plan of ſalvation through Chriſt crucified, lay their whole weight upon it and heartily acquieſce therein; for whatever he be to others, he is to them Chriſt the power of God, and the wiſdom of God. But unrenewed men not ſeeing this, are offended in him: they will not venture their ſouls in that bottom, but betake themſelves to the broken boards of their own righteouſneſs. The ſame light convincingly diſcovers a ſuperlative worth, a tranſcendent glory and excellency in Chriſt, which darken all created excellencies, as the riſing ſun makes the ſtars to hide their heads; and ſo it engages *the merchant-man to ſell at that he hath, to buy the one pearl of great price*, Matth. xiii. 45. 46. makes the ſoul well content to take Chriſt for all, and inſtead of all. Even as an unſkilful merchant, to whom one offereth a pearl of great price, for all his petty wares, dares not venture on the bargain, for though he thinks, that one pearl may be more worth than all he has, yet he is not ſure of it; but when a jeweller comes to him, and aſſures him, it is worth double all his wares; he then greedily embraceth the bargain, and chearfully parts with all he has, for that pearl. Finally, This illumination in the knowledge of Chriſt convincingly diſcovereth to men a fulneſs in him, ſufficient for the ſupply of all their wants, enough to ſatisfy the boundleſs deſire of an immortal ſoul. They are perſuaded ſuch fulneſs is in him, and that in order to be communicate: they depend upon it, as a certain truth; and therefore their ſouls take up their eternal reſt in him.

5. The man is inſtructed in the knowledge of the vanity of the world, Pſal. cxix. 96. *I have ſeen an end of all perfection.* Regenerating grace elevates the ſoul, ſets it, as it were, amongſt the ſtars, from whence this earth cannot but appear a little, yea, a very little thing; even as heaven appeared before, while the ſoul was immerſed in the earth. Grace brings a man into a new world; where this world is reputed but a ſtage of vanity, an howling wilderneſs, a valley of tears. God hath hung the ſign of vanity at the door of all created enjoyments: yet how do men throng into the houſe, calling and looking for ſomewhat that is ſatisfying; even after it has been a thouſand times told them, there is no ſuch thing in it, it is not to be got there, Iſ. lvii. 10. *Thou art wearied in the greatneſs of thy way; yet ſaidſt thou not, There is no hope.* Why are men ſo fooliſh? the truth of the matter lies here, they do not ſee by the light of grace, they do not ſpiritually diſcern that ſign of vanity. They have often indeed made a rational diſcovery of it; but can that truly wean the heart from the world? Nay, no more than painted fire can burn off the priſoners bands.

But, the light of grace is the light of life, powerful and efficacious.

Laſtly, (To ſum up all in one word), in regeneration the mind is enlightened in the knowledge of ſpiritual things, 1 John ii. 20. *Ye have an unction from the holy One*, (that is, from Jeſus Chriſt, Rev. iii. 18. It is an alluſion to the ſanctuary, whence the holy oil was brought to anoint the prieſts), *and ye know all things*, viz. neceſſary to ſalvation. Though men be not book-learned, if they be born again, they are Spirit-learned; for all ſuch are taught of God, John vi. 45. The Spirit of regeneration teacheth them what they knew not before; and what they did know, as by the ear only, he teacheth them over again as by the eye. The light of grace is an overcoming light, determining men to aſſent to divine truths on the mere teſtimony of God. It is no eaſy thing for the mind of man to acquieſce in divine revelation. Many pretend great reſpect to the ſcriptures; whom, nevertheleſs, the clear ſcripture-teſtimony will not divorce from their pre-conceived opinions. But this illumination will make mens minds run, as captives, after Chriſt's chariot wheels; which, for their part, ſhall be allowed to drive over, and *caſt down* their own *imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itſelf againſt the knowledge of God*, 2 Cor. x. 5. It will make them *receive the kingdom of God as a little child*, Mark x. 15. who thinks he has ſufficient ground to believe any thing, if his father do but ſay it is ſo.

Secondly, The will is renewed. The Lord takes away the ſtony heart, and gives a heart of fleſh, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. and ſo of ſtones raiſeth up children to Abraham. Regenerating grace is powerful and efficacious, and gives the will a new ſet. It does not indeed force it; but ſweetly, yet powerfully draws it, ſo that *his people are willing in the day of his power*, Pſal. cx. 3. There is heavenly oratory in the Mediator's lips, to perſuade ſinners, Pſal. xlv. 2. *Grace is poured into thy lips*. There are cords of a man, and bands of love in his hands, to draw them after, Hoſ. xi 4. Love makes a net for elect ſouls, which will infallibly catch them, and hale them to land. The cords of Chriſt's love are ſtrong cords: and they need to be ſo, for every ſinner is heavier than a mountain of braſs: and Satan, together with the heart itſelf, draw the contrary way. But *love is ſtrong as death:* and the Lord's love to the ſoul he died for, is ſtrongeſt love; which acts ſo powerfully, that it muſt come off victorious.

1. The will is cured of its utter inability to will what is good. While the opening of the priſon to them that are bound, is proclaimed in the goſpel; the Spirit of God comes to the priſon-door, opens it, goes to the priſoner, and by the power of his grace makes his chains fall off; breaks the bond of iniquity, wherewith he was held in ſin, ſo as he could neither will nor do any thing truly good; brings him forth into a large place, *working in him both to will and to do of his good pleaſure*, Phil. ii. 13. Then it is that the ſoul, that was fixed to the earth, can move heaven-ward; the withered hand is reſtored, and can be ſtretched out.

2. There is wrought in the will a fixed averſion to evil. In regeneration, a man gets *a new ſpirit put within him*, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. and that *ſpirit luſteth againſt the fleſh*, Gal. v. 17. The ſweet morſel of ſin, ſo greedily ſwallowed down, he now loaths and would fain be rid of it; even as willingly as one, that had drunk a cup of poiſon would throw it up again. When the ſpring is ſtopt, the mud lies in the well unmoved: but when once the ſpring is cleared, the waters ſpringing up, will work the mud away by degrees. Even ſo, while a man continues in an unregenerate ſtate, ſin lies, at eaſe in the heart: but as ſoon as the Lord ſtrikes the rocky heart, with the rod of his ſtrength, in the day of converſion; grace is *in him a well of water, ſpringing up into everlaſting life*, John iv. 14. working away natural corruption, and gradually purifying the heart, Acts xv. 9. The renewed will riſeth up againſt ſin, ſtrikes at the root thereof, and the branches too. Luſts are now grievous, and the ſoul endeavours to ſtarve them: the corrupt nature is the ſource of all evil; and therefore the ſoul will be often laying it before the great Phyſician. O what ſorrow, ſhame, and ſelf-loathing fill the heart, in the day that grace makes its triumphant entrance into it! For now the madman is come to himſelf, and the remembrance of his follies cannot but cut him to the heart.

Laſtly, The will is endowed with an inclination, bent, and propenſity to good. In its depraved ſtate, it lay quite another way, being prone and bent to evil only: but now, by a pull of the omnipotent, all-conquering arm, it is drawn from evil to good; and gets another ſet. And as the former ſet was natural; ſo this is natural too, in reſpect of the new nature given in regeneration, which has its own holy luſtings, as well as the corrupt old nature hath its ſinful luſtings, Gal. v 17. The will, as renewed, inclines and points towards God and godlineſs. When God made man, his will, in reſpect of its intention, was directed towards God, as his chief end; in reſpect of its choice, it pointed towards that which God willed. When man unmade himſelf, his will was framed into the very reverſe hereof: he made himſelf his chief end, and his own will his law. But when man is new made, in regeneration, grace rectifies this diſorder in ſome meaſure, though not perfectly indeed; becauſe we are but renewed in part, while in this world. It brings back the ſinner, out of himſelf, to God as his chief end, truly, though not perfectly, Pſal. lxxiii. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee.* Phil. i. 21. *For me to live is Chriſt*. It makes him to deny himſelf, and whatever way he turns, to point habitually towards God; who is the centre of the gracious ſoul, its home, its dwelling-place in all generations, Pſal. xc. 1. By regenerating grace, the will is framed into a conformity to the will of God. It is conformed to his preceptive will, being endowed with holy inclinations, agreeable to every one of his commands. The whole law is impreſſed on the gracious ſoul: every part of it is written over, on the renewed heart. And although remaining corruption makes ſuch blots in the writing, that oft-times the man himſelf cannot read it: yet he that wrote it can read it at all times; it is never quite blotted out, nor can be. What he has written, he has written, it ſhall ſtand; *For this is the covenant-- ----I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts*, Heb. viii. 10. And it is a covenant of ſalt, a perpetual covenant. It is alſo conformed to his providential will; ſo that the man will no more be maſter of his own proceſs; nor carve out his lot for himſelf. He learns to ſay, from his heart, *The will of the Lord be done: he ſhall chuſe our inheritance for us*, Pſal. xlvii. 4. Thus the will is diſpoſed to fall in with thoſe things, which in its depraved ſtate, it could never be reconciled to.

Particularly, (1.) The ſoul is reconciled to the covenant of peace. The Lord God propoſeth a covenant of peace to ſinners; a covenant which he himſelf hath framed, and regiſtered in the Bible: but they are not pleaſed with it. Nay, an unrenewed heart cannot be pleaſed with it. Were it put into their hands, to frame it according to their mind; they would blot many things out of it, which God has put in, and put in many things God has kept out. But the renewed heart is entirely ſatisfied with the covenant, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. *He hath made with me an everlaſting covenant, ordered in all things, and ſure: this is all my ſalvation, and all my deſire.* Though the covenant could not be brought down to their depraved will; their will is, by grace, brought up to the covenant: they are well pleaſed with it: there is nothing in it, they would have out; nor is any thing left out of it, which they would have in. (2.) The will is diſpoſed to receive Chriſt Jeſus the Lord. The ſoul is content to ſubmit to him. Regenerating grace undermines, and brings down the towering imaginations of the heart, raiſed up againſt its rightful Lord: it breaks the iron-ſinew, which kept the ſinner from bowing to him; and diſpoſeth him to be no more ſtiff-necked, but to yield himſelf. He is willing to take on the yoke of Chriſt's commands, to take up the croſs, and to follow him. He is content to take Chriſt, on any terms. Pſal. cx. 3. *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power.*

Now the mind being ſavingly enlightened, and the will renewed; the ſinner is thereby determined and enabled, to anſwer the goſpel-call. So the main work in regeneration is done; the fort of the heart is taken: there is room made for the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in the innermoſt parts of the ſoul; the inner-door of the will being now opened to him, as well as the outer-door of the underſtanding. In one word, Chriſt is paſſively received into the heart; he is come into the ſoul, by his quickening Spirit, whereby ſpiritual life is given to the man, who, in himſelf was dead in ſin. And his firſt vital act, we may conceive to be an active receiving of Jeſus Chriſt diſcerned in his glorious excellency; that is, a believing on him, a cloſing with him, as diſcerned, offered, and exhibited in the word of his grace, the glorious goſpel: the immediate effect of which is union with him, John i. 12. 13. *To as many as received him, to them gave he power* (or privilege) *to become the ſons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of God,* Eph. iii. 17. *That Chriſt may dwell in your hearts by faith.* Chriſt having taken the heart by ſtorm, and triumphantly entered into it, in regeneration; the ſoul by faith, yields itſelf to him, as it is expreſſed, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. Thus, this glorious King, who came into the heart, by his Spirit; dwells in it by faith. The ſoul being drawn, runs; and being effectually called, comes.

Thirdly, In regeneration, there is a happy change made on the affections; they are both rectified and regulated.

1. This change rectifies the affections, placing them on ſuitable objects. 2 Theſſ. iii. 5. *The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God.* The regenerate man's deſires are rectified; they are ſet on God himſelf, and the things above. He who before cried with the world, *Who will ſhew us any good?* has changed his note, and ſays, *Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us,* Pſal. iv. 6. Sometimes he ſaw no beauty in Chriſt, for which he was to be deſired; but now he is all deſires, he is altogether lovely, Cant. v. 16. The main ſtream of his deſires is turned to run towards God; for there is the one thing he deſireth, Pſal. xxvii. 4. He deſires to be holy, as well as to be happy; and rather to be gracious than great. His hopes, which before were low, and ſtaked down to things on earth, are now raiſed, and ſet on the glory which is to be revealed. He entertains the hope of eternal life, founded on the word of promiſe, Tit. i. 2. Which hope he has, as an anchor of the ſoul, fixing the heart under trials, Heb. vi. 19. And it puts him upon purifying himſelf, even as God is pure, John iii. 3. For he is begotten again unto a lively hope, 1 Pet. i. 3. His love is raiſed, and ſet on God himſelf, Pſal. xviii. 1. On his holy law, Pſal. cxix. 97. Though it ſtrike againſt his moſt beloved luſt, he ſays, *The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and juſt, and good,* Rom. vii. ver. 12. He loves the ordinances of God, Pſal. lxxxiv. 1. *How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hoſts!* Being paſſed from death unto life, he loves the brethren, (1 John iii. 14.) the people of God, as they are called, 1 Pet. ii. 10. He loves God for himſelf; and what is God's for his ſake. Yea, as being a child of God, he loves his own enemies. His heavenly Father is compaſſionate and benevolent: *He maketh his ſun to riſe on the evil, and on the good; and ſendeth rain on the juſt, and on the unjuſt:* and therefore he is in the like manner diſpoſed, Matth. v. 44. 45. His hatred is turned againſt ſin, in himſelf and others, Pſal. ci. 3. *I hate the work of them that turn aſide, it ſhall not cleave to me.* He groans under the remains of it, and longs for deliverance, Rom. vii. 24. *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death!* His joys and delights are in God the Lord, in the light of his countenance, in his law; and in his people, becauſe they are like him. Sin is what he chiefly fears: it is a fountain of ſorrow to him now, though formerly a ſpring of pleaſure.

2. It regulates the affections placed on ſuitable objects. Our affections, when placed on the creature, are naturally exorbitant; when we joy in it, we are apt to overjoy; and when we ſorrow, we are ready to ſorrow overmuch: but grace bridles theſe affections, clips their wings, and keeps them within bounds, that they overflow not all their banks. It makes a man *hate his father, and mother, and wife, and children,---yea, and his own life alſo;* comparatively; that is, to love them leſs than he loves God, Luke xiv. 26. It alſo ſanctifies lawful affections; bringing them forth from right principles, and directing them to right ends. There may be unholy deſires after Chriſt and his grace; as when men deſire Chriſt, not from any love to him, but merely out of love to themſelves. *Give us of your oil,* ſaid the fooliſh virgins, *for our lamps are gone out,* Matth. xxv. 8. There may be an unſanctified ſorrow for ſin; as when one ſorroweth for it, not becauſe it is diſpleaſing to God, but only becauſe of the wrath annexed to it, as did Pharaoh, Judas, and others. So a man may love his father and mother, from mere natural principles, without any reſpect to the command of God binding him thereto. But grace ſanctifies the affections, in ſuch caſes, making them to run in a new channel of love to God, reſpect to his commands, and regard to his glory. Again, grace ſcrews up the affections where they are too low. It gives the chief ſeat in them to God, and pulls down all other rivals, whether perſons or things making them lie at his feet. Pſal. lxxiii. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee.* He is loved for himſelf, and other perſons or things for his ſake. What is lovely in them, to the renewed heart, is ſome ray of the divine goodneſs appearing in them: for unto gracious ſouls they ſhine only by borrowed light. This accounts for the ſaints loving all men, and yet hating thoſe that hate God, and contemning the wicked as vile perſons. They hate and contemn them for their wickedneſs; there is nothing of God in that, and therefore nothing lovely nor honourable in it: but they love them for their commendable qualities or perfections, whether natural or moral; becauſe, in whomſoever theſe are, they are from God, and can be traced to him as their fountain. Finally, regenerating grace ſets the affections ſo firmly on God, that the man is diſpoſed, at God's command, to quite his hold of every thing elſe, in order to keep his hold of Chriſt; to hate father and mother, in compariſon with Chriſt, Luke xiv. 26. It makes even lawful enjoyments like Joſeph's mantle, to hang looſe about a man, that he may quit them, when he is in hazard to be enſnared by holding them.

If the ſtream of our affections was never thus turned, we are, doubtleſs, going down the ſtream into the pit. If *the luſt of the eye, the luſt of the fleſh, and the pride of life,* have the throne in our hearts, which ſhould be poſſeſſed by the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; if we never had ſo much love to God, as to ourſelves; if ſin has been ſomewhat bitter to us, but never ſo bitter as ſuffering, never ſo bitter as the pain of being weaned from it; truly we are ſtrangers to this ſaving change. For grace turns the affections upſide down, whenever it comes into the heart.

Fourthly, The conſcience is renewed. Now that a new light is ſet up in the ſoul, in regeneration; conſcience is enlightened, inſtructed, and informed. That candle of the Lord, (Prov. xx. 27.) is now ſnuffed and brightened; ſo as it ſhines, and ſends forth its light into the moſt retired corners of the heart; diſcovering ſins which the ſoul was not aware of before: and, in a ſpecial manner, diſcovering the corruption or depravity of nature, that ſeed and ſpawn whence all actual ſins proceed. This produces the new complaint, Rom. vii. 24. *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death!* That conſcience, which lay ſleeping in the man's boſom before, is now awakened, and makes its voice to be heard through the whole ſoul: and therefore there is no more reſt for him in the ſluggard's bed; he muſt get up and be doing, ariſe, *haſte and eſcape for his life.* It powerfully incites to obedience, even in the moſt ſpiritual acts, which lay not within the view of the natural conſcience; and powerfully reſtrains from ſin, even from theſe ſins, which do not ly open to the obſervation of the world. It urgeth the ſovereign authority of God, to which the heart is now reconciled, and which it willingly acknowledges; and ſo it engageth the man to his duty, whatever be the hazard from the world; for it fills the heart ſo with the fear of God, that the force of the fear of man is broken. This hath engaged many to put their life in their hand, and follow the cauſe of religion they once contemned, and reſolutely walk in the path they formerly abhorred, Gal. i. 23. *He which perſecuted us in times paſt, now preacheth the faith which once he deſtroyed.* Guilt now makes the conſcience to ſmart. It hath bitter remorſe for ſins paſt, which fills the ſoul with anxiety, ſorrow, and ſelf-loathing. And every new reflection on theſe ſins is apt to affect, and make its wounds bleed afreſh with regret. It is made tender, in point of ſin and duty, for the time to come: being once burnt, it dreads the fire, and fears to break the hedge where it was formerly bit by the ſerpent. Finally, the renewed conſcience drives the ſinner to Jeſus Chriſt, as the only Phyſician that can draw out the ſting of guilt; and whoſe blood alone can *purge the conſcience from dead works*, Heb. ix. 14: refuſing all eaſe offered to it from any other hand. And this is an evidence, that the conſcience is not only fired, as it may be in an unregenerate ſtate; but oiled alſo, with regenerating grace.

Fifthly, As the memory wanted not its ſhare of depravity, it is alſo bettered by regenerating grace. The memory is weakened, with reſpect to thoſe things that are not worth their room therein; and men are taught to forget injuries, and drop their reſentments, Matth. v. 44. 45. *Do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which deſpitefully uſe you,---That ye may be* (i. e. appear to be) *the children of your Father which is in heaven.* It is ſtrengthened for ſpiritual things. We have Solomon's receipt for an ill memory, Prov. iii. 1. *My ſon*, ſaith he, *forget not my law.* But how ſhall it be kept in mind? *Let thine heart keep my commandments.* Grace makes a heart-memory, even where there is no good head-memory, Pſal. cxix. 11. *Thy word have I hid in mine heart.* The heart truly touched with the powerful ſweetneſs of truth, will help the memory to retain what is ſo reliſhed. Did divine truths make deeper impreſſions on our hearts, they would thereby impreſs themſelves with more force on our memories, Pſal. cxix. 93. *I will never forget thy precepts; for with them thou haſt quickened me.* Grace ſanctifies the memory. Many have large, but unſanctified memories, which ſerve only to gather knowledge, whereby to aggravate their condemnation: but the renewed memory ſerves to *remember his commandments to do them*, Pſal. ciii. 18. It is a ſacred ſtore-houſe, from whence a Chriſtian is furniſhed in his way to Zion; for faith and hope are often ſupplied out of it, in a dark hour. It is the ſtore-houſe of former experiences; and theſe are the believer's way-marks, by noticing of which he comes to know where he is, even in a dark time, Pſal. xlii. 6. *O my God, my ſoul is caſt down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan*, It alſo helps the ſoul to godly ſorrow and ſelf-loathing, preſenting old guilt anew before the conſcience, and making it bleed afreſh, though the ſin be already pardoned, Pſal. xxv. 7. *Remember not the ſins of my youth.* And where unpardoned guilt is lying on the ſleeping conſcience, it is often employed to bring in a word, which, in a moment, ſets the whole ſoul aſtir: as, when *Peter remembered the words of Jeſus,---he went out and wept bitterly*, Matth. xxvi. 75. The word of God, laid up in a ſanctified memory, ſerves a man to reſiſt temptations, puts the ſword in his hand againſt his ſpiritual enemies, and is a light to direct his ſteps in the way of religion and righteouſneſs.

Sixthly, There is a change made on the body, and the members thereof, in reſpect of their uſe; they are conſecrated to the Lord. Even the body is---for the Lord, 1 Cor. vi. 13. It is the temple of the Holy Ghoſt, ver. 19. The members thereof, that were formerly inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin, become inſtruments of righteouſneſs unto God, Rom. vi. 13. Servants to righteouſneſs unto holineſs, ver. 19. The eye, that conveyed ſinful imaginations into the heart, is under a covenant, Job. xxxi. 1. to do ſo no more; but to ſerve the ſoul, in viewing the works, and reading the word of God. The ear, that had often been death's porter, to let in ſin, is turned to be the gate of life, by which the word of life enters the ſoul. The tongue, that ſet on fire the whole courſe of nature, is reſtored to the office it was deſigned for by the Creator; namely, to be an inſtrument of glorifying him, and ſetting forth his praiſe. In a word, the whole man is for God, in ſoul and body, which by this bleſſed change are made his.

Laſtly, This gracious change ſhines forth in the converſation. Even the outward man is renewed. A new heart makes newneſs of life. When the King's daughter is all glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold, Pſal. xlv. 13. The ſingle eye makes the whole body full of light, Matth. vi. 22. This change will appear in every part of one's converſation; particularly in theſe following things.

1. In the change of his company. Though ſometimes he deſpiſed the company of the ſaints, now they are the excellent, in whom is all his delight, Pſal. xvi. 3. I am a companion of all that fear thee, ſaith the royal pſalmiſt, Pſal. cxix. 63. A renewed man joins himſelf with the ſaints: for he and they are like minded, in that which is their main work and buſineſs: they have all one new nature; they are travelling to Immanuel's land, and converſe together in the language of Canaan. In vain do men pretend to religion, while ungodly company is their choice; for *a companion of fools ſhall be deſtroyed*, Prov. xiii. 20. Religion will make a man ſhy of throwing himſelf into an ungodly family, or any unneceſſary familiarity with wicked men; as one that is clean will beware of going into an infected houſe.

2. In his relative capacity, he will be a new man. Grace makes men gracious in their ſeveral relations, and natively leads them to the conſcientious performance of relative duties. It does not only make good men, and good women, but makes good ſubjects, good huſbands, good wives, children, ſervants, and, in a word, good relatives in the church, common-wealth, and family. It is a juſt exception made againſt the religion of many; namely, that they are bad relatives, they are ill huſbands, wives, maſters, ſervants, &c. How will we prove ourſelves to be new creatures, if we be ſtill but juſt ſuch as we were before, in our ſeveral relations? 2 Cor. v. 17. *Therefore, if any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature: old things are paſt away: behold, all things are become new.* Real godlineſs will gain a teſtimony to a man, from the conſciences of his neareſt relations; though they know more of his ſinful infirmities than others do, as we ſee in that caſe, 2 Kings iv. 2. *Thy ſervant my huſband is dead, and thou knoweſt that thy ſervant did fear the Lord.*

3. In the way of his following his worldly buſineſs, there is a great change. It appears to be no more his all, as ſometime it was. Though ſaints apply themſelves to worldly buſineſs, as well as others; yet their hearts are not ſwallowed up in it. It is evident they are carrying on a trade with Heaven, as well as a trade with earth,

Philip. iii. 20. *For our converſation is in heaven.* And they go about their employment in the world, as a duty laid upon them by the Lord of all, doing their lawful buſineſs as the will of God, Eph. vi. 7. working, becauſe he has ſaid, *Thou ſhalt not ſteal.*

4. They have a ſpecial concern for the advancement of the kingdom of Chriſt in the world: they eſpouſe the intereſts of religion, and prefer Jeruſalem above their chief joy, Pſal. cxxxvii. 6. How privately ſoever they live, grace makes them a public ſpirit, which will concern itſelf in the ark and work of God; in the goſpel of God; and in the people of God; even theſe of them whom they never ſaw in the face. As children of God, they naturally care for theſe things. They have a new and unwonted concern for the ſpiritual good of others: and no ſooner do they taſte of the power of grace themſelves, but they are inclined to ſet up to be agents for Chriſt and holineſs, in the world; as appears in the caſe of the woman of Samaria, who when Chriſt had manifeſted himſelf to her, *went her way into the city, and ſaith unto the men, Come, ſee a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Chriſt?* John iv. 28, 29. They have ſeen and felt the evil of ſin, and therefore pity the world lying in wickedneſs. They would fain pluck the brands out of the fire, remembering that they themſelves were plucked out of it. They will labour to commend religion to others, both by word and example; and rather deny themſelves their liberty in indifferent things, than, by the uncharitable uſe of it, deſtroy others, 1 Cor. viii. 13. *Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no fleſh while the world ſtandeth, leſt I make my brother to offend.*

5. In their uſe of lawful comforts, there is a great change. They reſt not in them, as their end; but uſe them as means to help them in their way. They draw their ſatisfaction from the higher ſprings, even while the lower ſprings are running. Thus Hannah, having obtained a ſon, rejoiced not ſo much in the gift, as in the giver, 1 Sam. ii. 1. And Hannah prayed, and ſaid, My heart rejoiceth in the Lord. Yea, when the comforts of life are gone, they can ſubſiſt without them, and rejoice in the Lord, although the fig-tree do not bloſſom, Hab. iii. 17. 18. Grace teacheth to uſe the conveniences of a preſent life paſſingly; and to ſhew a holy moderation in all things. The heart, which formerly immerſed itſelf in theſe things, without fear, is now ſhy of being over much pleaſed with them; and, being apprehenſive of danger, uſes them warily; as the dogs of Egypt run, while they lap their water out of the river Nile, for fear of the crocodiles that are in it.

Laſtly, This change ſhines forth, in the man's performance of religious duties. He who lived in the neglect of them will do ſo no more, if once the grace of God enter into his heart. If a man be new-born, he will deſire the ſincere milk of the word, 1 Pet. ii. 2. 3. Whenever the prayerleſs perſon gets the Spirit of grace, he will be in him a Spirit of ſupplication, Zech. xii. 10. It is as natural for one that is born again to fall a praying, as for the new-born babe to fall a crying, Acts ix. 11. *Behold, he prayeth.* His heart will be a temple for God, and his houſe a church. His devotion, which before was ſuperficial and formal, is now ſpiritual and lively; for as much as heart and tongue are touched with a live-coal from heaven: and he reſts not in the mere performing of duties, as careful only to get his taſk done; but in every duty ſeeketh communion with God in Chriſt, juſtly conſidering them as means appointed of God for that end, and reckoning himſelf diſappointed if he miſs of it. Thus far of the nature of regeneration.

The reſemblance betwixt natural and ſpiritual generation.

II. I come to ſhew why this change is called regeneration, a being born again. It is ſo called, becauſe of the reſemblance betwixt natural and ſpiritual generation, which lies in the following particulars.

Firſt, Natural generation is a myſterious thing: and ſo is ſpiritual generation, John iii. 8. *The wind bloweth where it liſteth, and thou heareſt the ſound thereof, but canſt not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: ſo is every one that is born of the Spirit.* The work of the Spirit is felt; but his way of working is a myſtery we cannot comprehend. A new light is let into the mind, and the will is renewed; but how that light is conveyed thither, how the will is fettered with cords of love, and how the rebel is made a willing captive, we can no more tell, than we can tell how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child, Eccleſ. xi. 5. As a man hears the ſound of the wind, and finds it ſtirring; but knows not where it begins, and where it ends; ſo is every one that is born of the Spirit: he finds the change that is made upon him; but how it is produced, he knoweth not. One thing he may know, that whereas he was blind, now he ſeeth: but the ſeed of grace doth ſpring and grow up, he knoweth not how, Mark iv. 26. 27.

Secondly, In both, the creature comes to a being it had not before. The child is not, till it be generate; and a man has no gracious being, no being in grace, till he be regenerate. Regeneration is not ſo much the curing of a ſick man, as the quickening of a dead man, Eph. ii. 1. 5. Man in his depraved ſtate is a mere non-entity in grace, and is brought into a new being, by the power of him *who calleth things that be not as though they were;* being *created in Jeſus Chriſt unto good works*, Eph. ii. 10. Therefore our Lord Jeſus, to give ground of hope to the Laodiceans, in their wretched and miſerable ſtate, propoſeth himſelf as the beginning of the creation of God, Rev. iii. 14. namely, the active beginning of it; for all things were made by him, at firſt, John i. 3. From whence they might gather, that ſeeing he made them when they were nothing, he could make them over again, when worſe than nothing; the ſame hand that made them his creatures, could make them new creatures.

Thirdly, As the child is merely paſſive in generation, ſo is the child of God in regeneration. The one contributes nothing to its own generation; neither does the other contribute any thing, by way of efficiency, to its own regeneration: for though a man may lay himſelf down at the pool; yet he hath no hand in moving of the water, no efficacy in performing of the cure. One is born the child of a king, another the child of a beggar: the child has no hand at all in this difference. God leaves ſome in their depraved ſtate; others he brings into a ſtate of grace or regeneracy. If thou be thus honoured, no thanks to thee; for who maketh thee to differ from another? 1 Cor. iv. 7.

Fourthly, There is a wonderful contexture of parts in both births. Admirable is the ſtructure of man's body, in which there is ſuch a variety of organs; nothing wanting, nothing ſuperfluous. The Pſalmiſt, conſidering his own body, looks on it as a piece of marvellous work; *I am fearfully and wonderfully made*, ſaith he, Pſal. cxxxix. 14. *and curiouſly wrought in the lower parts of the earth*, ver. 15. that is, in the womb, where I know not how the bones do grow, more than I know what is a-doing in the loweſt parts of the earth. In natural generation we are curiouſly wrought, as a piece of needle-work; as the word imports: even ſo it is in regeneration, Pſal. xlv. 14. *She ſhall be brought unto the King, in raiment of needle-work*, raiment curiouſly wrought. It is the ſame word in both texts. And what that raiment is, the apoſtle tells us, Eph. iv. 24. It is *the new man, which after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.* That is the raiment, he ſaith in the ſame place, we muſt put on; not excluding the imputed righteouſneſs of Chriſt. Both are curiouſly wrought, as maſter-pieces of the manifold wiſdom of God. O the wonderful contexture of graces in the new creature! O glorious creature, new-made, after the image of God! It is grace for grace in Chriſt, which makes up this new man, John i. 16: even as in bodily generation, the child has member for member in the parent; has every member the parent has in a certain proportion.

Fifthly, All this, in both caſes, hath its riſe from that which is in itſelf very ſmall and inconſiderable. O the power of God, in making ſuch a creature of corruptible ſeed, and much more in bringing forth the new creature from ſo ſmall beginnings; It is as *the little cloud, like a man's hand,* which ſpread, till *heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain,* 1 Kings xviii. 44, 45. A man gets a word at a ſermon which hundreds beſides him hear, and let ſlip: but it remains with him, works in him, and never leaves him, till the little world be turned upſide down by it; that is, till he become a new man. It is like the vapour that got up into Ahaſuerus's head, and cut off ſleep from his eyes, Eſth. vi. 1. which proved a ſpring of ſuch motions as never ceaſed, until Mordecai, in royal pomp, was brought on horſeback through the ſtreet, proud Haman trudging at his foot; the ſame Haman afterwards hanged, Mordecai advanced, and the church delivered from Haman's helliſh plot. The grain of muſtard ſeed---becometh a tree, Matth. xiii. 31, 32. God loves to bring great things out of ſmall beginnings.

Sixthly, Natural generation is carried on by degrees, Job x. 10. *Haſt thou not poured me out as milk, and crudled me like cheeſe?* So is regeneration. It is with the ſoul, ordinarily, in regeneration, as with the blind man cured by our Lord, who firſt *ſaw men as trees walking,* afterwards *ſaw every man clearly,* Matth. viii. 23, 24, 25. It is true, regeneration being, ſtrictly ſpeaking, a paſſing from death to life, the ſoul is quickened in a moment; likeas, when the embryo is brought to perfection in the womb, the ſoul is infuſed into the lifeleſs lump. Nevertheleſs, we may imagine ſomewhat like conception in ſpiritual generation, whereby the ſoul is prepared for quickening: and the new creature is capable of growth, 1 Pet. ii. 2. and of life more abundantly, John x. 10.

Seventhly, In both there are new relations. The regenerate may call God, Father; for they are his children, John i. 12. 13. begotten of him, 1 Pet. i. 3. The bride, the Lamb's wife, (that is the church,) is their mother, Gal. iv. 26. They are related, as brethren and ſiſters, to angels and glorified ſaints; the family of heaven. They are of the heavenly ſtock: the meaneſt of them, the baſe things of the world, 1 Cor. i. 28. the kinleſs things, (as the words imports,) who cannot boaſt of the blood that runs in their veins, are yet, by their new birth, near of kin with the excellent in the earth.

Eighthly, There is a likeneſs betwixt the parent and the child. Every thing that generates, generates its like; and the regenerate are partakers of the divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 14. The moral perfections of the divine nature are, in meaſure and degree, communicated to the renewed ſoul: and thus the divine image is retrieved; ſo that, as the child reſembles the father, the new creature reſembles God himſelf, being holy as he is holy.

Laſtly, As there is no birth without pain, both to the mother and to the child; ſo there is great pain in bringing forth the new creature. The children have more or leſs of theſe birth pains, whereby they are pricked in their heart, Acts ii. 27. The ſoul hath ſore pains, when under conviction and humiliation. *A wounded ſpirit who can bear?* The mother is pained, Zion travels, Iſ. lxvi. 8. She ſighs, groans, crieth, and hath hard labour in her miniſters and members, to bring forth children to her Lord, Gal. iv. 19. *My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Chriſt be formed in you.* And never was a mother more feelingly touched with joy, that a man-child is born into the world, than ſhe is upon the new birth of her children. But, what is more remarkable than all this; we read, not only of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt's travail (or toil) of ſoul, Iſ. liii. 11. but (what lies more directly to our purpoſe) of his pains, or pangs, as of one travailing in child-birth; ſo the word uſed, Acts ii. 24. properly ſignifies. Well may he call the new creature, as Rachel called her dear-bought ſon Benoni, i. e. the ſon of my ſorrow; and as ſhe called another, Napthali, i. e. my wreſtling: for the pangs of that travail put him to ſtrong crying and tears, Heb. v. 7. yea, into an agony and bloody ſweat, Luke xxii. 44. And in the end he died of theſe pangs, they became to him the pains of death, Acts ii. 24.

The doctrine of regeneration applied.

USE I. By what is ſaid, you may try whether you are in the ſtate of grace, or not. If ye be brought out of the ſtate of wrath, or ruin, into the ſtate of grace, or ſalvation; ye are new creatures, ye are born again. But ye will ſay, *How ſhall we know whether we be born again or not? Anſ.* Did you aſk me, if the ſun were riſen, and how you ſhould know, whether it were riſen, or not? I would bid you look up to the heavens, and ſee it with your eyes. And would ye know if the light be riſen in your heart? Look in, and ſee. Grace is light, and diſcovers itſelf. Look into thy mind, ſee if it has been illuminate in the knowledge of God. Haſt thou been inwardly taught what God is? Were thine eyes ever turned inward to ſee thyſelf, the ſinfulneſs of thy depraved ſtate; the corruption of thy nature; the ſins of thy heart and life? Waſt thou ever let into a view of the exceeding ſinfulneſs of ſin? Have thine eyes ſeen King Jeſus in his beauty; the manifold wiſdom of God in him, his tranſcendent excellency, and abſolute fulneſs and ſufficiency, with the vanity and emptineſs of all things elſe? Next, What change is there on thy will? Are the fetters taken off, wherewith it was ſometimes bound up from moving heavenwards? And has thy will got a new ſet? Doſt thou find an averſion to ſin, and a proneneſs to good wrought in thy heart? Is thy ſoul turned towards God, as thy chief end? Is thy will new moulded into ſome meaſure of conformity to the preceptive and providential will of God? Art thou heartily reconciled to the covenant of peace, and fixedly diſpoſed to the receiving of Chriſt, as he is offered in the goſpel? And as to a change on your affections, are they rectified, and placed on right objects? Are your deſires going out after God? are they to his name, and remembrance of him? Iſ. xxvi. 8. Are your hopes in him? Is your love ſet upon him, and your hatred ſet againſt ſin? Does your offending a good God affect your heart with ſorrow, and do you fear ſin more than ſuffering? Are your affections regulated? Are they, with reſpect to created comforts, brought down, as being too high; and, with reſpect to God in Chriſt, ſcrewed up, as being too low? Has he the chief ſeat in your heart? And are all your lawful worldly comforts and enjoyments laid at his feet? Has thy conſcience been enlightened and awakened, refuſing all eaſe, but from the application of the blood of a Redeemer? Is thy memory ſanctified, thy body conſecrated to the ſervice of God? And art thou now walking in newneſs of life? Thus ye may diſcover, whether ye are born again, or not.

But, for your further help in this matter, I will diſcourſe a little of another ſign of regeneration, namely, the love of the brethren; an evidence whereby the weakeſt and moſt timorous ſaints have often had comfort, when they could have little or no conſolation from other marks propoſed to them. This the apoſtle lays down, 1 John iii. 14. *We know that we have paſſed from death unto life, becauſe we love the brethren.* It is not to be thought, that the apoſtle, by the brethren in this place, means brethren by a common relation to the firſt Adam, but to the ſecond Adam Chriſt Jeſus: becauſe, howſoever true it is, that univerſal benevolence, a good-will to the whole race of mankind, takes place in the renewed ſoul, as being a lively lineament of the divine image; yet the whole context ſpeaks of thoſe that are the ſons of God, ver. 1, 2. children of God, ver. 10. born of God, ver. 9. diſtinguiſhing betwixt the children of God, and the children of the devil, ver. 10. betwixt theſe that are of the devil, ver. 8. 12. and theſe that are of God, ver. 10. And the text itſelf comes in as a reaſon why we ſhould not marvel that the world hates the brethren, the children of God, ver. 13. How can we marvel at it, ſeeing the love of the brethren is an evidence of one's having paſſed from death to life? And therefore it were abſurd to look for that love amongſt the men of the world, who are dead in treſpaſſes and ſin. They cannot love the brethren; no marvel then that they hate them. Wherefore it is plain, that by brethren here are meant brethren by regeneration.

Now, in order to ſet this mark of regeneration in a true light, conſider theſe three things. (1.) This love to the brethren, is a love to them as ſuch. Then do we love them in the ſenſe of the text, when the grace, or image of God in them, is the chief motive of our love to them. When we love the godly for their godlineſs, the ſaints for their ſanctity or holineſs: then we love God in them, and ſo may conclude, we are born of God; *for every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him alſo that is begotten of him*, 1 John v. 1. Hypocrites may love ſaints, on account of a civil relation to them; becauſe of their obliging converſation; for the being of the ſame opinion with themſelves in religious matters; and on many other ſuch like accounts, whereby wicked men may be induced to love the godly. But happy they, who can love them for naked grace in them; for their heaven-born temper and diſpoſition: who can pick this pearl out of a dunghill of infirmities in and about them; lay hold on it, and love them for it. (2.) It is a love that will be given to all, in whom the grace of God appears. They that love one ſaint, becauſe he is a ſaint, will have love to all the ſaints, Eph. i. 15. They will love all, who, to their diſcerning, bear the image of God. They that cannot love a gracious perſon in rags, but confine their love to thoſe of them who wear gay clothing, have not this love to the brethren in them. Theſe who confine their love to a party, to whom God has not confined his grace, are ſouls too narrow to be put among the children. In what points ſoever men differ from us, in their judgment or way; yet if they appear to agree with us, in love to God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, and in bearing his image, we will love them as brethren, if we ourſelves be of the heavenly family. And, (3.) If this love be in us, the more grace any perſon appears to be poſſeſſed of, he will be the more beloved by us. The more vehemently the holy fire of grace doth flame in any, the hearts of true Chriſtians will be the more warmed in love to them. It is not with the ſaints as with many other men, who make themſelves the ſtandard for others; and love them ſo far as they think they are like themſelves. But, if they ſeem to outſhine and darken them, their love is turned to hatred and envy, and they endeavour to detract from the due praiſe of their exemplary piety: becauſe nothing reliſheth with them in the practice of religion, that goes beyond their own meaſure; what of the life and power of religion appears in others, ſerves only to raiſe the ſerpentine grudge in their Phariſaical hearts. But, as for them that are born again, their love and affection to the brethren, bears proportion to the degrees of the divine image they diſcern in them.

Now, if ye would improve theſe things to the knowledge of your ſtate, I would adviſe you, (1.) To ſet apart ſome time, when ye are at home, for a review of your caſe, and try your ſtate by what has been ſaid. Many have comfort and clearneſs as to their ſtate, at a ſermon, who in a little time loſe it again: becauſe, while they hear the word preached, they make application of it; but do not conſider of theſe things more deliberately and leiſurely, when alone. The action is too ſudden and ſhort, to give laſting comfort; and it is often ſo indeliberate, that it has bad conſequences. Therefore, ſet about this work at home, after earneſt and ſerious prayer to God for his help in it. Complain not of your want of time, while the night follows the buſy day, nor of place, while fields and out-houſes are to be got. (2.) Renew your repentance before the Lord. Guilt lying on the conſcience, unrepented of, may darken all your evidences and marks of grace. It provokes the Spirit of grace to depart; and when he goes, our light ceaſes. It is not fit time for a ſaint to read his evidences, when the candle is blown out by ſome conſcience-wounding guilt. Laſtly, Exert the powers of the new nature; let the graces of the divine Spirit in you, diſcover themſelves by action. If ye would know whether there is a ſacred fire in your breaſt, or not, ye muſt blow the coal: for although it be, and be a live-coal; yet if it be under the aſhes, it will give you no light. Settle in your hearts a firm purpoſe, through the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus, to comply with every known duty, and watch againſt every known ſin, having a readineſs of mind to be inſtructed in what ye know not. If gracious ſouls would thus manage their enquiries into their ſtate, it is likely they would have a comfortable iſſue; and if others would take ſuch a ſolemn review, and make trial of their ſtate, impartially, ſifting themſelves before the tribunal of their own conſciences, they might have a timely diſcovery of their own naughtineſs: but the neglect of ſelf-examination leaves moſt men under ſad deluſions as to their ſtate, and deprives many ſaints of the comfortable ſight of the grace of God in them.

But, that I may afford ſome further help to true Chriſtians, in their enquiries into their ſtate; I ſhall propoſe and briefly anſwer ſome caſes or doubts, which may poſſibly hinder ſome perſons from the comfortable view of their happy ſtate. The childrens bread muſt not be with-held; though, while it is reached to them, the dogs ſhould ſnatch at it.

CASE 1. "I doubt if I be regenerate; becauſe I "know not the preciſe time of my converſion; nor can "I trace the particular ſteps in the way in which it was "brought to paſs." *Anſw.* Though it is very deſirable to be able to give an account of the beginning, and the gradual advances of the Lord's work upon our ſouls, as ſome ſaints can diſtinctly do, (howbeit the manner of the Spirit's working is ſtill a myſtery), yet this is not neceſſary to evidence the truth of grace. Happy he that can ſay, in this caſe, as the blind man in the goſpel, *One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I ſee.* Likeas, when we ſee flame, we know there is fire, though we know not how or when it began; ſo the truth of grace in us may be diſcerned, though we know not how or when it was dropt into our hearts. If thou canſt perceive the happy change, which is wrought on thy ſoul; if thou findeſt thy mind is enlightened, thy will inclined to comply with the will of God in all things, eſpecially to fall in with the divine plan of ſalvation, through a crucified Redeemer; in vain doſt thou trouble thyſelf, and refuſe comfort, becauſe thou knoweſt not, how and what way it was brought about.

CASE 2. "If I were a new creature, ſin could not "prevail againſt me as it doth." *Anſw.* Though we muſt not lay pillows for hypocrites to reſt their heads upon, who indulge themſelves in their ſins, and make the doctrine of God's grace ſubſervient to their luſts, lying down contentedly in the bond of iniquity, like men that are fond of golden chains; yet it muſt be owned, the juſt man falleth ſeven times a-day, and iniquity may prevail againſt the children of God. But, if thou art groaning under the weight of the body of death, the corruption of thy nature, loathing thyſelf for the ſins of thy heart and life, ſtriving to mortify thy luſts, fleeing daily to the blood of Chriſt for pardon, and looking to his Spirit for ſanctification: though thou mayſt be obliged to ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *Iniquities prevail againſt me:* yet thou mayſt add with him, *As for our tranſgreſſions, thou ſhalt purge them away*, Pſal. lxv. 3. The new creature doth not yet poſſeſs the houſe alone: it dwells beſide an ill neighbour; namely, remaining corruption, the reliques of depraved nature. Theſe ſtruggle together for the maſtery: *The fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the fleſh*, Gal. v. 17. And ſometimes corruption prevails, bringing the child of God into captivity to the law of ſin, Rom. vii. 23. Let not therefore the prevailing of corruption make thee in this caſe conclude, thou art none of God's children; but let it humble thee, to be the more watchful, and to thirſt the more intenſely after Jeſus Chriſt, his blood and Spirit; and that very diſpoſition will evidence a principle of grace in thee, which ſeeks the deſtruction of ſin, that prevails ſo often againſt thee.

CASE 3. "I find the motions of ſin, in my heart, more violent, ſince the Lord began his work on my ſoul, than they were before that time. Can this conſiſt with a change of my nature." *Anſw.* Dreadful is the caſe of many, who, after God has had a remarkable dealing with their ſouls, tending to their reformation, have thrown off all bonds, and have become groſsly and openly immoral and profane; as if the devil had returned into their hearts, with ſeven ſpirits worſe than himſelf. All I ſhall ſay to ſuch perſons is, that their ſtate is exceeding dangerous; they are in danger of ſinning againſt the Holy Ghoſt; therefore let them repent, before it be too late. But, if it be not thus with you; tho' corruption is beſtirring itſelf more violently than formerly, as if all the forces of hell were raiſed, to hold faſt, or bring back a fugitive; I ſay, theſe ſtirrings may conſiſt with a change of your nature. When the reſtraint of grace is newly laid upon corruption, it is no wonder if this laſt acts more vigorouſly than before, *warring againſt the law of the mind*, Rom. vii. 23. The motions of ſin may really be moſt violent, when a new principle is brought in to caſt it out. And, as the ſun, ſending its beams through the window, diſcovers the motes in the houſe, and their motions, which were not ſeen before; ſo the light of grace may diſcover the riſings and actings of corruption, in another manner than ever the man ſaw them before; though they really do not riſe nor act more vigorouſly. Sin is not quite dead in the regenerate ſoul, it is but dying; and, dying a lingering death, being crucified, no wonder there be great fightings, when it is ſick at the heart, and death is at the door. Beſides, temptations may be more in number, and ſtronger, while Satan is ſtriving to bring you back who are eſcaped, than while he endeavoured only to retain you: *After you were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions*, ſays the apoſtle to the Hebrews, chap. x. 32. But, *caſt not away your confidence*, ver. 34. Remember his *grace is ſufficient for you, and the God of peace will bruiſe Satan under your feet ſhortly*. Pharaoh and his Egyptians never made ſuch a formidable appearance againſt the Iſraelites, as at the Red ſea, after they were brought out of Egypt: but then were the purſuers neareſt to a total overthrow, Exod. xiv. Let not this caſe therefore make you raze foundations: but be ye emptied of yourſelves, and ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and ye ſhall come off victorious.

CASE 4. "But when I compare my love to God with my love to ſome created enjoyments, I find the pulſe of my affections beat ſtronger to the creature than the Creator. How then can I call him Father? Nay, alas! theſe turnings of heart within me, and glowings of affection to him, which ſometimes I had, are gone; ſo that I fear, all the love I ever had to the Lord, has been but a fit and flaſh of affection, ſuch as hypocrites often have. *Anſw.* It cannot be denied, that the predominant love of the world is a certain mark of an unregenerate ſtate, 1 John ii. 15. *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* Nevertheleſs, theſe are not always the ſtrongeſt affections which are moſt violent. A man's affection may be more moved, on ſome occaſions, by an object that is little regarded, than by another, that is exceedingly beloved; even as a little brook ſometimes makes a greater noiſe, than a great river. The ſtrength of our affections is to be meaſured by the firmneſs and fixedneſs of the root, not by the violence of their actings. Suppoſe a perſon meeting with a friend, who has been long abroad, finds his affections more vehemently acting towards his friend on that occaſion, than towards his own wife and children: will he therefore ſay, that he loves his friend more than them? Surely no. Even ſo, although the Chriſtian may find himſelf more moved in his love to the creature, than in his love to God; yet he is not therefore to be ſaid to love the creature more than God; ſeeing love to God is always more firmly rooted in a gracious heart, than love to any created enjoyment whatſoever; as appears, when competition ariſes in ſuch a manner, that the one or the other is to be forgone. Would ye then know your caſe? Retire into your own hearts, and there lay the two in the balance, and try which of them weighs down the other. Aſk thyſelf, as in the ſight of God, whether thou wouldſt part with Chriſt for the creature, or part with the creature for Chriſt, if thou wert left to thy choice in the matter? If you find your heart diſpoſed to part with what is deareſt to you in the world for Chriſt, at his call, you have no reaſon to conclude, you love the creature more than God; but, on the contrary, that you love God more than the creature; albeit you do not feel ſuch violent motions in the love of God, as in the love of ſome created thing, Matth. x. 37. *He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.* Luke xiv. 26. *If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother,--- he cannot be my diſciple.* From which texts compared, we may infer, that he who hates, i. e. is ready to part with, father and mother for Chriſt, is, in our Lord's account, one that loves them leſs than him; and not one who loves father and mother more than him. Moreover, ye are to conſider there is a twofold love to Chriſt. (1.) There is a ſenſible love to him, which is felt as a dart in the heart, and makes a holy love-ſickneſs in the ſoul, ariſing either from want of enjoyment, as in that caſe of the ſpouſe, Cant. v. 8. *I charge you, O daughters of Jeruſalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am ſick of love:* or elſe from the fulneſs of it, as in that caſe, Cant. ii. 5. *Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples; for I am ſick of love.* Theſe glowings of affections are uſually wrought in young converts, who are ordinarily made to ſing in the days of their youth, Hoſ. ii. 14. While the fire-edge is upon the young convert, he looks upon others, reputed to be godly, and not finding them in ſuch a temper and diſpoſition as himſelf, he is ready to cenſure them, and to think there is far leſs religion in the world than indeed there is. But when his own cup comes to ſettle below the brim, and he finds that in himſelf which made him queſtion the ſtate of others, he is more humbled, and feels more and more the neceſſity of daily recourſe to the blood of Chriſt for pardon, and to the Spirit of Chriſt for ſanctification; and thus grows downwards in humiliation, ſelf loathing, and ſelf-denial. (2.) There is a rational love to Chriſt, which, without theſe ſenſible emotions felt in the former caſe, evidences itſelf by a dutiful regard to the divine authority and command. When one bears ſuch a love to Chriſt; though the vehement ſtirrings of affection be wanting, yet he is truly tender of offending a gracious God; endeavours to walk before him unto all well-pleaſing; and is grieved at the heart for what is diſpleaſing unto him, 1 John v. 3. *For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments.* Now, although that the ſenſible love doth not always continue with you; yet ye have no reaſon to account it a hypocritical fit, while the rational love remains with you, more than a faithful and loving wife needs queſtion her love to her huſband, when her fondneſs is abated.

CASE 5. "The attainments of hypocrites and apoſtates are a terror to me, and come like a ſhaking ſtorm on me, when I am about to conclude, from the marks of grace, which I ſeem to find in myſelf, that I am in the ſtate of grace." *Anſw.* Theſe things ſhould indeed ſtir us up to a moſt ſerious and impartial examination of ourſelves, but ought not to keep us in a continued ſuſpenſe as to our ſtate. Sirs, ye ſee the outſide of hypocrites, their duties, their gifts, their tears, &c. but ye ſee not their inſide, ye do not diſcern their hearts, the bias of their ſpirits. Upon what ye ſee of them, ye found a judgment of charity, as to their ſtate; and ye do well to judge charitably in ſuch a caſe, becauſe ye cannot know the ſecret ſprings of their actings: but ye are ſeeking, and ought to have a judgment of certainty, as to your own ſtate; and therefore are to look in to that part of religion, which none in the world but yourſelves can diſcern in you, and which ye can as little ſee in others. An hypocrite's religion may appear far greater than that of a ſincere ſoul: but, that which makes the greateſt figure in the eyes of men, is often leaſt worth before God. I would rather utter one of thoſe groans the apoſtle ſpeaks of, Rom. viii. 26. than ſhed Eſau's tears, have Balaam's prophetic ſpirit, or the joy of the ſtony-ground hearers. The fire that ſhall try every man's work, will try, not of what bulk it is, but of what ſort it is, 1 Cor. iii. 13. Now, ye may know what bulk of religion another has: and what though it be more bulky than your own? God doth not regard that: why then do ye make ſuch a matter of it? It is impoſſible for you, without divine revelation, certainly to know of what ſort another man's religion is: but ye may certainly know what ſort your own is of, without extraordinary revelation; otherwiſe the apoſtle would not exhort the ſaints to *give diligence to make their calling and election ſure*, 2 Pet. i. 10. Therefore the attainments of hypocrites and apoſtates ſhould not diſturb you, in your ſerious enquiry into your own ſtate. But I will tell you two things, wherein the meaneſt ſaints go beyond the moſt refined hypocrites. (1.) In denying themſelves; renouncing all confidence in themſelves, and their own works; acquieſcing in, being well pleaſed with, and venturing their ſouls upon, God's plan of ſalvation through Jeſus Chriſt, Matth. v. 3. *Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* And chap. xi. 6. "Bleſſed is he whoſoever ſhall not be offended in me." Philip. iii. 3. "We are the circumciſion, which "worſhip God in the ſpirit, and rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, "and have no confidence in the fleſh." (2.) In a real hatred of all ſin; being willing to part with every luſt, without exception, and to comply with every duty the Lord makes, or ſhall make known to them, Pſal. cxix. 6. *Then ſhall I not be aſhamed, when I have reſpect unto all thy commandments.* Try yourſelves by theſe.

CASE 6. "I ſee myſelf fall ſo far ſhort of the ſaints "mentioned in the ſcriptures, and of ſeveral excellent "perſons of my own acquaintance; that, when I look "on them, I can hardly look on myſelf as one of the "ſame family with them." *Anſw.* It is indeed matter of humiliation, that we do not get forward to that meaſure of grace and holineſs, which we ſee is attainable in this life. This ſhould make us more vigorouſly preſs towards the mark: but ſurely it is from the devil, that weak Chriſtians make a rack for themſelves, of the attainments of the ſtrong. And to yield to this temptation, is as unreaſonable, as for a child to diſpute away his relation to his father, becauſe he is not of the ſame ſtature with his elder brethren. There are ſaints of ſeveral ſizes in Chriſt's family; ſome fathers, ſome young men, and ſome little children, 1 John ii. 13, 14.

CASE 7. "I never read in the word of God, nor did "I ever know of a child of God ſo tempted, and ſo left "of God, as I am; and therefore, no ſaint's caſe being "like mine, I cannot but conclude I am none of their "number." *Anſw.* This objection ariſes to ſome from their unacquaintedneſs with the ſcriptures, and with experienced Chriſtians. It is profitable, in this caſe, to impart the matter to ſome experienced Chriſtian friend, or to ſome godly miniſter. This has been a bleſſed mean of peace to ſome perſons; while their caſe, which appeared to them to be ſingular, has been evinced to have been the caſe of other ſaints. The ſcripture gives inſtances of very horrid temptations, wherewith the ſaints have been aſſaulted. Job was tempted to blaſpheme; this was the great thing the devil aimed at, in the caſe of that great ſaint, Job. i. 11. *He will curſe thee to thy face.* chap. ii. 9. *Curſe God, and die.* Aſaph was tempted to think it was in vain to be religious, which was in effect to throw off all religion, Pſal. lxxiii. 13. *Verily I have cleanſed my heart in vain.* Yea, Chriſt himſelf was tempted to caſt himſelf down from a pinacle of the temple, and to worſhip the devil, Matth. iv. 6. 9. And many of the children of God have not only been attacked with, but have actually yielded to very groſs temptations for a time. Peter denied Chriſt, and curſed and ſwore that he knew him not, Mark xiv. 71. Paul, when a perſecutor, compelled even ſaints to blaſpheme, Acts xxvi. 10, 11. Many of the ſaints can, from their ſad experience, bear witneſs to very groſs temptations, which have aſtoniſhed their ſpirits, made their very fleſh to tremble, and ſickened their bodies. Satan's fiery darts make terrible work; and will coſt pains to quench them, by a vigorous managing of the ſhield of faith, Eph. vi. 16. Sometimes he makes ſuch deſperate attacks, that never was one more put to it, in running to and fro, without intermiſſion, to quench the fireballs inceſſantly thrown into his houſe by an enemy, deſigning to burn the houſe about him, than the poor tempted ſaint is to repel Satanical injections. But theſe injections, theſe horrid temptations, though they are a dreadful affliction; they are not the ſins of the tempted, unleſs they make them theirs, by conſenting to them. They will be charged upon the tempter alone, if they be not conſented to: and will no more be laid to the charge of the tempted party, than a baſtard's being laid down at a chaſte man's door, will fix guilt upon him.

But, ſuppoſe neither miniſter nor private Chriſtian, to whom you go, can tell you of any who has been in your caſe; yet you ought not thence to infer, that your caſe certainly is ſingular, far leſs to give over hopes: for it is not to be thought, that every godly miniſter, or private Chriſtian, has had experience of all the caſes a child of God may be in: and we need not doubt but ſome have had diſtreſſes known only to God and their own conſciences; and ſo to others theſe diſtreſſes are, as if they had never been. Yea, and though the ſcriptures do contain ſuitable directions for every caſe a child of God can be in; and theſe illuſtrated with a ſufficient number of examples: yet it is not to be imagined, that there are in the ſcriptures perfect inſtances of every particular caſe, incident to the ſaints. Therefore, howbeit you cannot find an inſtance of your caſe in the ſcripture; yet bring your caſe to it, and you ſhall find ſuitable remedies preſcribed there for it. And ſtudy rather to make uſe of Chriſt, for your caſe, who has ſalve for all ſores, than to know if ever any was in your caſe. Though one ſhould ſhew you an inſtance of your caſe, in an undoubted ſaint; yet none could promiſe it would certainly give you eaſe: for a ſcrupulous conſcience would readily find out ſome difference. And if nothing, but a perfect conformity of another's caſe to yours, will ſatisfy, it will be hard, if not impoſſible, to ſatisfy you. For it is with people's caſes, as with their natural faces. Though the faces of all men are of one make; and ſome are ſo very like others, that, at firſt view, we are ready to take them for the ſame: yet if you view them more accurately, you will ſee ſomething in every face, diſtinguiſhing it from all others; though poſſibly you cannot tell what it is. Wherefore I conclude, that if you can find in yourſelves the marks of regeneration, propoſed to you from the word; you ought to conclude, you are in the ſtate of grace, though your caſe were ſingular, which is indeed unlikely.

CASE laſt, "The afflictions I meet with are ſtrange "and unuſual. I doubt if ever a child of God was tryſted with ſuch diſpenſations of providence as I am." *Anſ.*

Much of what was ſaid on the preceeding caſe, may be helped in this. Holy Job was aſſaulted with this temptation, Job v. 1. *To which of the ſaints wilt thou turn?* But he rejected it, and held faſt his integrity. The apoſtle ſuppoſeth Chriſtians may be tempted to *think ſtrange concerning the fiery trial*, 1 Pet. iv. 12: But they have need of larger experience than Solomon's; who will venture to ſay, *See this is new*, Eccleſ. i. 10. And what though in reſpect of the outward diſpenſations of providence, *it happen to you, according to the work of the wicked?* you may be juſt notwithſtanding; according to Solomon's obſerve, Eccleſ. viii. 14. Sometimes we travel in ways, where we cannot perceive the prints of the foot of man nor beaſt: yet we cannot from thence conclude, that there was never any there before us: ſo albeit thou canſt not perceive the footſteps of the flock, in the way of thine affliction; thou muſt not therefore conclude, thou art the firſt that ever travelled that road. But what if it were ſo, that thou wert indeed the firſt? Some one ſaint or other behoved to be firſt, in drinking of each bitter cup the reſt have drunk of. What warrant have you or I to limit the holy One of Iſrael to a trodden path, in his diſpenſations towards us? *Thy way is in the ſea, and thy path in the great waters: and thy footſteps are not known*, Pſal. lxxvii. 19. If the Lord ſhould carry you to heaven by ſome retired road, and let you in at a back-door, (ſo to ſpeak,) you would have no ground to complain. Learn to allow ſovereignty a latitude; be at your duty; and let no affliction caſt a vail over any evidences you otherwiſe have, for your being in the ſtate of grace: for *no man knoweth either their love or hatred, by all that is before them*, Eccleſ. ix. 1.

USE II. Ye that are ſtrangers to this new birth, be convinced of the abſolute neceſſity of it. Are all in this ſtate of grace born again? then ye have neither part nor lot in it, who are not born again. I muſt tell you, in the words of our Lord and Saviour, (and O that he would ſpeak them to your hearts!) *ye muſt be born again*, John iii. 7. And for your conviction, conſider theſe few things.

Firſt, Regeneration is abſolutely neceſſary to qualify you to do any thing really good and acceptable to God. While you are not born again, your beſt works are but gliſtering ſins; for though the matter of them is good, they are quite marred in the making. Conſider, (1.) That without regeneration there is no faith, and *without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*, Heb. xi. 6. Faith is a vital act of the new-born ſoul. The Evangeliſt, ſhewing the different entertainment our Lord Jeſus had from different perſons, ſome receiving and ſome rejecting him, points at regenerating grace as the true riſe of that difference, without which never one would have received him. He tells us that as many as received him, were theſe who were born of God, John i. 11. 12. 13. Unregenerate men may preſume; but true faith they cannot have. Faith is a flower that grows not in the field of nature. As the tree cannot grow without a root, neither can a man believe without the new nature, whereof the principle of believing is a part. (2.) Without regeneration a man's works are dead works. As is the principle, ſo muſt the effects be: if the lungs be rotten, the breath will be unſavoury; and he who at beſt is dead in ſin, his works at beſt will be but dead works. *Unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure--being abominable, and diſobedient, and unto every good work reprobate*, Tit. i. 15. 16. Could we ſay of a man, that he is more blameleſs in his life, than any other in the world; that he macerates his body with faſting; and has made his knees as horns with continual praying; but he is not born again: that exception would mar all. As if one ſhould ſay, There is a well-proportioned body, but the ſoul is gone; it is but a dead lump. This is a melting conſideration. Thou doſt many things materially good: but God ſaith, all theſe things avail not, as long as I ſee the old nature reigning in the man. Gal. vi. 15. *For in Jeſus Chriſt neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but a new creature.*

If thou art not born again; (1.) All thy reformation is naught in the ſight of God. Thou haſt ſhut the door, but the thief is ſtill in the houſe. It may be thou art not what once thou waſt: yet thou art not what thou muſt be, if ever thou ſeeſt heaven; for *except a man be born again he cannot ſee the kingdom of God*, John iii. 3. (2.) Thy prayers are an abomination to the Lord, Prov. xv. 8. It may be, others admire thy ſeriouſneſs; thou crieſt as for thy life: but God accounts of the opening of thy mouth, as one would account of the opening of a grave full of rottenneſs, Rom. iii. 13. *Their throat is an open ſepulchre.* Others are affected with thy prayers; which ſeem to them as if they would rent the heavens; but God accounts them but as the howling of a dog; *They have not cried unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds*, Hoſ. vii. 14. Others take thee for a wreſtler and prevailer with God; but he can take no delight in thee, nor thy prayers neither, Iſ. lxvi. 3. *He that killeth an ox, is as if he ſlew a man: he that ſacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck.---He that burneth incenſe, as if he bleſſed an idol.* Why but becauſe thou art yet in the gall of bitterneſs, and bond of iniquity? (3.) All thou haſt done for God and his cauſe in the world, though it may be followed with temporal rewards, yet is loſt as to divine acceptance. This is clear from the caſe of Jehu, who was indeed rewarded with a kingdom for his executing due vengeance upon the houſe of Ahab, as being a work good for the matter of it, becauſe it was commanded of God, as you may ſee, 2 Kings x. 13. yet was he puniſhed for it in his poſterity, becauſe he did it not in a right manner, Hoſ. i. 4. *I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the houſe of Jehu.* God looks mainly to the heart: and if ſo, truly albeit thy outward appearance be fairer than many others, yet the hidden man of thy heart is loathſome; thou lookeſt well before men, but art not as Moſes was, fair to God, as the margin hath it, Acts vii. 20. O what a difference is there betwixt the characters of Aſah and Amaziah! *The high places were not removed: nevertheleſs, Aſa his heart was perfect with the Lord all his days*, 1 Kings xv. 14. *Amaziah did that which was right in the ſight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart*, 2 Chron. xxv. 2. It may be thou art zealous againſt ſin in others, and doſt admoniſh them of their duty, and reprove them for their ſin; and they hate thee, becauſe thou doſt thy duty: but I muſt tell thee, God hates thee too, becauſe thou doſt it not in a right manner; and that thou canſt never do, whilſt thou art not born again. Laſtly, All thy ſtruggles againſt ſin in thine own heart and life, are naught. The proud Phariſee afflicted his body with faſting, and God ſtruck his ſoul in the mean time with a ſentence of condemnation, Luke xviii. Balaam ſtruggled with his covetous temper to that degree, that though he loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs, yet he would not win them by curſing Iſrael: but he died the death of the wicked, Numb. xxxi. 8. All thou doſt, while in an unregenrate ſtate, is for thyſelf; and therefore it will fare with thee as with a ſubject, who having reduced the rebels, puts the crown on his own head; and therefore loſeth all his good ſervice, and his head too.

Object. If it be thus with us, then we need never perform any religious duty at all. *Anſw.* The concluſion is not juſt. No inability of thine can looſe thee from the duty God's law lays on thee: and there is leſs evil in thy doing thy duty, than there is in the omitting of it. But there is a mids betwixt omitting of duty, and the doing of it as thou doſt it. A man ordereth maſons to build him an houſe. If they quite neglect the work, that will not be accepted; if they fall on, and build upon the old rotten foundation, neither will that pleaſe; but they muſt raze the old foundation, and build on firm ground. *Go thou and do likewiſe.* In the mean time, it is not in vain for thee, even for thee, to ſeek the Lord: for tho' he regards thee not, yet he may have reſpect to his own ordinance, and do thee good thereby, as was ſaid before.

Secondly, Without regeneration there is no communion with God. There is a ſociety on earth, whoſe fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt, 1 John i. 3. But out of that ſociety, all the unregenerate are excluded; for they are all enemies to God, as ye heard before at large. Now, *can two walk together, except they be agreed?* Amos iii. 3. They are all unholy: and *what communion hath light with darkneſs,----Chriſt with Belial?* 2 Cor. vi. 14. 15. They may have a ſhew and ſemblance of holineſs; but they are ſtrangers to true holineſs, and therefore without God in the world. How ſad is this caſe, to be employed in religious duties, but to have no fellowſhip with God in them! Ye would not be content with your meat, unleſs it fed you; nor with your cloaths, unleſs they kept you warm: and how can you ſatisfy yourſelves with your duties, while they are not effectual to your communion with God?

Thirdly, Regeneration is abſolutely neceſſary to qualify you for heaven. None go to heaven but they that are made meet for it, Col. i. 12. As it was with Solomon's temple, 1 Kings vi. 7. ſo is it with the temple above: it is *built of ſtone made ready before it is brought thither*: namely, of lively ſtones, 1 Pet. ii. 5. *wrought for the ſelf-ſame thing*, 2 Cor. v. 5. for they cannot be laid in that glorious building, juſt as they come out of the quarry of depraved nature. Jewels of gold are not meet for ſwine, and far leſs jewels of glory for unrenewed ſinners. Beggars in their rags are not meet for kings houſes; nor ſinners to enter into the King's palace, without the raiment of needle-work, Pſal. xlv. 14. 15. What wiſe man would bring fiſhes out of the water to feed in his meadow? or ſend his oxen to feed in the ſea? Even as little are the unregenerate meet for heaven, or is heaven meet for them. It would never be liked of by them.

The unregenerate would find fault with heaven on ſeveral accounts. As, (1.) That it is a ſtrange country. Heaven is the renewed man's native country: his Father is in heaven; his mother is Jeruſalem, which is above, Gal. iv. 26. He is born from above, John. iii. 3. Heaven is his home, 2 Cor. v. 1. therefore he looks on himſelf as a ſtranger on this earth, and his head is homeward, Heb. xi. 16. *They deſire a better country, that is an heavenly.* But the unregenerate man is the man of the earth, Pſal. x. 18. written in the earth, Jer. xvii. 13. Now, Home is home, be it never ſo homely: therefore he minds earthly things, Phil. iii. 19. There is a peculiar ſweetneſs in our native ſoil; and hardly are men drawn to leave it, and dwell in a ſtrange country. In no caſe does that prevail more, than in this; for unrenewed men would quit their pretenſions to heaven, were it not that they ſee they cannot make a better of it. (2.) There is nothing there of what they delight moſt in, as moſt agreeable to the carnal heart, Rev. xxi. 27. *And there ſhall in no wiſe enter into it, any thing that defileth.* When Mahomet gave out paradiſe to be a place of ſenſual delights, his religion was greedily embraced; for that is the heaven men naturally chuſe. If the covetous man could get bags full of gold there, and the voluptuous man could promiſe himſelf his ſenſual delights there, they might be reconciled to heaven, and meet for it too: but ſince it is not ſo, though they may utter fair words about it, truly it has little of their hearts. (3.) Every corner there is filled with that, which of all things they have the leaſt liking of: and that is holineſs, true holineſs, perfect holineſs. Were one that abhors ſwines fleſh, bidden to a feaſt, where all the diſhes were of that ſort of meat, but variouſly prepared; he would find fault with every diſh at the table, notwithſtanding of all the art uſed to make them palatable. It is true, there is joy in heaven, but it is holy joy; there are pleaſures in heaven, but they are holy pleaſures; there are places to ſtand by in heaven, but it is holy ground. That holineſs that caſts up in every place, and in every thing there, would mar all to the unregenerate. (4.) Were they carried thither, they would not only change their place, which would be a great heart-break to them; but they would change their company too. Truly they would never like the company there, who care not for communion with God here; nor value the fellowſhip of his people, at leaſt in the vitals of practical godlineſs. Many indeed mix themſelves with the godly on earth, to procure a name to themſelves, and to cover the naughtineſs of their hearts; but that trade could not be managed there. (5.) They would never like the employment of heaven, they care ſo little for it now. The buſineſs of the ſaints there, would be an intolerable burden to them, ſeeing it is not agreeable to their nature. To be taken up in beholding, admiring, and praiſing of him that ſitteth on the throne, and of the Lamb, would be work unſuitable, and therefore unſavoury to an unrenewed ſoul. Laſtly, They would find this fault with it, that the whole is of everlaſting continuance. This would be a killing ingredient in it, to them. How would ſuch as now account the Sabbath-day a burden, brook the celebrating of an everlaſting Sabbath in the heavens?

Laſtly, Regeneration is abſolutely neceſſary to your being admitted into heaven, John iii. 3. No heaven without it. Though carnal men could digeſt all theſe things which make heaven ſo unſuitable for them; yet God will never ſuffer them to come thither. Therefore born again ye muſt be; elſe ye ſhall never ſee heaven, ye ſhall periſh eternally. For, (1.) There is a bill of excluſion againſt you in the court of heaven, and againſt all of your ſort; *Except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God*, John iii. 3. Here is a bar before you, that men and angels cannot remove. And to hope for heaven, over the belly of this peremptory ſentence, is to hope that God will recal his word, and ſacrifice his truth and faithfulneſs to your ſafety; which is infinitely more than to hope, *the earth ſhall be forſaken for you, and the rock removed out of his place.* (2.) There is no holineſs without regeneration. It is *the new man, which is created in true holineſs*; for *without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord.* Heb. xii. 14. Will the gates of pearl be opened, to let in dogs and ſwine? No; their place is without, Rev. xxii. 15. God will not admit ſuch into the holy place of communion with him here, and will he admit them into the holieſt of all hereafter? Will he take the children of the devil, and give them to ſit with him in his throne? Or will he bring the unclean into the city, whoſe ſtreet is pure gold? Be not deceived; grace and glory are but two links of one chain, which God has joined, and no man ſhall put aſunder. None are tranſplanted into the paradiſe above, but out of the nurſery of grace below. If ye be unholy while in this world, ye will be for ever miſerable in the world to come. (3.) All the unregenerate are without Chriſt, and therefore having no hope while in that caſe, Eph. ii. 12. Will Chriſt prepare manſions of glory for them, that refuſe to receive him into their hearts? nay, rather, will he not *laugh at their calamity*, who now *ſet at nought all his counſel?* Prov. i. 25. 26. Laſtly, There is an infallible connection betwixt a finally unregenerate ſtate and damnation, ariſing from the nature of the things themſelves; and from the decree of Heaven, which is fixed and unmoveable as mountains of braſs, John iii. 3. Rom. viii. 6. *To be carnally minded is death.* An unregenerate ſtate is hell in the bud. It is eternal deſtruction in embrio, growing daily, though thou doſt not diſcern it. Death is painted on many a fair face, in this life. Depraved nature makes men meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the damned, in utter darkneſs. (1.) The heart of ſtone within thee is a ſinking weight. As a ſtone naturally goes downward; ſo the hard ſtony heart tends downward to the bottomleſs pit. Ye are hardened againſt reproof: though ye are told your danger; yet ye will not ſee it, ye will not believe it. But remember, that the conſcience, its being now ſeared with a hot iron, is a ſad preſage of everlaſting burnings. (2.) Your unfruitfulneſs under the means of grace, fits you for the ax of God's judgments, Matth. iii. 10. *Every tree that* *bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and caſt into the fire.* The withered branch is fuel for the fire, John xv. 6. Tremble at this, ye deſpiſers of the goſpel: if ye be not thereby made meet for heaven, ye will be like the barren ground, bearing briers and thorns, *nigh unto curſing, whoſe end is to be burned,* Heb. vi. 8. (3.) The helliſh diſpoſitions of mind, which diſcover themſelves in profanity of life, fit the guilty for the regions of horror. A profane life will have a miſerable end. *They which do ſuch things ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God,* Gal. v. 19. 20. 21. Think on this, ye prayerleſs perſons, ye mockers of religion, ye curſers and ſwearers, ye unclean, and unjuſt perſons, who have not ſo much as moral honeſty to keep you from lying, cheating, and ſtealing. What ſort of a tree think ye it to be, upon which theſe fruits grow? Is it a tree of righteouſneſs, which the Lord hath planted? Or is it not ſuch an one as cumbers the ground, which God wil pluck up for fuel to the fire of his wrath? (4.) Your being dead in ſin, makes you meet to be wrapt in flames of brimſtone, as a winding-ſheet; and to be buried in the bottomleſs pit, as in a grave. Great was the cry in Egypt, when the firſt-born in each family was dead; but are there not many families, where all are dead together? Nay, many there are, who are *twice dead, plucked up by the roots.* Sometime, in their life, they have been rouzed by apprehenſions of death, and its conſequences; but now they are ſo far on in their way to the land of darkneſs, that they hardly ever have the leaſt glimmering of light from heaven. (5.) The darkneſs of your minds preſageth eternal darkneſs. O the horrid ignorance ſome are plagued with; while others who have got ſome rays of reaſon's light into their heads, are utterly void of ſpiritual light in their hearts! If ye knew your caſe, ye would cry out, Oh! darkneſs! darkneſs! darkneſs! making way for the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever! The face-covering is upon you already, as condemned perſons, ſo near are ye to everlaſting darkneſs. It is only Jeſus Chriſt who can ſtop the execution, pull the napkin off the face of the condemned malefactor, and put a pardon in his hand, Iſ. xxv. 7. *And he will deſtroy in this mountain the face of the covering caſt over all people.* i. e. the face-covering caſt over the condemned, as in Haman's caſe, Eſth. vii. 8. *As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.* Laſtly, The chains of darkneſs ye are bound with in the priſon of your depraved ſtate, Iſ. lxi. 1. fits you to be caſt into the burning fiery furnace. Ah miſerable men! Sometimes their conſciences ſtir within them, and they begin to think of amending their ways. But, alas! they are in chains, they cannot do it. They are chained by the heart: their luſts cleave ſo faſt to them, that they cannot, nay, they will not ſhake them off. Thus you ſee what affinity there is, betwixt an unregenerate ſtate, and the ſtate of the damned, the ſtate of abſolute and irretrievable miſery. Be convinced then, that ye muſt be born again; put a high value on the new-birth, and eagerly deſire it.

The text tells you, that the word is the ſeed, whereof the new creature is formed: therefore take heed to it, and entertain it, for it is your life. Apply yourſelves to the reading of the ſcripture. Ye that cannot read, cauſe others read it to you. Wait diligently on the preaching of the word, as, by divine appointment, the ſpecial mean of converſion; for "it pleaſed God by the "fooliſhneſs of preaching to ſave them that believe," 1 Cor. i. 21. Wherefore caſt not yourſelves out of Chriſt's way: reject not the means of grace, leſt ye be found to judge yourſelves unworthy of eternal life. Attend carefully to the word preached. Hear every ſermon, as if you were hearing for eternity; and take heed, the fowls of the air pick not up this ſeed from you, as it is ſown. "Give thyſelf wholly to it," 1 Tim. iv. 15. "Receive "it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the "word of God," 1 Theſſ. ii. 13. And hear it with application, looking on it as a meſſage ſent from Heaven to you in particular; though not to you only, Rev. iii 22. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the "Spirit ſaith unto the churches." Lay it up in your hearts, meditate upon it, and be not as the unclean beaſts, that chew not the cud. But by earneſt prayer beg the dew of heaven may fall on thy heart, that the ſeed may ſpring up there.

More particularly. (1.) Receive the teſtimony of the word of God, concerning the miſery of an unregenerate ſtate, the ſinfulneſs thereof, and the abſolute neceſſity of regeneration. (2.) Receive its teſtimony, concerning God, what a holy and juſt One he is. (3.) Examine thy ways by it; namely the thoughts of thy heart, the expreſſions of thy lips, and the tenor of thy life. Look back through the ſeveral periods of thy life: and ſee thy ſins from the precepts of the word, and learn from its threatenings, what thou art liable to, on the account of theſe ſins. (4.) View the corruption of thy nature, by the help of the ſame word of God; as a glaſs, which repreſents our ugly face in a lively manner. Were theſe things deeply rooted in the heart, they might be the ſeed of that fear and ſorrow, on account of thy ſoul's ſtate, which are neceſſary to prepare and ſtir thee up to look after a Saviour. Fix your thoughts upon him offered to thee in the goſpel, as fully ſuited to thy caſe; having by his obedience to the death, perfectly ſatisfied the juſtice of God, and brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs. This may prove the ſeed of humiliation, deſire, hope, and faith; and put thee on, to ſtretch out the withered hand unto him, at his own command.

Let theſe things ſink deeply into your hearts, and improve them diligently. Remember, whatever ye be, ye *muſt be born again;* elſe it had been better for you ye had never been born. Wherefore, if any of you ſhall live and die in an unregenerate ſtate, ye will be inexcuſable, having been fairly warned of your hazard.

HEAD II.

The MYSTICAL UNION betwixt Chriſt and believers.

JOHN xv. 5.

I am the vine; ye are the branches.

HAving ſpoken of the change made by regeneration, on all thoſe that ſhall inherit eternal life, in oppoſition to their natural real ſtate, the ſtate of degeneracy; I proceed to ſpeak of the change made upon them, in their union with the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in oppoſition to their natural relative ſtate, the ſtate of miſery. The doctrine of the ſaints union with Chriſt, is very plainly and fully inſiſted on, from the beginning to the 12th verſe of this chapter; which is a part of our Lord's farewell-ſermon to his diſciples. Sorrow had now filled their heart: they were apt to ſay, Alas! what will become of us, when our Maſter is taken from our head? who will then inſtruct us? who will ſolve our doubts? how will we be ſupported, under our difficulties and diſcouragements? how will we be able to live, without our wonted communication with him?

Wherefore our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſeaſonably teaches them the myſtery of their union with him, comparing himſelf to the vine ſtock, and them to the branches.

He compares, I ſay, (1.) Himſelf to a vine-ſtock; I am the vine. He had been celebrating with his diſciples the ſacrament of his ſupper, that ſign and ſeal of his people's union with himſelf; and had told them, *He would drink no more of the fruit of the vine, till he ſhould drink it new with them, in his Father's kingdom*: and now he ſhews himſelf to be the vine, from whence the wine of their conſolation ſhould come. The vine has leſs beauty than many other trees; but is exceeding fruitful; fitly repreſenting the low condition our Lord was then in, yet bringing many ſons to glory. But that which is chiefly aimed at, in his comparing himſelf to a vine, is to repreſent himſelf as the ſupporter and nouriſher of his people, in whom they live, and bring forth fruit. (2.) He compares them to branches, ye are the branches of that vine. Ye are the branches knit to, and growing on this ſtock, drawing all your life and ſap from it. It is a beautiful compariſon; as if he had ſaid, I am as a vine, ye are as the branches of that vine. Now there are two ſorts of branches, (1.) Natural branches, which at firſt ſpring out of the ſtock. Theſe are the branches which are in the tree, and were never out of it. (2.) There are ingrafted branches, which are branches cut off from the tree, that firſt gave them life, and put into another to grow upon it. Thus branches come to be on a tree, which originally were not on it. The branches mentioned in the text, are of the latter ſort: branches broken off, (as the word in the original language denotes,) namely, from the tree that firſt gave them life. None of the children of men are natural branches of the ſecond Adam, viz. Jeſus Chriſt the true vine; they are all the natural branches of the firſt Adam, that degenerate vine: but the elect are all of them, ſooner or later, broken off from their natural ſtock, and ingrafted into Chriſt the true vine.

DOCT. *They who are in the ſtate of grace, are ingrafted in, and unite to, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* They are taken out of their natural ſtock, cut off from it; and are now ingrafted into Chriſt, as the new ſtock. It handling of this, I ſhall ſpeak to the myſtical union, (1.) More generally. (2.) More particularly.

A general view of the myſtical union.

I. In the general, for underſtanding the union betwixt the Lord Jeſus Chriſt and his elect, who believe in him, and on him.

1. It is a ſpiritual union. Man and wife, by their marriage-union, become one fleſh; Chriſt and true believers by this union, become one ſpirit, 2 Cor. vi. 17. As one ſoul or ſpirit actuates both the head, and the members in the natural body: ſo the one Spirit of God dwells in Chriſt and the Chriſtian: for, *if any man have not the ſpirit of Chriſt, he is none of his*, Rom viii. 9. Corporal union is made by contact; ſo the ſtones in a building are united: but this is an union of another nature. Were it poſſible we could eat the fleſh, and drink the blood of Chriſt, in a corporal and carnal manner; it would profit nothing, John vi. 63. It was not Mary's bearing him in her womb; but her believing on him, that made her a ſaint, Luke xi. 27. 28. *A certain woman------ſaid unto him, Bleſſed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou haſt ſucked. But he ſaid, Yea, rather bleſſed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.*

2. It is a real union. Such is our weakneſs, in our preſent ſtate, ſo much are we immerſed in ſin, that we are prone to form in our fancy, an image of every thing propoſed to us: and as to whatſoever that is denied us, we are apt to ſuſpect it to be but a fiction, or what has no reality. But nothing is more real, than what is ſpiritual; as approaching neareſt to the nature of him, who is the fountain of all reality, namely, God himſelf. We do not ſee, with our eyes, the union betwixt our own ſoul and body, neither can we repreſent it to ourſelves, truly, by imagination, as we do ſenſible things; yet the reality of it is not to be doubted. Faith is no fancy, but the ſubſtance of things hoped for, Heb. xi. 1. Neither is the union thereby made betwixt Chriſt and believers, imaginary, but moſt real: *For we are members of his body, of his fleſh, and of his bones*, Eph. v. 30.

3. It is a moſt cloſe and intimate union. Believers, regenerate perſons, who fiducially credit him, and rely on him, have put on Chriſt, Gal. iii. 27. If that be not enough, he is in them, John xvii. 23. formed in them, as the child in the mother's belly, Gal iv. 19. He is the foundation, 1 Cor. iii. 2. they are the lively ſtones built upon him, 1 Peter ii. 5. He is the head, and they the body, Eph. i. 22. 23. Nay, he liveth in them, as their very ſouls in their bodies, Gal. ii. 20. And, what is more than all this, they are one in the Father and the Son, as the Father is in Chriſt, and Chriſt in the Father, John xvi. 21. *That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they alſo may be one in us.*

4. Though it is not a mere legal union, yet it is an union ſuſtained in law. Chriſt as the cautioner, the Chriſtian as the principal debtor, are one, in the eye of the law. When the elect had run themſelves, with the reſt of mankind, in debt to the juſtice of God; Chriſt became ſurety for them, and paid the debt. When they believe on him, they are united to him in a ſpiritual marriage-union; which takes effect ſo far, that what he did and ſuffered for them is reckoned in law, as if they had done and ſuffered it themſelves. Hence they are ſaid to be crucified with Chriſt, Gal. ii. 20. buried with him, Col. ii. 12. yea, raiſed up together, (namely, with Chriſt,) and made to ſit together in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus, Eph. ii. 6. In which places, ſaints on earth, of whom the apoſtle there ſpeaks, cannot be ſaid to be ſitting, but in the way of law-reckoning.

5. It is an indiſſoluble union. Once in Chriſt, ever in him. Having taken up his habitation in the heart he never removes. None can untie this happy knot. Who will diſſolve this union? will he himſelf do it? No, he will not; we have his word for it. *I will not turn away from them*, Jer. xxxiii. 40. But perhaps, the ſinner will do this miſchief to himſelf; no, he ſhall not, *they ſhall not depart from me*, ſaith their God. ibid. Can devils do it; No, unleſs they be ſtronger than Chriſt, and his Father too; *Neither ſhall any man pluck them out of my hand*, ſaith our Lord, John x. 28. *And none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.* verſ. 39. But what ſay you of death, which parts huſband and wife, yea, ſeparates the ſoul from the body? will not death do it? No; the apoſtle, Rom. viii. 38. 39. is perſwaded that neither death, (as terrible as it is,) nor life, (as deſirable as it is;) nor devils thoſe evil angels, nor the devil's perſecuting agents, though they be principalities or powers on earth, nor evil things preſent, already lying on us; nor evil things to come on us; nor the height of worldly felicity, nor depth of worldly miſery; nor any other creature, good or ill, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord. As death ſeparated Chriſt's ſoul from his body, but could not ſeparate either the ſoul or body from his divine nature: ſo though the ſaints ſhould be ſeparate from their neareſt relations in the world, and from all their earthly enjoyments; yea though their ſouls ſhould be ſeparate from their bodies, and their bodies ſeparate in a thouſand pieces, their *bones ſcattered, as when one cutteth or cleaveth wood*: yet ſoul and body, and every piece of the body, the ſmalleſt duſt of it ſhall remain united to the Lord Chriſt: for even in death *they ſleep in Jeſus*, 1 Theſſ. iv. 14. and *he keepeth all their bones*, Pſal. xxxiv. 20. Union with Chriſt, is *the grace wherein we ſtand*, firm and ſtable, *as mount Zion, which cannot be removed.*

Laſtly, It is a myſterious union. The goſpel is a doctrine of myſteries. It diſcovers to us the ſubſtantial union of the three perſons in one God-head, 1 John

v. 7. *Theſe three are one*: the hypoſtatical union of the divine and human natures, in the perſon of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, 1 Tim. iii. 16. *God was manifeſt in the fleſh*: and the myſtical union, betwixt Chriſt and believers; this is a great myſtery alſo, Eph v. 32. O what myſteries are here! the head in heaven, the members on earth, yet really united! Chriſt in the believer, living in him, walking in him, and the believer dwelling in God, putting on the Lord Jeſus, eating his fleſh, and drinking his blood! this makes the ſaints a myſtery to the world; yea a myſtery to themſelves.

II. I come now more particularly to ſpeak of this union with, and ingrafting into, Jeſus Chriſt. And, (1.) I ſhall conſider the natural ſtock, which the branches are taken out of. (2.) The ſupernatural ſtock, they are ingrafted into. (3.) What branches are cut off the old ſtock, and put into the new. (4.) How it is done. And laſtly, The benefits flowing from this union, and ingrafting.

Of the natural and ſupernatural ſtocks, and the branches, taken out of the former, and ingrafted into the latter.

I. Let us take a view of the ſtock, which the branches are taken out of. The two Adams, that is, Adam and Chriſt, are the two ſtocks; for the ſcripture ſpeaks of theſe two, as if there had never been more men in the world than they, 1 Cor. xv. 45. *The firſt man Adam was made a living ſoul, the laſt Adam was made a quickening ſpirit*: verſ. 47. *The firſt man is of the earth, earthy; the ſecond man is the Lord from heaven.* And the reaſon is, there never were any that were not branches of one of theſe two; all men being either in the one ſtock, or in the other; for in theſe two ſorts all mankind ſtands divided, verſ. 48. *As is the earthy, ſuch are they alſo that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, ſuch are they alſo that are heavenly.* The firſt Adam then is the natural ſtock: on this ſtock are the branches found growing at firſt, which are afterwards cut off, and ingrafted into Chriſt. As for the fallen angels, as they had no relation to the firſt Adam, ſo they have none to the ſecond.

There are four things to be remembred here, (1.) That all mankind (the man Chriſt excepted) are naturally branches of the firſt Adam, Rom. v. 12. *By one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin: and ſo death paſſed upon all men.* (2.) The bond which knit us unto the natural ſtock, was the covenant of works. Adam being our natural root, was made the moral root alſo, bearing all his poſterity, as repreſenting them in the covenant of works. For, *by one man's diſobedience many were made ſinners*, Rom. v. 19. Now there behoved to be a peculiar relation betwixt that one man, and the many, as a foundation for imputing his ſin to them. This relation did not ariſe from the mere natural bond betwixt him and us, as of a father to his children; for ſo we are related to our immediate parents, whoſe ſins are not thereupon imputed to us, as Adam's ſin is. It behoved them to ariſe from a moral bond betwixt Adam and us: the bond of a covenant which could be no other than the covenant of works, wherein we were united to him, as branches to a ſtock. Hence Jeſus Chriſt, though a ſon of Adam, Luke iii. 23. 38. was none of theſe branches: for ſeeing he came not of Adam, in virtue of the bleſſing of marriage, which was given before the fall, (Gen. i. 28. *Be fruitful and multiply*, &c.) but in virtue of a ſpecial promiſe made after the fall, (Gen. iii. 15. *The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the ſerpent's head*,) Adam could not repreſent him in a covenant made before his fall. (3.) As it is impoſſible for a branch to be in two ſtocks at once, ſo no man can be, at one and the ſame time, both in the firſt and ſecond Adam. (4.) Hence it evidently follows, that all who are not ingrafted in Jeſus Chriſt, are yet branches of the old ſtock, and ſo partake of the nature of the ſame. Now, as to the firſt Adam, our natural ſtock, conſider,

Firſt, What a ſtock he was originally. He was a vine of the Lord's planting, a choice vine, a noble vine, wholly a right ſeed. There was a conſultation of the Trinity at the planting of this vine, Gen. i. 26. *Let us make man in our image, after our own likeneſs.* There was no rottenneſs at the heart of it. There was ſap and juice enough in it to have nouriſhed all the branches, to bring forth fruit unto God. My meaning is, Adam was made able perfectly to keep the commandments of God, which would have procured eternal life to himſelf, and to all his poſterity: for ſeeing all die by Adam's diſobedience, all ſhould have had life by his obedience, if he had ſtood. Conſider,

Secondly, What that ſtock now is. Ah! moſt unlike to what it was, when planted by the author and fountain of all good. A blaſt from hell, and a bite with the venomous teeth of the old ſerpent, have made it a degenerate ſtock, a dead ſtock; nay, a killing ſtock.

Firſt, It is a degenerate naughty ſtock. Therefore the Lord God ſaid to Adam, in that diſmal day, "Where art thou?" Gen. iii. 9. In what condition art thou now? "How art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a ſtrange vine unto me?" Or, Where waſt thou? Why not in the place of meeting with me? Why ſo long a coming? What meaneth this fearful change, this hiding of thyſelf from me? Alas! the ſtock is degenerate, quite ſpoilt, become altogether naught, and brings forth wild grapes. Converſe with the devil is preferred to communion with God. Satan is believed, and God, who is truth itſelf, diſbelieved. He who was the friend of God, is now in conſpiracy againſt him. Darkneſs is come into the room of light: ignorance prevails in the mind, where divine knowledge ſhone: the will, ſometime righteous and regular, is now turned rebel againſt its Lord: and the whole man is in dreadful diſorder.

Before I go further, let me ſtop and obſerve, Here is a mirror both for ſaints and ſinners. Sinners, ſtand here and conſider, what you are: and, ſaints, learn ye what once ye were. Ye ſinners, are branches of a degenerate ſtock. Fruit you may bear, indeed; but now that your vine is the vine of Sodom, your grapes muſt of courſe be grapes of gall, Deut. xxxii. 32. The ſcripture ſpeaks of two ſorts of fruit which grow on the branches upon the natural ſtock: and it is plain enough they are of the nature of their degenerate ſtock. (1.) The wild grapes of wickedneſs, Iſ. v. 2. Theſe grow in abundance by influence from hell. See Gal. v. 19. 20. 21. At their gates are all manner of theſe fruits, both new and old. Storms come from heaven to put them back, but ſtill they grow. They are ſtruck at with the ſword of the Spirit, the word of God; conſcience gives them many a ſecret blow, yet they thrive. (2.) Fruit to themſelves, Hoſ. x. 1. What elſe are all the unrenewed man's acts of obedience, his reformation, ſober deportment, his prayers, and good works? They are all done, chiefly for himſelf, not for the glory of God. Theſe fruits are like the apples of Sodom, fair to look at, but fall to aſhes when handled and tried. Ye think ye have not only the leaves of a profeſſion, but the fruits of a holy practice too: but if ye be not broken off from the old ſtock, and ingrafted in Chriſt Jeſus, God accepts not, nor regards your fruits.

Here I muſt take occaſion to tell you, there are five faults will be found in heaven, with your beſt fruits. (1.) Their bitterneſs; your *cluſters are bitter*, Deut. xxxii. 32. There is a ſpirit of bitterneſs, wherewith ſome come before the Lord, in religious duties, living in malice and envy; and which ſome profeſſors entertain againſt others, becauſe they outſhine them by holineſs of life, or becauſe they are not of their opinion or way. This, whereſoever it reigns, is a fearful ſymptom of an unregenerate ſtate. But I do not ſo much mean this, as that which is common to all the branches of the old ſtock, namely, *the leaven of hypocriſy*, Luke xii. 1.

which ſowres and embitters every duty they perform. The wiſdom, that is full of good fruits, is without hypocriſy, Jam. iii. 17. (2.) Their ill ſavour. Their works are abominable, for themſelves are corrupt, Pſal. xiv. 1. They all ſavour of the old ſtock, not of the new. It is the peculiar privilege of the ſaints, that they are unto God a ſweet ſavour of Chriſt, 2 Cor. ii. 15. The unregenerate man's fruits ſavour not of love to Chriſt, nor of the blood of Chriſt, nor of the incenſe of his interceſſion, and therefore will never be accepted of in heaven. (3.) Their unripeneſs. Their grape is an unripe grape, Job xv. 33. There is no influence on them, from the Sun of righteouſneſs, to bring them to perfection. They have the ſhape of fruit, but no more. The matter of duty is in them, but they want right principles and ends: their works are not wrought in God, John ii. 21. Their prayers drop from their lips, before their hearts be impregnate with the vital ſap of the Spirit of ſupplication: their tears fall from their eyes, ere their hearts be truly ſoftened: their feet turn to new paths, and their way is altered, while yet their nature is not changed. (4.) Their lightneſs. Being weighed in the balances, they are found wanting, Dan. v. 27. For evidence whereof you may obſerve, they do not humble the ſoul, but lift it up in pride. The good fruits of holineſs bear down the branches they grow upon, making them to ſalute the ground, 1 Cor. xv. 10. *I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.* But the blaſted fruits of unrenewed mens performances, hang lightly on branches towering up to heaven, Judges xvii. 13. *Now know I, that the Lord will do me good, ſeeing I have a Levite to my prieſt.* They look indeed ſo high, that God cannot behold them; *Wherefore have we faſted, ſay they, and thou ſeeſt not?* Iſ. lviii. 3. The more duties they do, and the better they ſeem to perform them, the leſs are they humbled, the more they are lifted up. This diſpoſition of the ſinner, is the exact reverſe of what is to be found in the ſaint. To men, who neither are in Chriſt, nor are ſolicitous to be found in him, their duties are like windy bladders, wherewith they think to ſwim aſhore to Immanuel's land: but theſe muſt needs break, and they conſequently ſink; becauſe they take not Chriſt for the lifter up of their head, Pſal. iii. 3. Laſtly, They are not all manner of pleaſant fruits, Cant. vii. 13. Chriſt, as a King, muſt be ſerved with variety. Where God makes the heart his garden, he plants it as Solomon did his, with trees of all kind of fruits, Eccleſ. ii. 5. And accordingly it brings forth the fruit of the Spirit in all goodneſs, Eph. v. 9. But the ungodly are not ſo; their obedience is never univerſal; there is always ſome one thing or other excepted. In one word, their fruits are fruits of an ill tree, that cannot be accepted in heaven.

Secondly, Our natural ſtock is a dead ſtock, according to the threatening, Gen. ii. 17. *In the day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.* Our root now is rottenneſs; no marvel the bloſſom go up as duſt. The ſtroke has gone to the heart, the ſap is let out, and the tree is withered. The curſe of the firſt covenant, like a hot thunder-bolt from heaven, has lighted on it, and ruined it. It is curſed now as that fig-tree, Matth. xxi. 19. *Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever.* Now it is good for nothing, but to cumber the ground, and furniſh fuel for Tophet.

Let me enlarge a little here alſo. Every unrenewed man is a branch of a dead ſtock. When thou ſeeſt, O ſinner, a dead ſtock of a tree, exhauſted of all its ſap, having branches on it in the ſame condition, look on it as a lively repreſentation of thy ſoul's ſtate. (1.) Where the ſtock is dead, the branches muſt needs be barren. Alas! the barrenneſs of many profeſſors plainly diſcovers on what ſtock they are growing. It is eaſy to pretend to faith, but *ſhew me thy faith without thy works,* if thou canſt, Jam. ii. 18. (2.) A dead ſtock can convey no ſap to the branches, to make them bring forth fruit. The covenant of works was the bond of our union with the natural ſtock; but now it is become weak through the fleſh; that is, through the degeneracy and depravity of human nature, Rom. viii. 3. It is ſtrong enough to command, and to bind heavy burdens on the ſhoulders of thoſe who are not in Chriſt, but it affords no ſtrength to bear them. The ſap, that was once in the root, is now gone: and the law, like a mercileſs creditor, apprehends Adam's heirs, ſaying, *Pay what thou oweſt;* when, alas! his effects are riotouſly ſpent. (3.) All pains and coſt are loſt on the tree, whoſe life is gone. In vain do men labour to get fruit on the branches, when there is no ſap in the root. Firſt, The gardener's pains are loſt: miniſters loſe their labour on the branches of the old ſtock, while they continue on it. Many ſermons are preached to no purpoſe; becauſe there is no life to give ſenſation. Sleeping men may be awakened; but the dead cannot be raiſed without a miracle: even ſo the dead ſinner muſt remain ſo, if he be not reſtored to life by a miracle of grace. Secondly, The influences of Heaven are loſt on ſuch a tree: in vain doth the rain fall upon it: in vain is it laid open to the winter-cold and froſts. The Lord of the vineyard digs about many a dead ſoul, but it is not bettered. *Bruiſe the fool in a morter, his folly will not depart.* Though he meets with many croſſes, yet he retains his luſts: let him be laid on a ſick-bed, he will ly there like a ſick beaſt, groaning under his pain, but not mourning for, nor turning from his ſin. Let death itſelf ſtare him in the face, he will preſumptuouſly maintain his hope, as if he would look the grim meſſenger out of countenance. Sometimes there are common operations of the divine Spirit performed on him: he is ſent home with a trembling heart, and with arrows of conviction ſticking in his ſoul: but at length he prevails againſt theſe things, and turns as ſecure as ever. Thirdly, Summer and winter are alike to the branches on the dead ſtock. When others about them are budding, bloſſoming, and bringing forth fruit, there is no change on them: the dead ſtock has no growing time at all. Perhaps it may be difficult to know, in the winter, what trees are dead, and what are alive; but the ſpring plainly diſcovers it. There are ſome ſeaſons wherein there is little life to be perceived, even amongſt ſaints; yet times of reviving come at length. But even when *the vine flouriſheth, and the pomegranates bud forth,* (when ſaving grace is diſcovering itſelf, by its lively actings, whereſoever it is), the branches on the old ſtock are ſtill withered: when the dry bones are coming together, bone to bone, amongſt ſaints, the ſinners bones are ſtill lying about the grave's mouth. They are trees that cumber the ground, are near to be cut down; and will be cut down for the fire, if God in mercy prevent it not by cutting them off from that ſtock, and ingrafting them into another.

Laſtly, Our natural ſtock is a killing ſtock. If the ſtock die, how can the branches live? If the ſap be gone from the root and heart, the branches muſt needs wither. *In Adam all die,* 1 Cor. xv. 22. The root died in Paradiſe, and all the branches in it, and with it. The root is empoiſoned, thence the branches come to be infected: *death is in the pot,* and all that taſte of the pulſe, or pottage, are killed.

Know then, that every natural man is a branch of a killing ſtock. Our natural root not only gives us not life, but it has a killing power, reaching all the branches thereof. There are four things which the firſt Adam conveys to all his branches, and they are abiding in, and lying on, ſuch of them as are not ingrafted in Chriſt. Firſt, A corrupt nature. He ſinned, and his nature was therefore corrupted or depraved; and this corruption is conveyed to all his poſterity. He was infected, and the contagion ſpread itſelf over all his ſeed. Secondly, Guilt, that is, an obligation to puniſhment, Rom. v. 21. *By one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin; and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned.* The threatenings of the law, as cords of death, are twiſted about the branches of the old ſtock, to draw them over the hedge into the fire. And till they be cut off from this ſtock by the pruning knife, the ſword of vengeance hangs over their heads, to cut them down. Thirdly, This killing ſtock tranſmits the curſe into the branches. The ſtock, as the ſtock (for I ſpeak not of Adam in his perſonal and private capacity) being curſed, ſo are the branches, Gal. iii. 10. *For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curſe.* This curſe affects the whole man, and all that belongs to him, every thing he poſſeſſes; and worketh three ways. (1.) As poiſon, infecting; thus their bleſſings are curſed, Mal. ii. 2. Whatever the man enjoys, it can do him no good, but evil, being thus empoiſoned by the curſe. His proſperity in the world deſtroys him, Prov. i. 32. The miniſtry of the goſpel is a favour of death unto death, to him, 2 Cor. ii. 16. His ſeeming attainments in religion are curſed to him: his knowledge ſerves but to puff him up, and his duties to keep him back from Chriſt. (2.) It worketh as a moth, conſuming and waſting by little and little, Hoſ. v. 12. *Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth.* There is a worm at the root, conſuming them by degrees. Thus the curſe purſued Saul, till it wormed him out of all his enjoyments, and out of the very ſhew he had of religion. Sometimes they decay like the fat of lambs, and melt away as the ſnow in a ſunſhine. (3.) It acteth as a lion rampant, Hoſ. v. 14. *I will be unto Ephraim as a lion.* The Lord "rains on them ſnares, fire and brimſtone, and "an horrible tempeſt," in ſuch a manner, that they are hurried away with the ſtream. He teareth their enjoyments from them in his wrath, purſueth them with terrors, rents their ſouls from their bodies, and throws the deadened branch into the fire. Thus the curſe devours like fire, which none can quench. Laſtly, This killing ſtock tranſmits death to the branches upon it. Adam took the poiſonous cup and drunk it off: this occaſioned death to himſelf and us. We came into the world ſpiritually dead, thereby obnoxious to eternal death, and abſolutely liable to temporal death. This root is to us like the Scythian river, which, they ſay, brings forth little bladders every day, out of which come certain ſmall flies, which are bred in the morning, winged at noon, and dead at night: a very lively emblem of our mortal ſtate.

Now, Sirs, is it not abſolutely neceſſary to be broken off from this our natural ſtock? What will our fair leaves of a profeſſion, or our fruits of duties avail, if we be ſtill branches of the degenerate, dead and killing ſtock? But, alas; among the many queſtions toſſed among us, few are taken up about theſe, Whether am I broken off from the old ſtock, or not? Whether am I ingrafted in Chriſt, or not? Ah! Wherefore all this waſte? Why is there ſo much noiſe about religion amongſt many who can give no good account of their having laid a good foundation, being mere ſtrangers to experimental religion? I fear, if God do not in mercy timeouſly undermine the religion of many of us, and let us ſee we have none at all, our root will be found rottenneſs, and our bloſſom go up as duſt, in a dying hour. Therefore let us look to our ſtate, that we be not found fools in our latter end.

II. Let us now view the ſupernatural ſtock, in which the branches cut off from the natural ſtock are ingrafted. Jeſus Chriſt is ſometimes called the Branch, Zech. iii. 8. So he is in reſpect of his human nature, being a branch, and the top-branch of the houſe of David. Sometimes he is called a root, Iſ. xi. 10. We have both together, Rev. xxii. 16. *I am the root, and the offſpring of David.* David's root as God, and his offſpring as man. The text tells us, that he is the vine, i. e. he, as a Mediator, is the vine-ſtock, whereof believers are the branches. As the ſap comes from the earth into the root and ſtock, and from thence is diffuſed into the branches; ſo, by Chriſt as Mediator, divine life is conveyed from the fountain, unto theſe who are united to him by faith, John vi. 57. *As the living Father hath ſent me, and I live by the Father: ſo he that eateth me, even he ſhall live by me.* Now Chriſt is Mediator, not as God only, as ſome have aſſerted; nor yet as man only, as the Papiſts generally hold: but he is Mediator as God-man, Acts xx. 28.-- --*The church of God which he hath purchaſed by his blood*, Heb. ix. 14.---- *Chriſt, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himſelf without ſpot to God.* The divine and human natures have their diſtinct actings, yet a joint operation, in his diſcharging the office of Mediator. This is illuſtrated by the ſimilitude of a fiery ſword, which at once cuts and burns: cutting it burneth, and burning it cutteth; the ſteel cuts, and the fire burns. Wherefore Chriſt, God-man, is the ſtock, whereof believers are the branches: and they are united to whole Chriſt. They are united to him in his human nature, as being *members of his body, of his fleſh, and of his bones*, Eph. v. 30. And they are united to him in his divine nature; for ſo the apoſtle ſpeaks of this union, Col. i. 27. *Chriſt in you the hope of glory.* And by him they are united to the Father, and to the Holy Ghoſt, 1 John iv. 15. *Whoſever ſhall confeſs that Jeſus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.* Faith, the bond of this union, receives whole Chriſt God-man, and ſo unites us to him as ſuch.

Behold here, O believers, your high privilege. Ye were once branches of a degenerate ſtock, even as others: but ye are, by grace, become branches of the new vine, John xv. 1. Ye are cut out of a dead and killing ſtock and ingrafted in the laſt Adam, who was made a quickning ſpirit, 1 Cor xv. 45. your loſs by the firſt Adam is made up, with great advantage, by your union with the ſecond. Adam, at his beſt eſtate, was but a ſhrub, in compariſon with Chriſt the tree of life. He was but a ſervant; Chriſt is the Son, the Heir, and Lord of all things, the Lord from heaven. It cannot be denied, that grace was ſhown in the firſt covenant, but it is as far exceeded by the grace of the ſecond covenant, as the twilight is by the light of mid-day.

III. What branches are taken out of the natural ſtock and grafted into this vine? *Anſw.* Theſe are the elect and none other. They, and they only are grafted into Chriſt; and conſequently none but they are cut off from the killing ſtock. For them alone he intercedes, *That they may be one in him and his Father*, John xvii. 9. 23. Faith the bond of this union, is given to none elſe; it is the faith of God's elect, Tit. i. 1. The Lord paſſeth by many branches growing on the natural ſtock, and cuts off only here one, and there one, and grafts them into the true vine, according as free love hath determined. Oft does he pitch upon the moſt unlikely branch, leaving the top-boughs: paſſing by the mighty, and the noble, and calling the weak, baſe, and deſpiſed, 1 Cor. i. 26. 27. Yea, he often leaves the fair and ſmooth, and takes the rugged and knotty: *and ſuch were ſome of you; but ye are waſhed*, &c. 1 Cor. vi. 11. If we enquire why ſo? We find no other reaſon but, becauſe they were choſen in him, Eph. i. 4. *predeſtinated to the adoption of children by Jeſus Chriſt*, verſ. 5. Thus are they gathered together in Chriſt, while the reſt are left growing on their natural ſtock, to be afterwards bound up in bundles for the fire. Wherefore, to whomſoever the goſpel may come in vain, it will have a bleſſed effect on God's elect, Acts xiii. 48. *As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.* Where the Lord has much people, the goſpel will have much ſucceſs ſooner or latter. Such as are to be ſaved will be added to the myſtical body of Chriſt.

How the branches are taken out of the natural ſtock, and ingrafted into the ſupernatural ſtock.

IV. I am to ſhew how the branches are cut off from the natural ſtock, the firſt Adam, and grafted into the true vine, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Thanks to the Huſbandman, not to the branch, that it is cut off from its natural ſtock, and grafted into a new one. The ſinner, in his coming off from the firſt ſtock, is paſſive, and neither can nor will come off from it of his own accord, but clings to it, till almighty power make him to fall off, John vi. 44. *No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath ſent me, draw him.* And chap. v. 40. *Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.* The ingrafted branches are God's huſbandry, 1 Cor. iii. 9. the planting of the Lord, Iſ. lxi. 3. The ordinary means he makes uſe of, in this work, is the miniſtry of the word, 1 Cor iii. 9. *We are labourers together with God.* But the efficacy thereof is wholly from him, whatever the miniſter's parts or piety be, verſe 7. *Neither is he that planteth any thing, neither is he that watereth: but God that giveth the increaſe.* The apoſtles preached to the Jews, yet the body of that people remained in infidelity, Rom. x. 16. *Who hath believed our report?* Yea Chriſt himſelf who ſpoke as never man ſpoke, ſaith concerning the ſucceſs of his own miniſtry, *I have laboured in vain, I have ſpent my ſtrength for nought*, Iſ. xlix. 4. The branches may be hacked by the preaching of the word: but the ſtroke will never go through, till it be carried home on them, by an omnipotent arm. However, God's ordinary way is, *by the fooliſhneſs of preaching to ſave them that believe*, 1 Cor. i. 21.

The cutting off of the branch, from the natural ſtock, is performed by the pruning knife of the law in the hand of the ſpirit of God, Gal. ii. 19. *For I through the law am dead to the law.* It is by the bond of the covenant of works, as I ſaid before, that we are knit to our natural ſtock: and therefore, as a wife, unwilling to be put away, pleads and hangs by the marriage-tye; ſo do men by the covenant of works. They hold by it, like the man who held the ſhip with his hands; and when one hand was cut off, held it with the other; and when both were cut off, held it with his teeth. This will appear from a diſtinct view of the Lord's work on men, in bringing them off from the old ſtock; which now I offer in the following particulars.

Firſt, When the Spirit of the Lord comes to deal with a perſon, to bring him to Chriſt; he finds him in Laodicea's caſe, in a ſound ſleep of ſecurity, dreaming of heaven, and the favour of God, though full of ſin againſt the holy One of Iſrael, Rev. iii. 17. *Thou knoweſt not that thou art wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked.* And therefore he darts in ſome beams of light into the dark ſoul; and lets the man ſee he is a loſt man, if he turn not over a new leaf, and betake himſelf to a new courſe of life. Thus by the Spirit of the Lord acting as a ſpirit of bondage, there is a criminal court erected in the man's breaſt; where he is arraigned, accuſed, and condemned for breaking the law of God, convinced of ſin and judgment, John xvi. 8. And now he can no longer ſleep ſecurely in his former courſe of life. This is the firſt ſtroke the branch gets, in order to cutting off.

Secondly, Hereupon the man forſakes his former profane courſes, his lying, ſwearing, Sabbath-breaking, ſtealing, and ſuch like practices; though they be dear to him, as right eyes, he will rather quit them, than ruin his ſoul. The ſhip is like to ſink, and therefore he throweth his goods over-board, that he himſelf may not periſh. And now he begins to bleſs himſelf in his heart, and look joyfully on his evidences for heaven; thinking himſelf a better ſervant to God than many others, Luke xviii. 11. *God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjuſt, adulterers*, &c. But he ſoon gets another ſtroke with the axe of the law, ſhewing him that it is only he that doth what is written in the law, who can be ſaved by it; and that his negative holineſs is too ſcanty a cover from the ſtorm of God's wrath. And thus, although his ſins of commiſſion only were heavy on him before, his ſins of omiſſion now crowd into his thoughts, attended with a train of law-curſes and vengeance. And each of the ten commands diſcharges thunder-claps of wrath againſt him, for his omitting required duties.

Thirdly, Upon this he turns unto a poſitively holy courſe of life. He not only is not profane, but he performs religious duties: he prays, ſeeks the knowledge of the principles of religion, ſtrictly obſerves the Lord's day, and, like Herod, does many things, and hears ſermons gladly. In one word, there is a great conformity, in his outward converſation, to the letter of both tables of the law. And now there is a mighty change upon the man, that his neighbours cannot but take notice of. Hence he is cheerfully admitted by the godly into their ſociety, as a praying perſon; and can confer with them about religious matters, yea, and about ſoul-exerciſe, which ſome are not acquainted with; and their good opinion of him, confirms his good opinion of himſelf. This ſtep in religion is fatal to many, who never get beyond it. But here the Lord reacheth the elect-branch a further ſtroke. Conſcience flies in the man's face, for ſome wrong ſteps in his converſation, the neglect of ſome duty, or commiſſion of ſome ſin, which is a blot in his converſation: and then the flaming ſword of the law appears again over his head; and the curſe rings in his ears, for that he *continueth not in ALL things written in the law, to do them*, Gal. iii. 10.

Fourthly, On this account he is obliged to ſeek another ſalve for his ſore. He goes to God, confeſſeth his ſin, ſeeks the pardon of it, promiſing to watch againſt it for the time to come: and ſo finds eaſe, and thinks he may very well take it, ſeeing the ſcripture ſaith, *If we confeſs our ſins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins*, 1 John i. 9. not conſidering that he graſps at a privilege, which is theirs only who are grafted into Chriſt, and under the covenant of grace, and which the branches yet growing on the old ſtock cannot plead. And here ſometimes there are formal and expreſs vows made againſt ſuch and ſuch ſins, and binding to ſuch and ſuch duties. Thus many go on all their days, knowing no other religion, but to do duties, and to confeſs, and pray for pardon of that wherein they fail, promiſing themſelves eternal happineſs, though they are utter ſtrangers to Chriſt. Here many elect ones have been caſt down wounded, and many reprobates have been ſlain, while the wounds of neither of them have been deep enough to cut them off from their natural ſtock. But the Spirit of the Lord gives yet a deeper ſtroke to the branch which is to be cut off, ſhewing him, that, as yet, he is but an out-ſide ſaint, and diſcovering to him the filthy luſts lodged in his heart, which he took no notice of before, Rom. vii. 9. *When the commandment came, ſin revived, and I died.* Then he ſees his heart a dunghill of helliſh luſts, filled with covetouſneſs, pride, malice, filthineſs, and the like. Now, aſſoon as the door of the chambers of his imagery is thus opened to him, and he ſees what they do there in the dark, his outſide religion is blown up as inſufficient; and he learns a new leſſon in religion, namely, *That he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly*, Rom. ii. 28.

Fifthly, Upon this he goes further, even to inſide religion; ſets to work more vigorouſly than ever, mourns over the evils of his heart, and ſtrives to bear down the weeds he finds growing in that neglected garden. He labours to curb his pride and paſſion, and to baniſh ſpeculative impurities; prays more fervently, hears attentively, and ſtrives to get his heart affected in every religious duty he performs: and thus he comes to think himſelf not only an out-ſide, but an in-ſide Chriſtian. Wonder not at this, for there is nothing in it, beyond the power of nature, or what one may attain to under a vigorous influence of the covenant of works; therefore another yet deeper ſtroke is reached. The law chargeth home on the man's conſcience, that he was a tranſgreſſor from the womb; that he came into the world a guilty creature, and that in the time of his ignorance, and even ſince his eyes were opened, he has been guilty of many actual ſins, either altogether overlooked by him, or not ſufficiently mourned over. (For ſpiritual ſores, not healed by the blood of Chriſt, but ſkinned over ſome other way, are eaſily ruffled, and as ſoon break out again). And therefore the law takes him by the throat, ſaying, *Pay what thou oweſt.*

Sixthly, Then the ſinner ſays in his heart, *Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all;* and ſo falls to work to pacify an offended God, and to atone for theſe ſins. He renews his repentance, ſuch as it is; bears patiently the afflictions laid upon him; yea, he afflicts himſelf, denies himſelf the uſe of his lawful comforts, ſighs deeply, mourns bitterly, cries with tears for a pardon, till he hath wrought up his heart to a conceit of having obtained it: having thus done penance for what is paſt, and reſolving to be a good ſervant to God, and to hold on in outward and inward obedience, for the time to come. But the ſtroke muſt go nearer the heart yet, ere the branch fall off. The Lord diſcovers to him, in the glaſs of the law, how he ſinneth in all he does, even when he does the beſt he can; and therefore the dreadful ſound returns to his ears, Gal. iii. 10. *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things,* &c. *When ye faſted and mourned,* ſaith the Lord, *did ye at all faſt unto me, even to me?* Will muddy water make clean cloaths? Will you ſatisfy for one ſin with another? Did not your thoughts wander in ſuch a duty? Were not your affections flat in another? Did not your heart give a whoriſh look to ſuch an idol? And did it not riſe in a fit of impatience under ſuch an affliction? *Should I accept this of your hands? Curſed be the deceiver, which ſacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing,* Mal. i. 13. 14. And thus he becomes ſo far broke off, that he ſees he is not able to ſatisfy the demands of the law.

Seventhly. Hence, like a broken man, who finds he is not able to pay all his debt, he goes about to compound with his creditor. And, being in purſuit of eaſe and comfort, he does what he can to fulfil the law; and wherein he fails, he looks that God will accept the will for the deed. Thus doing his duty, and having a will to do better, he cheats himſelf into a perſuaſion of the goodneſs of his ſtate: and hereby thouſands are ruined. But the elect get another ſtroke, which looſeth their hold in this caſe. The doctrine of the law is borne in on their conſciences, demonſtrating to them, that exact and perfect obedience is required by it, under pain of the curſe; and that it is doing, and not wiſhing to do, which will avail. Wiſhing to do better will not anſwer the law's demands; and therefore the curſe ſounds again, *Curſed is every one that continueth------to DO them:* that is, actually to do them. In vain is wiſhing then.

Eightly, Being broken off from hopes of compounding with the law, he falls a borrowing. He ſees that all he can do to obey the law, and all his deſires to be, and to do better, will not ſave his ſoul: therefore he goes to Chriſt, intreating, that his righteouſneſs may make up what is wanting in his own, and cover all the defects of his doings, and ſufferings, that ſo God for Chriſt's ſake may accept them, and thereupon be reconciled. Thus doing what he can to fulfil the law, and looking to Chriſt to make up all his defects: he comes, at length, again to ſleep in a ſound ſkin. Many perſons are ruined this way. This was the error of the Galatians, which Paul, in his epiſtle to them, diſputes againſt. But the Spirit of God breaks off the ſinner from this hold alſo: by bearing in on his conſcience that great truth, Gal. iii. 12. *The law is not of faith, but the man that doth them ſhall live in them.* There is no mixing of the law and faith in this buſineſs: the ſinner muſt hold by one of them, and let the other go. The way of the law, and the way of faith, are ſo far different, that it is not poſſible for a ſinner to walk in the one, but he muſt come off from the other: and if he be for doing, he muſt do all alone; Chriſt will not do a part for him, if he do not all. A garment pieced up of ſundry ſorts of righteouſneſs, is not a garment meet for the court of heaven. Thus the man who was in a dream, and thought he was eating, is awakened by the ſtroke, and behold his ſoul is faint: his heart ſinks in him like a ſtone, while he finds he can neither bear his burden himſelf alone, nor can he get help under it.

Ninthly, What can one do, who muſt needs pay, and yet neither has as much of his own as will bring him out of debt, nor can he get as much to borrow, and to beg he is aſhamed? What can ſuch a one do, I ſay, but ſell himſelf, as the man under the law, that was waxen poor? Lev. xxv. 47. Therefore the ſinner, beat off from ſo many holds, goes about to make a bargain with Chriſt, and to ſell himſelf to the Son of God, (if I may ſo ſpeak,) ſolemnly promiſing and vowing, that he will be a ſervant to Chriſt, as long as he lives, if he will ſave his ſoul. And here oft-times the ſinner makes a perſonal covenant with Chriſt, reſigning himſelf to him on theſe terms; yea, and takes the ſacrament, to make the bargain ſure. Hereupon the man's great care is, how to obey Chriſt, keep his commands, and to fulfil his bargain. And in this the ſoul finds a falſe, unſound peace, for a while; till the Spirit of the Lord fetch another ſtroke, to cut off the man from this refuge of lies likewiſe. And that happens in this manner. When he fails of the duties he engaged to, and falls again into the ſin he covenanted againſt, it is powerfully carried home on his conſcience, that his covenant is broken: ſo all his comfort goes, and terrors afreſh ſeize on his ſoul, as one that has broken covenant with Chriſt. And commonly the man, to help himſelf, renew his covenant, but breaks it again as before. And how is it poſſible it ſhould be otherwiſe, ſeeing he is ſtill upon the old ſtock? Thus the work of many, all their days, as to their ſouls, is nothing but a making and breaking ſuch covenants, over and over again.

Object. Some perhaps will ſay, "Who liveth and ſinneth not? Who is there that faileth not of the duties he has engaged to? If you reject this way as unſound, who then can be ſaved?" *Anſw.* True believers will be ſaved, namely, all who do by faith take hold of God's covenant. But this kind of covenant is men's own covenant, deviſed of their own heart; not God's covenant revealed in the goſpel of his grace: and the making of it is nothing elſe but the making of a covenant of works with Chriſt, confounding the law and the goſpel; a covenant he will never ſubſcribe to, though we ſhould ſign it with our heart's blood, Rom. iv. 14. For if they who are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promiſe made of none effect. v. 16. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end, the promiſe might be ſure to all the ſeed. chap. xi. 6. And if by grace, then is it no more of works, otherwiſe grace is no more grace; but if it be of works, then is it no more grace, otherwiſe work is no more work. God's covenant is everlaſting; once in, never out of it again, and the mercies of it are ſure mercies. But that covenant of yours is a tottering covenant, never ſure, but broken every day. It is a mere ſervile covenant: giving Chriſt ſervice for ſalvation: but God's covenant is a filial covenant, in which the ſinner takes Chriſt, and his ſalvation freely offered, and ſo becomes a ſon, John i. 12. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the ſons of God:* and being become a ſon, he ſerves his Father, not that the inheritance may become his, but becauſe it is his, through Jeſus Chriſt. See Gal. iv. 24. and downward. To enter into that ſpurious covenant, is to buy from Chriſt with money; but to take hold of God's covenant, is to buy of him without money and without price. Iſ. lv. 1. that is to ſay, to beg of him. In that covenant men work for life; in God's covenant they come to Chriſt for life, and work from life. When a perſon under that covenant fails in his duty, all is gone; the covenant muſt be made over again. But under God's covenant, although the man fail in his duty, and for his failures falls under the diſcipline of the covenant; and lies under the weight of it, till ſuch time as he has recourſe anew to the blood of Chriſt for pardon, and renew his repentance: yet all that he truſted to for life and ſalvation, namely, the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, ſtill ſtands entire, and the covenant remains firm. See Rom. vii. 24. 25. and viii. 1.

Now, though ſome men ſpend their lives in making and breaking ſuch covenants of their own; the terror upon the breaking of them wearing weaker and weaker by degrees, till at laſt it creates them little or no uneaſineſs: yet the man, in whom the good work is carried on, till it be accompliſhed in cutting him off from the old ſtock, finds theſe covenants to be, as rotten cords, broke at every touch; and the terror of God being thereupon redoubled on his ſpirit, and the waters, at every turn, getting in unto his very ſoul, he is obliged to ceaſe from catching hold of ſuch covenants, and to ſeek help ſome other way.

Tenthly, Therefore the man comes at length to beg at Chriſt's door for mercy; but yet he is a proud beggar, ſtanding on his perſonal worth. For, as the Papiſts have mediators to plead for them with the one only Mediator, ſo the branches of the old ſtock have always ſomething to produce, which, they think, may commend them to Chriſt, and engage him to take their caſe in hand. They cannot think of coming to the ſpiritual market without money in their own hand. They are like perſons who have once had an eſtate of their own, but are reduced to extreme poverty, and forced to beg. When they come to beg, they ſtill remember their former character; and though they have loſt their ſubſtance, yet they retain much of their former ſpirit: therefore they cannot think they ought to be treated as ordinary beggars, but deſerve a particular regard; and, if that be not given them, their ſpirits riſe againſt him to whom they addreſs themſelves for ſupply. Thus God gives the unhumbled ſinner many common mercies, and ſhuts him not up in the pit according to his deſerving: but all this is nothing in his eyes. He muſt be ſet down at the childrens table, otherwiſe he reckons himſelf hardly dealt with and wronged: for he is not yet brought ſo low, as to think God may be juſtified when he ſpeaketh (againſt him,) and clear from all iniquity, when he judgeth him, according to his real demerit. Pſal. li. 4. He thinks perhaps that, even before he was enlightened, he was better than many others: he conſiders his reformation of life, his repentance, the grief and tears his ſin has coſt him, his earneſt deſires after Chriſt, his prayers and wreſtlings for mercy; and uſeth all theſe now as bribes for mercy, laying no ſmall weight upon them in his addreſſes to the throne of grace. But here the Spirit of the Lord ſhoots a ſheaf of arrows into the man's heart, whereby his confidence in theſe things is ſunk and deſtroyed; and inſtead of thinking himſelf better than many, he is made to ſee himſelf worſe than any. The naughtineſs of his reformation of life is diſcovered; his repentance appears to him no better than the repentance of Judas; his tears like Eſau's, and his deſires after Chriſt to be ſelfiſh and loathſome, like theirs who ſought Chriſt becauſe of the loaves, John vi. 26. His anſwer from God ſeems now to be, Away proud beggar, *how ſhall I put thee among the children?* He ſeems to look ſternly on him, for his ſlighting of Jeſus Chriſt by unbelief; which is a ſin he ſcarce diſcerned before. But now at length he beholds it in its crimſon colours, and is pierced to the heart, as with a thouſand darts, while he ſees he has been going on blindly, ſinning againſt the remedy of ſin, and, in the whole courſe of his life, trampling on the blood of the Son of God. And now he is, in his own eyes, the miſerable object of law-vengeance, yea, and goſpel-vengeance too.

Eleventhly, The man being thus far humbled, will no more plead he is worthy for whom Chriſt ſhould do this thing; but, on the contrary, looks on himſelf as unworthy of Chriſt, and unworthy of the favour of God. We may compare him, in this caſe, to the young man who followed Chriſt, *having a linen cloth, caſt about his naked body: on whom when the young men laid hold, he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked,* Mark xiv. 51. 52. Even ſo the man had been following Chriſt, in the thin and coldriſe garment of his own perſonal worthineſs: but by it, even by it, which he ſo much truſted to, the law catcheth hold of him, to make him priſoner; and then he is fain to leave it, and flees away naked: yet not to Chriſt, but from him. If ye now tell him, he is welcome to Chriſt, if he will come to him; he is apt to ſay, Can ſuch a vile and unworthy wretch as I, be welcome to the holy Jeſus? If a plaiſter be applied to his wounded ſoul, it will not ſtick. He ſays, *Depart from me, for I am a ſinful man, O Lord,* Luke v. 8. No man needs ſpeak to him of his repentance, for his comfort; he can quickly eſpy ſuch faults in it as makes it naught: nor of his tears; for he is aſſured they have never come into the Lord's bottle. He diſputes himſelf away from Chriſt; and concludes, now that he has been ſuch a ſlighter of Chriſt, and is ſuch an unholy and vile creature, he cannot, he will not, he ought not to come to Chriſt; and that he muſt either be in better caſe, or elſe he will never believe. And hence he now makes his ſtrongeſt efforts to amend what was amiſs in his way before: he prays more earneſtly than ever, mourns more bitterly, ſtrives againſt ſin, in heart and life, more vigorouſly, and watcheth more diligently, if by any means he may, at length, be fit to come to Chriſt. One would think the man is well humbled now: but, ah! deviliſh pride lurks under the veil of all this ſeeming humility; like a kindly branch of the old ſtock, he adheres ſtill, and will not ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of God, Rom. x. 3. He will not come to the market of free grace without money. He is bidden to the marriage of the King's ſon, where the Bridegroom himſelf furniſheth all the gueſts with wedding-garments, ſtripping them of their own; but he will not come, becauſe he wants a wedding garment, howbeit he is very buſy making one ready. This is ſad work; and therefore he muſt have a deeper ſtroke yet, elſe he is ruined. This ſtroke is reached him with the axe of the law, in its irritating power. Thus the law girding the ſoul with cords of death, and holding it in with the rigorous commands of obedience, under the pain of the curſe; and God in his holy and wiſe conduct, withdrawing his reſtraining grace, corruption is irritated, luſts become violent; and the more they are ſtriven againſt, the more they rage, like a furious horſe checked with the bit. Then do corruptions ſet up their heads, which he never ſaw in himſelf before. Here ofttimes Atheiſm, blaſphemy, and, in one word, horrible things concerning God, terrible thoughts concerning the faith, ariſe in his breaſt: ſo that his heart is a very hell within him. Thus, while he is ſweeping the houſe of his heart, not yet watered with goſpel-grace, theſe corruptions which lay quiet before in neglected corners, fly up and down in it like duſt. He is as one who is mending a dam, and while he is repairing breaches in it, and ſtrengthening every part of it, a mighty flood comes down, overturns his work, and drives all away before it, as well what was newly laid, as what was laid before. Read Rom. vii. 8. 9. 10. 13. This is a ſtroke which goes to the heart: and by it, his hope of getting himſelf more fit to come to Chriſt, is cut off.

Laſtly, Now the time is come, when the man, betwixt hope and deſpair, reſolves to go to Chriſt as he is; and therefore, like a dying man, ſtretching himſelf juſt before his breath goes out, he rallies the broken forces of his ſoul, tries to believe, and in ſome ſort lays hold on Jeſus Chriſt. And now the branch hangs on the old ſtock by one ſingle tack of a natural faith, produced by the natural vigour of one's own ſpirit, under a moſt preſſing neceſſity, Pſal lxxviii. 34. 35. *When he ſlew them, then they ſought him, and they returned and enquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer.* Hoſ. viii. 2. *Iſrael ſhall cry unto me, My God, we know thee.* But the Lord, minding to perfect his work, fetches yet another ſtroke, whereby the branch falls quite off. The Spirit of God convincingly diſcovers to the ſinner his utter inability to do any thing that is good, and ſo he dieth, Rom. vii. 9. That voice powerfully ſtrikes through his ſoul, *How can ye believe?* John v. 44. Thou canſt no more believe, than thou canſt reach up thine hand to heaven, and bring Chriſt down from thence. And thus at length he ſees, he can neither help himſelf by working, nor by believing: and having no more to hang by, on the old ſtock, he therefore falls off. And while he is diſtreſſed thus, ſeeing himſelf like to be ſwept away with the flood of God's wrath; and yet unable ſo much as to ſtretch forth a hand to lay hold of a twig of the tree of life, growing on the banks of the river, he is taken up, and ingrafted in the true vine, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt giving him the ſpirit of faith.

By what has been ſaid upon this head, I deſign not to rack or diſtreſs tender conſciences; for though there are but few ſuch, at this day, yet God forbid I ſhould offend any of Chriſt's little ones. But, alas! a dead ſleep is fallen upon this generation, they will not be awakened, let us go as near the quick as we will; and therefore I fear there is another ſort of awakening abiding this ſermon-proof generation, which ſhall make the ears of them that hear it to tingle. However, I would not have this to be looked upon as the ſovereign God's ſtinted method of breaking off ſinners from the old ſtock: but this I aſſert as a certain truth, that all who are in Chriſt have been broken off from all theſe ſeveral confidences: and that they who were never broken off from them, are yet in their natural ſtock. Nevertheleſs, if the houſe be pulled down, and the old foundation razed, it is all a caſe, whether it was taken down ſtone by ſtone, or whether it was undermined, and all fell down together.

Now it is that the branch is ingrafted in Jeſus Chriſt. And as the law, in the hand of the Spirit of God, was the inſtrument to cut off the branch from the natural ſtock; ſo the goſpel, in the hand of the ſame Spirit, is the inſtrument uſed for ingrafting it in the ſupernatural ſtock, 1 John i. 3. *That which we have ſeen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye alſo may have fellowſhip with us; and truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt.* See Iſ. lxi. 1. 2. 3. The goſpel is the ſilver cord let down from heaven, to draw periſhing ſinners to land. And, though the preaching of the law prepares the way of the Lord: yet it is in the word of the goſpel that Chriſt and a ſinner meet. Now, as in the natural grafting, the branch being taken up is put into the ſtock, and being put into it, takes with it, and ſo they are united; even ſo in the ſpiritual ingrafting, Chriſt apprehends the ſinner, and the ſinner, being apprehended of Chriſt, apprehends him, and ſo they become one, Phil. iii. 12.

Firſt, Chriſt apprehends the ſinner by his Spirit, and draws him to himſelf, 1 Cor. xii. 13. *For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.* The ſame Spirit, which is in the Mediator himſelf, he communicates to his elect in due time, never to depart from them, but to abide in them as a principle of life. Thus he takes hold of them by his own Spirit put into them; and ſo the withered branch gets life. The ſoul is now in the hands of the Lord of life, and poſſeſſed by the Spirit of life: how can it then but live? The man gets a raviſhing ſight of Chriſt's excellency, in the glaſs of the goſpel: he ſees him a full, ſuitable and willing Saviour; and gets a heart to take him, for and inſtead of all. The Spirit of faith furniſheth him with feet to come to Chriſt, and hands to receive him. What by nature he could not do, by grace he can, the Holy Spirit working in him the work of faith with power.

Secondly, The ſinner thus apprehended apprehends Chriſt by faith, and ſo takes with the bleſſed ſtock, Eph. iii 17. *That Chriſt may dwell in your hearts by faith.* The ſoul that before tried many ways of eſcape, but all in vain, doth now look again with the eye of faith, which proves the healing look. As Aaron's rod, laid up in the tabernacle, budded, and brought forth buds, Numb. xvii. 8; ſo the dead branch, apprehended by the Lord of life, put into, and bound up with the glorious quickening ſtock, by the Spirit of life, buds forth in actual believing on Chriſt, whereby this union is completed. *We having the ſame Spirit of faith------believe,* 2 Cor. iv. 13. Thus the ſtock and the graft are united, Chriſt and the Chriſtian are married, faith being the ſoul's conſent to the ſpiritual marriage-covenant, which, as it is propoſed in the goſpel to mankind ſinners indefinitely, ſo it is demonſtrated, atteſted, and brought home, to the man in particular, by the Holy Spirit: and ſo he being joined to the Lord, is one ſpirit with him. Hereby a believer lives in, and for Chriſt, and Chriſt lives in, and for the believer, Gal. ii. 20. *I am crucified with Chriſt: Nevertheleſs I live; yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me.* Hoſ. iii. 3. *Thou ſhalt not be for another man, ſo will I alſo be for thee.* The bonds then of this bleſſed union are, the Spirit on Chriſt's part, and faith on the believer's part.

Now both the ſouls and bodies of believers are united to Chriſt. *He that is joined to the Lord, is one ſpirit,* 1 Cor. vi. 17. The very bodies of believers have this honour put upon them, that they are the temples of the Holy Ghoſt, ver. 19. and the members of Chriſt, ver. 15. When they ſleep in the duſt, they ſleep in Jeſus, 1 Theſſ. iv. 14.; and it is in virtue of this union they ſhall be raiſed up out of the duſt again, Rom. viii. 11. *He ſhall quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.* In token of this myſtical union, the church of believers is called by the name of her Head and Huſband, 1 Cor. xii. 12. *For as the body is one, and hath many members,------ſo alſo is Chriſt.*

USE. From what is ſaid, we may draw theſe following inferences.

1. The preaching of the law is moſt neceſſary. He that would ingraft, muſt needs uſe the ſnedding knife. Sinners have many ſhifts to keep them from Chriſt; many things by which they keep their hold of the natural ſtock: therefore they have need to be cloſely purſued, and hunted out of their ſkulking holes, and refuges of lies.

2. Yet it is the goſpel that crowns the work; *the law makes nothing perfect.* The law lays open the wound, but it is the goſpel that heals. The law *ſtrips a man, wounds him, and leaves him half dead:* the goſpel *binds up his wounds, pouring in wine and oil,* to heal them. By the law we are broken off, but it is by the goſpel we are taken up, and implanted in Chriſt.

3. *If any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his,* Rom. viii. 9. We are told of a monſter in nature, having two bodies differently animated, as appeared from contrary affections at one and the ſame time; but ſo united, that they were ſerved with the ſelf-ſame legs. Even ſo, however men may cleave to Chriſt, *call themſelves of the holy city, and ſtay themſelves upon the God of Iſrael,* Iſ. xlviii. 2. and they may be bound up, as branches in him, John xv. 2. by the outward ties of ſacraments: yet if the Spirit that dwells in Chriſt, dwell not in them, they are not one with him. There is a great difference between adheſion and ingrafting. The ivy claſps and twiſts itſelf about the oak, but it is not one with it, for it ſtill grows on its own root: ſo, to allude to Iſ. iv. 1. many profeſſors take hold of Chriſt, and eat their own bread, and wear their own apparel, only they are called by his name. They ſtay themſelves upon him, but grow upon their own root: they take him to ſupport their hopes, but their delights are elſewhere.

4. The union betwixt Chriſt and his myſtical members is firm and indiſſoluble. Were it ſo that the believer only apprehended Chriſt, but Chriſt apprehended not him, we could promiſe little on the ſtability of ſuch an union; it might quickly be diſſolved: but, as the believer apprehends Chriſt by faith, ſo Chriſt apprehends him by his Spirit, and none ſhall pluck him out of his hand. Did the child only keep hold of the nurſe, it might at length weary, and let go its hold, and ſo fall away: but if ſhe have her arms about the child, it is no hazard of falling away, even though it be not actually

holding by her. So, whatever ſinful intermiſſions may happen in the exerciſe of faith: yet the union remains ſure, by reaſon of the conſtant indwelling of the Spirit. Bleſſed Jeſus! *All his ſaints are in thy hand,* Deut. xxxiii. 3. It is obſerved by ſome, that the word Abba, is the ſame, whether you read it forward or backward: whatever the believer's caſe be, the Lord is ſtill to him, Abba, Father.

Laſtly, They have an unſure hold of Chriſt, whom he has not apprehended by his Spirit. There are many half marriages here, where the ſoul apprehends Chriſt, but is not apprehended of him. Hence, many fall away, and never riſe again: they let go their hold of Chriſt; and when that is gone, all is gone. Theſe are *the branches in Chriſt, that bear no fruit, which the Huſbandman taketh away,* John xv. 2. Queſt. How can that be? Anſw. Theſe branches are ſet in the ſtock by a profeſſion, or an unſound hypocritical faith; they are bound up with it, in the external uſe of the ſacraments; but the ſtock and they are never knit; therefore they cannot bear fruit. And they need not be cut off, nor broken off; they are by the Huſbandman only taken away, or (as the word primarily ſignifies) lifted up, and ſo taken away, becauſe there is nothing to hold them: they are indeed bound up with the ſtock, but they have never united with it.

Queſt. *How ſhall I know if I am apprehended of Chriſt?* Anſw. You may be ſatisfied in this enquiry, if you conſider and apply theſe two things.

1ſt, When Chriſt apprehends a man by his Spirit, he is ſo drawn, that he comes away to Chriſt with his whole heart: for true believing is believing with all the heart, Acts viii. 37. Our Lord's followers are like theſe who followed Saul at firſt, men whoſe hearts God has touched, 1 Sam. x. 26. When the Spirit pours in overcoming grace, they pour out their hearts like water before him, Pſal. lxii. 8. They flow unto him like a river, Iſ. ii. 2. *All nations ſhall flow unto it,* namely, to *the mountain of the Lord's houſe.* It denotes not only the abundance of converts, but the diſpoſition of their ſouls in coming to Chriſt; they come heartily and freely, as drawn with loving-kindneſs, Jer. xxxi. 3. *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power,* Pſal. cx. 3. i. e. free, ready, open-hearted, giving themſelves to thee as free-will offerings. When the bridegroom has the bride's heart, it is a right marriage: but ſome give their hand to Chriſt, who give him not their heart They that are only driven to Chriſt by terror, will ſurely leave him again when that terror is gone. Terrors may break a heart of ſtone, but the pieces into which it is broken ſtill continue to be ſtone: the terrors cannot ſoften it into a heart of fleſh. Yet terror may begin the work, which love crowns. The ſtrong wind, the earthquake, and the fire going before, the ſtill ſmall voice, in which the Lord is, may come after them. When the bleſſed Jeſus is ſeeking ſinners to match with him, they are bold and perverſe: they will not ſpeak with him, till he hath wounded them, made them captives, and bound them with the cords of death. When this is done, then it is that he makes love to them, and wins their hearts. The Lord tells us, Hoſ. ii. 16---20. that his choſen Iſrael ſhall be married unto himſelf. But how will the bride's conſent be won? Why, in the firſt place, he will bring her into the wilderneſs, as he did the people, when he brought them out of Egypt, ver. 14. There ſhe will be hardly dealt with, ſcorched with thirſt, and bitten of ſerpents: and then he will ſpeak comfortably to her, or, as the expreſſion is, he will ſpeak upon her heart. The ſinner is firſt driven, and then drawn to Chriſt. It is with the ſoul as with Noah's dove, ſhe was forced back again to the ark, becauſe ſhe could find nothing elſe to reſt upon: but, when ſhe did return, ſhe would have reſted on the outſide of it, if Noah had not put forth his hand, and pulled her in, Gen. viii. 9. The Lord ſends the avenger of blood in purſuit of the criminal; and he, with a ſad heart, leaves his own city, and, with tears in his eyes, parts with his old acquaintances, becauſe he dare not ſtay with them, and he flees for his life to the city of refuge. This is not at all his choice, it is forced work; neceſſity has no law. But when he comes to the gates, and ſees the beauty of the place, the excellency and lovelineſs of it charms him; and then he enters it with heart and goodwill, ſaying, *This is my reſt, and here I will ſtay;* and, as one ſaid in another caſe, "I had periſhed, unleſs I had periſhed."

2dly, When Chriſt apprehends a ſoul, the heart is diſengaged from, and turned againſt ſin. As in cutting off the branch from the old ſtock, the great idol ſelf is brought down, the man is powerfully taught to deny himſelf: ſo, in the apprehending of the ſinner by the Spirit, that union is diſſolved which was betwixt the man and his luſts, while he was in the fleſh, as the apoſtle expreſſes it, Rom. vii. 5. His heart is looſed from them, though formerly as dear to him as the members of his body; as his eyes, legs, or arms: and, inſtead of taking pleaſure in them, as ſometime he did; he longs to be rid of them. When the Lord Jeſus comes to a ſoul, in the day of converting grace, he finds it like Jeruſalem, in the day of her nativity, (Ezek. xvi. 4.) with its navel not cut, drawing its fulſome nouriſhment and ſatisfaction from its luſts; but he cuts off this communication, that he may ſet the ſoul on the breaſts of his own conſolations, and give it reſt in himſelf. And thus the Lord wounds the head and heart of ſin, and the ſoul comes to him, ſaying, *Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit,* Jer. xvi. 19.

Of the benefits flowing to true believers from their union with Chriſt.

V. And, laſtly, I come to ſpeak of the benefits flowing to true believers from their union with Chriſt. The chief of the particular benefits believers have by it, are juſtification, peace, adoption, ſanctification, growth in grace, fruitfulneſs in good works, acceptance of theſe good works, eſtabliſhment in a ſtate of grace, ſupport, and a ſpecial conduct of providence about them. As for communion with Chriſt, it is ſuch a benefit, as, being the immediate conſequent of union with him, comprehends all the reſt as mediate ones. For, look, as the branch, immediately upon its union with the ſtock, hath communion with the ſtock, in all that is in it; ſo the believer, uniting with Chriſt, hath communion with him; in which he launcheth forth into an ocean of happineſs, is led into a paradiſe of pleaſures, and has a ſaving intereſt in the treaſure hid in the field of the goſpel, the unſearchable riches of Chriſt. As ſoon as the believer is united to Chriſt, Chriſt himſelf, in whom all fulneſs dwells, is his, Cant. ii. 16. *My beloved is mine, and I am his.* And, *how ſhall he not with him freely give us all things?* Rom. viii. 32. *Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things preſent, or things to come, all are yours,* 1 Cor. iii. 22. Thus communion with Chriſt is the great comprehenſive bleſſing neceſſarily flowing from our union with him. Let us now conſider the particular benefits flowing from it, before mentioned.

The firſt particular benefit that a ſinner hath by his union with Chriſt, is juſtification; for, being united to Chriſt, he hath communion with him in his righteouſneſs, 1 Cor. i. 30. *But of him are ye in Chriſt Jeſus, who of God is made unto us wiſdom and righteouſneſs.* He ſtands no more condemned, but juſtified before God, as being in Chriſt, Rom. viii. 1. *There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Chriſt Jeſus.* The branches hereof are, pardon of ſin, and perſonal acceptance.

Firſt, His ſins are pardoned, the guilt of them is removed. The bond obliging him to pay his debt is cancelled. God the Father takes the pen, dips it in the blood of his Son, croſſeth the ſinner's accounts, and blotteth them out of his debt-book. The ſinner out of Chriſt is bound over to the wrath of God: he is under an obligation in law to go the priſon of Hell, and there to lie till he has paid the utmoſt farthing. This ariſeth from the terrible ſanction with which the law is fenced; which is no leſs than death, Gen. ii. 17. So that the ſinner, paſſing the bounds aſſigned him, is, as Shimei in another caſe, a man of death, 1 Kings ii. 42. But now, being united to Chriſt, God ſaith, *Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ranſom*, Job xxxiii. 24. The ſentence of condemnation is reverſed, the believer is abſolved, and ſet beyond the reach of the condemning law. His ſins, which ſometimes were ſet before the Lord, Pſal. xc. 8. ſo that they could not be hid, God now takes and caſts them all behind his back, Iſ. xxxvii. 17. Yea, he caſts them into the depths of the ſea, Micah vii. 19. What falls into a brook may be got up again; but what is caſt into the ſea cannot be recovered. Ay, but there are ſome ſhallow places in the ſea: true, but their ſins are not caſt in there, but into the depths of the ſea; and the depths of the ſea are devouring depths, from whence they ſhall never come forth again. But what if they do not ſink? He will caſt them in with force, ſo that they ſhall go to the ground, and ſink as lead in the mighty waters of the Redeemer's blood. They are not only forgiven, but forgotten, Jer. xxxi. 34. *I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their ſin no more.* And though their after-ſins do in themſelves deſerve eternal wrath, and do actually make them liable to temporal ſtrokes, and fatherly chaſtiſements, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace, Pſal. lxxxix. 30.------33. yet they can never be actually liable to eternal wrath, or the curſe of the law; for they are dead to the law in Chriſt, Rom. vii. 4. And they can never fall from their union with Chriſt; nor can they be in Chriſt, and yet under condemnation, Rom. viii. 1. *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus.* This is an inference drawn from that doctrine of the believer's being dead to the law, delivered by the apoſtle, chap. vii. 1.----6. as is clear from the 2d, 3d, and 4th verſes of this eight chapter. And in this reſpect the juſtified man is *the bleſſed man, unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity*, Pſal. xxxii. 2. as one who has no deſign to charge a debt on another, ſets it not down in his count-book.

2dly, The believer is accepted as righteous in God's ſight, 2 Cor. v. 21. For he is *found in Chriſt, not having his own righteouſneſs, but that which is through the faith of Chriſt, the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith*, Phil. iii. 9. He could never be accepted of God, as righteous, upon the account of his own righteouſneſs: becauſe, at beſt, it is but imperfect; and all righteouſneſs, properly ſo called, which will abide a trial before the throne of God, is perfect. The very name of it implies perfection: for unleſs a work be perfectly conform to the law, it is not right, but wrong; and ſo cannot make a man righteous before God, whoſe judgment is according to truth. Yet if juſtice demand a righteouſneſs of one that is in Chriſt, upon which he may be accounted righteous before the Lord, *Surely ſhall ſuch an one ſay, In the Lord have I righteouſneſs*, Iſ. xlv. 24. The law is fulfilled, its commands are obeyed, its ſanction is ſatisfied. The believer's cautioner has paid the debt. It was exacted, and he anſwered for it.

Thus the perſon united to Chriſt is juſtified. You may conceive of the whole proceeding herein, in this manner. The avenger of blood purſuing the criminal, Chriſt, as the Saviour of loſt ſinners, doth by the Spirit apprehend him, and draw him to himſelf; and he by faith lays hold on Chriſt: ſo the Lord our righteouſneſs, and the unrighteous creature, unite. From this union with Chriſt reſults a communion with him in his unſearchable riches, and conſequently in his righteouſneſs, that white raiment which he has for cloathing of the naked, Rev. iii. 18. Thus the righteouſneſs of Chriſt becomes his; and becauſe it is his by unqueſtionable title, it is imputed to him; it is reckoned his in the judgment of God, which is always according to the truth of the thing. And ſo the believing ſinner, having a righteouſneſs which fully anſwers the demands of the law, he is pardoned and accepted as righteous. See Iſ. xlv. 22. 24. 25. Rom. iii. and chap. v. 1. Now he is a free man. Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of theſe whom God juſtifieth? Can juſtice lay any thing to their charge? No, for it is ſatisfied. Can the law? No, for it has got all its demands of them in Jeſus Chriſt, Gal. ii. 20. *I am crucified with Chriſt.* What can the law require more, after it has wounded their head, poured in wrath in full meaſure into their ſoul, and cut off their life, and brought it into the duſt of death, in ſo far as it has done all this to Jeſus Chriſt, who is their head, Eph. i. 22. their ſoul, Acts ii. 25. 27. and their life, Col. iii. 4? What is become of the ſinner's own hand-writing, which would prove the debt upon him? Chriſt has blotted it out, Col. ii. 14. But, it may be, juſtice may get its eye upon it again. No, he took it out of the way. But, O that it had been torn in pieces! may the ſinner ſay: Yea, ſo it is; the nails that pierced Chriſt's hands and feet are driven through it; he nailed it. But what if the torn pieces be ſet together again? That cannot be; for he nailed it to his croſs, and his croſs was buried with him, but will never riſe more, ſeeing Chriſt dieth no more. Where is the face-covering that was upon the condemned man? Chriſt has deſtroyed it, Iſ. xxv. 7. Where is death that ſtood before the ſinner with a grim face, and an open mouth, ready to devour him? Chriſt has ſwallowed it up in victory, verſ. 8. Glory, glory, glory to him that thus loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood.

The ſecond benefit flowing from the ſame ſpring of union with Chriſt, and coming by the way of juſtification, is peace; peace with God, and peace of conſcience, according to the meaſure of the ſenſe the juſtified have of their peace with God, Rom. v. 1. *Therefore being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God.* Chap. xiv. 17. *For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteouſneſs and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.* Whereas God was their enemy before, now he is reconciled to them in Chriſt: they are in a covenant of peace with him; and as Abraham was, ſo they are the friends of God. He is well pleaſed with them in his beloved Son. His word, which ſpoke terror to them formerly, now ſpeaks peace, if they rightly take up its language. And there is love in all his diſpenſations towards them, which makes all things work together for their good. Their conſciences are purged of that guilt and filthineſs that ſometime lay upon them: his conſcience-purifying blood ſtreams through their ſouls, by virtue of their union with him, Heb. ix. 14. *How much more ſhall the blood of Chriſt---purge your conſcience from dead works, to ſerve the living God?* The bonds laid on their conſciences, by the Spirit of God, acting as the Spirit of bondage, are taken off, never more to be laid on by that hand, Rom. viii. 15. *For ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear.* Hereby the conſcience is quieted, aſſoon as the ſoul becomes conſcious of the application of that blood; which falls out ſooner or later, according to the meaſure of faith, and as the only wiſe God ſees meet to time it. Unbelievers may have troubled conſciences, which they may get quieted again: but alas! their conſciences become peaceable, ere they become pure; ſo their peace is but the ſeed of greater horror and confuſion. Careleſſneſs may give eaſe for a while, to a ſick conſcience; men neglecting its wounds, they cloſe again of their own accord, before the filthy matter is purged out. Many bury their guilt in the grave of an ill memory: conſcience ſmarts a little; at length the man forgets his ſin, and there is an end of it; but that is only an eaſe before death Buſineſs, or the affairs of life, often give eaſe in this caſe. When Cain is baniſhed from the preſence of the Lord, he falls a building of cities. When the evil ſpirit came upon Saul, he calls not for his Bible, nor for the prieſts to converſe with him about his caſe; but for muſic, to play it away. So many, when their conſciences begin to be uneaſy, they fill their heads and hands with buſineſs, to divert themſelves, and to regain eaſe at any rate. Yea, ſome will ſin over the belly of their convictions, and ſo get ſome eaſe to their conſciences, as Hazael gave to his maſter, by ſtifling him. Again, the performing of duties may give ſome eaſe to a diſquieted conſcience: and this is all that legal profeſſors have recourſe to, for quieting of their conſciences. When conſcience is wounded; they will pray, confeſs, mourn, and reſolve to do ſo no more: and ſo they become whole again, without an application of the blood of Chriſt, by faith. But they, whoſe conſciences are rightly quieted, come for peace and purging to the blood of ſprinkling. Sin is a ſweet morſel, that makes God's elect ſick ſouls, ere they get it vomited up. It leaves a ſting behind it, which ſome one time or other, will create them no little pain.

Elihu ſhews us both the caſe and cure, Job xxxiii. Behold the caſe one may be in, whom God has thoughts of love to. He darteth convictions into his conſcience; and makes them ſtick ſo faſt, that he cannot rid himſelf of them, verſ. 16. *He openeth the ears of men, and ſealeth their inſtruction.* His very body ſickens, verſ. 19. *He is chaſtened alſo with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with ſtrong pain.* He loſeth his ſtomach, verſ. 20. *His life abhorreth bread, and his ſoul dainty meat.* His body pines away, ſo that there is nothing on him but ſkin and bone, verſ. 21. His fleſh is conſumed away, that it cannot be ſeen, and his bones that were not ſeen ſtick out. Though he is not prepared for death, he has no hopes of life, ver. 22. His ſoul draweth near unto the grave, and (which is the height of his miſery) his life to the deſtroyers; he is looking every moment when devils, theſe deſtroyers, Rev. ix. 11. theſe murderers, or manſlayers, John viii. 44. will come and carry away his ſoul to hell. O dreadful caſe! yet there is hope. God deſigns to keep back his ſoul from the pit, ver. 18. although he bring him forward to the brink of it. Now, ſee how the ſick man is cured. The phyſician's art cannot prevail here: the diſeaſe lies more inward, than that his medicines can reach it. It is ſoul-trouble that has brought the body into this diſorder: and therefore the remedies muſt be applied to the ſick man's ſoul and conſcience. The phyſician for this caſe, muſt be a ſpiritual Phyſician; the remedies muſt be ſpiritual, a righteouſneſs, a ranſom, or atonement. Upon the application of theſe, the ſoul is cured, the conſcience is quieted; and the body recovers, verſ. 23. 24. 25. 26. *If there be a meſſenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thouſand, to ſhew unto man his uprightneſs: then he is gracious unto him, and ſaith, Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ranſom. His fleſh ſhall be freſher than a child's; he ſhall return to the days of his youth. He ſhall pray unto God, and he ſhall be favourable unto him, and he ſhall ſee his face with joy.* The proper phyſician for this patient, is a meſſenger, an interpreter, ver. 23. that is, as ſome expoſitors not without ground underſtand it, the great Phyſician Jeſus Chriſt, whom Job had called his Redeemer, chap. xix. 25. He is a meſſenger, the meſſenger of the covenant of peace, Mal. iii. 1. who comes ſeaſonably to the ſick man. He is an interpreter, the great interpreter of God's counſels of love to ſinners, John i. 18. One among a thouſand, even the chief among ten thouſand, Cant. v. 10. One choſen out of the people, Pſal. lxxxix. 29. One to whom the Lord hath given the tongue of the learned,---to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon to him that is weary, Iſ. l. 4. 5. 6. It is he that is with him, by his Spirit, now, to convince him of righteouſneſs, John xvi. 8. as he was with him before, to convince him of ſin and of judgment. His work now is, to ſhew unto him his uprightneſs, or his righteouſneſs, i. e. the interpreter Chriſt his righteouſneſs; which is the only righteouſneſs, ariſing from the paying of a ranſom, and upon which a ſinner is delivered from going down to the pit, ver. 24. And thus Chriſt is ſaid to declare God's name, Pſal. xxii. 22. and to preach righteouſneſs, Pſal. xl. 9. The phraſe is remarkable: it is not to ſhew unto the man, but unto man, his righteouſneſs; which not obſcurely intimates, that he is more than a man, who ſhews or declareth this righteouſneſs. Compare Amos iv. 13. *He that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought.* There ſeems to be in it a ſweet alluſion to the firſt declaration of this righteouſneſs unto man, or as the word is, unto Adam, after the fall, while he lay under terror from apprehenſions of the wrath of God: which declaration was made by the meſſenger, the interpreter, namely, the eternal Word, the Son of God, called the voice of the Lord God, Gen. iii. 8. and by him appearing, probably, in human ſhape. Now, while he, by his Spirit, is the preacher of righteouſneſs to the man, it is ſuppoſed the man lays hold on the offered righteouſneſs; whereupon, the ranſom is applied to him, and he is delivered from going down to the pit: for God hath a ranſom for him. This is intimate to him: God ſaith, Deliver him, ver. 24. Hereupon his conſcience, being purged by the blood of atonement, is pacified, and ſweetly quieted. He ſhall pray unto God---and ſee his face with joy, which before he beheld with horror, ver. 26; that is, in New-Teſtament language, *having an high-prieſt over the houſe of God,* he ſhall *draw near with a true heart, in full aſſurance of faith, having his heart ſprinkled from an evil conſcience,* Heb. x. 21. 22. But then, what becomes of the body, the weak and weary fleſh? Why his fleſh ſhall be freſher than a child's, he ſhall return to the days of his youth, ver. 25. Yea, All his bones (which were chaſtened with ſtrong pain, ver. 19.) ſhall ſay, Lord, who is like unto thee? Pſal. xxxv. 10.

A third benefit flowing from union with Chriſt, is adoption. Believers being united to Chriſt, become children of God, and members of the family of heaven. By their union with him, who is the Son of God by nature, they become the ſons of God by grace, John i. 12. As when a branch is cut off from one tree, and grafted in the branch of another: the ingrafted branch, by means of its union with the adopting branch, (as ſome not unfitly have called it,) is made a branch of the ſame ſtock, with that into which it is ingrafted: ſo ſinners being ingrafted into Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe name is the Branch, his Father is their Father, his God their God, John xx. 17. And thus they, who are by nature children of the devil, become children of God. They have the Spirit of adoption, Rom viii. 15. namely, the Spirit of his Son, which brings them to God, as children to a Father; to pour out their complaints in his boſom, and to ſeek neceſſary ſupply, Gal. iv. 6. *Becauſe ye are ſons, God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father.* Under all their weakneſſes, they have fatherly pity and compaſſion ſhewn them, Pſal. ciii. 13. *Like as a father pitieth his children: ſo the Lord pitieth them that fear him.* Although they were but fundlings, found in a deſart land; yet now that to them belongs the adoption, he keeps them as the apple of his eye, Deut. xxxii. 10. Whoſoever purſue them, they have a refuge, Prov. xiv. 26. His children ſhall have a place of refuge. In a time of common calamity, they have chambers of protection, where they may be hid, until the indignation be overpaſt, Iſ. xxvi. 20. And he is not only their refuge of protection, but their portion for proviſion, in that refuge; Pſal cxliii. 5. Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living. They are provided for for eternity, Heb. xi. 16. He hath prepared for them a city. And what he ſees they have need of for time, they ſhall not want, Matth. vi. 31. 32. Take no thought ſaying, What ſhall we eat? or what ſhall we drink? or wherewithall ſhall we be clothed?

For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all theſe things. Seaſonable correction is likewiſe their privilege as ſons: ſo they are not ſuffered to paſs with their faults, as happens to others who are not children, but ſervants of the family, and will be turned out of doors for their miſcarriages at length, Heb. xii. 7. If ye endure chaſtening, God dealeth with you as with ſons: for what ſon is he whom the father chaſteneth not? They are heirs of, and ſhall inherit the promiſe, Heb. vi. 12. Nay, they are heirs of God, who himſelf is the portion of their inheritance, Pſal. xvi. 6. and joint heirs with Chriſt, Rom. viii. 17. And becauſe they are the children of the great King, and young heirs of glory; they have angels for their attendants, who are ſent forth to miniſter for them, that ſhall be heirs of ſalvation, Heb. i. 14.

A fourth benefit is ſanctification, 1 Cor. i. 30. But of him are ye in Chriſt Jeſus, who of God is made unto us wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification. Being united to Chriſt, they partake of his Spirit, which is the Spirit of holineſs. There is a fulneſs of the Spirit in Chriſt, and it is not like the fulneſs of a veſſel, which only retains what is poured into it; but it is the fulneſs of a fountain for diffuſion and communication, which is always ſending forth its waters, and yet is always full. The Spirit of Chriſt, that ſpiritual ſap, which is in the ſtock, and from thence is communicate to the branches, is the Spirit of grace, Zech. xii. 10. And where the Spirit of grace dwells, there will be found a complication of all graces. Holineſs is not one grace only, but all the graces of the Spirit: it is a conſtellation of graces: it is all the graces in their ſeed and root. And as the ſap conveyed from the ſtock into the branch goes through it, and through every part of it: ſo the Spirit of Chriſt ſanctifies the whole man. The poiſon of ſin was diffuſed through the whole ſpirit, ſoul and body of the man; and ſanctifying grace purſues it into every corner, 1 Theſſ. v. 23. Every part of the man is ſanctified, though no part is perfectly ſo. The truth we are ſanctified by, is not held in the head, as in a priſon: but runs with its ſanctifying influences, through heart and life. There are indeed ſome graces, in every believer, which appear as top branches above the reſt: as meekneſs in Moſes, patience in Job: but ſeeing there is in every child of God, a holy principle going along with the holy law, in all the parts thereof, loving, liking, and approving of it; as appears from their univerſal reſpect to the commands of God: it is evident they are endowed with all the graces of the Spirit: becauſe there can be no leſs in the effect, then there was in the cauſe.

Now, This ſanctifying ſpirit, whereof believers partake, is unto them, (1.) A ſpirit of mortification; *through the Spirit they mortify the deeds of the body*, Rom. viii. 13. Sin is crucified in them, Gal. v. 24. They are planted together (namely with Chriſt) in the likeneſs of his death, which was a lingering death, Rom. vi. 4. Sin in the ſaint, though not quite dead, yet is dying. If it were dead, it would be taken down from the croſs, and buried out of his ſight; but it hangs there as yet, working and ſtruggling under its mortal wounds. Look, as when a tree has got ſuch a ſtroke as reaches the heart of it, all the leaves and branches thereof begin to fade and decay: ſo, when the ſanctifying ſpirit comes, and breaks the power of ſin, there is a gradual ceaſing from it, and dying to it, in the whole man: ſo that he no longer lives in the fleſh, to the luſts of men. He does not make ſin his trade and buſineſs; it is not his great deſign, to ſeek himſelf, and to ſatisfy his corrupt inclinations; but he is for Immanuel's land; and is walking in the high-way to it, the way which is called the way of holineſs: though the wind from hell, that was on his back before, blows now full in his face, makes his travelling uneaſy, and often drives him off the high-way. (2.) This Spirit is a Spirit of vivification to them; for he is the Spirit of life, and makes them live unto righteouſneſs, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. *And I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes.* Theſe that have been planted together with Chriſt, in the likeneſs of his death, ſhall be alſo in the likeneſs of his reſurrection, Rom. vi. 5. At Chriſt's reſurrection, when his ſoul was reunited with his body, every member of that bleſſed body was enabled again, to perform the actions of life: ſo, the ſoul being influenced by the ſanctifying Spirit of Chriſt, is enabled more and more to perform all the actions of ſpiritual life. And as the whole of the law, and not ſome ſcraps of it only, is written on the holy heart; ſo believers are enabled to tranſcribe that law, in their converſation. And although they cannot write one line of it, without blots; yet God, for Chriſt's ſake, accepts of the performances, in point of ſanctification; they being diſciples of his own Son, and led by his own Spirit.

This ſanctifying Spirit, communicate by the Lord Jeſus, to his members, is the ſpiritual nouriſhment, the branches have from the ſtock into which they are ingrafted; whereby the life of grace, given them in regeneration, is preſerved, continued, and actuated. It is the nouriſhment whereby the new creature liveth, and is nouriſhed up towards perfection. Spiritual life needs to be fed, and muſt have ſupply of nouriſhment: and believers derive the ſame from Chriſt their head, whom the Father has conſtituted the head of influences, to all his members, Col. ii. 19. *And not holding the head, from which all the body by joints and bands, having nouriſhment miniſtered*, or ſupplied, &c. Now this ſupply is the ſupply of the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, Phil. i. 19. The ſaints feed richly, eating Chriſt's fleſh, and drinking his blood, for their ſpiritual nouriſhment: yet our Lord himſelf teacheth us, that it is the Spirit that quickeneth, even that Spirit who dwells in that bleſſed body, John vi. 63. The human nature is united to the divine nature, in the perſon of the Son, and ſo (like the bowl in Zechariah's candleſtick, Zech. iv.) lies at the fountain-head, as the glorious means of conveyance of influences, from the fountain of the Deity; and receives not the Spirit by meaſure, but ever hath a fulneſs of the Spirit, by reaſon of that perſonal union. Hence, believers being united to the Chriſt, (as the ſeven lamps to the bowl, by their ſeven pipes, Zech. iv. 2.), his fleſh is to them meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed: for, feeding on that bleſſed body, (i. e. effectually applying Chriſt to their ſouls by faith), they partake more and more of that Spirit, who dwelleth therein, to their ſpiritual nouriſhment. The holineſs of God could never admit of an immediate union with the ſinful creature, nor (conſequently) an immediate communion with it: yet the creature could not live the life of grace, without communion with the fountain of life. Therefore that the honour of God's holineſs, and the ſalvation of ſinners, might jointly be provided for; the ſecond perſon of the glorious Trinity, took into a perſonal union with himſelf, a ſinleſs human nature; that ſo this holy, harmleſs, and undefiled humanity, might immediately receive a fulneſs of the ſpirit, of which he might communicate to his members, by his divine power and efficacy. And likeas, if there were a tree, having its root in the earth, and its branches reaching to heaven: the vaſt diſtance betwixt the root and the branches would not interrupt the communication betwixt the root and the top branch; even ſo the diſtance betwixt the man Chriſt, who is in heaven, and his members, who are on earth, cannot hinder the communication betwixt them. What though the parts of myſtical Chriſt (viz. the head and the members) are not contiguous, as joyned together in the way of a corporal union? The union is not therefore the leſs real and effectual. Yea, our Lord himſelf ſhews us, that albeit we ſhould eat his fleſh, in a corporal and carnal manner, yet it would profit nothing, John vi. 36. we would not be one whit holier thereby. But the members of Chriſt on earth, are united to their head in heaven, by the inviſible bond of the ſelf-ſame Spirit dwelling in both; in him as the head, and in them as the members: even as the wheels, in Ezekiel's viſion, were not contiguous to the living creatures, yet were united to them, by an inviſible bond of one ſpirit in both; ſo that, *when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them, and when the living creatures were lift up from the earth, the wheels were lift up*, Ezek. i. 19. *For*, ſays the prophet, *the Spirit of the living creature was in the wheels*, verſe 20.

Hence we may ſee the difference betwixt true ſanctification, and that ſhadow of it, which is to be found amongſt ſome ſtrict profeſſors of Chriſtianity, who yet are not true Chriſtians, are not regenerate by the Spirit of Chriſt, and is of the ſame kind with what has appeared in many ſober Heathens. True ſanctification is the reſult of the ſoul's union with the holy Jeſus, the firſt and immediate receptacle of the ſanctifying ſpirit; out of whoſe fulneſs, his members do, by virtue of their union with him, receive ſanctifying influences. The other is the mere product of the man's own ſpirit, which whatever it has or ſeems to have of the matter of true holineſs, yet does not ariſe from the ſupernatural principles, nor to the high aims and ends thereof: for, as it comes from ſelf, ſo it runs out into the dead ſea of ſelf again; and lies as wide of true holineſs, as nature doth of grace. They who have this baſtard holineſs, are like common boat-men, who ſerve themſelves with their own oars: whereas the ſhip bound for Immanuel's land, ſails by the blowings of the divine Spirit. How is it poſſible, there ſhould be true ſanctification without Chriſt? Can there be true ſanctification, without partaking of the Spirit of holineſs? Can we partake of that Spirit, but by Jeſus Chriſt, the way, the truth, and the life? The falling dew ſhall aſſoon make its way through the flinty rock, as influences of grace ſhall come from God to ſinners, any other way, but through him whom the Father hath conſtituted the head of influences, Col. i. 19. *For it pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell*: and chap. ii. 19. *And not holding the head, from which all the body by joints and bands, having nouriſhment miniſtred and knit together, increaſeth with the increaſe of God.* Hence ſee, how it comes to paſs, that many fall away from their ſeeming ſanctification, and never recover: it is becauſe they are not branches truly knit to the true vine. Mean while, others recover from their decays; becauſe of their union with the life-giving ſtock, by the quickening Spirit, 1 John ii. 19. *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us.*

A fifth benefit is growth in grace. *Having nouriſhment miniſtered, they increaſe with the increaſe of God*, Col. ii. 19. *The righteous ſhall flouriſh like the palm tree; he ſhall grow like a cedar in Lebanon*, Pſal. xcii. 12. Grace is of a growing nature: in the way to Zion they go from ſtrength to ſtrength. Though the holy man be at firſt a little child in grace, yet at length he becomes a young man, a father, 1 John ii. 13. Though he does but creep in the way to heaven ſometimes: yet afterwards he walks, he runs, he mounts up with wings as eagles. Iſ. xl. 31. If a branch grafted into a ſtock never grows, it is a plain evidence of its not having knit with the ſtock.

But ſome may perhaps ſay, "If all true Chriſtians be "growing ones: what ſhall be ſaid of theſe, who in"ſtead of growing are going back?" I anſwer, Firſt, There is a great difference betwixt the Chriſtian's growing ſimply, and his growing at all times. All true Chriſtians do grow, but I do not ſay they grow at all times. A tree, that has life and nouriſhment, grows to its perfection, yet it is not always growing; it grows not in the winter. Chriſtians alſo have their winters, wherein the influences of grace, neceſſary for growth, are ceaſed. Cant. v. 2. "I ſleep." It is by faith the believer derives gracious influences from Jeſus Chriſt: likeas each lamp in the candleſtick, received oil from the bowl, by the pipe going betwixt them, Zech. iv. 2. Now, if that pipe be ſtopt, if the ſaint's faith lie dormant and inactive then all the reſt of the graces will become dim, and ſeem ready to be extinguiſhed. In conſequence whereof, depraved nature will gather ſtrength, and become active. What then will become of the ſoul? Why, there is ſtill one ſure ground of hope. The ſaints faith is not as the hypocrite's, like a pipe laid ſhort of the fountain, whereby there can be no conveyance, it ſtill remains a bond of union, betwixt Chriſt and the ſoul: and therefore, becauſe Chriſt lives, the believer ſhall live alſo, John xiv. 19. The Lord Jeſus puts in his hand by the hole of the door, and clears the means of conveyance: and then influences for growth flow, and believers graces look freſh and green again, Hoſ. xiv. 7. *They that dwell under his ſhadow ſhall return: they ſhall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine.* In the worſt of times, the ſaints have a principle of growth in them, 1 John iii. 9. *His ſeed remaineth in him.* And therefore, after decays, they revive again; namely, when the winter is over, and the Sun of righteouſneſs returns to them with his warm influences. Mud thrown into a pool may lie there at eaſe; but if it be caſt into a fountain, the ſpring will at length work it out, and run clear as formerly. Secondly, Chriſtians may miſtake their growth, and that two ways. (1.) By judging of their caſe according to their preſent feeling. They obſerve themſelves, and cannot perceive themſelves to be growing, but there is no reaſon thence to conclude they are not growing, Mark iv. 27. *The ſeed ſprings and grows up, he knoweth not how.* Should one fix his eye never ſo ſtedfaſtly, on the ſun running his race, or on a growing tree; he would not perceive the ſun moving, nor the tree growing: but if he compare the tree as it now is, with what it was ſome years ago; and conſider the place of the heavens, where the ſun was in the morning; he will certainly perceive the tree has grown, and the ſun has moved. In like manner may the Chriſtian know, whether he be in a growing or declining ſtate, by comparing his preſent, with his former condition. (2.) Chriſtians may miſtake their caſe, by meaſuring their growth by the advances of the top only, not of the root. Though a man be not growing taller, he may be growing ſtronger. If a tree be taking with the ground, fixing itſelf in the earth, and ſpreading out its roots; it is certainly growing, altho' it be nothing taller than formerly. So albeit the Chriſtian may want the ſweet conſolation, and flaſhes of affection, which ſometimes he has had; yet if he be growing in humility, ſelf-denial, and ſenſe of needy dependence on Jeſus Chriſt, he is a growing Chriſtian, Hoſ. xiv. 5. *I will be as the dew unto Iſrael, he ſhall caſt forth his roots as Lebanon.*

Queſt. *But do hypocrites grow at all? And if ſo, how ſhall we diſtinguiſh betwixt their growth, and true Chriſtian growth?* Anſw. To the firſt part of the queſtion; hypocrites do grow. The tares have their growth, as well as the wheat: and the ſeed that fell among thorns did ſpring up, Luke viii. 7. Only it did bring no fruit to perfection, verſe 14. Yea, a true Chriſtian may have a falſe growth. James and John ſeemed to grow in the grace of holy zeal, when their ſpirits grew ſo hot in the cauſe of Chriſt, that they would have fired whole villages, for not receiving their Lord and Maſter, Luke ix. 54. *They ſaid, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and conſume them, even as Elias did?* But it was indeed no ſuch thing; and therefore he rebuked them, verſ. 55. *and ſaid, Ye know not what manner of ſpirit ye are of.* To the ſecond part of the queſtion, it is anſwered, that there is a peculiar beauty in true Chriſtian growth, diſtinguiſhing it from all falſe growth: it is univerſal, regular, proportionable. It is a growing up into him in all things, which is the head, Eph. iv. 15. The growing Chriſtian grows proportionably, in all the parts of the new man. Under the kindly influences of the Sun of righteouſneſs, believers grow up as calves of the ſtall, Mal. iv. 2. Ye would think it a monſtrous growth, in theſe creatures, if ye ſaw their heads grow, and not their bodies; or if ye ſaw one leg grow, and another not: if all the parts do not grow proportionably. Ay, but ſuch is the growth of many in religion. They grow like rickety children, who have a big head, but a ſlender body: they get more knowledge into their heads, but no more holineſs into their hearts and lives. They grow very hot outwardly, but very cold inwardly; like men in a fit of the ague. They are more taken up about the externals of religion, than formerly; yet as great ſtrangers to the power of godlineſs as ever. If a garden is watered with the hand, ſome of the plants will readily get much, ſome little, and ſome no water at all; and therefore ſome wither, while others are coming forward: but after a ſhower from the clouds, all come forward together. In like manner, all the graces of the Spirit grow proportionably, by the ſpecial influences of divine grace. The branches ingrafted in Chriſt, growing aright, do grow in all the ſeveral ways of growth at once. They grow inward, growing into Chriſt, (Eph. iv. 15.) uniting more cloſely with him; and cleaving more firmly to him, as the head of influences, which is the ſpring of all other true Chriſtian growth. They grow outward, in good works, in their life and converſation. They not only, with Naphtali, give goodly words; but, like Joſeph, they are fruitful boughs. They grow upward in heavenly mindedneſs, and contempt of the world; for their converſation is in heaven, Phil. iii. 20. And finally they grow downward in humility and ſelf-loathing. The branches of the largeſt growth in Chriſt, are in their own eyes *leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints*, Eph. iii. 8. *the chief of ſinners*, 1 Tim. i. 15. *more brutiſh than any man*, Prov. xxx. 2. They ſee they can do nothing, no not ſo much as to think any thing, as of themſelves, 2 Cor. iii. 5. that they deſerve nothing, being not worthy of the leaſt of all the mercies ſhewed unto them, Gen. xxxii. 10. and that they are nothing, 2 Cor. xii. 2.

A ſixth benefit is fruitfulneſs. The branch ingrafted into Chriſt is not barren, but brings forth fruit, John xv. 5. *He that abideth in me, and I in him, the ſame bringeth forth much fruit.* For that very end are ſouls married to Chriſt, that they may bring forth fruit unto God, Rom. vii. 4. They may be branches in Chriſt, by profeſſion, but not by real implantation, that are barren branches. Whoſoever are united to Chriſt, bring forth the fruit of goſpel obedience, and true holineſs. Faith is always followed with good works. The believer is not only come out of the grave of his natural ſtate; but he has put off his grave-clothes, namely, reigning luſts, in the which he walked ſometime like a ghoſt; being dead while he lived in them, Col. iii. 7. 8. For Chriſt has ſaid of him, as of Lazarus, *Looſe him, and let him go.* And now that he has put on Chriſt; he perſonates him, (ſo to ſpeak,) as a beggar, in borrowed robes, repreſents a king on the ſtage, walking as he alſo walked. Now the fruit of the Spirit in him, is in all goodneſs. Eph. v. 9. The fruits of holineſs will be found in the hearts, lips, and lives of thoſe who are united to Chriſt. The hidden man of the heart, is not only a temple built for God, and conſecrated to him; but uſed and employed for him, where love, fear, truſt, and all the other parts of unſeen religion are exerciſed, Phil. iii. 3. *For we are the circumciſion, which worſhip God in the Spirit.* The heart is no more the devil's common, where thoughts go free; for there even vain thoughts are hated, Pſal. cxix. 113. But it is God's incloſure, hedged about as a garden for him. Cant. iv. 16. It is true, there are weeds of corruption there, becauſe the ground is not yet perfectly healed; but the man, in the day of his new creation, is ſet to dreſs it, and keep it. A live-coal from the altar has touched his lips, and they are purified, Pſal. xv. 1. 2. 3. *Lord who ſhall abide in thy tabernacle? Who ſhall dwell in thy holy hill? He that ſpeaketh the truth in his heart: he that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor taketh up a reproach againſt his neighbour.* There may be indeed a very ſmooth tongue, where there is a falſe heart. The voice may be Jacob's, while the hands are Eſau's. But, *If any man among you ſeem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain*, James i. 26. The power of godlineſs will rule over the tongue, though a world of iniquity. If one be a Galilean, his ſpeech will bewray him; he will ſpeak not the language of Aſhdod, but the language of Canaan. He will neither be dumb in religion; nor will his tongue walk at random, ſeeing to the double guard nature hath given the tongue, grace hath added a third. The fruits of holineſs will be found in his outward converſation, for he hath clean hands, as well as a pure heart, Pſal. xxiv. 4. He is a godly man, and religiouſly diſcharges the duties of the firſt table of the law; he is a righteous man, and honeſtly performs the duties of the ſecond table. In his converſation he is a good Chriſtian, and a good neighbour too. He carries it towards God, as if mens eyes were upon him; and towards men, as believing God's eye to be upon him. Theſe things which God hath joined in his law, he dare not, in his practice, put aſunder.

Thus the branches in Chriſt, are full of good fruits. And thoſe fruits are a cluſter of vital actions whereof Jeſus Chriſt is the principle and end; the principle: for he lives in them, and the life they live is by faith in the Son of God, Gal. ii. 20. the end: for they live to him, and to them to live is Chriſt, Phil. i. 21. The duties of religion are in the world, like fatherleſs children, in rags; ſome will not take them in, becauſe they never loved them, nor their father; ſome take them in, becauſe they may be ſerviceable to them; but the ſaints take them in for their Father's ſake, that is for Chriſt's ſake; and they are lovely in their eyes, becauſe they are like him. O! whence is this new life of the ſaints! Surely it could never have been hammered out of the natural powers of their ſouls, by the united force of all created power. In eternal barrenneſs ſhould their womb have been ſhut up; but that being married to Chriſt, they bring forth fruit unto God, Rom. vii. 4.

If ye aſk me, How your nouriſhment, growth, and fruitfulneſs may be forwarded? I offer theſe few advices. (1.) Make ſure work, as to your knitting with the ſtock, by faith unfeigned; and beware of hypocriſy: a branch that is not ſound at the heart, will certainly wither. The trees of the Lord's planting are trees of righteouſneſs, Iſ. lxi. 3. So when others fade, they bring forth fruit. Hypocriſy is a diſeaſe in the vitals of religion, which will conſume all at length. It is a leak in the ſhip, that will certainly ſink it. Sincerity of grace will make it laſting, be it never ſo weak: as the ſmalleſt twig that is ſound at the heart, will draw nouriſhment from the ſtock, and grow, while the greateſt bough that is rotten can never recover, becauſe it receives no nouriſhment. (2.) Labour to be ſtedfaſt in the truths and way of God. An unſettled and wavering judgment, is a great enemy to chriſtian growth and fruitfulneſs, as the apoſtle teaches, Eph. iv. 14. 15. *That we henceforth be no more children toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine. But ſpeaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Chriſt.* A rolling ſtone gathers no fog, and a wavering judgment makes a fruitleſs life. Though a tree be never ſo ſound; yet how can it grow, or be fruitful, if ye be ſtill removing it out of one ſoil into another? (3.) Endeavour to cut off the ſuckers, as gardeners do, that their trees may thrive. Theſe are unmortified luſts. Therefore mortify your members that are upon the earth, Col. iii. 5. When the Iſraelites got meat to their luſts, they got leanneſs to their ſouls. She that has many hungry children about her hand, and muſt be ſtill putting into their mouths, will have much ado to get a bit put into her own. They muſt refuſe the cravings of inordinate affections, who would have their ſouls to proſper. Laſtly, Improve for theſe ends, the ordinances of God. The courts of our God are the place, where the trees of righteouſneſs flouriſh, Pſal. xcii. 13. The waters of the ſanctuary are the means appointed of God, to cauſe his people grow as willows by the water-courſes. Therefore drink in with deſire, the ſincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby, 1 Pet. ii. 2. Come to theſe wells of ſalvation: not to look at them only, but to draw water out of them. The ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper is in a ſpecial manner appointed for theſe ends. It is not only a ſolemn public profeſſion, and a ſeal of our union and communion with Chriſt: but it is a means of moſt intimate communion with him, and ſtrengthens our union with him, our faith, love, repentance, and other graces, 1 Cor. x. 16. *The cup of bleſſing, which we bleſs, is it not the communion of the blood of Chriſt? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Chriſt.* And chap. xii. 13. *We have been all made to drink into one ſpirit.* Give yourſelves unto prayer: open your mouths wide, and he will fill them. By theſe means the branches in Chriſt may be further nouriſhed, grow up, and bring forth much fruit.

A ſeventh benefit is, The acceptance of their fruits of holineſs before the Lord. Though they be very imperfect, they are accepted, becauſe they ſavour of Chriſt the bleſſed ſtock, which the branches grow upon; while the fruits of others are rejected of God, Gen. iv. 4, 5. *And the Lord had reſpect unto Abel, and to his offering: but unto Cain and his offering he had not reſpect.* Compare Heb. xi. 3. *By faith, Abel offered unto God a more excellent ſacrifice than Cain.* O how defective are the ſaints duties in the eye of the law! The believer himſelf eſpies many faults in his beſt performances: yet the Lord graciouſly receives them. There is no grace planted in the heart, but there is a weed of corruption hard by its ſide, while the ſaints are in this lower world. Their very ſincerity, is not without a mixture of diſſimulation or hypocriſy, Gal. ii. 13. Hence there are defects in the exerciſe of every grace, as well as in the performance of every duty: depraved nature always drops ſomething to ſtain their beſt works. There is ſtill ſome mixture of darkneſs with their cleareſt light. Yet this does not mar their acceptance, Cant. vi. 10. *Who is ſhe that looketh forth as the morning?* or, as the dawning? Behold how Chriſt's ſpouſe is eſteemed and accepted of her Lord, even when ſhe looks forth as the morning, whoſe beauty is mixed with the blackneſs of the night! When the morning was looking out, as the word is, Judges xix. 26. i. e. in the dawning of the day, as we read it. So the very dawning of grace, and goodwill to Chriſt, grace peeping out from under a maſs of darkneſs in believers, is pleaſant and acceptable to him, as the break of day, is to the weary traveller. Though the remains of unbelief make their hand of faith to ſhake and tremble: yet the Lord is ſo well pleaſed with it, that he employs it to carry away pardons and ſupplies of grace, from the throne of grace, and the fountain of grace. His faith was effectual, who cried out, and ſaid with tears, *Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief,* Mark ix. 24. Though the remains of ſenſual affections make the flame of their love weak and ſmoaky; he turns his eyes from the ſmoak, and beholds the flame, how fair it is, Cant. iv. 10. *How fair is thy love, my ſiſter, my ſpouſe!* The ſmell of their under garments of inherent holineſs, as imperfect as it is, is like the ſmell of Lebanon, verſe 11. and that becauſe they are covered with their elder brother's cloaths, which makes the ſons of God to ſmell as a field which the Lord hath bleſſed. Their good works are accepted; their cups of cold water given to a diſciple in the name of a diſciple, ſhall not want a reward. Though they cannot offer for the tabernacle, gold, ſilver and braſs, and onyx-ſtones, let them come forward with what they have; if it were but goats-hair, it ſhall not be rejected; if it were but rams ſkins, they ſhall be kindly accepted; for they are dyed red, dipt by faith in the Mediator's blood, and ſo preſented unto God. A very ordinary work done in faith, and from faith, if it were but the building of a wall about the holy city, is a great work, Neh. vi. 3. If it were but the beſtowing of a box of ointment on Chriſt, it ſhall never be forgotten, Matth. xxvi. 13. Even *a cup of cold water only given to one of Chriſt's little ones, in the name of a diſciple, ſhall be rewarded,* Matth. x. 42. Nay, not a good word for Chriſt, ſhall drop from their mouths, but it ſhall be regiſtered in God's book of remembrance, Mal. iii. 16. Nor ſhall a tear drop from their eyes for him, but he will put it in his bottle, Pſal. lxvi. 8. Their will is accepted for the deed; their ſorrow for the want of will, for the will itſelf, 2 Cor. viii. 12. *For if there be firſt a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.* Their groanings, when they cannot well word their deſires, are heard in heaven; the meaning of theſe groans is well known there, and they will be returned like the dove with an olive branch of peace in her mouth. See Rom. viii. 26. 27. Their mites are better than other mens talents. Their liſping and broken ſentences are more pleaſant to their Father in heaven, than the moſt fluent and flouriſhing ſpeeches of theſe that are not in Chriſt. Their voice is ſweet, even when they are aſhamed it ſhould be heard; their countenance is comely, even when they bluſh, and draw a veil over it, Cant. ii. 14. The Mediator takes their petition, blots out ſome parts, rectifies others, and then preſents them to the Father, in conſequence whereof they paſs in the court of heaven.

Every true Chriſtian is a temple of God. If ye look for ſacrifices, they are not wanting there; they offer the ſacrifice of praiſe, and they do good; with ſuch ſacrifices God is well pleaſed, Heb. xiii. 15. 16. Chriſt himſelf is the altar that ſanctifies the gift, verſe 10. But what comes of the ſkin and dung of their ſacrifices? They are carried away without the camp. If we look for incenſe, it is there too. The graces of the Spirit are found in their hearts: and the ſpirit of a crucified Chriſt fires them, and puts them in exerciſe; like as the fire was brought from the altar of burnt-offering, to ſet the incenſe in flame: then they mount heaven-ward, like pillars of ſmoke, Cant. iii. 6. But the beſt of incenſe will leave aſhes behind it: yes indeed: but as the prieſt took away the aſhes of the incenſe in a golden diſh, and threw them out; ſo our great High Prieſt takes away the aſhes and refuſe of all the ſaints ſervices, by his mediation in their behalf.

An eighth benefit flowing from union with Chriſt, is eſtabliſhment. The Chriſtian cannot fall away, but muſt perſevere unto the end, John x. 28. *They ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any man pluck them out of my hand.* Indeed if a branch do not knit with the ſtock, it will fall away when ſhaking winds ariſe: but the branch knit to the ſtock ſtands faſt, whatever wind blows. Sometimes a ſtormy wind of temptation blows from hell, and toſſeth the branches in Chriſt the true vine: but their union with him is their ſecurity: moved they may be, but removed they never can be. The Lord will with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, 1 Cor. x. 13. Calms are never of a continuance; there is almoſt always ſome wind blowing; and therefore branches are rarely altogether at reſt. But ſometimes violent winds ariſe, which threaten to rend them from off their ſtock. Even ſo it is with ſaints; they are daily put to it, to keep their ground againſt temptation: but ſometimes the wind from hell riſeth ſo high, and blows ſo furiouſly, that it makes even top branches to ſweep the ground: yet being knit to Chriſt their ſtock, they get up again, in ſpight of the moſt violent efforts of the prince of the power of the air, Pſal. xciv. 18. *When I ſaid, My foot ſlippeth, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up.* But the Chriſtian improves by this trial: and is ſo far from being damaged, that he is benefited by it, in ſo far as it diſcovers what hold the ſoul has of Chriſt, and what hold Chriſt has of the ſoul. And look as the wind in the bellows, which would blow out the candle, blows up the fire, even ſo it often comes to paſs, that ſuch temptations do enliven the true Chriſtian, awakening the graces of the Spirit in him; and, by that means, diſcover both the reality, and the ſtrength of grace in him. And hence, as Luther, that great man of God, ſaith, ‘ One Chriſtian, who hath had experience of temptation, is worth a thouſand others.’

Sometimes a ſtormy wind of trouble and perſecution from the men of the world, blows upon the vine, i. e. myſtical Chriſt: but union with the ſtock is a ſufficient ſecurity to the branches. In a time of the church's peace and outward proſperity, while the angels hold the winds, that they blow not, there are a great many branches taken up, and put into the ſtock, which never knit with it, nor live by it, though they be bound up with it, by the bonds of external ordinances. Now, theſe may ſtand a while on the ſtock; and ſtand with great eaſe, while the calm laſts. But when once the ſtorms ariſe, and the winds blow; they will begin to fall off, one after another; and the higher the wind riſeth, the greater will the number be that falls. Yea, ſome ſtrong boughs of that ſort, when they fall, will, by their weight carry others of their own kind, quite down to the earth with them; and will bruiſe and preſs down ſome true branches in ſuch a manner, that they would alſo fall off, were it not for their being knit to the ſtock; in virtue whereof they get up their heads again, and cannot fall off, becauſe of that faſt hold the ſtock has of them. Then it is that many branches, ſometimes high and eminent, are found lying on the earth withered, and fit to be gathered up and caſt into the fire, Matth. xiii. 6. *And when the ſun was up, they were ſcorched: and becauſe they had not root, they withered away.* John xv. 6. *If a man abide not in me, he is caſt forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them into the fire, and they are burned.* But however violently the winds blow, none of the truly ingrafted branches, that are knit with the ſtock, are found miſſing, when the ſtorm is changed into a calm, John xvii. 12. *Thoſe that thou gaveſt me, I have kept, and none of them is loſt.* The leaſt twig growing in Chriſt ſhall ſtand it out, and----ſubſiſt; when the talleſt cedars growing on their own root, ſhall be laid flat on the ground, Rom. viii. 35. *Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? Shall tribulation, or diſtreſs, or perſecution, or famine, or nakedneſs, or peril, or ſword?* See verſe 36. 37. 38. 39. However ſeverely Iſrael be ſifted, yet ſhall not the leaſt grain (or as it is in the original language, a little ſtone) fall upon the earth, Amos ix. 9. It is an alluſion to the ſifting of fine peeble-ſtones from among heaps of duſt and ſand: though the ſand and duſt fall to the ground, be blown away with the wind, and trampled under foot: yet there ſhall not fall on the earth ſo much as a little ſtone, ſuch is the exactneſs of the ſieve, and care of the ſifter. There is nothing more ready to fall on the earth, than a ſtone: yet if profeſſors of religion be lively ſtones built on Chriſt the chief corner ſtone; although they be little ſtones, they ſhall not fall to the earth, whatever ſtone beat upon them. See 1 Pet. ii. 4. 5. 6. All the good grain in the church of Chriſt is of this kind: they are ſtones in reſpect of ſolidity; and lively ſtones in reſpect of activity. If men be ſolid ſubſtantial Chriſtians, they will not be like chaff toſſed to and fro with every wind; having ſo much of the livelineſs, that they have nothing of the ſtone; and if they be lively Chriſtians, whoſe ſpirit will ſtir in them, as Paul's did, when he ſaw the city wholly given to idolatry, Acts xvii. 16. they will not lie like ſtones, to be turned over, hither and thither, cut and carved, according to the luſts of men; having ſo much of the ſtone as leaves nothing of livelineſs in them.

Our God's houſe is a great houſe, wherein are not only veſſels of gold, but alſo of earth, 2 Tim. ii. 20. Both theſe are apt to contract filthineſs; and therefore when God brings trouble upon the church, he hath an eye to both. As for the veſſels of gold, they are not deſtroyed; but purged by a fiery trial in the furnace of affliction, as goldſmiths purge their gold, Iſ. i. 25. *And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy droſs.* But deſtruction is to the veſſels of earth; they ſhall be broken in ſhivers, as a potter's veſſel, ver. 28. *And the deſtruction* (or breaking) *of the tranſgreſſors, and of the ſinners, ſhall be together.* It ſeems to be an alluſion to that law, for breaking the veſſels of earth, when unclean; while veſſels of wood, and conſequently veſſels of gold, were only to be rinſed, Lev. xv. 21.

A ninth benefit is ſupport. If thou be a branch ingrafted in Chriſt, the root beareth thee. The believer leans on Chriſt, as a weak woman, in a journey, leaning upon her beloved huſband, Cant. viii. 5. He ſtays himſelf upon him, as a feeble old man ſtays himſelf on his ſtaff, Iſ. l. 10. He rolls himſelf on him, as one rolls a burden, he is not able to walk under, off his own back, upon another who is able to bear it, Pſal. xxii. 8. There are many weights to hang upon, and preſs down the branches in Chriſt the true vine. But, ye know, whatever weights hang on branches, the ſtock bears all; it bears the branch and the weight that is upon it too.

1ſt, Chriſt ſupports believers in him, under a weight of outward troubles. That is a large promiſe, Iſ. xliii. 2. *When thou paſſeſt through the waters, I will be with thee: and through the rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee.* See how David was ſupported under a heavy load, 1 Sam. xxx. 6. His city Ziklag was burnt, his wives were taken captives, his men ſpoke of ſtoning him: nothing was left him, but his God and his faith; but by his faith, he encouraged himſelf in his God. The Lord comes, and lays his croſs on his peoples ſhoulders; it preſſeth them down; they are like to ſink under it, and therefore cry *Maſter, ſave us, we periſh:* but he ſupports them under their burden; he bears them up, and they bear their croſs. Thus the Chriſtian having a weight of outward troubles upon him, goes lightly under his burden, having withal the everlaſting arms underneath him. The Chriſtian has a ſpring of comfort, which he cannot loſe; and therefore never wants ſomething to ſupport him. If one have all his riches in money, robbers may take theſe away; and then what has he more? But though the landed man be robbed of his money, yet his lands remain for his ſupport. They that build their comfort on worldly goods, may quickly be comfortleſs; but they that are united to Chriſt, ſhall find comfort, when all the ſtreams of worldly enjoyments are dried up, Job vi. 13. *Is not my help in me? and is wiſdom driven quite from me? q. d.* Though my ſubſtance is gone; though my ſervants, my children, my health, and ſoundneſs of body, are all gone; yet my grace is not gone too. Though the Sabeans have driven away my oxen and aſſes, and the Chaldeans have driven away my camels: they have not driven away my faith, and my hope too: theſe are yet in me, they are not driven from me; ſo that by them I can fetch comfort from heaven, when I can have none from earth.

2dly, Chriſt ſupports his people under a weight of inward troubles and diſcouragements. Many times heart and fleſh fail them, but then God is the ſtrength of their heart, Pſal. lxxiii. 26. They may have a weight of guilt preſſing them. This is a load that will make their back to ſtoop, and their ſpirits to ſink: but he takes it off, and puts a pardon in their hand, while they caſt their burden over upon him. Chriſt takes the ſoul, as one marries a widow under a burden of debt: and ſo when the creditors come to Chriſt's ſpouſe, ſhe carries them to her huſband, confeſſeth the debt, declares ſhe is not able to pay it, and lays all over upon him. The Chriſtian ſometimes, through careleſſneſs, loſeth his diſcharge; he cannot find it, however he ſearch for it. The law takes that opportunity: and ſends up a proceſs againſt him, for a debt paid already. God hides his face, and the ſoul is diſtreſſed. Many arrows go through the heart now; many long accounts are laid before the man, which he reads and acknowledges. Often does he ſee the officers coming to apprehend him, and the priſon-door open to receive him. What elſe keeps him from ſinking utterly under diſcouragements in this caſe, but that the everlaſting arms of a Mediator are underneath him, and that he relies upon the great Cautioner?

Further, they may have a weight of ſtrong luſts preſſing them. They have a body of death upon them. Death is a weight that preſſeth the ſoul out of the body. A leg or an arm of death (if I may ſo ſpeak) would be a terrible load. (One lively luſt will ſometimes lie ſo heavy on a child of God, that he can no more remove it, than a child could throw a giant from off him). How then are they ſupported under a whole body of death? Why, their ſupport is from the root that bears them, from the everlaſting arm that is underneath them. His grace is ſufficient for them, 2 Cor. xii. 9. The great ſtay of the believer is not the grace of God within him; that is a well, whoſe ſtreams ſometimes run dry: but it is the grace of God without him, the grace that is in Jeſus Chriſt; which is an ever-flowing fountain, to which the believer can never come amiſs. For the apoſtle tells us in the ſame verſe, it is the power of Chriſt. *Moſt gladly therefore,* ſaith he, *will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Chriſt may reſt upon me,* or tabernacle above me, as the cloud of glory did on the Iſraelites, which God ſpread for a covering, or ſhelter to them in the wilderneſs, Pſal. cv. 39. compare Iſ. iv. 5. 6. So that the believer in this combat, like the eagle, firſt flies aloft (by faith), and then comes down on the prey, Pſal. xxxiv. 5. *they looked to him, and were lightened.* And finally, they have a weight of weakneſs and wants upon them, but they caſt over that burden on the Lord their ſtrength, and he ſuſtains them, Pſal. lv. 22. With all their wants and weakneſs, they are caſt upon him; as the poor, weak, and naked babe coming out of the womb, is caſt into the lap of one appoint take care of it, Pſal. xxii. 10. Though they be deſtitute, (as a ſhrub in the wilderneſs, which the foot of every beaſt may tread down), the Lord will regard them, Pſal. cii. 17. It is no marvel, the weakeſt plant be ſafe in a garden: but our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is a hedge for protection to his weak and deſtitute ones, even in a wilderneſs.

Object. *But if the ſaints be ſo ſupported, how is it that they fall ſo often, under temptations and diſcouragements? Anſw.* (1.) How low ſoever they fall at any time, they never fall off; and that is a great matter. They are kept by the power of God through faith unto ſalvation, 1 Pet. i. 5. Hypocrites may fall, ſo as to fall off, and fall into the pit, as a bucket falls into a well when the chain breaks. But though the child of God may fall, and that ſo low as the waters go over his head: yet there is ſtill a bond of union betwixt Chriſt and him, the chain is not broken; he will not go to the ground; he will be drawn up again, Luke xxii. 31. 32. *And the Lord ſaid, Simon, Simon, Satan hath deſired to have you, that he may ſift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.* (2.) The falls of the ſaints flow from their not improving their union with Chriſt, their not making uſe of him by faith, for ſtaying or bearing them up, Pſal. xxvii. 13. *I had fainted, unleſs I had believed.* While the nurſe holds the child in her arms, it cannot fall to the ground: yet if the unwary child hold not by her; it may fall backwards in her arms, to its great hurt. Thus David's fall broke his bones, Pſal. li. 8. But it did not break the bond of union betwixt Chriſt and him: the holy Spirit, the bond of that union, was not taken from him, verſ. 11.

The laſt benefit I ſhall name, is, the ſpecial care of the huſbandman, John xv. 1. 2. *I am the true vine, and my Father is the huſbandman.------Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.* Believers, by virtue of their union with Chriſt, are the objects of God's ſpecial care and providence. Myſtical Chriſt is God's vine; other ſocieties in the world are but wild olive-trees. The men of the world are but God's out-field; the ſaints are his vineyard, which he has a ſpecial propriety in, and a ſpecial concern for, Cant. viii. 12. *My vineyard, which is mine, is before me.* He that ſlumbers not, nor ſleeps, is the keeper of it, he does keep it; leſt any hurt it, he will keep it night and day: he in whoſe hand is the dew of heaven, will water it every moment, Iſ. xxvii. 3. He dreſſeth and purgeth it, in order to further its fruitfulneſs, John xv. 2. He cuts off the luxuriant twigs that mar the fruitfulneſs of the branch. This is done, eſpecially by the word, and by the croſs, or afflictions; the ſaints need the miniſtry of the word, as much as the vineyard needeth one to dreſs and prune the vines, 1 Cor. iii. 9. *We are labourers together with God; ye are God's huſbandry, ye are God's building.* And they need the croſs too, 1 Pet. i. 6.

And therefore, if we ſhould reckon the croſs amongſt the benefits flowing to believers from their union with Chriſt, I judge, we ſhould not reckon amiſs. Sure I am, in their ſufferings they ſuffer with him, Rom. viii. 17. And the aſſurances they have of the croſs, have rather the nature of a promiſe, as of a threatening, Pſal. lxxxix. 30. 31. 32. 33. 'If his children forſake my law,---then will I viſit their tranſgreſſions with the rod, and their iniquity with ſtripes. Nevertheleſs, my loving kindneſs will I not utterly take from him: nor ſuffer my faithfulneſs to fail.' This looks like a tutor's engaging to a dying father, to take care of the children left upon him: and to give them both nurture and admonition, for their good. The covenant of grace does truly beat the ſpears of affliction into pruning hooks, to them that are in Chriſt, Iſa. xxvii. 9. 'By this therefore ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his ſin.' Why then ſhould we be angry without our croſs? Why ſhould we be frighted at it? The believer muſt take up his croſs, and follow his leader, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. He muſt take up his ilk day's croſs, Luke xi. 23. 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs daily.' Yea, he muſt take up his holy-day's croſs too, Lam. ii. 22. 'Thou haſt called, as in a ſolemn day, my terrors round about.' The church of the Jews had, of a long time, many a pleaſant meeting at the temple, on ſolemn days, for the worſhip of God: but they got a ſolemnity of another nature, when God called together, about the temple and city, the Chaldean army that burnt the temple and laid Jeruſalem on heaps. And now, that the church of God is yet militant in this lower region, how can it be but the clouds will return after the rain? But the croſs of Chriſt (which name the ſaints troubles do bear) is a kindly name to the believer. It is a croſs indeed; but not to the believers graces, but to his corruptions. The hypocrite's ſeeming graces may indeed breathe out their laſt on a croſs, as theſe of the ſtony ground hearers did, Mat. xiii. 6. 'And when the ſun (of perſecution, ver. 21.) was up they were ſcorched: And becauſe they had no root, they withered away.' But never did one of the real graces in a believer die upon the croſs yet. Nay, as the candle ſhines brighteſt in the night, and the fire burns fierceſt in intenſe froſt: So the believer's graces are ordinarily moſt vigorous in a time of trouble.

There is a certain pleaſure and ſweetneſs in the croſs, to them who have their ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern, and to find it out. There is a certain ſweetneſs in one's ſeeing himſelf upon his trials for him, and ſtanding candidate for glory. There is a pleaſure in travelling over theſe mountains, where the Chriſtian can ſee the prints of Chriſt's own feet, and the foot-ſteps of the flock, who have been there before him. How pleaſant is it to a ſaint in the exerciſe of grace to ſee how a good God croſſeth his corrupt inclinations, and prevents his folly. How ſweet is it to behold theſe thieves upon the croſs! How refined a pleaſure is there in obſerving how God draws away proviſion from unruly luſts, and ſo pincheth them, that the Chriſtian may get them governed! Of a truth, there is a paradiſe within this thorn-hedge. Many a time the people of God are in bonds; which are never looſed, till they be bound with cords of affliction. God takes them, and throws them into a fiery furnace, that burns off their bonds; and then, like the three children, Dan. iii. 25. they are looſe, walking in the midſt of the fire. God gives his children a potion, with one bitter ingredient: if that will not work upon them, he will put in a ſecond, a third, and ſo on, as there is need, that they may work together, for their good, Rom. viii. 28. With croſs-winds he haſtens them to their harbour. They are often found in ſuch ways, as that the croſs is the happieſt foot they can meet with: and well they may ſalute it, as David did Abigail, ſaying, Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, which ſent thee this day to meet me, 1 Sam. xxv. 32. Worldly things are often ſuch a load to the Chriſtian, that he moves but very ſlowly heavenward. God ſends a wind of trouble that blows the burden off the man's back: and then he walks more ſpeedily on his way; after God had drawn ſome gilded earth from him, that was drawing his heart away from God, Zeph. iii. 12. I will alſo leave in the midſt of thee, an afflicted and poor people, and they ſhall truſt in the name of the Lord. It was an obſerve of a Heathen moraliſt, that no hiſtory makes mention of any man, who hath been made better by riches. I doubt if our modern hiſtories can ſupply the defect of ancient hiſtories in this point. But ſure I am, many have been the worſe of riches: thouſands have been hugged to death, in the embraces of a ſmiling world; and many good men have got wounds from outward proſperity, that behoved to be cured by the croſs. I remember to have read of one, who having an impoſthume in his breaſt, had in vain uſed the help of phyſicians: but being wounded with a ſword, the impoſthume was broken; and his life was ſaved by that accident, which threatened immediate death. Often have ſpiritual impoſthumes gathered in the breaſts of God's people, in time of outward proſperity, and been thus broken and diſcuſſed by the croſs. It is kindly for believers to be healed by ſtripes; although they are uſually ſo weak as to cry out for fear, at the ſight of the pruning-hook, as if it were the deſtroying ax; and to think the Lord is coming to kill them, when he is indeed coming to cure them. I ſhall now conclude, addreſſing myſelf in a few words, firſt to ſaints, and next to ſinners.

I. To you that are ſaints, I ſay,

Firſt, Strive to obtain and keep up actual communion and fellowſhip with Jeſus Chriſt; that is, to be ſtill deriving freſh ſupplies of grace, from the fountain thereof in him, by faith: and making ſuitable returns of them, in the exerciſe of grace, and holy obedience. Beware of eſtrangement betwixt Chriſt and your ſouls. If it has got in already, (which ſeems to be the caſe of many this day,) endeavour to get it removed. There are multitudes in the world that ſlight Chriſt, though ye ſhould not ſlight him: many have turned their backs on him, that ſometimes looked fair for heaven. The warm ſun of outward peace and proſperity, has cauſed ſome caſt their cloke of religion from them, who held it faſt when the wind of trouble was blowing upon them: and *will ye alſo go away?* John vi. 67. The baſeſt ingratitude is ſtamped on your ſlighting of communion with Chriſt, Jer. ii. 31. Have I been a wilderneſs unto Iſrael: a land of darkneſs? Wherefore ſay my people, We are lords; we will come no more unto thee? Oh! beloved, Is this your kindneſs to your friend? It is unbecoming any wife to ſlight converſe with her huſband, but her eſpecially who was taken from a priſon or a dunghill, as ye were by your Lord. But remember I pray you, this is a very ill choſen time to live at a diſtance from God: it is a time in which divine providence frowns upon the land we live in; the clouds of wrath are gathering, and are thick above our heads? It is not a time for you to be out of your chambers, Iſ. xxvi. 20. They that now are walking moſt cloſely with God, may have enough ado to ſtand when the trial comes: how hard will it be for others then, who are like to be ſurpriſed with troubles, when guilt is lying on their conſciences unremoved? To be awakened out of a ſound ſleep, and caſt into a raging ſea, as Jonah was, will be a fearful trial. To feel trouble before we ſee it coming, to be paſt hope before we have any fear, is a very ſad caſe. Wherefore break down your idols of jealouſy, mortify theſe luſts, theſe irregular appetites and deſires, that have ſtolen away your hearts, and left you like Sampſon, without his hair; and ſay, *I will go and return to my firſt huſband: for then was it better with me than now*, Hoſ. ii. 7.

Secondly, Walk as becomes theſe that are united to Chriſt. Evidence your union with him by walking as he alſo walked, 1 John ii. 6. If ye be brought from under the power of darkneſs, let your light ſhine before men. Shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life, as the lanthorn holds the candle, which being in it, ſhines through it, Phil. ii. 15. 16. Now that ye profeſs Chriſt to be in you, let his image ſhine forth in your converſation, and remember the buſineſs of your lives is to prove, by practical arguments, what ye profeſs.

1. You know the character of a wife, *She that is married, careth how ſhe may pleaſe her huſband.* Go you and do likewiſe; *walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleaſing*, Col. i. 10. This is the great buſineſs of life; you muſt pleaſe him, though it ſhould diſpleaſe all the world. What he hates muſt be hateful to you, becauſe he hates it. Whatever luſts come in ſuit of your hearts, deny them, ſeeing the grace of God has appeared, teaching ſo to do, and you are joined to the Lord. Let him be a covering to your eyes; for you have not your choice to make, it is made already; and you muſt not diſhonour your head. *Shall I then take the members of Chriſt, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid*, ſays the apoſtle, 1 Cor. vi. 15. Wilt thou take that heart of thine, which is Chriſt's dwelling-place, and lodge his enemies there? Wilt thou take that body, which is his temple, and defile it, by uſing the members thereof, as inſtruments of ſin?

2. Be careful to bring forth fruit, and much fruit. The branch well laden with fruit, is the glory of the vine, and of the huſbandman too, John xv. 8. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; ſo ſhall ye be my diſciples. A barren tree ſtands ſafer in a wood than in an orchard: and branches in Chriſt that bring not forth fruit, will be taken away and caſt into the fire.

3. Be heavenly-minded, and maintain a holy contempt of the world. Ye are united to Chriſt: he is your head and huſband, and is in heaven: wherefore your hearts ſhould be there alſo, Col. iii. 1. *If ye then be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things which are above, where Chriſt ſitteth at the right hand of God.* Let the ſerpent's ſeed go on their belly, and eat the duſt of this earth: but let the members of Chriſt be aſhamed to bow down, and feed with them.

4. Live and act dependently, depending by faith upon Jeſus Chriſt. That which grows on its own root, is a tree, not a branch. It is of the nature of a branch, to depend on the ſtock for all, and to derive all its ſap from thence. Depend on him for life, ſtrength, and all ſpiritual benefits, Gal. ii. 20. *I live, yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.* For this cauſe, in the myſtical union, ſtrength is united to weakneſs, life to death, and heaven to earth: that weakneſs, death, and earth, may mount up on borrowed wings. Depend on him for temporal benefits alſo, Matth. vi. 2. *Give us this day our daily bread.* If we have truſted him with our eternal concerns, let us be aſhamed to diſtruſt him in the matter of our proviſion in the world.

Laſtly, Be of a meek diſpoſition, and an uniting temper with the fellow-members of Chriſt's body, as being united to the meek Jeſus, the bleſſed center of union. There is a prophecy to this purpoſe concerning the kingdom of Chriſt, Iſ. ii. 6. *The wolf ſhall dwell with the lamb; and the leopard ſhall lie down with the kid.* It is an alluſion to the beaſts in Noah's ark. The beaſts of prey, that were wont to kill and devour others, when once they came into the ark, lay down in peace with them: the lamb was in no hazard by the wolf there; nor the kid by the leopard. There was a beautiful accompliſhment of it in the primitive church, Acts iv. 32. *And the multitude of them that believed, were of one heart and of one ſoul.* And this prevails in all the members of Chriſt, according to the meaſure of the grace of God in them. Man is born naked into this world, as if God deſigned him for the picture of peace: and ſurely when he is born again, he comes not into the new world of grace, with claws to tear, a ſword to wound, and a fire in his hand, to burn up his fellow members in Chriſt, becauſe they cannot ſee with his light. Oh! it is ſad to ſee Chriſt's lillies as thorns in one another's ſides, Chriſt's lambs devouring one another like lions, and God's diamonds cutting one another: yet it muſt be remembered, that ſin is no proper cement for the members of Chriſt, though Herod and Pontius Pilate may be made friends that way. The apoſtle's rule is plain, Heb. xii. 14. Follow peace with all men, and holineſs. To follow peace no further than our humour, credit, and ſuch like things will allow us, is too ſhort: to purſue it further than holineſs, that is, conformity to the divine will, allows us, is too far. Peace is precious, yet it may be bought too dear: wherefore we muſt rather want it, than purchaſe it at the expence of truth or holineſs. But otherwiſe it cannot be over dear bought; and it will always be precious in the eyes of the ſons of peace.

II. And now, ſinners, what ſhall I ſay to you? I have given you ſome view of the privileges of theſe in the ſtate of grace: ye have ſeen them afar off. But, alas! they are not yours, becauſe ye are not Chriſt's. The ſinfulneſs of an unregenerate ſtate is yours; and the miſery of it is yours alſo: but ye have neither part nor lot in this matter. The guilt of all your ſins lies upon you; ye have no part in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt. There is no peace to you, no peace with God, no true peace of conſcience: for ye have no ſaving intereſt in the great peace-maker. Ye are none of God's family; the adoption we ſpoke of, belongs not to you. Ye have no part in the Spirit of ſanctification: and, in one word, ye have no inheritance among them that are ſanctified. All I can ſay to you in this matter, is, that the caſe is not deſperate, they may yet be yours, Rev. iii. 20. *Behold I ſtand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will ſup with him, and he with me.* Heaven is propoſing an union with earth ſtill, the potter is making ſuit to his own clay, and the gates of the city of refuge are not yet cloſed. O that we could compel you to come in.

Thus far of the ſtate of grace.

STATE IV.

NAMELY,

The Eternal State; or, State of Conſummate Happineſs or Miſery.

HEAD I.

Of DEATH.

JOB xxx. 23.

For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the houſe appointed for all living.

I Come now to diſcourſe of man's eternal ſtate, into which he enters by death. Of this entrance Job takes a ſolemn ſerious view, in the words of the text, which contain a general truth, and a particular application of it. The general truth is ſuppoſed; namely, that all men muſt, by death, remove out of this world; they muſt die. But whither muſt they go? They muſt go to the houſe appointed for all living; to the grave; that darkſome, gloomy, ſolitary houſe, in the land of forgetfulneſs. Whereſoever the body is laid up till the reſurrection; thither, as to a dwelling houſe, death brings us home. While we are in the body, we are but in a lodging-houſe; in an inn, on our way homeward. When we come to our grave, we come to our home, our long home, Eccleſ. xii. 5. All living muſt be inhabitants of this houſe, good and bad, old and young. Man's life is a ſtream, running into death's devouring deeps. They who now live in palaces, muſt quite them, and go home to this houſe; and they who have not where to lay their heads, ſhall thus have a houſe at length. It is appointed for all, by him whoſe counſel ſhall ſtand. This appointment cannot be ſhifted; it is a law which mortals cannot tranſgreſs. Job's application of this general truth to himſelf, is expreſſed in theſe words; *I know that thou wilt bring me to death,* &c. He knew, that he behoved to meet with death; that his ſoul and body behoved to part; that God who had ſet the tryſt, would certainly ſee it kept. Sometimes Job was inviting death to come to him, and carry him home to its houſe; yea, he was in hazard of running to it, before the time: Job vii. 15. *My ſoul chuſeth ſtrangling and death, rather than my life.* But here he conſiders God would bring him to it: yea, bring him back to it, as the word imports. Whereby he ſeems to intimate, that we have no life in this world but as run-aways from death, which ſtretcheth out its cold arms, to receive us from the womb: but though we do then narrowly eſcape its clutches, we cannot eſcape long; we will be brought back again to it. Job knew this, he had laid his account with it, and was looking for it.

DOCTRINE, *All muſt die.*

Although this doctrine be confirmed by the experience of all former generations, ever ſince Abel entered into the houſe appointed for all living; and though the living know that they ſhall die; yet it is needful to diſcourſe of the certainty of death, that it may be impreſſed on the mind, and duly conſidered.

Wherefore conſider, firſt, There is an unalterable ſtatute of death under which men are concluded. *It is appointed unto men once to die*, Heb. ix. 27. It is laid up for them, as parents lay up for their children: they may look for it, and cannot miſs it; ſeeing God has deſigned and reſerved it for them. There is no peradventure in it: we muſt needs die, 2 Sam. xiv. 14. Though ſome men will not hear of death, yet every man muſt ſee death, Pſal. lxxxix. 48. Death is a champion all muſt grapple with: we muſt enter the liſts with it, and it will have the maſtery, Eccleſ. viii. 8. *There is no man that hath power over the ſpirit, to retain the ſpirit: neither hath he power in the day of death.* They indeed who are found alive at Chriſt's coming, ſhall all be changed, 1 Cor. xv. 51. But that change will be equivalent to death, will anſwer the purpoſes of it. All other perſons muſt go the common road, the way of all fleſh. Secondly, Let us conſult daily obſervation. Every man ſeeth that wiſe men die, likewiſe the fool and brutiſh perſon, Pſal. xlix. 10. There is room enough, on this earth, for us, notwithſtanding of the multitudes, that were upon it before us; they are gone to make room for us; as we muſt depart to leave room for others. It is long ſince death began to tranſport men into another world, and vaſt ſhoals or multitudes are gone thither already: yet the trade is going on ſtill; death is carrying off new inhabitants daily, to the houſe appointed for all living. Who could ever hear the grave ſay, It is enough? Long has it been getting, but ſtill it aſketh. This world is ~~like a great fair or market, where ſome are coming in, others going out, while the *aſſembly that is in it is confuſed, and the more part know not wherefore they are come together*;~~ or, like a town ſituate on the road to a great city, through which ſome travellers are paſt, ſome are paſſing, while others are only coming in, Eccleſ. i. 4. *One generation paſſeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever.* Death is an inexorable, irreſiſtible meſſenger, who cannot be diverted from executing his orders by the force of the mighty, the bribes of the rich, nor the intreaties of the poor. It doth not reverence the hoary head, nor pity the harmleſs babe. The bold and daring cannot outbrave it; nor can the faint-hearted obtain a diſcharge in this war. Thirdly, The human body conſiſts of periſhing principles, Gen. iii. 19. *Duſt thou art, and unto duſt thou ſhalt return.* The ſtrongeſt are but brittle earthen veſſels, eaſily broken in ſhivers. The ſoul is but meanly houſed, while in this mortal body, which is not a houſe of ſtone, but a houſe of clay: the mud walls cannot but moulder away; eſpecially ſeeing the foundation is not on a rock, but in the duſt; they are cruſhed before the moth, though this inſect be ſo tender, that the gentleſt touch of a finger will diſpatch it, Job. iv. 19. Theſe principles are like gun-powder, a very ſmall ſpark lighting on them, will ſet them on fire, and blow up the houſe: the ſtone of a raiſin, or a hair in milk have choaked men, and laid the houſe of clay in the duſt. If we conſider the frame and ſtructure of our bodies, how fearfully and wonderfully we are made; and on how regular and exact a motion of the fluids, and balance of humours, our life depends: and that death has as many doors to enter in by, as the body hath pores: and if we compare the ſoul and body together, we may juſtly reckon, there is ſomewhat more aſtoniſhing in our life, than in our death; and that it is more ſtrange, to ſee duſt walking up and down on the duſt, than lying down in it. Though the lamp of our life be not violently blown out, yet the flame muſt go out at length for want of oil. And what are thoſe diſtempers and diſeaſes we are liable to, but deaths harbingers, that come to prepare its way? They meet us, as ſoon as we ſet our foot on earth; to tell us at our entry, that we do but come into the world to go out again. Howbeit, ſome are ſnatched away in a moment, without being warned by ſickneſs or diſeaſe. Fourthly, We have ſinful ſouls, and therefore have dying bodies: death follows ſin, as the ſhadow follows the body. The wicked muſt die, by virtue of the threatening of the covenant of works, Gen ii. 17. *In the day that thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely die.* And the godly muſt die too: that as death entered by ſin, ſin may go out by death. Chriſt has taken away the ſting of death, as to them; albeit he has not as yet removed death itſelf. Wherefore, though it faſten on them, as the viper did on Paul's hand, it ſhall do them no harm; but becauſe the leproſy of ſin is in the walls of the houſe, it muſt be broken down, and all the materials thereof carried forth. Laſtly, Man's life in this world according to the ſcripture-account of it, is but a few degrees removed from death. The ſcripture repreſents it as a vain and empty thing, ſhort in its continuance, and ſwift in its paſſing away.

Firſt, Man's life is a vain and empty thing: while it is, it vaniſheth away; and lo! it is not. Job vii. 6. *My days are vanity.* If we ſuſpect afflicted Job of partiality in this matter, hear the wiſe and proſperous Solomon's character of the days of his life, Eccleſ. vii. 15. *All things have I ſeen in the days of my vanity*, i. e. *my vain days.* Moſes, who was a very active man, compares our days to a ſleep, Pſal. xc. 5. *They are as a ſleep*, which is not noticed till it be ended. The reſemblance is pat; few men have right apprehenſions of life, untill that death awaken them: then we begin to know we were living. *We ſpend our years as a tale that is told*, verſe 9. When an idle tale is a telling, it may affect a little: but when it is ended, it is forgot: and ſo is man forgotten, when the fable of his life is ended. It is a dream or viſion of the night, in which there is nothing ſolid: when one awakes, all evaniſheth; Job. xx. 8. He ſhall fly away as a dream, and ſhall not be found; yea, he ſhall be chaſed away as a viſion of the night. It is but a vain ſhow, or image; Pſal. xxxix. 6. Surely every man walketh in a vain ſhew. Man, in this world, is but, as it were, a walking ſtatue: his life is but an image of life, there is ſo much of death in it.

If we look on our life, in the ſeveral periods of it, we will find it a heap of vanities. Childhood and youth are vanity, Eccleſ. xi. 10. We come into the world the moſt helpleſs of all animals: young birds and beaſts can do ſomething for themſelves, but infant man is altogether unable to help himſelf. Our childhood is ſpent in pitiful trifling pleaſures, which become the ſcorn of our own after-thoughts. Youth is a flower that ſoon withereth, a bloſſom that quickly falls off; it is a ſpace of time in which we are raſh, fooliſh, and inconſiderate, pleaſing ourſelves with a variety of vanities, and ſwimming as it were through a flood of them. But ere we are aware, it is paſt, and we are in middle age, encompaſſed with a thick cloud of cares, through which we muſt grope: and finding ourſelves beſet with pricking thorns of difficulties, through them we muſt force our way to accompliſh the projects and contrivances of our riper thoughts. And the more we ſolace ourſelves in any earthly enjoyment we attain to, the more bitterneſs do we find in parting with it. Then comes old age, attended with its own train of infirmities, labour and ſorrow, Pſal. xc. 10. and ſets us down next door to the grave. In a word, *All fleſh is graſs*, Iſ. xl. 6. Every ſtage or period in life, is vanity. *Man at his beſt ſtate*, (his middle age, when the heat of youth is ſpent, and the ſorrows of old age have not yet overtaken him) *is altogether vanity*, Pſal. xxxix. 4. Death carries off ſome in the bud of childhood, others in the bloſſom of youth, and others when they are come to their fruit; few are left ſtanding, till, like ripe corn, they forſake the ground: all die one time or other.

Secondly, Man's life is a ſhort thing; it is not only a vanity, but a ſhort-lived vanity. Conſider, firſt, How the life of man is reckoned in the ſcriptures. It was indeed ſometimes reckoned by hundreds of years: but no man ever arrived at a thouſand; which yet bears no proportion to eternity. Now hundreds are brought down to ſcores; three ſcore and ten, or fourſcore, is its utmoſt length, Pſal. xc. 10. But few men arrive at that length of life. Death does but rarely wait, till men be bowing down, by reaſon of age, to meet the grave. Yet, as if years were too big a word for ſuch a ſmall thing as the life of man on earth; we find it counted by months, Job xiv. 5. *The number of his months are with thee.* Our courſe, like that of the moon, is run in a little time: we are always waxing or weaning, till we diſappear. But frequently it is reckoned by days; and theſe but few, Job xiv. 1. Man that is born of a woman is of few days. Nay, it is but one day in ſcripture-account; and that a hireling's day, who will preciſely obſerve when his days end, and give over his work, verſe 6. *Till he ſhall accompliſh as an hireling his day.* Yea, the ſcripture brings it down to the ſhorteſt ſpace of time, and calls it a moment, 2 Cor. iv. 1. Our light affliction (though it laſte all our life long) is but for a moment. But elſewhere it is brought down to yet a lower pitch, farther than which one cannot carry it, Pſal. xxxix. 5. *Mine age is as nothing before thee.* Agreeable to this, Solomon tells us, Eccleſ. iii. 2. there is *a time to be born, and a time to die*; but makes no mention of a time to live, as if our life were but a ſkip from the womb to the grave. Secondly, Conſider the various ſimilitudes by which the ſcripture repreſents the ſhortneſs of man's life. Hear Hezekiah, Iſ. xxxviii. 12. *Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a ſhepherd's tent: I have cut off like a weaver my life.* The ſhepherd's tent is ſoon removed; for the flocks muſt not feed long in one place: ſuch is a man's life on this earth, quickly gone. It is a web he is inceſſantly working; he is not idle ſo much as for one moment: in a ſhort time it is wrought, and then it is cut off. Every breathing is a thread in this web; when the laſt breath is drawn, the web is woven out, he expires, and then it is cut off, he breathes no more. Man is like graſs, and like a flower, Iſ. xl. 6. All fleſh (even the ſtrongeſt and moſt healthy fleſh) is graſs, and all the goodlineſs thereof is as the flower of the field. The graſs is flouriſhing in the morning, but in the evening being cut down by the mowers, it is withered: ſo man ſometimes is walking up and down at eaſe in the morning, and in the evening is lying a corpſe, being knocked down by a ſudden ſtroke, with one or other of death's weapons. The flower, at beſt, is but a weak and tender thing, of ſhort continuance, where ever it grows; but obſerve, man is not compared to the flower of the garden; but to the flower of the field, which the foot of every beaſt may tread down at any time. Thus is our life liable to a thouſand accidents every day, any of which may cut us off. But though we ſhould eſcape all theſe, yet at length this graſs withereth, this flower fadeth of itſelf. It is carried off, as the cloud is conſumed, and vaniſheth away, Job vii. 9. It looks big as the morning-cloud, which promiſeth great things, and raiſeth the expectations of the huſbandman; but the ſun riſeth, and the cloud is ſcattered; death comes and man evaniſheth. The apoſtle James propoſeth the queſtion, *What is our life?* chap. iv. 14. Hear his own anſwer, *It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vaniſheth away.* It is as ſmoke, which goes out of the chimney, as if it would darken the face of the heavens: but quickly it is ſcattered, and appears no more: thus goeth man's life, and where is he? It is a wind, Job vii. 7. O remember that my life is wind. It is but a paſſing blaſt, a ſhort puff, a wind that paſſeth away, and cometh not again, Pſal. lxxviii. 39. Our breath is in our noſtrils, as it were always upon the wing to depart; ever paſſing and repaſſing, like a traveller; untill it go away for good and all, not to return till the heavens be no more.

Laſtly, Man's life is a ſwift thing; not only a paſſing, but a flying vanity. Have you not obſerved how ſwiftly a ſhadow hath run along the ground, in a cloudy and windy day, ſuddenly darkening the places beautified before with the beams of the ſun; but as ſuddenly diſappearing? Such is the life of man on the earth, for he fleeth as a ſhadow, and continueth not, Job xvi. 2. A weaver's ſhuttle is very ſwift in its motion; in a moment it is thrown from one ſide of the web to the other: yet our days are ſwifter than a weaver's ſhuttle, chap. vii. 6. How quickly is man toſſed through time, into eternity! See how Job deſcribes the ſwiftneſs of the time of life, chap. ix. 25. *Now my days are ſwifter than a poſt; they flee away, they ſee no good.* Verſe 26. *They are paſſed away as the ſwift ſhips; as the eagle that haſteth to the prey.* He compares his days with a poſt, a foot-poſt; a runner, who runs ſpeedily to carry tidings, and will make no ſtay. But though the poſt were like Ahimaaz, who over-ran Cuſhi; our days would be ſwifter than he; for they flee away, like a man fleeing for his life before the purſuing enemy; he runs with his utmoſt vigour, yet our days run as faſt as he. Howbeit, that is not all. Even he who is fleeing for his life, cannot run always; he muſt needs ſometimes ſtand ſtill, lie down, or turn in ſomewhere, as Siſera did into Jael's tent, to refreſh himſelf; but our time never halts. Therefore it is compared to ſhips, which can ſail night and day without intermiſſion, till they be at their port; and to ſwift ſhips, ſhips of deſire, in which men quickly arrive at the deſired haven; or, ſhips of pleaſure, that ſail more ſwiftly than ſhips of burden. Yet the wind failing, the ſhip's courſe is marred: but our time always runs with a rapid courſe. Therefore it is compared to the eagle flying; not with his ordinary flight, for that is not ſufficient to repreſent the ſwiftneſs of our days; but when he flies upon his prey, which is with an extraordinary ſwiftneſs. And thus, even thus, our days fly away.

Having thus diſcourſed of death, let us improve it, in diſcerning the vanity of the world; in bearing up with Chriſtian contentment and patience, under all troubles and difficulties in it; in mortifying our luſts; in cleaving unto the Lord with purpoſe of heart, on all hazards; and in preparing for death's approach.

And firſt, Let us hence, as in a looking-glaſs, behold the vanity of the world, and of all theſe things in it, which men ſo much value and eſteem; and therefore ſet their hearts upon. The rich and the poor are equally intent upon this world; they bow the knee to it; yet it is but a clay god; they court this bulky vanity, and run keenly to catch this ſhadow. The rich man is hugged to death in its embraces; and the poor man wearies himſelf in the fruitleſs purſuit. (What wonder if the world's ſmiles overcome us, when we purſue it ſo eagerly, even while it frowns upon us?) But look into the grave, O man, conſider and be wiſe; liſten to the doctrine of death; and learn, (1.) That, hold as faſt as thou canſt, thou ſhalt be forced to let go thy hold of the world at length. Though thou load thyſelf with the fruits of this earth; yet all ſhall fall off when thou comeſt to creep into thy hole, the houſe under ground, appointed for all living. When death comes, thou muſt bid an eternal farewell to thy enjoyments in this world; thou muſt leave thy goods to another; and whoſe ſhall thoſe things be which thou haſt provided? Luke xii. 20. (2.) Thy portion of theſe things ſhall be very little ere long. If thou lie down on the graſs, and ſtretch thyſelf at full length, and obſerve the print of thy body when thou riſeſt, thou mayeſt ſee how much of this earth will fall to thy ſhare at laſt. It may be thou ſhalt get a coffin, and a winding-ſheet; but thou art not ſure of that: many who have had abundance of wealth, yet have not had ſo much when they took up their new houſe in the land of ſilence. But however that be, more ye cannot expect. It was a mortifying leſſon, Saladine, when dying, gave to his ſoldiers. He called for his ſtandard-bearer, and ordered him to take his winding-ſheet upon his pike; and go out to the camp with it, and tell them, that of all his conqueſts, victories, and triumphs, he had nothing now left him, but that piece of linen to wrap his body in for burial. Laſtly, This world is a falſe friend, who leaves a man in time of greateſt need, and flees from him when he has moſt to do. When thou art lying on a death-bed, all thy friends and relations cannot reſcue thee; all thy ſubſtance cannot ranſom thee, nor procure a reprieve for one day; nay, not for one hour. Yea, the more thou poſſeſſeſt of this world's goods, thy ſorrow at death is like to be the greater: for though one may live more commodiouſly in a palace than in a cottage, yet he may die more eaſily in the cottage, where he has very little to make him fond of life.

Secondly, It may ſerve as a ſtorehouſe for Chriſtian contentment and patience under worldly loſſes and croſſes A cloſe application of the doctrine of death is an excellent remedy againſt fretting, and gives ſome eaſe to a rankled heart. When Job had ſuſtained very great loſſes, he ſat down contented, with this meditation, Job i. 21. *Naked came I out of my mothers womb, and naked ſhall I return thither. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; bleſſed be the name of the Lord.* When providence brings a mortality or murrain among your cattle, how ready are you to fret and complain! but the ſerious conſideration of your own death, (to which you have a notable help from ſuch providential occurrences,) may be of uſe to ſilence your complaints, and quiet your rankled ſpirits. Look to *the houſe appointed for all living*, and learn, (1.) That ye muſt abide a ſorer thruſt, than the loſs of worldly goods. Do not cry out for a thruſt in the leg or arm: for ere long there will be a home-thruſt at the heart. You may loſe your deareſt relations: the wife may loſe her huſband, and the huſband his wife; the parents may loſe their dear children, and the children their parents. But if any of theſe trials happen to you, remember ye muſt loſe your own life at laſt; and wherefore doth a living man complain? Lam. iii. 39. It is always profitable to conſider, under affliction, how our caſe might have been worſe than it is. Whatever be conſumed, or taken from us, it is of the Lord's mercies that we ourſelves are not conſumed, verſe 22. (2.) It is but for a ſhort ſpace of time we are to be in this world. It is but little our neceſſities require in this ſhort ſpace of time: when death comes, we will ſtand in need of none of theſe things. Why ſhould men rack their heads with cares how to provide for tomorrow; while they know not if they ſhall need any thing to morrow? Though a man's proviſion for his journey be near ſpent, he is not diſquieted, if he think he is near home. Are you working with candle light, and is there little of your candle left? It may be there is as little ſand in your glaſs; and if ſo, ye have little uſe for it. (3) Ye have matters of greater weight that challenge your care. Death is at the door, beware ye loſe not your ſouls. If blood break out at one part of the body, they uſe to open a vein in another part of it, to turn the ſtream of blood, and thus to ſtop it. Thus the Spirit of the Lord ſometimes cures men of ſorrow for earthly things, by opening the heart vein to bleed for ſin. Did we purſue heavenly things the more vigorouſly that our affairs in this life proſper not, we ſhould thereby gain a double advantage: our worldly ſorrow would be diverted, and our beſt treaſure increaſed. (4.) Croſſes of this nature will not laſte long. The world's ſmiles and frowns will be quickly buried together in everlaſting forgetfulneſs. Its ſmiles go away as the foam on the water: and its frowns are as a paſſing ſtitch in a man's ſide. Time flies away with ſwift wings, and carries our earthly comforts, and croſſes too, along with it: neither of them will acompany us into the houſe appointed for all living, Job iii. 17. 'There the 'wicked ceaſe from troubling, and there the weary be at 'reſt.' Ver. 18. 'there the priſoners reſt together, they 'hear not the voice of the oppreſſor.' Ver. 19. 'The 'ſmall and great are there, and the ſervant is free from 'his maſter.' Caſt your eyes on eternity, and ye will ſee, affliction here is but for a moment. The truth is, our time is ſo very ſhort, that it will not allow either our joys or griefs to come to perfection. Wherefore, let them that weep, be as tho' they weeped not; and they that rejoyce, as though they rejoyced not, &c. 1 Cor. vii. 29. 30. 31. (5.) Death will put all men on a level. The king and the beggar muſt dwell in one houſe, when they come to their journey's end: tho' their entertainment by the way be very different. The ſmall and the great are there, Job iii. 19. We are in this world as on a ſtage: it is no great matter, whether a man act the part of a prince or a peaſant; for when they have acted their parts, they muſt both get behind the curtain, and appear no more. Laſtly, If thou be not in Chriſt, whatever thy afflictions now be, troubles, a thouſand times worſe, are abiding thee in another world. Death will turn thy croſſes into pure unmixed curſes: and then how gladly wouldſt thou return to thy former afflicted ſtate, and purchaſe it at any rate; were there any poſſibility of ſuch a return. If thou be in Chriſt, thou mayeſt well bear thy croſs. Death will put an end to all thy troubles. If a man on a journey be not well accommodated, where he lodgeth only for a night, he will not trouble himſelf much about the matter: becauſe he is not to ſtay there; it is not his home. Ye are on the road to eternity; let it not diſquiet you, that you meet with ſome hardſhips in the inn of this world. Fret not, becauſe it is not ſo well with you as with ſome others. One man travels with a cane in his hand: his ſellow-traveller (perhaps) has but a common ſtick, or ſtaff: either of them will ſerve the turn. It is no great matter which of them be yours; both will be laid aſide when you come to your journey's end.

Thirdly, It may ſerve for a bridle, to curb all manner of luſts, particularly thoſe converſant about the body. A ſerious viſit made to cold death, and that ſolitary manſion, the grave, might be of good uſe to repreſs them.

1ſt. It may be of uſe to cauſe men remit of their inordinate care of the body; which is to many the bane of their ſouls. Often do theſe queſtions, *What ſhall we eat? what ſhall we drink? and wherewithal ſhall we be clothed?* leave no room for another of more importance, viz. *Wherewithal ſhall I come before the Lord?* The ſoul is put to the rack, to anſwer theſe mean queſtions in favour of the body: while its own eternal intereſts are neglected. But ah! why are men ſo buſy to repair the ruinous cottage; leaving the inhabitant to bleed to death of his wounds, unheeded, unregarded! Why ſo much care for the body, to the neglecting of the concerns of the immortal ſoul? O! be not ſo anxious for what can only ſerve your bodies; ſince, ere long, the clods of cold earth will ſerve for back and belly too.

2dly, It may abate your pride on account of bodily endowments, which vain man is apt to glory in. Value not yourſelves on the bloſſom of youth; for while ye are in your blooming years, ye are but ripening for a grave; and death gives the fatal ſtroke, without aſking any body's age. Glory not in your ſtrength, it will quickly be gone: the time will ſoon be, when ye ſhall not be able to turn yourſelves on a bed; and ye muſt be carried by your grieving friends to your long home. And what ſignifies your healthful conſtitution? Death doth not always enter in ſooneſt where it begins ſooneſt to knock at the door; but makes as great diſpatch with ſome in a few hours, as with others in many years. Value not yourſelves on your beauty, which ſhall conſume in the grave, Pſal. xlix. 14. Remember the change death makes on the faireſt face, Job xiv. 20. *Thou changeſt his countenance, and ſendeſt him away.* Death makes the greateſt beauty ſo lothſome, that it muſt be buried out of ſight. Could a looking-glaſs be uſed in the houſe appointed for all living; it would be a terror to theſe, who now look oftener into their glaſſes than into their Bibles. And, what though the body be gorgeouſly arrayed? The fineſt clothes are but badges of our ſin and ſhame; and in a little time, will be exchanged for a winding ſheet; when the body will become a feaſt to the worms.

3dly, It may be a mighty check upon ſenſuality and fleſhly luſts, 1 Pet. ii. 11. *I beſeech you as ſtrangers and pilgrims, abſtain from fleſhly luſts, which war againſt* *the ſoul.* It is hard to cauſe wet wood take fire; and when the fire doth take hold of it, it is ſoon extinguiſhed. Senſuality makes men moſt unfit for divine communications, and is an effectual means to quench the Spirit. Intemperance in eating and drinking, carries on the ruin of ſoul and body at once: and haſtens death, while it makes the man moſt unmeet for it. Therefore, take heed to yourſelves, leſt at any time your hearts be overcharged with ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs, and ſo that day come upon you unawares, Luke xxi. 34. But, O how often is the ſoul ſtruck through with a dart, in gratifying the ſenſes! At theſe doors, deſtruction enters in. Therefore Job made a covenant with his eyes, chap. xxxi. *The mouth of a ſtrange woman is a deep pit; he that is abhorred of the Lord, ſhall fall therein,* Prov. xxii. 14. *Let him that ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall.* Beware of laſciviouſneſs; ſtudy modeſty, in your apparel, words, and actions. The ravens of the valley of death will at length pick out the wanton eye: the obſcene filthy tongue will at length be quiet, in the land of ſilence: and grim death embracing the body, in its cold arms, will effectually allay the heat of all fleſhly luſts.

Laſtly, In a word, it may check our earthly mindedneſs; and at once knock down, the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life. Ah! if we muſt die, why are we thus? Why ſo fond of temporal things; ſo anxious to get them, ſo eager in the embraces of them, ſo mightily touched with the loſs of them? Let me, upon a view of the houſe appointed for all living, beſpeak the worldling, in the words of Solomon, Prov. xxiii. 5. *Wilt thou ſet thine eyes upon that which is not? For riches certainly make themſelves wings, they flee away as an eagle towards heaven.* Riches, and worldly things, are but a fair nothing: they are that which is not. They are not what they ſeem to be: they are but gilded vanities, that deceive the eye. Comparatively they are not; there is infinitely more of nothingneſs and not-being, than of being or reality, in the beſt of them. What is the world, and all that is in it, but a faſhion, or fair ſhow, ſuch as men make on a ſtage, a paſſing ſhow? 1 Cor. vii. 31. Royal pomp is but gaudy ſhow, or appearance, in God's account, Acts xxv. 23. The beſt name they get is good things: but, obſerve it, they are only the wicked man's good things, Luke xvi. 25. *Thou in thy life time receivedſt thy good things,* ſays Abraham, in the parable, to the rich man in hell. And well may the men of the world, call theſe things their goods; for there is no other good in them, about them, nor attending them. Now wilt thou ſet thine eyes upon empty ſhows and fancies? Wilt thou cauſe thine eyes to fly on them, as the word is? Shall mens hearts fly out at their eyes upon them, as a ravenous bird on its prey? If they do, let them know, that at length, theſe ſhall fly as faſt away from them, as ever their eyes flew upon them: like a flock of fair feathered birds, that ſettle on a fool's ground; the which, when he runs to catch them as his own, do immediately take wing, fly away, and ſitting down on his neighbour's ground, elude his expectation. Luke xii. 20. *Thou fool, this night thy ſoul ſhall be required of thee: then whoſe ſhall theſe things be?* Though you do not make wings to them, as many do; they make themſelves wings, and fly away; not as a tame houſe-bird, which may be catched again; nor as an hawk, that will ſhow where ſhe is by her bells, and be called again with the lure: but as an eagle, which quickly flies out of ſight, and cannot be recalled. Forbear thou to behold theſe things. O mortal! there is no reaſon, thou ſhould ſet thine eyes upon them. This world is a great inn, in the road to eternity, to which thou art travelling. Thou art attended by theſe things, as ſervants belonging to the inn, where thou lodgeſt: they wait upon thee, while thou art there; and when thou goeſt away, they will convoy thee to the door. But they are not thine, they will not go away with thee; but return to wait on other ſtrangers, as they did on thee.

Fourthly, It may ſerve as a ſpring of Chriſtian reſolution, to cleave to Chriſt, adhere to his truths, and continue in his ways; whatever we may ſuffer for ſo doing. It would much allay the fear of man, that bringeth a ſnare. *Who art thou, that thou ſhouldſt be afraid of a man that ſhall die?* Iſ. li. 12. Look on perſecutors as pieces of brittle clay, that ſhall be daſhed in pieces: for then ſhall ye deſpiſe them as foes that are mortal; whoſe terror, to others in the land of the living, ſhall quickly die with themſelves. The ſerious conſideration of the ſhortneſs of our time, and the certainty of death, will teach us, that all the advantage we can make by our apoſtacy, in time of trial, is not worth the while; it is not worth going out of our way to get it: and what we refuſe to forego for Chriſt's ſake, may quickly be taken from us by death. But we can never loſe it ſo honourably, as for the cauſe of Chriſt, and his goſpel: for what glory is it, that ye give up what ye have in the world; when God takes it away from you by death, whether you will or not? This conſideration may teach us to undervalue life itſelf, and chooſe to forego it, rather than to ſin. The worſt that men can do, is to take away that life, which we cannot long keep, though all the world ſhould conſpire to help us to retain the ſpirit. And if we refuſe to offer it up to God, when he calls for it in defence of his honour, he can take it from us another way; as it fared with him, who could not burn for Chriſt, but was afterwards burnt by an accidental fire in his houſe.

Laſtly, It may ſerve for a ſpur, to incite us to prepare for death. Conſider, (1.) Your eternal ſtate will be according to the ſtate in which ye die: death will open the doors of heaven or hell to you. As the tree falls, ſo it ſhall ly through eternity. If the infant be dead-born, the whole world will not raiſe it to life again: and if one die out of Chriſt, in an unregenerate ſtate, there is no more hope of him for ever. (2.) Seriouſly conſider, what it is to go into another world; a world of ſpirits, wherewith we are very little acquainted. How frightful is converſe with ſpirits, to poor mortals in this life! and how dreadful is the caſe, when men are hurried away into another world, not knowing but devils may be their companions for ever! Let us then give all diligence to make and advance our acquaintance with the Lord of that world. (3.) It is but a ſhort time ye have to prepare for death: therefore, now or never; ſeeing the time aſſigned for preparation will ſoon be over: Eccleſ. ix. 10. *Whatſoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom in the grave, whither thou goeſt.* How can we be idle, having ſo great a work to do, and ſo little time to do it in? But if the time be ſhort, the work of preparation for death, though hard work, will not laſte long. The ſhadows of the evening make the labourer work chearfully; knowing the time to be at hand, when he will be called in from his labour. (4.) Much of our ſhort time is over already; and the youngeſt of us all cannot aſſure himſelf, that there is as much of his time to come, as is paſt. Our life in the world is but a ſhort preface to long eternity; and much of the tale is told. Oh! ſhall we not double our diligence, when ſo much of our time is ſpent, and ſo little of our great work is done? (5.) The preſent time is flying away: and we cannot bring back time paſt, it hath taken an eternal farewell of us: there is no kindling the fire again that is burnt to aſhes. The time to come is not ours: and we have no aſſurance of a ſhare in it when it comes. We have nothing we can call ours, but the preſent moment; and that is flying away: how ſoon our time may be at an end, we know not. Die we muſt: but who can tell us, when? If death kept one ſet time for all, we were in no hazard of a ſurpriſe: but daily obſervation ſhows us, there is no ſuch thing. Now the flying ſhadow of our life allows no time for loitering. The rivers run ſpeedily into the ſea from whence they came; but not ſo ſpeedily as man to the duſt from whence he came. The ſtream of time is the ſwifteſt current, and quickly runs out to eternity. Laſtly, If once death carry us off, there is no coming back again to mend our matters, Job xiv. 14. If a man die, ſhall he live again? Dying is a thing we cannot get a trial of; it is what we can only do once, Heb. ix. 27. It is appointed unto men *once* to die. And that which can be but once done, and yet is of ſo much importance, that our all depends on our doing it right, we have need to uſe the utmoſt diligence, that we may do it well. Therefore prepare for death, and do it timeouſly.

If ye, who are unregenerate, aſk me, what ye ſhall do to prepare for death, that ye may die ſafely? I anſwer, I have told you already, what muſt be done. And that is, your nature and ſtate muſt be changed: ye muſt be born again; ye muſt be united to Jeſus Chriſt by faith. And till this is done, ye are not capable of other directions, which belong to one's dying comfortably; whereof we may diſcourſe afterwards in the due place.

HEAD II.

The *difference* betwixt the *righteous* and the *wicked* in their *death*.

PROVERBS xiv. 32.

The wicked is driven away in his wickedneſs: but the righteous hath hope in his death.

THis text looks like the cloud betwixt the Iſraelites and Egyptians: having a dark ſide towards the latter, and a bright ſide towards the former. It repreſents death like Pharaoh's jaylor, bringing the chief butler, and the chief baker out of one priſon; the one to be reſtored to his office, and the other to be led to execution. It ſhows the difference betwixt the godly and ungodly in their death; who, as they act a very different part in life; ſo, in death, have a vaſtly different exit.

Firſt, As to the death of a wicked man: here is, (1.) The manner of his paſſing out of the world. He is driven away: namely, in his death, as is clear from the oppoſite clauſe. He is forcibly thruſt out of his place in this world: driven away as chaff before the wind. (2.) The ſtate he paſſeth away in. He dies in a ſinful and hopeleſs ſtate. Firſt, In a ſinful ſtate: he is driven away in his wickedneſs. He lived in it, and he dies in it; his filthy garments of ſin, in which he wrapt up himſelf in his life, are his priſon-garments, in which he ſhall ly wrapt up for ever. Secondly, In a hopeleſs ſtate; but the righteous hath hope in his death: which plainly imports the hopeleſſneſs of the wicked in their death. Whereby is not meant, that no wicked man ſhall have any hope at all, when he is a-dying; but ſhall die in deſpair. No: ſometimes it is ſo indeed; but frequently it is otherwiſe: fooliſh virgins may, and often do hope to the laſt breath. But the wicked man has no ſolid hope; and as for the deluſive hopes he entertains himſelf with, death will root them up, and he ſhall be for ever irretrievably miſerable.

Secondly, As to the death of a righteous man; he hath hope in his death. This is uſhered in with a *but*, importing a removal of theſe dreadful circumſtances, with which the wicked man is attended, who is driven away in his wickedneſs: but the godly are not ſo. Not ſo, (1.) In the manner of their paſſing out of the world. The righteous is not driven away as chaff before the wind, but led away as a bride to the marriage-chamber, carried away by the angels into Abraham's boſom, Luke xvi. 22. (2.) Not ſo as to their ſtate, when paſſing out of this life. The righteous man dies, (1.) Not in a ſinful, but in a holy ſtate. He goes not away in his ſin, but out of it. In his life he was putting off the old man, changing his priſon garments: and now the remaining rags of them are removed, and he is adorned with robes of glory. (2.) Not in a hopeleſs, but a hopeful ſtate. He hath hope in his death; he has the grace of hope, and the well founded expectation of better things, than ever he had in this world: and tho' the ſtream of his hope at death may run ſhallow: yet he has ſtill as much of it, as makes him venture his eternal intereſts upon the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

DOCTRINE I.

The wicked dying, are driven away in their wickedneſs, and in a hopeleſs ſtate.

In ſpeaking to this doctrine, (1.) I ſhall ſhew how, and in what ſenſe, the wicked are driven away in their wickedneſs, at death, (2.) I ſhall diſcover the hopeleſſneſs of their ſtate at death. And laſtly, Apply the whole.

I. How, and in what ſenſe the wicked are driven away in their wickedneſs. In diſcourſing of this matter, I ſhall briefly enquire, (1.) What is meant by their being driven away. (2.) Whence they ſhall be driven, and whither. (3.) In what reſpects they may be ſaid to be driven away in their wickedneſs. But, before I proceed, let me advertiſe you; that you are miſtaken, if you think that no perſons are to be called wicked, but they who are avowedly vitious and prophane; as if the devil could dwell in none but thoſe whoſe name is legion. In ſcripture account, all who are not righteous, in the manner hereafter explained, are reckoned wicked. And therefore the text divides the whole world into two ſorts, the righteous, and the wicked; and ye will ſee the ſame thing in that other text, Mal. iii. 18. Then ſhall ye return, and diſcern between the righteous and the wicked. Wherefore, if ye be not righteous, ye are wicked. If ye have not an imputed righteouſneſs, and alſo an implanted righteouſneſs, or holineſs; if ye be yet in your natural ſtate, unregenerated, not united to Chriſt by faith: howſoever moral and blameleſs, in the eyes of men, your converſation may be; ye are the wicked, who ſhall be driven away in your wickedneſs, if death find you in that ſtate. Now,

Firſt, As to the meaning of this phraſe *driven away*: there are three things in it: the wicked ſhall be taken away ſuddenly, violently, and irreſiſtibly.

Firſt, Unrenewed men ſhall be taken away ſuddenly at death. Not that all wicked men die ſuddenly: nor that they are all wicked, who die ſo, God forbid! But, (1.) Death commonly comes upon them unexpected, and ſo ſurprizeth them; as the deluge came ſurprizingly on the old world, tho' they were forewarned of it long before it came; and as travail comes on a woman with child, with ſurprizing ſuddenneſs; although looked for and expected, 1 Theſſ. v. 3. Death ſeizeth them, as a creditor doth his debtor, to hale him to priſon, Pſal. lv. 15. and that when they are not aware. Death comes in, as a thief, at the window, and finds them full of buſy thoughts about this life, which that very day periſh. (2.) Death always ſeizeth them unprepared for it: the old houſe falls down about their ears, before they have another provided. When death caſts them to the door, they have not where to lay their heads; unleſs it be on a bed of fire and brimſtone. The ſoul and body are, as it were, hugging one another in mutual embraces: when death comes like a whirlwind, and ſeparates them. (3.) Death hurries them away in a moment to deſtruction, and makes a moſt diſmal change: the man for the moſt part, never knows where he is, till in hell he lift up his eyes, Luke xvi. 23. The floods of wrath ſuddenly overwhelm his ſoul; and ere he is aware, he is plunged in the bottomleſs pit.

Secondly, The unrenewed man is taken away out of the world violently. Driving is a violent action: he is chaſed out of the world, Job xviii. 18. Fain would he ſtay, if he could; but death drags him away, like a malefactor, to the execution. He ſought no other portion, than the profits and pleaſures of this world; he hath no other; he really deſires no other; how can he then go away out of it, if he were not driven?

Queſt. *But may not a wicked man be willing to die?* *Anſw.* He may indeed be willing to die; but (obſerve) it is only in one of three caſes. (1.) In a fit of paſſion, by reaſon of ſome trouble that he is impatient to be rid of. Thus many perſons, when their paſſion has got the better of their reaſon, and when, on that account, they are moſt unfit to die, will be ready to cry, *O to be gone!* but ſhould their deſire be granted, and death come at their call, they would quickly ſhow they were not in earneſt; and that if they go, they muſt be driven away againſt their wills. (2.) When they are brimful of deſpair, they may be willing to die. Thus Saul murdered himſelf; and Spira wiſhed to be in hell, that he might know the uttermoſt of what he believed he was to ſuffer. In this manner men may ſeek after death, while it flies from them. But fearful is the violence theſe do undergo whom the terrors of God do thus drive. (3.) When they are dreaming of happineſs after death. Fooliſh virgins, under the power of deluſion, as to their ſtate, may be willing to die, having no fear of lying down in ſorrow. How many are there, who can give no ſcripture-ground for their hope, who yet have no bands in their death! Many are driven to darkneſs ſleeping: they go off like lambs, who would roar like lions, did they but know what place they are going to: though the chariot in which they are, drives furiouſly to the depths of hell; yet they fear not, becauſe they are faſt aſleep.

Laſtly, The unregenerate man is taken away irreſiſtibly. He muſt go, though ſore againſt his will. Death will take no refuſal, nor admit of any delay: though the man has not lived half his days, according to his own computation. If he will not bow, it will break him: if he will not come forth, it will pull the houſe down about his ears; for there he muſt not ſtay. Although the phyſician help, friends groan, the wife and the children cry, and the man himſelf uſe his utmoſt efforts to retain the Spirit, his ſoul is required of him; yield he muſt, and go, where he ſhall never more ſee light.

Secondly, Let us conſider, whence they are driven, and whither. When the wicked die, (1.) They are drivven out of this world, where they ſinned; into the other world, where they muſt be judged, and receive their particular ſentences, Heb. ix. 27. *It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.* They ſhall no more return to their beloved earth. Though their hearts are wedded to their earthly enjoyments, they muſt leave them, they can carry nothing hence. How ſorrowful muſt their departure be, when they have nothing in view, ſo good as that which they leave behind them! (2.) They are driven out of the ſociety of the ſaints on earth, into the ſociety of the damned in hell, Luke xvi. 22. *The rich man alſo died, and was buried.* ver. 23. *And in hell he lift up his eyes.* What a multitude of the devil's goats do now take place among Chriſt's ſheep! but at death they ſhall be led forth with the workers of iniquity, Pſal. cxxv. 5. There is a mixed multitude in this world, but no mixture in the other: each party is there ſet by themſelves. Though hypocrites grow here as tares among the wheat, death will root them up, and they ſhall be bound in bundles for the fire. (3.) They are driven out of time into eternity. While time laſtes with them, there is hope: but when time goes, all hope goes with it. Precious time is now laviſhly ſpent: it lies ſo heavy upon the hands of many, that they think themſelves obliged to take ſeveral ways to drive away time. But beware of being at a loſs what to do in life: improve time for eternity, whilſt you have it: for ere long death will drive it from you, and you from it, ſo as ye ſhall never meet again. (4.) They are driven out of their ſpecious pretences to piety. Death ſtrips them of the ſplendid robes of a fair profeſſion, with which ſome of them are adorned; and turns them off the ſtage, in the rags of a wicked heart and life. The word hypocrite, properly ſignifies a ſtage-player, who appears to be what indeed he is not. This world is the ſtage on which theſe children of the devil perſonate the children of God. Their ſhew of religion is their player's coat, under which one muſt look, who will judge of them aright. Now, death turns them out of their coat, and then they appear in their native dreſs: it unveils them, and takes off their maſk. There are none in the other world, who pretend to be better than they really are. Depraved nature acts in the regions of horror, unallayed and undiſguiſed. Laſtly, They are driven away from all means of grace; and are ſet beyond the line, quite out of all proſpect of mercy. There is no more an opportunity to buy oil for the lamp; it is gone out at death, and can never be lighted again. There may be offers of mercy and peace made after they are gone; but they are to others, not to them: there are no ſuch offers in the place to which they are driven; theſe offers are only made in that place from which they are driven away.

Laſtly, In what reſpects may they be ſaid to be driven away in their wickedneſs? Anſw. (1.) In reſpect of their being driven away, in their ſinful unconverted ſtate. Having lived enemies to God, they die in a ſtate of enmity to him: for none are brought into the ſtate of conſummate happineſs, but by the way of the ſtate of grace, or begun recovery in this life. The child dead in the womb, is born dead, and is caſt out of the womb into the grave: ſo he who is dead while he liveth, or is ſpiritually dead, is caſt forth of the womb of time, in the ſame ſtate of death, into the pit of utter miſery. O miſerable death, to die in the gall of bitterneſs, and bond of iniquity! it had been incomparably better for ſuch as die thus, that they had never been born. (2.) In regard they die ſinning, acting wickedly againſt God, in contradiction to the divine law; for they can do nothing but ſin while they live: ſo death takes them in the very act of ſinning; violently draws them from the embraces of their luſts, and drives them away to the tribunal, to receive their ſentence. It is a remarkable expreſſion, Job xxxvi. 14. *They die in youth:* the marginal reading is, *their ſoul dieth in youth;* their luſts being lively, their deſires vigorous, and expectations big, as is common in youth. *And their life is among the unclean;* or, *And the company* (or herd) *of them* dieth *among the Sodomites*, i. e. is taken away in the heat of their ſin and wickedneſs, as the Sodomites were, Gen. xix. Luke vii. 28. 29. (3.) In as much as they are driven away, loaded with the guilt of all their ſins; this is the winding-ſheet, that ſhall lie down with them in the duſt, Job xx. 11. Their works follow them into the other world; they go away with the yoke of their tranſgreſſions wreathed about their necks. Guilt is a bad companion in life, but how terrible will it be in death! It lies now, perhaps, like cold brimſtone on their benumbed conſciences: but when death opens the way for ſparks of divine vengeance, like fire, to fall upon it, it will make dreadful flames in the conſcience, in which the ſoul will be, as it were, wrapt up for ever. Laſtly, The wicked are driven away in their wickedneſs, in ſo far as they die under the abſolute power of their wickedneſs. While there is hope, there is ſome reſtraint on the worſt of men: and theſe moral endowments, which God gives to a number of men, for the benefit of mankind in this life, are ſo many allays and reſtraints upon the impetuous wickedneſs of human nature. But all hope being cut off, and theſe gifts withdrawn; the wickedneſs of the wicked will then arrive at its perfection. As the ſeeds of grace, ſown in the hearts of the elect, come to their full maturity at death; ſo wicked and helliſh diſpoſitions in the reprobate come then to their higheſt pitch. Their prayers to God will then be turned to horrible curſes, and their praiſes to hideous blaſphemies, Matth. xxii. 13. *There ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.* This gives a diſmal, but genuine view of the ſtate of the wicked in another world.

II. I ſhall diſcover the hopeleſsneſs of the ſtate of unrenewed men, at death. It appears to be very hopeleſs, if we conſider theſe four things.

Firſt, Death cuts off their hopes and proſpects of peace and pleaſure in this life. Luke xii. 19. *Soul, thou haſt much goods laid up for many years, take thine eaſe, eat, drink, and be merry.* ver. 20. *But God ſaid unto him, Thou fool, this night thy ſoul ſhall be required of thee: then whoſe ſhall thoſe things be, which thou haſt provided?* They look for great matters in this world, they hope to increaſe their wealth, to ſee their families proſper, and to live at eaſe: but death comes like a ſtormy wind, and ſhakes off all their fond hopes, like green fruit from off a tree. When he is about to fill his belly, God ſhall caſt the fury of his wrath upon him. He may begin a web of contrivances, for advancing his worldly intereſt: but before he gets it wrought out, death comes, and cuts it out. *His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts periſh,* Pſal. cxlvi. 4.

Secondly, When death comes, they have no ſolid grounds to hope for eternal happineſs. For what is the hope of the hypocrite, tho' he hath gained, when God taketh away his ſoul? Job xxvii. 8. Whatever hopes they fondly entertain, they are not founded on God's word, which is the only ſure ground of hope: if they knew their own caſe, they would ſee themſelves only happy in a dream. And indeed what hope can they have? The law is plain againſt them, and condemns them. The curſes of it (theſe cords of death) are about them already. The Saviour whom they ſlighted, is now their Judge; and their Judge is their enemy. How then can they hope? They have bolted the door of mercy againſt themſelves, by their unbelief. They have deſpiſed the remedy, and therefore muſt die without mercy. They have no ſaving intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt, the only channel of conveyance, in which mercy flows: and therefore they can never taſte of it. The ſword of juſtice guards the door of mercy, ſo as none can enter in, but the members of the myſtical body of Chriſt, over whoſe heads is a covert of atoning blood, the Mediator's blood. Theſe indeed may paſs without harm, for juſtice has nothing to require of them. But others cannot paſs, ſince they are not in Chriſt: death comes to them with the ſting in it, the ſting of unpardoned guilt. It is armed againſt them with all the force the ſanction of a holy law can give it, 1 Cor. xv. 56. The ſting of death is ſin, and the ſtrength of ſin is the law. When that law was given on *Sinai, the whole mount quaked greatly,* Exod. xix. 18. When the Redeemer was making ſatiſfaction for the elect's breaking of it, *the earth did quake, and the rocks rent,* Matth. xxvii. 51. What poſſible ground of hope then is there to the wicked man, when death comes upon him armed with the force of this law? How can he eſcape that fire, which burnt unto the midſt of heaven? Deut. iv. 11. How ſhall he be able to ſtand in that ſmoke, that aſcended as the ſmoke of a furnace? Exod. xix. 18. How ſhall he endure the terrible thunders and lightnings, ver. 16. and dwell in the darkneſs, clouds, and thick darkneſs? Deut. iv. 11. All theſe reſemblances heaped together, do but faintly repreſent the fearful tempeſt of wrath and indignation, which ſhall purſue the wicked to the loweſt hell; and for ever abide on them, who are driven to darkneſs at death.

Thirdly, Death roots up their deluſive hopes of eternal happineſs: then it is their covenant with death, and agreement with hell is broken. They are awakened out of their golden dreams, and at length lift up their eyes; Job viii. 14. *Whoſe hope ſhall be cut off, and whoſe truſt ſhall be a ſpider's web.* They truſt all ſhall be well with them after death: but this their truſt is but a web woven out of their own bowels, with a great deal of art and induſtry. They wrap themſelves up in this their hope, as the ſpider wraps herſelf in her web. But it is but a weak and ſlender defence; for however it may withſtand the threatnings of the word of God; death, that beſom of deſtruction, will ſweep them and it both away, ſo as there ſhall not be the leaſt ſhred of it left them; but he who this moment will not let his hope go, ſhall next moment be utterly hopeleſs. Death overturns the houſe built on the ſand; it leaves no man under the power of deluſion.

Laſtly, Death makes their ſtate abſolutely and for ever hopeleſs. Matters cannot be retrieved and amended after death. For (1.) Time once gone can never be recalled. If cries or tears, price or pains, could bring time back again; the wicked man might have hope in his death. But tears of blood will not prevail; nor will his roaring for millions of ages, cauſe it to return. The ſun will not ſtand ſtill untill the ſluggard awake, and enter on his journey; and when once it is gone down, he needs not expect the night to be turned into day for his ſake: he muſt lodge through the long night of eternity where his time left him. (2.) There is no returning to this life, to amend what is amiſs: it is a ſtate of probation and trial, which terminates at death; and therefore we cannot return to it again: it is but once we thus live, and once we die. Death carries the wicked man to his own place, Acts i. 25. This life is our working day; death cloſeth our day and our work together. We may readily imagine the wicked might have ſome hope in their death; if, after death has opened their eyes, they could return to life, and have but the trial of one Sabbath, one offer of Chriſt, one day, or but one hour more, to make up their peace with God: but, man lieth down, and riſeth not till the heavens be no more; they ſhall not awake, nor be raiſed out of their ſleep, Job xiv. 12. Laſtly, In the other world, men have no acceſs to get their ruined ſtate and condition retrieved, if they never ſo fain would. For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom in the grave whither thou goeſt, Eccleſ. ix. 10. Now a man may flee from the wrath to come; now he may get into a refuge: but when once death has done its work, the door is ſhut: there are no more offers of mercy, no more pardons: where the tree is fallen, there it muſt ly.

Let what has been ſaid be carefully pondered, and that it may be of uſe, let me exhort you.

Firſt, To take heed that ye entertain no hopes of heaven, but what are built on a ſolid foundation: tremble to think what fair hopes of happineſs death ſweeps away like cobwebs; how the hopes of many are cut off, when they ſeem to themſelves to be at the very threſhold of heaven; how, in the moment they expected to be carried by angels into Abraham's boſom, into the regions of bliſs and peace, they are carried by devils into the ſociety of the damned in hell, into the place of torment, and regions of horror. I beſeech you to beware, (1.) Of a hope built up, where the ground was never cleared. The wiſe builder digged deep, Luke vi. 48. Were your hopes of heaven never ſhaken; but have ye had good hopes all your days? Alas for it; you may ſee the myſtery of your caſe explained, Luke xi. 21. When a ſtrong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace. But if they have been ſhaken, take heed leſt there have only ſome breaches been made in the old building, which you have got repaired again, by ways and means of your own. I aſſure you, your hope (howſoever fair a building it is) is not to truſt to; unleſs your old hopes have been razed, and you have built on a foundation quite new. (2.) Beware of that hope which looks briſk in the dark; but loſeth all its luſtre when it is ſet in the light of God's word, when it is examined and tried by the touchſtone of divine revelation, John iii. 20. For every one that doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, leſt his deeds ſhould be reproved. Ver. 21. But he that doth the truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifeſt, that they are wrought in God. That hope, which cannot abide ſcripture trial, but ſinks when ſearched into by ſacred truth, is a deluſion, and not a true hope: for God's word is always a friend to the graces of God's Spirit, and an enemy to deluſion. (3.) Beware of that hope, which ſtands without being ſupported by ſcripture evidences. Alas! many are big with hopes, who cannot give, becauſe they really have not any ſcripture grounds for them. Thou hopeſt that all ſhall be well with thee after death: but what word of God is it, on which thou haſt been cauſed to hope? Pſal. cxix. 49. What ſcripture-evidence haſt thou to prove, that thy hope is not the hope of the hypocrite? What haſt thou, after impartial ſelf-examination, as in the ſight of God, found in thyſelf, which the word of God determines to be a ſure evidence of his right to eternal life, who is poſſeſſed of it? Numbers of men are ruined with ſuch hopes as ſtand unſupported by ſcripture-evidence. Men are fond and tenacious of theſe hopes; but death will throw them down, and leave the ſelf-deceiver hopeleſs. Laſtly, Beware of that hope of heaven, which doth not prepare and diſpoſe you for heaven, which never makes your ſoul more holy, 1 John iii. 3. *Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure.* The hope of the moſt part of men is, rather a hope to be free of pain and torment in another life; than a hope of true happineſs, the nature whereof is not underſtood and diſcerned: and therefore it ſtakes down in ſloth and indolence, and does not excite to mortification and a heavenly life. So far are they from hoping aright for heaven; that they muſt own, if they ſpeak their genuine ſentiments, removing out of this world into any other place whatſoever, is rather their fear than their hope. The glory of the heavenly city does not at all draw their hearts upwards towards it: nor do they lift up their heads with joy, in the proſpect of arriving at it. If they had the true hope of the marriage day, they would, as the bride, the lamb's wife, be making themſelves ready for it, Rev. xix. 7. But their hopes are produced by their ſloth, and their ſloth is nouriſhed by their hopes. Oh! Sirs, as ye would not be driven away hopeleſs in your death, beware of theſe hopes. Raze them now, and build on a new foundation; leſt death leave not one ſtone of them upon another, and ye never be able to hope any more.'

Secondly, Haſten, O ſinners, out of your wickedneſs, out of your ſinful ſtate, and out of your wicked life; if ye would not at death be driven away in your wickedneſs. Remember the fatal end of the wicked man, as the text repreſents it. I know there is a great difference in the death of the wicked, in reſpect of ſome circumſtances: but all of them, in their death, agree in this, that they are driven away in their wickedneſs. Some of them die reſolutely, as if they ſcorned to be afraid. Some in raging deſpair, ſo filled with horror, that they cry out, as if they were already in hell: others in ſullen deſpondency, oppreſſed with fears, inſomuch that their hearts are ſunk within them, upon the remembrance of miſpent time, and the view they have of eternity; having neither head nor heart to do any thing for their own relief. And others die ſtupid: they lived like beaſts; and they die like beaſts, without any concern on their ſpirits about their eternal ſtate. They groan under their bodily diſtreſs, but have no ſenſe of the danger of their ſouls. One may with almoſt as much proſpect of ſucceſs ſpeak to a ſtone, as ſpeak to them: vain is the attempt to teach them; nothing that can be ſaid moves them. To diſcourſe to them, either of the joys of heaven, or the torments of hell, is to plow on a rock, or beat the air. Some die like the fooliſh virgins, dreaming of heaven; their foreheads are ſteeled againſt the fears of hell, with preſumptuous hopes of heaven. Their buſineſs, who would be uſeful to them, is not to anſwer doubts about the caſe of their ſouls; but to diſpute them out of their falſe hopes. But which way ſoever the unconverted man dies, he is driven away in his wickedneſs. O dreadful caſe! Oh, let the conſideration of ſo horrible a departure out of this world, move you to betake yourſelves to Jeſus Chriſt, as an all ſufficient Saviour, an almighty Redeemer. Let it prevail to drive you out of your wickedneſs, to holineſs of heart and life. Though you reckon it pleaſant to live in wickedneſs; you cannot but own, it is bitter to die in it. And if you leave it not in time, you ſhall go in your wickedneſs to hell, the proper place of it, that it may be ſet there on its own baſe. For when you are paſſing out of this world, all your ſins, from the eldeſt to the youngeſt of them, will ſwarm about you, hang upon you, accompany you to the other world; and, as ſo many furies, ſurround you there for ever.

Laſtly, O be concerned for others, eſpecially for your relations, that they may not continue in their ſinful natural ſtate, but be brought into a ſtate of ſalvation; leſt they be driven away in their wickedneſs at death. What would ye not do to prevent any of your friends dying an untimely death? But, alas; do not ye ſee them in hazard of being driven away in their wickedneſs? Is not death approaching them, even the youngeſt of them? And are they not ſtrangers to true Chriſtianity, remaining in that ſtate, in which they came into the world! Oh, make haſte to pluck the brand out of the fire, before it be burnt to aſhes. The death of relations often leaves a ſting in the hearts of theſe they leave behind them; for that they did not do for their ſouls, as they had opportunity: and that now the opportunity is for ever taken out of their hands.

DOCTRINE II.

The ſtate of the godly in death, is a hopeful ſtate.

We have ſeen the dark ſide of the cloud looking towards ungodly men, paſſing out of the world: let us now take a view of the bright ſide of it, ſhining on the godly, as they are entering upon their eternal ſtate. In diſcourſing this ſubject, I ſhall confirm this doctrine, anſwer an objection againſt it, and then make ſome practical improvement of the whole.

For confirmation, let it be obſerved, that although the paſſage out of this world by death, has a frightful aſpect to poor mortals; and to miſcarry in it muſt needs be of fatal conſequence: yet the following circumſtances make the ſtate of the godly in their death, happy and hopeful.

Firſt, They have a truſty good friend before them in the other world. Jeſus Chriſt, their beſt friend, is Lord of that land, to which death carries them. When Joſeph ſent for his father to come down to him to Egypt, telling him *God had made him lord over all Egypt*, Gen. xlv. 9. and *Jacob ſaw the waggons Joſeph had ſent to carry him, the ſpirit of Jacob revived*, ver. 27. He frankly reſolves to undertake the journey. I think, when the Lord calls a godly man out of this world, he ſends him ſuch glad tidings, and ſuch a kind invitation into the other world, that if he had faith to believe it, his ſpirit muſt revive, when he ſees the waggon of death, which comes to carry him thither. It is true indeed, he has a weighty trial to undergo; after death the judgment. But the caſe of the godly is altogether hopeful; for the Lord of the land is their huſband, and their huſband is the judge; *the Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son*, John v. 22. And ſurely the caſe of the wife is hopeful, when her own huſband is her judge, even ſuch a huſband as hates putting away. No huſband is ſo loving and ſo tender of his ſpouſe, as the Lord Chriſt is of his. One would think, it would be a very bad land, which a wife would not willingly go to, where her huſband is the ruler and judge. Moreover, their judge is the advocate, 1 John ii. 1. *We have an advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous.* And therefore they need not fear their being put back, and falling into condemnation. What can be more favourable? Can they think, that he who pleads their cauſe, will himſelf paſs ſentence againſt them? Yet further, their advocate is their Redeemer; they are *redeemed with the precious blood of Chriſt*, 1 Pet. i. 18. 19. So when he pleads for them, he is pleadiug his own cauſe. Though an advocate may be careleſs of the intereſt of one who employs him; ſurely he will do his utmoſt to defend his own right, which he hath purchaſed with his money: and ſhall not their advocate defend the purchaſe of his own blood? But more than all that; their Redeemer is their head, and they are his members, Eph. v. 23. 30. Though one were ſo ſilly as to let his own purchaſe go, without ſtanding up to defend his right; yet ſurely he will not quit a limb of his own body. Is not their caſe then hopeful in death, who are ſo cloſely linked and allied to the Lord of the other world, who hath *the keys of hell and of death?*

Secondly, They ſhall have a ſafe paſſage to another world. They muſt indeed go through the valley of the ſhadow of death: but though it be in itſelf a dark and ſhady vale, it ſhall be a valley of hope to them: they ſhall not be driven through it, but walk through it; as men in perfect ſafety, who fear no evil, Pſal. xxiii. 4. Why ſhould they fear? They have the Lord of the land's ſafe conduct, his paſs ſealed with his own blood: namely, the bleſſed covenant, which is the ſaint's death-bed comfort. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. *Although my houſe be not ſo with God, yet he hath made with me an everlaſting* covenant, *ordered in all things and ſure: for this is all my ſalvation, and all my deſire, although he make it not to grow.* Who then can harm them? It is ſafe riding in Chriſt's chariot, (Cant. iii. 9.), both through life and death. They have good and honourable attendants, a guard, even a guard of angels. Theſe encamp about them in the time of their life; and ſurely will not leave them in the day of their death. Theſe happy miniſtering ſpirits are attendants on their Lord's bride, and will doubtleſs convey her ſafe home to his houſe. When friends in mournful mood ſtand by the ſaint's bed-ſide, waiting to ſee him draw his laſt breath; his ſoul is waited for of holy angels, to be carried by them into Abraham's boſom, Luke xvi. 22. The captain of the ſaints ſalvation is the captain of this holy guard: he was their guide even unto death, and he will be their guide through it too, Pſal. xxiii. 4. *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me.* They may, without fear, paſs that river, being confident it ſhall not overflow them; and may walk through that fire, being ſure they ſhall not be burnt by it.

Death can do them no harm. It cannot even hurt their bodies: for though it ſeparate the ſoul from the body; it cannot ſeparate the body from the Lord Chriſt. Even death is to them but ſleep in Jeſus, 1 Theſſ. iv. 14. They continue members of Chriſt, though in a grave. Their duſt is precious duſt; laid up in the grave, as in their Lord's cabinet. They lie in a grave mellowing; as precious fruit laid up to be brought forth to him, at the reſurrection. The huſbandman has corn in his barn, and corns lying in the ground: the latter is more precious to him than the former; becauſe he looks to get it returned with increaſe. Even ſo the dead bodies of the ſaints are valued by their Saviour: they are ſown in corruption, to be raiſed in incorruption; ſown in diſhonour, to be raiſed in glory, 1 Cor. xv. 42. 43. It cannot hurt their ſouls. It is with the ſouls of the ſaints at death, as with Paul and his company in their voyage, whereof we have the hiſtory, Acts xxvii. The ſhip was broke in pieces, but the paſſengers got all ſafe to land. When the dying ſaint's ſpeech is laid, his eyes ſet, and his laſt breath drawn; the ſoul gets ſafe away into the heavenly paradiſe, leaving the body to return to its earth, but in the joyful hope of a re-union at its glorious reſurrection How can death hurt the godly? It is a foiled enemy: if it caſt them down, it is only that they may riſe up more glorious. Our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt hath aboliſhed death, 2 Tim. i. 10. The ſoul and life of it is gone: it is but a walking ſhade that may fright, but cannot hurt ſaints: it is only the ſhadow of death to them; it is not the thing itſelf: their dying is but as dying, or ſomewhat like dying. The apoſtle tells us, *It is Chriſt that died*, Rom. viii. 34. Stephen, the firſt Chriſtian martyr, though ſtoned to death, yet but *fell aſleep*, Acts vii. 60. Certainly, the nature of death is quite changed, with reſpect to the ſaints. It is not to them, what it was to Jeſus Chriſt their head: it is not the invenomed ruinating thing, wrapt up in the ſanction of the firſt covenant, Gen. ii. 17. *In the day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.* It comes to the godly without its ſting: they may meet it with that ſalutation, *O death, where is thy ſting* Is this Mara? Is this bitter death? It went out full into the world, when the firſt Adam opened the door to it: but the ſecond Adam hath brought it again empty to his own people. I feel a ſting, may the dying ſaint ſay; yet it is but a bee-ſting, ſtinging only through the ſkin: but, O death, where is thy ſting, thine old ſting, the ſerpent's ſting, that ſtings to the heart and ſoul? The ſting of death is ſin: but that is taken away. If death arreſt the ſaint, and carry him before the Judge, to anſwer for the debt he contracted; the debt will be found paid by the glorious Cautioner; and he has the diſcharge to ſhow. The thorn of guilt is pulled out of the man's conſcience; and his name is blotted out of the black roll, and written among the living in Jeruſalem. It is true, it is a great journey to go through the valley of the ſhadow of death: but the ſaint's burden is taken away from off his back, his iniquity is pardoned, he may walk at eaſe; no lion ſhall be there, nor any ravenous beaſt: the redeemed may walk at leiſure there, free from all apprehenſions of danger.

Laſtly, They ſhall have a joyful entrance into the other world. Their arrival in the regions of bliſs, will be celebrated with rapturous hymns of praiſe to their glorious Redeemer. A dying day is a good day to a godly man. Yea, it is his beſt day; it is better to him than his birth-day, or than the moſt joyous day he ever had on earth. *A good name*, ſays the wiſe man, *is better than precious ointment: and the day of death, than the day of one's birth*, Eccleſ. vii. 1. The notion of the immortality of the ſoul, and of future happineſs, which obtained among ſome Pagan nations, had wonderful effects on them. Some of them, when they mourned for the dead, did it in woman's apparel; that being moved with the indecency of the garb, they might the ſooner lay aſide their mourning. Others buried them without any lamentation or mourning; but had a ſacrifice, and a feaſt for friends, upon that occaſion. Some were wont to mourn at births, and rejoice at burials. But the practice of ſome Indian nations is yet more ſtrange, of whom it is reported, that upon the huſband's deceaſe, his ſeveral wives were in uſe to contend before the judges, which of them was the beſt beloved wife; and ſhe, in whoſe favours it was determined, with a chearful countenance, threw herſelf into the flames prepared for her huſband's corpſe, was burned with it, and reckoned happy; while the reſt lived in grief, and were accounted miſerable. But howſoever lame notions of a future ſtate aſſiſted by pride, affectation of applauſe, apprehenſions of difficulties in this life, and ſuch like principles proper to depraved human nature, may influence rude uncultivated minds, when ſtrengthened by the arts of hell: O what ſolid joy and conſolation may they have, who are true Chriſtians, being in Chriſt, who hath brought life and immortality to light through the goſpel! 2 Tim. v. 10. Death is one of theſe all things, that work together for good, to them that love God, Rom. viii. 28. When the body dies, the ſoul is perfected: the body of death goes off, at the death of the body. What harm did the jailor to Pharaoh's butler, when he opened the priſon-door to him, and let him out? Is the bird in worſe caſe, when at liberty, than when confined in a cage? Thus, and no worſe, are the ſouls of the ſaints treated by death. It comes to the godly man, as Haman came to Mordecai, with the royal apparel and the horſe, Eſther iv. 11. with commiſſion to do them honour; howſoever aukwardly it be performed: I queſtion not but Haman performed the ceremony with a very ill mien, a pale face, a down look, and a cloudy countenance; and like one who came to hang him, rather than to honour him. But he, whom the king delighted to honour, behoved to be honoured; and Haman, Mordecai's grand enemy, muſt be the man employed to put this honour upon him. Glory, glory, glory, bleſſing and praiſe to our Redeemer, our Saviour, our Mediator, by whoſe death, grim devouring death is made to do ſuch a good office to thoſe, whom it might otherwiſe have hurried away in their wickedneſs, to utter and eternal deſtruction! A dying day is, in itſelf, a joyful day to the godly; it is their redemption-day; when the captives are delivered, when the priſoners are ſet free. It is the day of the pilgrims coming home from their pilgrimage; the day in which the heirs of glory return from their travels, to their own country, and their Father's houſe; and enter in actual poſſeſſion of the glorious inheritance. It is their marriage-day: now is the time of eſpouſals; but then the marriage is conſummate, and a marriage-feaſt begun, which has no period. If ſo, is not the ſtate of the godly in death, a hopeful ſtate?

Object. 'But if the ſtate of the godly in their death be 'ſo hopeful, how comes it to paſs that many of them, 'when dying are full of fears, and have little hope?' Anſw. It muſt be owned, that ſaints do not all die in one and the ſame manner: there is a diverſity among them, as well as among the wicked; yet the worſt caſe of a dying ſaint is indeed a hopeful one. Some die triumphantly, in a full aſſurance of faith. 2 Tim. iv. 6. *The time of my departure is at hand.* ver. 7. *I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith.* ver. 8. *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs.* They get a taſte of the joys of heaven, while here on earth; and begin the ſongs of Zion, while yet in a ſtrange land. Others die in a ſolid fiducial dependence on their Lord and Saviour: tho' they cannot ſing triumphantly, yet they can and will ſay confidently, the Lord is their God. Though they cannot triumph over death, with old Simeon, having Chriſt in his arms, and ſaying, Lord, now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace, according to thy word. For mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation, Luke ii. 29. 30. yet they can ſay with dying Jacob, I have waited for thy ſalvation, O Lord, Gen. xlix. 18. His left hand is under their head to ſupport them; though his right hand doth not embrace them: they firmly believe, though they are not filled with joy in believing. They can plead the covenant, and hang by the promiſe, although their houſe is not ſo with God, as they could wiſh. But the dying day of ſome ſaints may be like that day mentioned, Zech. xiv. 7. Not day, nor night. They may die under great doubts and fears; ſetting as it were, in a cloud, and going to heaven in a miſt. They may go mourning without the ſun, and never put off their ſpirit of heavineſs, till death ſtrip him of it. They may be carried to heaven through the confines of hell; and may be purſued by the devouring lion, even to the very gates of the New Jeruſalem; and may be compared to a ſhip almoſt wrecked in ſight of the harbour, which yet gets ſafe into her port, 1 Cor. iii. 15. If any man's work ſhall be burnt, he ſhall ſuffer loſs: but he himſelf ſhall be ſaved, yet ſo as by fire. There is ſafety amidſt their fears, but danger in the wicked's ſtrongeſt confidence; and there is a bleſſed ſeed of gladneſs in their greateſt ſorrows, Light is ſown for the righteous, and gladneſs for the upright in heart, Pſal. xcvii. 11.

Now, ſaints are liable to ſuch perplexity in their death, becauſe, though they be Chriſtians indeed, yet they are men of like paſſions with others; and death is a frightful object in itſelf, whatever dreſs it appear in: the ſtern countenance, with which it looks at mortals, can hardly miſs of cauſing them ſhrink. Moreover, the ſaints are of all men moſt jealous of themſelves. They think of eternity, and of a tribunal, more deeply than others do: with them, it is a more ſerious thing to die, than the reſt of mankind are aware of. They know the deceits of the heart, the ſubtilities of depraved human nature, better than others do. And therefore they may have much ado to keep up hope on a death-bed: while others paſs off quietly, like ſheep to the ſlaughter: the rather that Satan, who uſeth all his art to ſupport the hopes of the hypocrite, will do his utmoſt to mar the peace, and increaſe the fears of the ſaint. Finally, The bad frame of ſpirit, and ill condition, in which death ſometimes ſeizeth a true Chriſtian, may cauſe this perplexity. By his being in the ſtate of grace, he is indeed always habitually prepared for death, and his dying ſafely is inſured; but there is more requiſite to his actual preparation, and dying comfortably; his ſpirit muſt be in good condition too.

Wherefore there are three caſes, in which death cannot but be very uncomfortable to a child of God. (1.) If it ſeize him at a time when the guilt of ſome particular ſin unrepented of, is lying on his conſcience; and death comes on that very account, to take him out of the land of the living; as was the caſe with many of the Corinthian believers, 1 Cor. xi. 30. For this cauſe (namely, of unworthy communicating) many are weak and ſickly among you, and many ſleep. If a perſon is ſurpriſed with the approach of death, while lying under the guilt of ſome unpardoned ſin, it cannot but cauſe a mighty conſternation. (2.) When death catches him napping. The midnight cry muſt be frightful to ſleeping virgins. The man who lies in a ruinous houſe, and awakens not till the timber begins to crack, and the ſtones to drop down about his ears, may indeed get out of it ſafely, but not without fears of being cruſhed by its fall. When a Chriſtian has being going on in a courſe of ſecurity and backſliding, and awakes not till death comes to his bedſide; it is no marvel if he get a fearful awakening. Laſtly, When he has loſt ſight of his ſaving intereſt in Chriſt, and cannot produce evidences of his title to heaven. It is hard to meet death without ſome evidence of a title to eternal life at hand: hard to go through the dark valley, without the candle of the Lord ſhining upon the head. It is a terrible adventure to launch out into eternity, when a man can make no better of it, than a leap in the dark, not knowing where he ſhall light, whether in heaven or hell.

Nevertheleſs the ſtate of the ſaints in their death, is always in itſelf hopeful. The preſumptuous hopes of the ungodly in their death, cannot make their ſtate hopeful; neither can the hopeleſſneſs of a ſaint make his ſtate hopeleſs: for God judgeth according to the truth of the thing, not according to mens opinions about it. Howbeit, the ſaints can no more be altogether without hope, than they can be altogether without faith. Their faith may be very weak, but it fails not; and their hope very low, yet they will, and do hope to the end. Even while the godly ſeem to be carried away with the ſtream of doubts and fears; there remains ſtill as much hope as determines them to lay hold on the tree of life, that grows on the banks of the river, Jonah ii. 4. *Then I ſaid, I am caſt out of thy ſight: yet I will look again toward thy temple.*

USE. This ſpeaks comfort to the godly againſt the fear of death. A godly man may be called a happy man before his death; becauſe, whatever befall him in life, he ſhall certainly be happy at death. You who are in Chriſt, who are true Chriſtians, have hope in your end; and ſuch a hope as may comfort you againſt all thoſe fears, which ariſe from the conſideration of a dying hour. This I ſhall branch out in anſwering ſome caſes briefly.

CASE I. *The proſpect of death* (will ſome of the ſaints ſay) *is uneaſy to me, not knowing what ſhall become of my family, when I am gone.* *Anſw.* The righteous hath hope in his death, as to his family, as well as himſelf. Although you have little, for the preſent, to live upon; which has been the caſe of many of God's choſen ones, 1 Cor. iv. 11. We (namely the apoſtles, ver. 9.) both hunger and thirſt, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place: and though you have nothing to leave them, as was the caſe of that ſon of the prophets who did fear the Lord, and yet died in debt, which he was unable to pay, as his poor widow repreſents, 2 Kings iv. 1; yet you have a good friend to leave them to; a covenanted God, to whom you may confidently commit them, Jer. xlix. 11. *Leave thy fatherleſs children, I will preſerve them alive; and let thy widows truſt in me.* The world can bear witneſs of ſignal ſettlements made upon the children of providence, ſuch as by their pious parents have been caſt upon God's providential care. It has been often remarked, that they wanted neither proviſion nor education. Moſes is an eminent inſtance of this. He, albeit he was an outcaſt infant (Exod. ii. 3.) yet was learned in all the wiſdom of the Egyptians, Acts vii. 22. and became king in Jeſhurun, Deut. xxxiii. 5. O! may we not be aſhamed, that we do not ſecurely truſt him, with the concerns of our families, to whom, as our Saviour and Redeemer, we have committed our eternal intereſts?

CASE II. *Death will take us away from our dear friends; yea, we ſhall not ſee the Lord in the land of the living, in the bleſſed ordinances.* *Anſw.* It will take you to your beſt friend, the Lord Chriſt. And the friends you leave behind you, if they be indeed perſons of worth, you will meet again, when they come to heaven: and you will never be ſeparated any more. If death take you away from the temple below, it will carry you to the temple above. It will indeed take you from the ſtreams, but it will ſet you down by the fountain. If it put out your candle, it will carry you where there is no night, where there is an eternal day.

CASE III. *I have ſo much ado in time of health, to ſatisfy myſelf as to my intereſt in Chriſt, about my being a real Chriſtian, a regenerate man; that I judge it is almoſt impoſſible I ſhould die comfortably.* *Anſw.* If it is thus with you, then double your diligence, to make your calling and election ſure. Endeavour to grow in knowledge, and walk cloſely with God: be diligent in ſelf-examination; and pray earneſtly for the holy Spirit, whereby you may know the things freely given you of God. If you are enabled by the power and Spirit of Chriſt thus diligently to proſecute your ſpiritual concerns; though the time of your life be neither day nor night, yet at evening-time, it may be light. Many weak Chriſtians indulge doubts and fears about their ſpiritual ſtate, as if they placed at leaſt ſome part of religion in this imprudent practice: but towards the period of life, they are forced to think and act in another manner. The traveller, who reckons he has time to ſpare, may ſtand ſtill debating with himſelf, whether this or the other be the right way: but when the ſun begins to ſet, he is forced to lay aſide his ſcruples, and reſolutely to go forward in the road he judges to be the right one, leſt he ly all night in the open fields. Thus ſome Chriſtians, who perplex themſelves much, throughout the courſe of their lives, with jealous doubts and fears, content themſelves when they come to die, with ſuch evidences of the ſafety of their ſtate, as they could not be ſatisfied with before; and by diſputing leſs againſt themſelves, and believing more, court the peace they formerly rejected, and gain it too.

CASE IV. *I am under a ſad decay in reſpect of my ſpiritual condition.* *Anſw.* Bodily conſumptions may make death eaſy: but it is not ſo in ſpiritual decays. I will not ſay, that a godly man cannot be in ſuch a caſe when he dies, but I believe it is rarely ſo. Ordinarily (I ſuppoſe) a cry comes to awaken ſleeping virgins, before death come. Samſon is ſet to grind in the priſon, until his locks grow again. David and Solomon fell under great ſpiritual decays; but before they died, they recovered their ſtrength and vigour. However, beſtir ye yourſelves without delay, to ſtrengthen the things that remain: your fright will be the leſs, that ye awake from ſpiritual ſleep ere death come to your bed-ſide: and you ought to loſe no time, ſeeing you know not how ſoon death may ſeize you.

CASE V. *It is terrible to think of the other world, that world of ſpirits, which I have ſo little acquaintance with.* *Anſw.* Thy beſt friend is Lord of that other world. Abraham's boſom is kindly even to theſe who never ſaw his face. After death thy ſoul becomes capable of converſe with the bleſſed inhabitants of that other world. The ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, were once ſuch as thy ſpirit now is. And as for the angels, howſoever they be of a ſuperior nature in the rank of beings, yet our nature is dignified above theirs in the man Chriſt, and they are all of them, thy Lord's ſervants, and ſo thy fellow-ſervants.

CASE VI. *The pangs of death are terrible.* *Anſw.* Yet not ſo terrible as pangs of conſcience, cauſed by a piercing ſenſe of guilt, and apprehenſions of divine wrath, with which I ſuppoſe thee to be not altogether unacquainted. But who would not endure bodily ſickneſs, that the ſoul may become ſound, and every whit whole? Each pang of death will ſet ſin a ſtep nearer the door; and with the laſt breath, the body of ſin will breathe out its laſt. The pains of death will not laſte long; and the Lord thy God will not leave, but ſupport thee under them.

CASE VII. *But I am like to be cut off in the midſt of my days.* *Anſw.* Do not complain, you will be the ſooner at home: you thereby have the advantage of your fellow-labourers, who were at work before you, in the vineyard. God, in the courſe of his providence, hides ſome of his ſaints early in the grave, that they may be taken away from the evil to come. An early removal out of this world, prevents much ſin and miſery: and they have no ground of complaint, who get the reſidue of their years in Immanuel's land. Surely thou ſhalt live as long as thou haſt work cut out for thee, by thy great Maſter, to be done for him in this world: and when that is at an end, it is high time to be gone.

CASE VIII. *I am afraid of ſudden death.* *Anyw.* Thou mayeſt indeed die ſo. Good Eli died ſuddenly, 1 Sam. iv. 18. Yet death found him watching, ver. 13. *Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour the Lord doth come,* Matth. xxiv. 42. But be not afraid, it is an unexpreſſible comfort, that death, come when it will, can never catch thee out of Chriſt; and therefore can never ſeize thee, as a jailor, to hurry thee into the priſon of hell. Sudden death may haſten and facilitate thy paſſage to heaven, but can do thee no prejudice.

CASE IX. *I am afraid it be my lot to die wanting the exerciſe of reaſon.* *Anſw.* I make no queſtion but a child of God, a true Chriſtian, may die in this caſe. But what harm? There is no hazard in it, as to his eternal ſtate; a diſeaſe, at death, may diveſt him of his reaſon, but not of his religion. When a man, going a long voyage, has put his affairs in order, and put all his goods aboard; he himſelf may be carried aboard the ſhip ſleeping: all is ſafe with him, although he knows not where he is, till he awake in the ſhip. Even ſo the godly man, who dies in this caſe, may die uncomfortably, but not unſafely.

CASE laſt. *I am naturally timorous, and the very thoughts of death are terrible to me.* *Anſw.* The leſs you think on death, the thoughts of it will be the more frightful: but make it familiar to you by frequent meditations upon it, and you may thereby allay your fears. Lock at the white and bright ſide of the cloud: take faith's view of the city that hath foundations: ſo ſhall you ſee hope in your death. Be duly affected with the body of ſin and death, the frequent interruptions of your communion with God, and with the glory which dwells on the other ſide death: this will contribute much to remove ſlaviſh fear.

It is pity, ſaints ſhould be ſo fond of life as they often are: they ought always to be in good terms with death. When matters are duly conſidered, it might well be expected every child of God, every regenerate man, ſhould generouſly profeſs concerning this life, what Job did, chap. vii. 16. *I lothe it, I would not live always*. In order to gain their hearts to this deſirable temper, I offer the following additional conſiderations.

Firſt, Conſider the ſinfulneſs that attends life in this world. While ye live here, ye ſin, and ſee others ſinning. Ye breathe infectious air. Ye live in a peſt houſe. Is it at all ſtrange to lothe ſuch a life? (1.) Your own plague ſores are running on you. Doth not the ſin of your nature make you groan daily? Are you not ſenſible, that though the cure be begun, it is yet far from being perfected? Has not the leproſy got into the walls of the houſe, which cannot be removed without pulling it down? Is not your nature ſo vitiate, that no leſs than the ſeparation of the ſoul from the body can root out the diſeaſe? Have you not your ſores without, as well as your ſickneſs within? Do ye not leave marks of your pollution on whatſoever paſſes through your hands? Are not all your actions tainted and blemiſhed with defects and imperfections? Who elſe then ſhould be much in love with life, but ſuch whoſe ſickneſs is their health, and who glory in their ſhame? (2.) The loathſome ſores of others are always before your eyes, go where you will. The follies and wickedneſs of men are every where conſpicuous, and make but an unpleaſant ſcene. The ſinful world is but an unſightly company, a diſagreeable croud, in which the moſt loathſome are the moſt numerous. (3.) Are not your own ſores oft times breaking out again, after healing? Frequent relapſes may well cauſe us remit of our fondneſs for this life. To be ever ſtruggling, and anon falling into the mire again, makes weary work. Do ye never wiſh for cold death, thereby effectually to cool the heat of theſe luſts, which ſo often take fire again; even after a flood of godly ſorrow has gone over them? (4.) Do not ye ſometimes infect others, and others infect you? There is no ſociety in the world, in which every member of it doth not ſometimes lay a ſtumbling block before the reſt. The beſt carry about with them the tinder of a corrupt nature, which they cannot be rid of while they live, and which is liable to be kindled at all times, and in all places: yea, they are apt to inflame others, and become the occaſions of ſinning. Certainly theſe things are apt to imbitter this life to the ſaints.

Secondly. Conſider the miſery and trouble that attend it. Reſt is deſirable, but it is not to be found on this ſide of the grave Worldly troubles attend all men in this life. This world is a ſea of trouble, where one wave rolls upon another. They who fancy themſelves beyond the reach of trouble, are miſtaken: no ſtate, no ſtage of life is exempted from it. The crowned head is ſurrounded with thorny cares. Honour many times paves the way to deep diſgrace: riches for the moſt part, are kept to the hurt of the owners. The faireſt roſe wants not prickles, and the heavieſt croſs is ſometimes wrapt up in the greateſt earthly comfort. Spiritual troubles attend the ſaints in this life. They are like travellers travelling in a cloudy night, in which the moon ſometimes breaks out from under one cloud, but quickly hides her head again under another: no wonder they long to be at their journey's end. The ſudden alterations the beſt frame of ſpirit is liable to, the perplexing doubts, confounding fears, ſhort-lived joys, and long running ſorrows, which have a certain affinity with the preſent life, muſt needs create in the ſaints a deſire to be with Chriſt, which is beſt of all.

Laſtly, Conſider the great imperfections attending this life. While the ſoul is lodged in this cottage of clay, the neceſſities of the body are many; it is always craving. The mud-walls muſt be repaired and patched up daily, till the clay cottage fall down for good and all. Eating, drinking, ſleeping, and the like, are, in themſelves, but mean employments for a rational creature; and will be reputed ſuch by the heaven-born ſoul. They are badges of imperfection, and, as ſuch, unpleaſant to the mind, aſpiring unto that life and immortality, which is brought to light through the goſpel: and would be very grievous, if this ſtate of things were of long continuance. Doth not the gracious ſoul often find itſelf yoked with the body, as with a companion in travel, unable to keep pace with it? When the ſpirit is willing, the fleſh is weak. When the ſoul would mount upward, the body is as a clog upon it, and as a ſtone tied to the foot of a bird attempting to fly. The truth is, O believer! thy ſoul in this body is, at beſt, but like a diamond in a ring, where much of it is obſcured: it is far ſunk in the vile clay, till relieved by death.

I conclude this ſubject with a few directions how to prepare for death, ſo as we may die comfortably. I ſpeak not here of habitual preparation for death, which a true Chriſtian, in virtue of his gracious ſtate, never wants, from the time he is born again and united to Chriſt: but of actual preparation or readineſs, in reſpect of his circumſtantiate caſe, frame, and diſpoſition of mind and ſpirit; the want of which makes even a ſaint very unfit to die.

Firſt, Let it be your conſtant care to keep a clean conſcience, a conſcience void of offence toward God, and toward man, Acts xxiv. 16. Beware of a ſtanding controverſy betwixt God and you, on the account of ſome iniquity regarded in the heart. When an honeſt man is about to leave his country, and not to return, he ſettles accompts with thoſe he had dealings with, and lays down methods for paying his debts timeouſly; leſt he be reckoned a bankrupt, and be attacked by an officer, when he is going off. Guilt lying on the conſcience is a fountain of fears; and will readily ſting ſeverely, when death ſtares the criminal in the face. Hence it is, that many, even of God's children, when a-dying, are made to wiſh paſſionately, and deſire eagerly that they may live to do what they ought to have done, before that time. Wherefore, walk cloſely with God, be diligent, ſtrict and exact in your courſe; beware of a looſe, careleſs, and irregular converſation: as ye would not lay up for yourſelves anguiſh and bitterneſs of ſpirit, in a dying hour. And becauſe, through the infirmity cleaving to us, in our ſtate of imperfection, in many things we offend all, renew your repentance daily, and be ever waſhing in the Redeemer's blood. As long as ye are in the world, ye will need to waſh your feet, John xiii. 10. that is, to make application to the blood of Chriſt, anew, for purging your conſciences from the guilt of daily miſcarriages. Let death find you at the fountain; and if ſo, it will find you ready to anſwer its call.

Secondly, Be always watchful, waiting for your change. Like unto men that wait for their Lord, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately, Luke xxi. 36. Beware of ſlumbering and ſleeping, while the bridegroom tarries. To be awakened out of ſpiritual ſlumber, by a ſurprizing call to paſs into another world, is a very frightful thing: but he who is daily waiting for the coming of his Lord, ſhall comfortably receive the grim meſſenger, while he beholds him uſhering in him, of whom he may confidently ſay, *This is my God: I have waited for him.* The way to die comfortably, is to die daily. Be often eſſaying (as it were) to die. Bring yourſelves familiarly acquainted with death, by making many viſits to the grave, in ſerious meditations upon it. This was Job's practice, chap. xvii. 13. 14. *I have made my bed in the darkneſs.* Go thou, and do likewiſe; and when death comes, thou ſhalt have nothing ado but to ly down. 'I have ſaid 'to corruption, thou art my father; to the worm, thou 'art my mother and my ſiſter.' Do thou ſay ſo too;

and thou wilt be the fitter to go home to their houſe. Be frequently reflecting upon your conduct, and conſidering what courſe of life you wiſh to be found in when death arreſts you: and act accordingly. When you do the duties of your ſtation in life, or are employed in acts of worſhip, think with yourſelves, that, it may be, this is the laſt opportunity; and therefore act as if you was never to do more of that kind. When you lie down at night, compoſe your ſpirits, as if you was not to awake, till the heavens be no more. And when you awake in the morning, conſider that new day as your laſt; and live accordingly. Surely that night cometh, of which you will never ſee the morning; and that morning, of which you will never ſee the night. But which of your mornings or nights will be ſuch, you know not.

Thirdly, Employ yourſelves much in weaning your hearts from the world. The man who is making ready to go abroad, buſies himſelf in taking leave of his friends. Let the mantle of earthly enjoyments hang looſe about you, that it may be eaſily dropt, when death comes to carry you away into another world. Moderate your affections towards your lawful comforts of life: and let not your hearts be too much taken with them. The traveller acts unwiſely, who ſuffers himſelf to be ſo allured with the conveniencies of the inn where he lodgeth, as to make his neceſſary departure from it grievous. Feed with fear, and walk through the world as pilgrims and ſtrangers. Likeas, when the corn is forſaking the ground, it is ready for the ſickle: when the fruit is ripe, it falls off the tree eaſily: ſo, when a Chriſtian's heart is truly weaned from the world, he is prepared for death, and it will be the more eaſy to him. A heart diſengaged from the world is an heavenly one: and then are we ready for heaven, when our heart is there before us, Matth. vi. 21.

Fourthly, Be diligent in gathering and laying up evidences of your title to heaven, for your ſupport and comfort at the hour of death. The neglect hereof mars the joy and conſolation which ſome Chriſtians might otherwiſe have at their death. Wherefore examine yourſelves frequently, as to your ſpiritual ſtate; that evidences, which lie hid and unobſerved, may be brought to light, and taken notice of. And if you would manage this work ſucceſsfully, make ſolemn ſerious work of it. Set apart ſome time for it. And after earneſt prayer to God, through Jeſus Chriſt, for the enlightning influences of the Holy Spirit, whereby ye may be enabled to underſtand his own word, to diſcern his own work in your ſouls; ſift yourſelves before the tribunal of your conſciences, that ye may judge yourſelves in this weighty matter.

And in the firſt place, Let the marks of a regenerate ſtate be fixed, from the Lord's word: and have recourſe to ſome particular text for that purpoſe: ſuch as Prov. viii. 17. ‘ I love them that love me.’ Compare Luke xiv. 26. ‘ If any man come to me, and hate not his ‘ father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren ‘ and ſiſters, yea, and his own life alſo, he cannot be ‘ my diſciple. Pſal. cxix. 6. Then ſhall I not be aſham‘ ed, when I have reſpect unto all thy commandments. ‘ Pſal. xviii. 23. I was alſo upright before him: and I ‘ kept myſelf from mine iniquity.’ Compare Rom. vii. 22. 23. ‘ For I delight in the law of God, after the in‘ ward man: but I ſee another law in my members ‘ warring againſt the law of my mind, &c. 1 John iii. ‘ 3. And every man that hath this hope in him, puri‘ fieth himſelf, even as he is pure, Matth. v. 3. Bleſſed ‘ are the poor in ſpirit, for theirs is the kingdom of hea‘ ven. Phil. iii. 3. For we are the circumciſion which ‘ worſhip (or ſerve) God in the ſpirit, and rejoyce in ‘ Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the fleſh.’ The ſum of the evidence ariſing from theſe texts, lies here. A real Chriſtian is one who loves God for himſelf as well as for his benefits; and that with a ſupreme love, above all perſons and all things; he has an awful and impartial regard to God's commands: he oppoſeth and wreſtleth againſt that ſin, which of all others, moſt eaſily beſets him; he approveth and loveth the holy law, even in that very point, wherein it ſtrikes againſt his moſt beloved luſt: his hope of heaven engageth him in the ſtudy of univerſal holineſs; in the which he aims at perfection, though he cannot reach it in this life: he ſerves the Lord not only in acts of worſhip, but in the whole of his converſation; and as to both, is ſpiritual in the principle, motives, aims, and ends of his ſervice: yet he ſees nothing in himſelf to truſt to, before the Lord: Chriſt and his fulneſs is the ſtay of his ſoul; and his confidence is cut off from all that is not Chriſt, or in Chriſt, in point of juſtification, or acceptance with God; and in point of ſanctification too. Every one in whom theſe characters are found, has a title to heaven, according to the word. It is convenient and profitable to mark ſuch texts for this ſpecial uſe, as they occur, while you read the ſcriptures, or hear ſermons. The marks of a regenerate ſtate thus fixed; in the next place, impartially ſearch and try your own hearts thereby, as in the ſight of God, with dependence on him for ſpiritual diſcerning, that ye may know whether they be in you or not. And when ye find them, form the concluſion deliberately and diſtinctly; namely, that therefore you are regenerate, and have a title to heaven. Thus you may gather evidences. But be ſure to have recourſe to God in Chriſt by earneſt prayer, for the teſtimony of the ſpirit, whoſe office is to *bear witneſs with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God*, Rom. viii. 16. Moreover, carefully obſerve the courſe and method of providence towards you: and likewiſe how your ſoul is affected under the ſame in the various ſteps thereof: compare both with ſcripture-doctrines, promiſes, threatnings, and examples: ſo ſhall ye perceive, if the Lord deals with you as he uſeth to do unto thoſe that love his name; and if you be going forth by the footſteps of the flock, this may afford you comfortable evidence. Walk tenderly and circumſpectly; and the Lord will manifeſt himſelf to you, according to his promiſe, John xiv. 21. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me, ſhall be loved of my father, and I will love him, and will manifeſt myſelf to him. But it is in vain to think on ſucceſsful ſelf-examination, if ye be looſe and irregular in your converſation.

Laſtly, Diſpatch the work of your day and generation, with ſpeed and diligenee. *David, after he had ſerved his own generation by the will of God, fell on ſleep.* Acts xiii. 36. God has allotted us certain pieces of work of this kind, which ought to be diſpatched before the time of working be over. Eccleſ. ix. 10. ‘ Whatſoever thy ‘ hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there ‘ is no work, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom in the grave ‘ whither thou goeſt.’ Gal. vi. 10. ‘ As we have ‘ therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, ‘ eſpecially unto them who are of the houſhold of faith.’ If a paſſenger, after he is got on ſhipboard, and the ſhip is getting under ſail, remember that he has ommitted to diſpatch a piece of neceſſary buſineſs when he was aſhore, it muſt needs be uneaſy to him; even ſo, reflection in a dying hour, upon neglected ſeaſons, and loſt opportunities, cannot fail to diſquiet a Chriſtian. Wherefore whatever is incumbent upon thee to do for God's honour, and the good of others: either as the duty of thy ſtation, or by ſpecial opportunity put into thy hand, perform it ſeaſonably, if thou wouldſt die comfortably.

HEAD III.

The RESURRECTION.

JOHN v. 28. 29.

Marvel not at this : for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves ſhall hear his voice, and ſhall come forth, they that have done good, unto the reſurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the reſurrection of damnation.

THESE words are part of the defence our Lord Jeſus Chriſt makes for himſelf, when perſecuted by the Jews, for curing the impotent man, and ordering him to carry away his bed on the Sabbath ; and for vindicating his conduct, when accuſed by them of having thereby profaned that day. On this occaſion he profeſſeth himſelf not only Lord of the Sabbath, but alſo Lord of life and death ; declaring, in the words of the text, the reſurrection of the dead to be brought to paſs by his power. This he introduceth with theſe words, as with a ſolemn preface, *Marvel not at this, i. e.* at this ſtrange diſcourſe of mine : do not wonder to hear me, whoſe appearance is ſo very mean in your eyes, talk at this rate ; for the day is coming, in which the dead ſhall be raiſed by my power.

Obſerve in this text, (1.) The doctrine of the reſurrection aſſerted : *All that are in the graves ſhall hear his voice, and ſhall come forth.* The dead bodies, which are reduced to duſt, ſhall revive, and evidence life by hearing and moving. (2.) The author of it, Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of man, ver. 27. The dead ſhall hear his voice, and be raiſed thereby. (3.) The number that ſhall be raiſed, *All that are in the graves, i. e.* all the dead bodies of men, howſoever differently diſpoſed of, as it were, in different kinds of graves ; or all the dead, good and bad. They are not all buried in graves, properly ſo called : ſome are burnt to aſhes ; ſome drowned, and buried in the bellies of fiſhes ; yea, ſome devoured by maneaters, called cannibals : but, whereſoever the matter or ſubſtance of which the body was compoſed, is to be found, thence they ſhall come forth. (4.) The great diſtinction that ſhall be made betwixt the godly and the wicked. They ſhall indeed both riſe again in the reſurrection. None of the godly ſhall be miſſing ; though, perhaps, they either had no burial, or a very obſcure one : and all the wicked ſhall come forth ; their vaulted tombs ſhall hold them no longer than the voice is uttered. But the former ſhall have a joyful reſurrection to life, whilſt the latter have a dreadful reſurrection to damnation. Laſtly, The ſet time of this great event : there is an hour, or certain fixed period of time, appointed of God for it. We are not told when that hour will be, but that it is *coming* : for this, among other reaſons, that we may always be ready.

DOCTRINE.

There ſhall be a reſurrection of the dead.

In diſcourſing of this ſubject, I ſhall, firſt, ſhew the certainty of the reſurrection ; next, I ſhall enquire into the nature of it ; and, laſtly, make ſome practical improvement of the whole.

I. In ſhewing the certainty of the reſurrection, I ſhall evince (1.) That God can raiſe the dead. And, (2.) That he will do it ; which are the two grounds or topics laid down by Chriſt himſelf, when diſputing with the Sadducees, Matth. xxii. 29. *Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the ſcriptures nor the power of God.*

Firſt, Seeing God is almighty, ſurely he can raiſe the dead. We have inſtances of this powerful work of God, both in the Old and New Teſtament. The ſon of the widow in Sarepta was raiſed from the dead, 1 Kings xvii. 22 ; the Shunamite's ſon, 2 Kings iv. 35 ; and the man caſt into the ſepulchre of Eliſha, chap. xiii. 21. In which we may obſerve a gradation, the ſecond of theſe miraculous events being more illuſtrious than the firſt, and the third than the ſecond. The firſt of theſe perſons was raiſed when he was but newly dead ; the prophet Elijah, who raiſed him, being preſent at his deceaſe. The ſecond, when he had lien dead a conſiderable time ; namely, while his mother travelled from Shunem to mount Carmel, (reckoned about the diſtance of ſixteen miles), and returned from thence to her houſe, with Eliſha who raiſed him. The laſt, not till they were burying him, and the corpſe was caſt into the prophet's grave. In like manner, in the New Teſtament, Jairus's daughter, (Mark v. 41.) and Dorcas, (Acts ix. 40.) were both raiſed to life, when lately dead ; the widow's ſon in Nain, when they were carrying him out to bury him, Luke vii. 11. 15 ; and Lazarus, when ſtinking in the grave, John xi. 39. 44.

Can men make curious glaſſes out of aſhes, reduce flowers into aſhes, and raiſe them again out of theſe aſhes, reſtoring them to their former beauty ; and cannot the great Creator, who made all things of nothing, raiſe man's body, after it is reduced into duſt ? If it be objected, 'How can mens bodies be raiſed up again, 'after they are reſolved into duſt, and the aſhes of many 'generations are mingled together ?' Scripture and reaſon furniſh the anſwer ; *With men it is impoſſible, but not with God.* It is abſurd for men to deny that God can do a thing, becauſe they ſee not how it may be done. How ſmall a portion do we know of his ways ! How abſolutely incapable are we of conceiving diſtinctly of the extent of almighty power, and much more of comprehending its actings, and the method of procedure ! I queſtion not, but many illiterate men are as great Infidels to many chymical experiments, as ſome learned men are to the doctrine of the reſurrection : and as theſe laſt are ready to deride the former, ſo the Lord will have them in deriſion. What a myſtery was it to the Indians, that the Europeans could, by a piece of paper, converſe together at the diſtance of ſome hundreds of miles ? And how much were they aſtoniſhed to ſee them, with their guns, produce as it were thunder and lightening in a moment, and at pleaſure kill men afar off ? Shall ſome men do ſuch things as are wonders in the eyes of others, becauſe they cannot comprehend them : and ſhall men confine the infinite power of God within the narrow boundaries of their own ſhallow capacities, in a matter noways contrary to reaſon ? An inferior nature has but a very imperfect conception of the power of a ſuperior. Brutes do not conceive of the actings of reaſon in men ; and men have but lame notions of the power of angels : how low and inadequate a conception then, muſt a finite nature have of the power of that which is infinite ! Though we cannot conceive how God acts, yet we ought to believe he can do above what we can think or conceive of.

Wherefore let the bodies of men be laid in the grave ; let them rot there, and be reſolved into the moſt minute particles : or let them be burnt, and the aſhes caſt into rivers, or thrown up into the air, to be ſcattered by the wind : let the duſt of a thouſand generations be mingled, and the ſteams of the dead bodies wander to and fro in the air : let birds or wild beaſts eat the dead bodies, or the fiſhes of the ſea devour them, ſo that the parts of human bodies, thus deſtroyed, paſs into ſubſtantial parts of birds, beaſts, or fiſhes: or, what is more than that, let man-eaters, who themſelves muſt die and riſe again, devour human bodies; and let others devour them again; and then let our modern Sadducees propoſe the queſtion in theſe caſes, as the ancient Sadducees did, in the caſe of the woman who had been married to ſeven huſbands ſucceſſively, Matth. xxii. 28. We anſwer, as our bleſſed Lord and Saviour did, ver. 29. *Ye do err, not knowing the ſcriptures, nor the power of God.* We believe God to be omniſcient and omnipotent; infinite in knowledge and in power: and hence, agreeable to the dictates of reaſon, we conclude the poſſibility of the reſurrection, even in the caſes ſuppoſed.

Material things may change their forms and ſhapes; may be reſolved into the principles of which they are formed: but they are not annihilated or reduced to nothing; nor can they be ſo by any created power. God is omniſcient, his underſtanding is infinite: therefore he knows all things whatſoever; what they were at any time, what they are, and where they are to be found. Though the country-man who comes into the apothecary's ſhop, cannot find out the drug he wants; yet the apothecary himſelf knows what he has in his ſhop, whence it came, and where it is to be found. And in a mingle of many different ſeeds, the expert gardiner can diſtinguiſh betwixt ſeed and ſeed. Why then may not omniſcience diſtinguiſh betwixt duſt and duſt? Can he who knows all things to perfection, be liable to any miſtake about his own creatures? Whoſo believes an infinite underſtanding, muſt needs own, that no maſs of duſt is ſo jumbled together, but God perfectly comprehends, and infallibly knows, how the moſt minute particle, and every one of them is to be matched. And therefore he knows where the particles of each dead body are; whether in the earth, ſea, or air; how confuſed ſoever they lie. And particularly, he knows where to find the primitive ſubſtance of the man-eater; howſoever evaporate or reduced, as it were, into air or vapour, by ſweat or perſpiration: and how to ſeparate the parts of the body that was eaten, from the body of the eater, howſoever incorporate or made one body with it: and ſo underſtands, not only how, but whence he is to bring back the primitive ſubſtance of the man-eater to its proper place; and alſo to ſeparate from the man-eater's body, that part of the devoured body which goes into its ſubſtance, and is indeed but a very ſmall part of it. It is certain the bodies of men, as of all other animals or living creatures, are in a continual flux: they grow and are ſuſtained by daily food; ſo ſmall a part whereof becomes nouriſhment, that the moſt part is evacuate. And it is reckoned that, at leaſt, as much of the food is evacuate inſenſibly by perſpiration, as is voided by other perceptible ways. Yea, the nouriſhing part of the food, when aſſimilate, and thereby become a part of the body, is evacuate by perſpiration through the pores of the ſkin, and again ſupplied by the uſe of the food: yet the body is ſtill reckoned one and the ſame body. Whence we may conclude, that it is not eſſential to the reſurrection of the body, that every particle of the matter, which at any time was part of a human body, ſhould be reſtored to it, when it is raiſed up from death to life. Were it ſo, the bodies of men would become of ſo huge a ſize, that they would bear no reſemblance of the perſons. It is ſufficient to denominate it the ſame body that died, when it is riſen again, if the body that is raiſed be formed in its former proportions of the ſame particles of matter, which at any time were its conſtituent parts, howſoever it be refined: likeas, we reckon it is the ſame body that was pined away by long ſickneſs, which becomes fat and fair again after recovery.

Now, to this infinite underſtanding join infinite power, whereby he is able to ſubdue all things unto himſelf; and this glorioully great work appears moſt reaſonable. If omniſcience diſcover every little particle of duſt, where it is, and how it is to be matched, cannot omnipotence bring them, and join them together in their order? Can the watch maker take up the ſeveral pieces of a watch, lying in a confuſed heap before him, and ſet each in its proper place; and cannot God put the human body into order after its diſſolution? Did he ſpeak this world into being, out of nothing; and can he not form man's body out of its pre-exiſtent matter? If he calleth thoſe things which be not, as though they were; ſurely he can call things that are diſſolved, to be as they were, before the compound was reſolved into its parts and principles. Wherefore, God can raiſe the dead. And why ſhould it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God ſhould raiſe the dead? Acts xxvi. 8.

Secondly, God *will* do it. He not only *can* do it; but he certainly *will* do it, becauſe he has ſaid it. Our text is very full to this purpoſe, ‘ All that are in their graves ſhall hear his voice: and ſhall come forth; they that have done good, unto the reſurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the reſurrection of damnation.’ Theſe words relate to, and are an explanation of that part of Daniel's prophecy, Dan. xii. 2. ‘ And many of them that ſleep in the duſt of the earth ſhall awake, ſome to everlaſting life, and ſome to ſhame and everlaſting contempt.’ The which appears to have been calculate to confront the doctrine of the Sadducees which the Holy Ghoſt knew was to be at a great height in the Jewiſh church, under the perſecution of Antiochus. There are many other texts in the Old and New Teſtament, that might here be adduced; ſuch as Acts xxiv. 15. ‘ And have hope towards God, which they themſelves alſo allow, that there ſhall be a reſurrection of the dead, both of the juſt and unjuſt.’ Job xix. 26. 27. ‘ And though after my ſkin worms deſtroy this body, yet in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God: whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf, and mine eyes ſhall behold, and not another, though my reins be conſumed within me.’ But I need not multiply teſtimonies, in a matter ſo clearly and frequently taught in ſacred ſcripture. Our Lord and Saviour himſelf proves it againſt the Sadducees, in that remarkable text, Luke xx. 37. 38. ‘ Now that the dead are raiſed, even Moſes ſhewed at the buſh, when he calleth the Lord, the God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob; For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.’ Theſe holy partriarchs were now dead: nevertheleſs, the Lord JEHOVAH is called their God, namely, in virtue of the covenant of grace, and in the ſenſe thereof; in which ſenſe, the phraſe comprehends all bleſſedneſs, as that, which by the covenant, is ſecured to them who are in it, Heb. xi. 16. ‘ God is not aſhamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.’ He is not called the God of their ſouls only; but their God, the God of their perſons, ſouls, and bodies; the which, by virtue of his truth and faithfulneſs, muſt have its full effect: now it cannot have its full effect on the dead, who in as far as they are dead, are far from all bleſſedneſs; but on the living, who alone are capable of it: therefore, ſince God is ſtill called their God, they are living in reſpect of God, altho' their bodies are yet in the grave; for in reſpect of him, who by his power can reſtore them to life, and in his covenant has declared his will and purpoſe ſo to do, and whoſe promiſe cannot fail, they all are to be reckoned to live; and, conſiſtent with the covenant, their death is but a ſleep, out of which, in virtue of the ſame covenant, ſecuring all bleſſedneſs to their perſons, their whole man, they muſt and ſhall certainly be awakened. The Apoſtle Paul proves the reſurrection at large, 1 Cor. xv. and ſhews it to be a fundamental article; the denial whereof is ſubverſive of Chriſtianity, ver. 13. 14. ‘ If there be no reſurrection of the dead, then is Chriſt not riſen. And if Chriſt be not riſen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is alſo vain.’

To aſſiſt us in conceiving of it, the ſcripture gives us types of the reſurrection of the dead; as the dry bones living, Ezek. xxxvii. Jonah's coming out of the whale's belly, Mat. xii. 40. And nature affords us emblems and reſemblances of it, as the ſun's ſetting and riſing again; night and day, winter and ſummer, ſleeping and awaking; ſwallows in winter lying void of all appearance of life, in ruinous buildings and ſubterraneous caverns, and reviving again in the ſpring ſeaſon; the ſeeds dying under the clod, and thereafter ſpringing up again: all which, and the like, may juſtly be admitted, as deſigned by the God of nature, though not for proofs, yet for memorials of the reſurrection; whereof we have aſſurance from the ſcripture, 1 Cor. xv. 36. ‘Thou fool, that which thou ſoweſt is not quickened, except it die.’

II. I ſhall enquire into the nature of the reſurrection, ſhewing, 1ſt, *Who* ſhall be raiſed. 2dly, *What* ſhall be raiſed. 3dly, *How* the dead ſhall be raiſed.

Firſt, *Who* ſhall be raiſed, Our text tells us who they are; namely, All that are in the graves, i. e. all mankind who are dead. As for thoſe perſons, who ſhall be found alive at the ſecond coming of Chriſt; they ſhall not die, and ſoon thereafter be raiſed again: but ſuch a change ſhall ſuddenly paſs upon them, as ſhall be to them inſtead of dying and riſing again: ſo that their bodies ſhall become like to thoſe bodies which are raiſed out of the graves, 1 Cor. xv. 51. 52. ‘We ſhall not all ſleep, but we ſhall all be changed; In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.’ Hence theſe who are to be judged at the great day, are diſtinguiſhed into quick and dead, Acts x. 42. All the dead ſhall ariſe, whether godly or wicked, juſt or unjuſt (Acts xxiv. 15.) old or young; the whole race of mankind, even theſe who never ſaw the ſun, but died in their mother's belly, Rev. xx. 12. And I ſaw the dead ſmall and great ſtand before God. The ſea and earth ſhall give up their dead without reſerve; none ſhall be kept back.

Secondly, *What* ſhall be raiſed? The bodies of mankind. A man is ſaid to die when the ſoul is ſeparated from the body, and returns unto God who gave it, Eccleſ. xii. 7. But it is the body only which is laid in the grave, and can be properly ſaid to be raiſed: wherefore the reſurrection is, ſtrictly ſpeaking, competent to the body only. Moreover, it is the ſame body that dies, which ſhall riſe again. At the reſurrection, men ſhall not appear with other bodies for ſubſtance, than theſe which they now have, and which are laid down in the grave: but with the ſelf-ſame bodies, endowed with other qualities. The very notion of a reſurrection implies this; ſince nothing can be ſaid to riſe again, but that which falls. But to illuſtrate it a little, Firſt, it is plain from ſcripture-teſtimony. The Apoſtle tells, it is this mortal which muſt put on immortality, 1 Cor. xv. 53. and that Chriſt ſhall change our vile body, that it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious body, Philip. iii. 21. Death in ſcripture language, is a ſleep; and the reſurrection an awaking out of that ſleep, Job xiv. 12. which ſhews the body riſing up, to be the ſelf-ſame that died. Secondly, The equity of the divine procedure, both with reſpect to the godly and the wicked, evinces this. It is not reckoned equal among men, that one do the work, and another get the reward. Though the glorifying of the bodies of ſaints, is not, properly ſpeaking, and in a ſtrict ſenſe, the reward of their ſervices or ſufferings on earth: yet this is evident, that it is not at all agreeable to the manner of the divine diſpenſation, that one body ſerve him, and another be glorified: that one fight, and another receive the crown. How can it be imagined that the temples of the Holy Ghoſt (as theſe bodies of believers are termed, 1 Cor. vi. 19.) ſhould always ly in rubbiſh; and others be reared up in their ſtead; That theſe members of Chriſt (ver. 15.) ſhall periſh utterly, and other bodies come in their room? Nay, ſurely, as theſe bodies of the ſaints now bear a part in glorifying God, and ſome of them ſuffer in his cauſe; ſo they ſhall partake of the glory that is to be revealed. And theſe bodies of the wicked which are laid in the duſt, ſhall be raiſed again; that the ſame body which ſinned may ſuffer. Shall one body ſin here, and another ſuffer in hell for that ſin? Shall that body, which was the ſoul's companion in ſin, ly for ever hid in the duſt; and another body, which did not act any part in ſinning, be its companion in torment? No, no; it is that body, which now takes up all their thoughts to provide for its back and belly, that ſhall be raiſed up to ſuffer in hell. It is that tongue that is now the ſwearing, lying tongue, which will need water to cool it in eternal flames. Theſe ſame feet that now ſtand in the way of ſinners, and carry men in their ungodly courſes, ſhall ſtand in the burning lake. And theſe now covetous and laſcivious eyes ſhall take part in the fire and ſmoak of the pit.

Thirdly, *How* the dead ſhall be raiſed. The ſame Jeſus, who was crucified without the gates of Jeruſalem, ſhall, at the laſt day, to the conviction of all, be declared both Lord and Chriſt: appearing as Judge of the world, attended with his mighty angels, 2 Theſſ. i. 7. he ſhall deſcend from heaven with a ſhout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, 1 Theſſ. iv. 16. The trumpet ſhall ſound, and the dead ſhall be raiſed, and theſe who are alive changed; 1 Cor. xv. 52. Whether this ſhout, voice, and trumpet do denote ſome audible voice, or only the workings of divine power, for the raiſing of the dead, and other awful purpoſes of that day, (though the former ſeems probable) I will not poſitively determine. There is no queſtion but this coming of the Judge of the world will be in greater majeſty and terror than we can conceive: yet that awful grandeur, majeſty, and ſtate, which was diſplayed at the giving of the law, viz. thunders heard, lightnings and a thick cloud upon the mount ſeen, the Lord deſcending in fire, the whole mount quaking greatly, and the voice of the trumpet waxing louder and louder (Exod. xix. 16. 18. 19.) may help forward a becoming thought of it. However, the ſound of this trumpet ſhall be heard all the world over; it ſhall reach to the depths of the ſea, and the bowels of the earth. At this loud alarm, bones ſhall come together, bone to his bone: the ſcattered duſt of all the dead ſhall be gathered together, duſt to his duſt, neither ſhall one thruſt another, they ſhall walk every one in his path; and meeting together again, ſhall make up that very ſame body which crumbled into duſt in the grave. And at the ſame alarming voice, ſhall every ſoul come again into its own body never more to be ſeparated. The dead can ſtay no longer in their graves, but muſt bid an eternal farewell to their long homes; They hear his voice, and muſt come forth, and receive their final ſentence.

Now, as there is a great difference betwixt the godly and the wicked in their life, and in their death; ſo will there be alſo in their reſurrection.

The godly ſhall be raiſed up out of their graves, by virtue of the Spirit of Chriſt, the bleſſed bond of their union with him, Rom. viii. 11. He that raiſed up Chriſt from the dead, ſhall alſo quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Jeſus Chriſt aroſe from the dead, as the firſt fruits of them that ſlept, 1 Cor. xv. 20. So they that are Chriſt's, ſhall follow at his coming, ver. 23. The myſtical Head having got above the waters of death, he cannot but bring forth the members after him in due time. They ſhall come forth with unexpreſſible joy; for then ſhall that paſſage of ſcripture, which, in its immediate ſcope, reſpected the Babyloniſh captivity, be fully accompliſhed in its extenſive ſpiritual view, Iſa. xxvi. 19. *Awake and ſing, ye that dwell in the duſt.* As a bride adorned for her huſband, goes forth of her bed-chamber unto the marriage: ſo ſhall the ſaints go forth of their graves, unto the marriage of the lamb. Joſeph had a joyful out going from the priſon, Daniel from the lions den, and Jonah from the whale's belly; yet thoſe are but faint repreſentations of the ſaints outgoing from the grave at the reſurrection. Then ſhall they ſing the ſong of Moſes and of the Lamb, in higheſt ſtrains; death being quite ſwallowed up in victory. They had while in this life, ſometimes ſung by faith, the triumphant ſong over death and the grave, *O death where is thy ſting? O grave where is thy victory?* 1 Cor. xv. 55. But when they ſing the ſame from ſight and ſenſe; the black band of doubts and fears which frequently diſturbed them and diſquieted their minds, is for ever caſhiered.

May we not ſuppoſe the ſoul and body of every ſaint, as in mutual embraces, to rejoice in each other, and triumph in their happy meeting again? And may not one imagine the body to addreſs the ſoul thus? ‘O my ſoul, have we got together again after ſo long a ſeparation! art thou come back into thine old habitation, never more to remove! O joyful meeting! how unlike is our preſent ſtate to what our caſe was, when a ſeparation was made betwixt us at death! Now is our mourning turned into joy; the light and gladneſs, ſometimes ſown, are now ſprung up; and there is a perpetual ſpring in Immanuel's land. Bleſſed be the day in which I was united to thee; whoſe chief care was to get Chriſt in us the hope of glory, and to make me a temple for his holy Spirit. O bleſſed ſoul, which, in the time of our pilgrimage, kept thine eye on the land then afar off, but now near at hand! thou tookeſt me into ſecret places, and there madeſt me bow theſe knees before the Lord, that I might bear a part in our humiliations before him; and now is the due time, and I am lifted up. Thou didſt employ this tongue, in confeſſions, petitions, and thankſgivings: which henceforth ſhall be employed in praiſing for evermore. Thou madeſt theſe (ſometimes) weeping eyes, ſow that ſeed of tears, which is now ſprung up in joy that ſhall never end. I was happily beat down by thee and kept in ſubjection, while others pampered their fleſh, and made their bellies their gods to their own deſtruction: and now I glorioully ariſe to take my place in the manſions of glory, whilſt they are dragged out of their graves to be caſt into fiery flames. Now my ſoul, thou ſhalt complain no more of a ſick and pained body; thou ſhalt be no more clogged with weak and weary fleſh: I ſhall now hold pace with thee in the praiſes of our God for evermore.’ And may not the ſoul ſay? ‘O happy day in which I return to dwell in that bleſſed body, which was, and is, and will be for ever a member of Chriſt, a temple of the holy Spirit! Now ſhall I be eternally knit to thee: the ſilver cord ſhall never be looſed more: death ſhall never make another ſeparation betwixt us. Ariſe then, my body, and come away; and let theſe eyes which ſerved to weep over my ſins, behold now with joy the face of our glorious Redeemer; lo! this is our God, and we have waited for him. Let theſe ears which ſerved to hear the word of life in the temple below, come now and hear the hallelujahs in the temple above. Let theſe feet that carried me to the congregation of ſaints on earth, take their place now among theſe who ſtand by. And let that tongue which confeſſed Chriſt before men, and uſed to be ſtill dropping ſomething to his commendation, join the quire of the upper houſe, in his praiſes for evermore. Thou ſhalt faſt no more, but keep an everlaſting feaſt: thou ſhalt weep no more, neither ſhall thy countenance be overclouded; but thou ſhalt ſhine for ever, as a ſtar in the firmament. We took part together in the fight, come now, let us go together to receive and wear the crown.’

But on the other hand, the wicked ſhall be raiſed by the power of Chriſt, as a juſt Judge, who is to render vengeance to his enemies. The ſame divine power which ſhut up their ſouls in hell, and kept their bodies in a grave, as in a priſon, ſhall bring them forth, that ſoul and body together may receive the dreadful ſentence of eternal damnation, and be ſhut up together in the priſon of hell.

They ſhall come forth of their graves with unſpeakable horror and conſternation. They ſhall be dragged forth, as ſo many malefactors out of a dungeon, to be led to execution; crying to the mountains and to the rocks, to fall on them, and hide them from the face of the Lamb. Fearful was the cry in Egypt, that night the deſtroying angel went through, and ſlew their firſt-born. Dreadful were the ſhouts, at the earth's opening her mouth, and ſwallowing up Dathan and Abiram, and all that appertained to them. What hideous crying then muſt there be, when, at the ſound of the laſt trumpet, the earth and ſea ſhall open their mouths, and caſt forth all the wicked world, delivering them up to the dreadful Judge? How will they cry, roar, and tear themſelves! How will the jovial companions weep and howl, and curſe one another! How will the earth be filled with their doleful ſhrieks and lamentations, while they are pulled out like ſheep for the ſlaughter? They who, while they lived in the world, were profane debauchees, covetous worldings, or formal hypocrites, ſhall then, in anguiſh of mind, wring their hands, beat their breaſts, and bitterly lament their caſe, roaring forth their complaints, and calling themſelves beaſts, fools, and madmen, for having acted ſo mad a part in this life, and not having believed what they then ſee. They were driven away in their wickedneſs, at death: and now all their ſins riſe with them, and, like ſo many ſerpents, twiſt themſelves about their wretched ſouls, and bodies too; which now have a frightful meeting, after a long ſeparation.

Then we may ſuppoſe the miſerable body thus to accoſt the ſoul, ‘Haſt thou found me, O mine enemy, my worſt enemy, ſavage ſoul, more cruel than a thouſand tygers? Curſed be the day ever we met. O that I had remained a lifeleſs lump, rotted in the belly of my mother, and had never received ſenſe, life, nor motion! O that I had rather been the body of a toad or ſerpent, than thy body; for then had I lien ſtill, and had not ſeen this terrible day! If I behoved to be thine, O that I had been thy aſs, or one of thy dogs, rather than thy body; for then wouldeſt thou have taken more true care of me than thou didſt! O cruel kindneſs! haſt thou thus hugged me to death, thus nouriſhed me to the ſlaughter? Is this the effect of thy tenderneſs for me? Is this what I am to reap of thy pains and concern about me? What do riches and pleaſures avail now, when this fearful reckoning is come; of which thou hadſt fair warning? O cruel grave, why didſt thou not cloſe thy mouth upon me for ever? why didſt thou not hold faſt thy priſoner? why haſt thou ſhaken me out, while I lay ſtill and was at reſt? Curſed ſoul, wherefore didſt thou not abide in thy place, wrapt up in flames of fire? Wherefore art thou come back to take me alſo down to the bars of the pit? Thou madeſt me an inſtrument of unrighteouſneſs; and now I muſt be thrown into the fire. This tongue was by thee employed in mocking at religion, curſing, ſwearing, lying, backbiting, and boaſting; and withheld from glorifying God: and now it muſt not have ſo much as a drop of water to cool it in the flames. Thou didſt withdraw mine ears from hearing the ſermons, which gave warning of this day. Thou foundeſt ways and means to ſtop them from attending to ſeaſonable exhortations, admonitions, and reproofs. But why didſt thou not ſtop them from hearing the ſound of this dreadful trumpet? Why doſt thou not rove and fly away on the wings of imagination, thereby, as it were, tranſporting me during theſe frightful tranſactions; as thou waſt wont to do, when I was ſet down at ſermons, communions, prayers, and godly conferences: that I might now have as little ſenſe of the one, as I formerly had of the other? But ah! I muſt burn for ever, for thy love to thy luſts, thy profanity, thy ſenſuality, thy unbelief, and hypocriſy.’ But may not the ſoul anſwer? ‘Wretched and vile carcaſe, I am now driven back into thee. O that thou hadſt lien rotting for ever in thy grave! Had I not torment enough before? Muſt I be knit to thee again, that being joined together as two dry ſticks for the fire, the wrath of God may the more keenly burn us up? It was by caring for you I loſt myſelf. It was your back and your belly, and the gratifying of your ſenſes, which ruined me. How often was I enſnared by your ears? how often betrayed by your eyes? It was to ſpare you, that I neglected opportunities of making peace with God, loitered away Sabbaths, lived in the neglect of prayer; went to the houſe of mirth, rather than to the houſe of mourning; and that I chuſed to deny Chriſt, and forſake his cauſe and intereſts in the world; and ſo am fallen a ſacrifice to your curſed eaſe. When at any time my conſcience began to awake, and I was ſetting myſelf to think of my ſins, and the miſery I have felt ſince we parted, and now feel, it was you that diverted me from theſe thoughts, and drew me off to make proviſion for thee, O wretched fleſh! By your ſilken cords of fleſhly luſts, I was drawn to deſtruction, over the belly of my light and conſcience: but now they are turned into iron chains, with which I am to be held under wrath for evermore. Ah wretched profits! ah! curſed pleaſures! for which I muſt lie for ever in utter darkneſs!’ But no complaints will then avail. O that men were wiſe, that they underſtood this, that they would conſider their latter end!

As to the qualities with which the bodies of the ſaints ſhall be endowed at the reſurrection, the apoſtle tells us, they ſhall be raiſed incorruptible, glorions, powerful and ſpiritual, 1 Cor. xv. 42. 43. 44. ‘It is ſown in corruption, it is raiſed in incorruption: it is ſown in diſhonour, it is raiſed in glory: it is ſown in weakneſs, it is raiſed in power: it is ſown a natural body, it is raiſed a ſpiritual body.’

Firſt. The bodies of the ſaints ſhall be raiſed incorruptible. They are now as the bodies of others, a very maſs of corruption, full of the ſeeds of diſeaſes, and death; and when dead, become ſo nauſeous, even to their deareſt friends, that they muſt be buried out of their ſight, in a grave, there to rot and be conſumed: yea loathſome ſores and diſeaſes make ſome of them very unſightly, even while alive. But at the reſurrection, they leave all the ſeeds of corruption behind them in the grave; and riſe incorruptible, incapable of the leaſt indiſpoſition, ſickneſs, or ſore, and much more of dying, External violences and inward cauſes of pain ſhall for ever ceaſe: they ſhall feel it no more: yea they ſhall have an everlaſting youth and vigour, being no more ſubject to the decays which age produced in this life.

Secondly. They ſhall be glorious bodies; not only beautiful, comely, and well proportioned, but full of ſplendor and brightneſs. The moſt beautiful face, and beſt proportioned body that now appears in the world, is not to be named in compariſon with the body of the meaneſt ſaint at the reſurrection; for then ſhall the righteous ſhine forth as the ſun, Matth. xiii. 43. If there was a dazzling glory on Moſes's face, when he came down from the mount; and if Stephen's face was as it had been the face of an angel, when he ſtood before the council, how much more ſhall the faces of the ſaints be beautified and glorious, full of ſweet agreeable majeſty, when they have put off all corruption, and ſhine as the ſun? But obſerve, this beauty of the ſaints is not reſtricted to their faces, but diffuſes itſelf through their whole bodies; for the whole body is raiſed in glory, and ſhall be faſhioned like unto their Lord and Saviour's glorious body: in whoſe transfiguration not only did his face ſhine as the ſun, but alſo his raiment was white as the light, Matth. xvii. 2. Whatever defects or deformities the bodies of the ſaints had, when laid in the grave, occaſioned by accidents in life, or ariſing from ſecret cauſes of their formation in the womb, they ſhall riſe out of the grave free of all theſe. But ſuppoſe the marks of the Lord Jeſus, the ſcars or prints of the wounds and bruiſes ſome of the ſaints received while on earth, for his ſake, ſhould remain in their bodies after the reſurrection; likeas the print of the nails remained in Chriſt's body, after his reſurrection; theſe marks will rather be badges of diſtinction, and add to their glory, than detract from their beauty. But howſoever that be, ſurely Iſaac's eyes ſhall not be dim, nor will Jacob halt; Leah ſhall not be tender-eyed, nor Mephiboſheth lame of his legs. For as the goldſmith melts down the old crazy veſſel, and caſts it over again into a new mold, bringing it forth with a new luſtre; ſo ſhall the vile body, which lay diſſolved in the grave, come forth at the reſurrection in perfect beauty and comely proportion.

Thirdly, They ſhall be powerful and ſtrong bodies. The ſtrongeſt men on earth being frail and mortal, may juſtly be reckoned weak and feeble; in regard their ſtrength, howſoever great, is quickly worn out and conſumed. Many of the ſaints now have bodies weaker than others; but the feeble among them (to allude to Zech. xii. 8.) at that day ſhall be as David, and the houſe of David ſhall be as God. A grave divine ſays, that one ſhall be ſtronger at the reſurrection than an hundred, yea, than thouſands are now. Certainly great, and vaſtly great muſt the ſtrength of glorified bodies be; ſeeing they ſhall bear up an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. The mortal body is not at all adapted to ſuch a ſtate. Do tranſports of joy occaſion death, as well as exceſſive grief does? And can it bear up under a weight of glory? Can it ſubſiſt in union with a ſoul filled with heaven's raptures? Surely no. The mortal body would ſink under that load, and ſuch a fill would make the earthen pitcher to fly in pieces. The ſcripture has plainly told us, that fleſh and blood (namely,) in their preſent frail ſtate, though it were the fleſh and blood of a giant, cannot inherit the kingdom of God 1 Cor. xv. 50. How ſtrong muſt the bodily eyes be, which, to the ſoul's eternal comfort, ſhall behold the dazzling glory and ſplendor of the new Jeruſalem; and ſtedfaſtly look at the tranſcendent glory and brightneſs of the man Chriſt, the Lamb who is the light of that city, the inhabitants whereof ſhall ſhine as the ſun? The Lord of heaven doth now, in mercy, hold back the face of his throne, and ſpreadeth his cloud upon it; that mortals may not be confounded with the rays of glory, which ſhine forth from it, Job xxvi. 9. But then the vail ſhall be removed, and they made able to behold it, to their unſpeakable joy. How ſtrong muſt their bodies be, who ſhall not reſt night nor day; but be without intermiſſion for ever employed in the heavenly temple, to ſing and proclaim the praiſes of God without wearineſs, which is a weakneſs incident to the frail mortal, but incompetent to the glorified body!

Laſtly, They ſhall be ſpiritual bodies. Not that they ſhall be changed into ſpirits, but they ſhall be ſpiritual, in reſpect of their ſpirit-like qualities and endowments. The body ſhall be abſolutely ſubſervient to the ſoul, ſubject to it, and influenced by it; and therefore no more a clog to its activity, nor the animal appetites a ſnare to it. There will be no need to beat it down, nor to drag it to the ſervice of God. The ſoul, in this life, is ſo much influenced by the body, that in ſcripture-ſtile it is ſaid to be carnal; but then the body ſhall be ſpiritual, readily ſerving the ſoul in the buſineſs of heaven, and in that only, as if it had no more relation to earth, than a ſpirit. It will have no further need of the now neceſſary ſupports of life, namely, food and raiment, and the like. *They ſhall hunger no more, neither thirſt any more*, Rev. vii. 16. *For in the reſurrection, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.* Then ſhall the ſaints be ſtrong, without meat or drink, warm without clothes, ever in perfect health without medicine, and ever freſh and vigorous, though they ſhall never ſleep, but ſerve him night and day in his temple, Rev. vii. 15. They will need none of theſe things, more than ſpirits do. They will be nimble and active as ſpirits, and of a moſt refined conſtitution. The body, that is now lumpiſh and heavy, ſhall then be moſt ſprightly. No ſuch thing as melancholy ſhall be found to make the heart heavy, and the ſpirits flag and ſink.

Where the carcaſe is, there ſhall the ſaints, as ſo many eagles, be gathered together. I ſhall not further dip into this matter: The day will declare it.

As to the qualities of the bodies of the wicked, at the reſurrection, I find the ſcripture ſpeaks but little of them. Whatever they may need, they ſhall not get a drop of water to cool their tongues, Luke xvi. 24. 25. Whatever may be ſaid of their weakneſs, it is certain they will be continued for ever in life, that they may be ever dying: they ſhall bear up, howſoever unwillingly, under the load of God's wrath, and ſhall not faint away under it. *The ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up for ever and ever. And they have no reſt day nor night.* Surely they ſhall not partake of the glory and beauty of the ſaints. All their glory dies with them, and ſhall never riſe again. Daniel tells us, they ſhall awake to ſhame, and everlaſting contempt, chap. xii. 2. Shame follows ſin, as the ſhadow followeth the body: but the wicked in this world walk in the dark, and often under a diſguiſe: nevertheleſs, when the Judge comes in flaming fire, at the laſt day, they will be brought to the light; their maſk will be taken off, and the ſhame of their nakedneſs will clearly appear to themſelves and others, and fill their faces with confuſion. Their ſhame will be too deep for bluſhes: but all faces ſhall gather blackneſs, at that day, when they ſhall go forth of their graves, as malefactors out of their priſons to execution: for their reſurrection is the reſurrection of damnation. The greateſt beauties, who now pride themſelves in their comelineſs of body, not regarding their deformed ſouls, will then appear with a ghaſtly countenance, a grim and death-like viſage. Their looks will be frightful, and they will be horrible ſpectacles, coming forth of their graves, like infernal furies out of the pit. They ſhall riſe alſo to everlaſting contempt. They ſhall then be the moſt contemptible creatures, filled with contempt from God, as veſſels of diſhonour, whatever honourable uſes they have been employed to in this world; and filled alſo with contempt from men. They will be moſt deſpicable in the eyes of the ſaints, even of thoſe ſaints who gave them honour here, either for their high ſtation, the gifts of God in them, or becauſe they were of the ſame human nature with themſelves. But then ſhall their bodies be as ſo many loathſome carcaſes, which they ſhall go forth and look upon with abhorrence: yea, they ſhall be an abhorring unto all fleſh, Iſ. lxvi. 24. The word here rendered an abhorring, is the ſame which in the other text is rendered contempt; and Iſaiah and Daniel point at one and the ſame thing, namely, the loathſomeneſs of the wicked at the reſurrection. They will be loathſome in the eyes of one another. The unclean wretches were never ſo lovely to each other, as then they will be loathſome: dear companions in ſin will then be an abhorring, each one to his fellow; and the wicked, great, and honourable men, ſhall be no more regarded by their wicked ſubjects, their ſervants, their ſlaves, than the mire in the ſtreets.

Uſe I. Of comfort to the people of God. The doctrine of the reſurrection is a ſpring of conſolation and joy unto you. Think on it, O believers, when ye are in the houſe of mourning, for the loſs of your godly relations or friends, That ye ſorrow not, even as others which have no hope; for ye will meet again, 1 Theſſ. iv. 13. 14. They are but lain down to reſt in their beds for a little while (Iſ. lvii. 2.); but in the morning of the reſurrection they will awake again, and come forth of their graves. The veſſel of honour was but coarſe, it had much alloy of baſe metal in it; it was too weak, too dim and inglorious, for the upper-houſe, whatever luſtre it had in the lower one. It was cracked, it was polluted; and therefore it behoved to be melted down, that it may be refined, and faſhioned more gloriouſly. Do but wait a while, and you ſhall ſee it come forth out of the furnace of earth, vying with the ſtars in brightneſs; nay, as the ſun when he goeth forth in his might. Have you laid your infant children in the grave? You will ſee them again. Your God calls himſelf the God of your ſeed; which, according to our Saviour's expoſition, ſecures the glorious reſurrection of the body. Wherefore let the covenant you embraced, for yourſelf, and your babes now in the duſt, comfort your heart, in the joyful expectation, that, by virtue thereof, they ſhall be raiſed up in glory; and that as being no more infants of days, but brought to a full and perfect ſtature, as is generally ſuppoſed. Be not diſcouraged by reaſon of a weak and ſickly body; there is a day coming, when thou ſhalt be every whit whole. At the reſurrection, Timothy ſhall be no more liable to his often infirmities; his body, that was weak and ſickly, even in youth, ſhall be raiſed in power: Lazarus ſhall be heal and ſound, his body being raiſed incorruptible. And although, perhaps, thy weakneſs will not allow thee, now, to go one furlong to meet the Lord in public ordinances: yet the day cometh, when thy body ſhall be no more a clog to thee, but thou ſhalt *meet the Lord in the air*, 1 Theſſ. iv. 17. It will be with the ſaints coming up from the grave, as with the Iſraelites when they came out of Egypt, Pſal. cv. 37. *There was not one feeble perſon among their tribes.* Haſt thou an uncomely or deformed body? There is a glory within, which will then ſet all right without, according to all the deſire of thine heart. It ſhall riſe a glorious, beautiful, handſome, and well-proportioned body. Its uncomelineſs, or deformities, may go with it to the grave, but they ſhall not come back with it. O that theſe, who are now ſo deſirous to be beautiful and handſome, would not be too haſty to affect it with their fooliſh and ſinful arts, but wait and ſtudy the heavenly art of beautifying the body, by endeavouring now to become all glorious within, with the graces of God's Spirit! This would at length make them admirable and everlaſting beauties. Thou muſt indeed, O believer, grapple with death, and ſhalt get the firſt fall: but thou ſhalt riſe again, and come off victorious at laſt. Thou muſt go down to the grave; but, though it be thy long home, it will not be thine everlaſting home. Thou will not hear the voice of thy friends there; but thou ſhalt hear the voice of Chriſt there. Thou mayſt be carried thither with mourning, but ſhalt come up from it rejoicing. Thy friends indeed will leave thee there, but thy God will not. What God ſaid to Jacob, concerning his going down to Egypt, (Gen. xlvi. 3. 4.) he ſays to thee, anent thy going down to the grave, *Fear not to go down---I will go down with thee, and I will alſo ſurely bring thee up again.* O ſolid comfort! O glorious hopes! Wherefore, comfort yourſelves, and one another with theſe words, 1 Theſſ. iv. 18.

Uſe II. Of terror to all unregenerate men. Ye who are yet in your natural ſtate, look at this piece of the eternal ſtate; and conſider what will be your part in it, if ye be not in time brought into the ſtate of grace. Think, O ſinner, on that day, when the trumpet ſhall ſound, at the voice of which, the bars of the pit ſhall be broken aſunder, the doors of the grave ſhall fly open, the devouring depths of the ſea ſhall throw up their dead, the earth caſt forth hers; and death every where, in the exceſs of aſtoniſhment, ſhall let go its priſoners; and thy wretched ſoul and body ſhall be re-united, to be ſifted before the tribunal of God. Then if thou hadſt a thouſand worlds at thy diſpoſal, thou wouldſt gladly give them all away, upon condition thou mighteſt ly ſtill in thy grave, with the hundredth part of that eaſe, wherewith thou haſt ſometimes lain at home, on the Lord's day: or (if that cannot be obtained) that thou mighteſt be but a ſpectator of the tranſactions of that day: as thou haſt been at ſome ſolemn occaſions, and rich goſpel feaſts: or (if even that is not to be purchaſed) that a mountain or a rock might fall on thee, and cover thee from the face of the Lamb. Ah! how are men bewitched, thus to trifle away the precious time of life, in (almoſt) as little concern about death, as if they were like the beaſts that periſh! ſome will be telling where their corpſe muſt be laid; while yet they have not ſeriouſly conſidered, whether their graves ſhall be their beds, where they ſhall awake with joy in the morning of the reſurrection ; or their priſons, out of which they ſhall be brought to receive the fearful ſentence. Remember, now is your ſeed-time ; and as ye ſow, ye ſhall reap. God's ſeed-time begins at death ; and at the reſurrection, the bodies of the wicked, that were ſown full of ſins, that ly down with them in the duſt (Job xx. 11.) ſhall ſpring up again, ſinful, wretched, and vile. Your bodies, which are now inſtruments of ſin, the Lord will lay aſide for the fire, at death ; and bring them forth for the fire, at the reſurrection. That body, which is not now employed in God's ſervice, but is abuſed by uncleanneſs and laſciviouſneſs, will then be brought forth in all its vileneſs, thenceforth to lodge with unclean ſpirits. The body of the drunkard ſhall then ſtagger by reaſon of the wine of the wrath of God, poured out to him, and poured into him, without mixture. Theſe who now pleaſe themſelves in their revellings, will reel to and fro at another rate ; when inſtead of their ſongs and muſick, they ſhall hear the ſound of the laſt trumpet. Many toil their bodies for worldly gain, who will be loth to diſtreſs them for the benefit of their ſouls ; by labour, unreaſonably hard, they will quite diſfit them for the ſervice of God : and, when they have done, will reckon it a very good reaſon for ſhifting duty, that they are already tired out with other buſineſs : but the day cometh when they will be made to abide a yet greater ſtreſs. They will go ſeveral miles for back and belly, who will not go half the way for the good of their immortal ſouls ! they will be ſickly and unable on the Lord's day, who will be tolerably well all the reſt of the week. But when that trumpet ſounds, the dead ſhall find their feet, and none ſhall be miſſing in that great congregation. When the bodies of the ſaints ſhine as the ſun, frightful will the looks of their perſecutors be. Fearful will their condition be, who ſometimes ſhut up the ſaints in naſty priſons, ſtigmatized, burned them to aſhes, hanged them, and ſtuck up their heads and hands in publick places, to fright others from the ways of righteouſneſs, which they ſuffered for. Many faces now fair, will then gather blackneſs. They ſhall be no more admired and careſsed for that beauty, which has a worm at the root, that will cauſe it to iſſue in loathſomeneſs and deformity. Ah ! what is that beauty, under which there lurks a monſtrous deformed, and graceleſs heart ? What but a ſorry paint, a ſlight varniſh : which will leave the body ſo much the more ugly, before that flaming-fire, in which the Judge ſhall be revealed from heaven, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the goſpel, 2 Theſſ. i. 7. 8. They ſhall be ſtript of all their ornaments, and not have a rag to cover their nakedneſs : but their carcaſſes ſhall be abhorring to all fleſh, and ſerve as a foil to ſet off the beauty and glory of the righteous, and make it appear the brighter.

Now is the time to ſecure for yourſelves, a part in the reſurrection of the juſt. The which if ye would do, unite with Jeſus Chriſt by faith, riſing ſpiritually from ſin, and glorifying God with your bodies. He is the reſurrection and the life, John xi. 25. If your bodies be members of Chriſt, temples of the Holy Ghoſt ; they ſhall certainly ariſe in glory. Get into this ark now, and ye ſhall come forth with joy into the new world. Riſe from your ſins : caſt away theſe grave-clothes, putting off your former luſts. How can one imagine, that theſe, who continue dead while they live, ſhall come forth, at the laſt day, unto the reſurrection of life ? But that will be the privilege of all thoſe, who having firſt conſecrated their ſouls and bodies to the Lord by faith, do glorify him with their bodies, as well as their ſouls : living and acting to him, and for him ; yea, and ſuffering for him too, when he calls them to it.

HEAD IV.

The General JUDGMENT.

MATTH. xxv. 31. 32. 33. 34. 41. 46.

When the Son of man ſhall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then ſhall he ſit upon the throne of his glory. And before him ſhall be gathered all nations ; and he ſhall ſeparate them one from another, as a ſhepherd divideth his ſheep from the goats : and he ſhall ſet the ſheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then ſhall the King ſay unto them on his right hand, Come, ye bleſſed, &c. *Unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye curſed,* &c. *And theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment : but the righteous into life eternal.*

THE dead being raiſed, and theſe found alive at the coming of the Judge, changed, follows the general judgment, plainly and awfully deſcribed in this portion of ſcripture ; in which we ſhall take notice of the following particulars. (1.) The coming of the Judge. When the Son of man ſhall come in his glory, &c. The Judge is Jeſus Chriſt the Son of man : the ſame, by whoſe almighty power, as he is God, the dead will be raiſed. He is alſo called the King, ver. 34. The judging of the world being an act of the Royal Mediator's kingly office. He will come in glory ; glorious in his own Perſon, and having a glorious retinue, even all the holy angels with him, to miniſter unto him at this great ſolemnity. (2.) The Judge's mounting the tribunal. He is a King, and therefore it is a throne, a glorious throne, He ſhall ſit upon the throne of his glory, ver. 31. (3.) The compearance of the parties. Theſe are all nations ; all and every one, ſmall and great, of whatſoever nation, who ever were, are, or ſhall be on the face of the earth ; all ſhall be gathered before him ; ſiſted before his tribunal. (4.) The ſorting of them. He ſhall ſeparate the elect ſheep and reprobate goats, ſetting each party by themſelves : as a ſhepherd who feeds his ſheep and goats together all the day, ſeparates them at night, ver. 32. The godly he will ſet on his right hand, as the moſt honourable place ; the wicked on the left, ver. 33. Yet ſo as they ſhall be both before him, ver. 32. It ſeems to be an alluſion to a cuſtom in the Jewiſh courts, in which, one ſat at the right hand of the Judge, who wrote the ſentence of abſolution ; another at their left, who wrote the ſentence of condemnation. (5.) The ſentencing of the parties, and that according to their works ; the righteous being abſolved, and the wicked condemned, ver. 34. 41. Laſtly, the execution of both ſentences, in the driving away of the wicked into hell, and carrying the godly to heaven, ver. 49.

DOCTRINE.

There ſhall be a general Judgment.

This doctrine I ſhall, (1.) confirm, (2.) explain, and (3.) apply.

I. For confirmation of this great truth, that there ſhall be a general judgment.

Firſt, It is evident from plain ſcripture-teſtimonies.

The world has in all ages been told of it. Enoch before the flood, taught it in his prophecy, related Jude ver. 14. 15. ‘ Behold the Lord cometh with ten thouſand of ‘ his ſaints, to execute judgment upon all, ’&c. Daniel deſcribes it, chap. vii. 9 10. ‘ I beheld till the thrones were caſt down, and the Ancient of days did ſit, whoſe garment was white as ſnow, and the hair of his head like pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery ſtream iſſued and came from before him; thouſand thouſands miniſtered unto him, and ten thouſand times ten thouſand ſtood before him; the judgment was ſet, and the books were opened.’ The Apoſtle is very expreſs. Acts xvii. 31. ‘ He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs by that man whom he hath ordained.’ See Matth xvi. 27. 2 Cor. v. 10. 2. Theſſ. i. 7. 8. 9. 10. Rev xx. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. God has not only ſaid it, but he has ſworn it, Rom. xiv. 10. 11. ‘ We muſt all ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt. For it is written, As I live, ſaith the Lord, every knee ſhall bow to me, and every tongue ſhall confeſs to God.’ So that the truth of God is moſt ſolemnly plighted for it.

Secondly, The rectoral juſtice and goodneſs of God, the ſovereign Ruler of the world, do neceſſarily require it, in as much as they require its being well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked. Howbeit, we often now ſee wickedneſs exalted, while truth and righteouſneſs fall in the ſtreets; piety oppreſſed, while profanity and irreligion do triumph. This is ſo very ordinary, that every one, who ſincerely embraceth the way of holineſs, muſt, and doth lay his account with the loſs of all he has, which the world can take away from him. Luke xiv. 26. ‘ If any man come to me, and hate not his ‘ father, and mother, and wife, and children, and bre- ‘ thren, and ſiſters, yea, and his own life alſo, he cannot ‘ be my diſciple.’ But it is inconſiſtent with the juſtice and goodneſs of God, that the affairs of men ſhould always continue in this ſtate, which they appear in, from one generation to another; but that every man be rewarded according to his work: and ſince that is not done in this life, there muſt be a judgment to come; ‘ See- ‘ ing it is a righteous thing with God to recompenſe ‘ tribulation to them that trouble you: and to you who ‘ are troubled, reſt with us, when the Lord Jeſus ſhall be ‘ revealed from heaven.’ 2 Theſſ. i. 6. 7. There will be a day, in which the tables will be turned; and the wicked ſhall be called to an account for all their ſins, and ſuffer the due puniſhment of them; and the pious ſhall be the proſperous; for, as the Apoſtle argues for the happy reſurrection of the ſaints, ‘ If in this life only ‘ we have hope in Chriſt, we are of all men moſt miſer- ‘ able.’ 1. Cor. xv. 19. It is true, God ſometimes puniſheth the wicked, in this life; that men may know, he is a God that judgeth in the earth: but yet much wickedneſs remains unpuniſhed, and undiſcovered; to be a pledge of the judgment to come. If none of the wicked were puniſhed here, they would conclude that God had utterly forſaken the earth: if all of them were puniſhed in this life, men would be apt to think, there is no after reckoning. Therefore, in the wiſdom of God, ſome are puniſhed now and ſome not. Sometimes the Lord ſmites ſinners, in the very act of ſin: to ſhew unto the world, that he is witneſs to all their wickedneſs, and will call them to an account for it. Sometimes he delays long, ere he ſtrike; that he may diſcover to the world, that he forgets not mens ill deeds, though he does not preſently puniſh them. Beſides all this, the ſins of many do outlive them; and the impure fountain, by them opened, runs long after they are dead and gone. As in the caſe of Jeroboam the firſt king of the ten tribes, whoſe ſin did run on all along unto the end of that unhappy kingdom, 2 Kings xvii. 22. ‘ The children of ‘ Iſrael walked in all the ſins of Jeroboam, which ‘ he did; they departed not from them, ver. 23. ‘ Until the Lord removed Iſrael out of his ſight.’

Thirdly, The reſurrection of Chriſt is a certain proof, that there ſhall be a day of Judgment. This argument Paul uſeth to convince the Athenians, that Jeſus Chriſt will be the Judge of the world; Whereof, ſays he, he hath given aſſurance to all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead, Acts xvii. 31. The Judge is already named, his patent written and ſealed, yea and read before all men, in his riſing again from the dead. Hereby God has given aſſurance of it, (or offered faith, Marg.) He hath, by raiſing Chriſt from the dead, exhibited his credentials as the Judge of the world. When, in the days of his humiliation, he was ſiſted before a tribunal, arraigned, accuſed, and condemned of men; he plainly told them of his judgment, and that he himſelf would be the Judge, Matth, xxvi. 64. ‘ Hereafter ſhall ye ſee the ‘ Son of man ſitting on the right hand of power, and ‘ coming in the clouds of heaven.’ And now that he was raiſed from the dead, though condemned as a blaſphemer on this very head; is it not an undeniable proof from heaven, of the truth of what he aſſerted? Moreover this was one of the great ends of Chriſt's death and reſurrection. For to this end Chriſt died and roſe, and revived, that he might be the Lord (i. e. The Lord Judge, as is evident from the context) both of the dead and of the living, Rom. xiv. 9.

Laſtly, Every man bears about with him a witneſs to this, within his own breaſt. Rom. ii. 15. *Which ſhew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conſcience alſo bearing witneſs, and their thoughts the mean while accuſing, or elſe excuſing one another.* There is a tribunal erected within every man, where conſcience is accuſer, witneſs, and judge, binding over the ſinner to the judgment of God. This fills the moſt profligate wretches with horror, and inwardly ſtings them, on the commiſſion of ſome atrocious crime; in effect ſummoning them to anſwer for it, before the judge of the quick and dead. And this it doth, even when the crime is ſecret, and hid from the eyes of the world. It reacheth thoſe, whom the laws of men cannot reach, becauſe of their power or craft. When men have fled from the judgment of their fellow-creatures; yet, go where they will, conſcience, as the ſupreme Judge's officer, ſtill keeps hold of them, reſerving them in its chains to the judgment of the great day. And whether they eſcape puniſhment from men, or fall by the hand of public juſtice, when they perceive death's approach, they hear from within, of this after-reckoning; being conſtrained to hearken thereto, in theſe the moſt ſerious minutes of their life. If there be ſome, in whom nothing of this doth appear, we have no more ground thence to conclude againſt it, than we have to conclude, that becauſe ſome men do not groan, therefore they have no pain; or that dying is a mere jeſt, becauſe there have been, who ſeemed to make little elſe of it. A good face may be put upon an ill conſcience: and the more hopeleſs mens caſe is, they reckon it the more their intereſt, to make no reflections on their ſtate and caſe. But every one, who will conſult himſelf ſeriouſly, ſhall find in himſelf the witneſs to the judgment to come. Even the Heathens wanted not a notion of it, though mixed with fictions of their own. Hence, though ſome of the Athenians, when they heard of the reſurrection of the dead, mocked, Acts xvii. 32; yet there is no account of their mocking, when they heard of the general judgment, ver. 31.

II. For explication, the following particulars may ſerve to give ſome view of the nature and tranſactions of that great day.

I. God ſhall judge the world by Jeſus Chriſt. *He will judge the world in righteouſneſs by that man, whom he hath ordained,* Acts xvii. 31. The pſalmiſt tells us, that God is Judge himſelf, Pſal. l. 6. The holy bleſſed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt is Judge, in reſpect of judiciary authority, dominion, and power: but the Son incarnate is the Judge, in reſpect of diſpenſation, and ſpecial exerciſe of that power. The judgment ſhall be exerciſed or performed by him, as the royal Mediator: for he has a delegated power of judgment from the Father, as his ſervant, his King, whom he hath ſet upon his holy hill of Zion, (Pſal. ii. 6.) and to whom he hath committed all judgment, John v. 22. This is a part of the Mediator's exaltation, given him in conſequence of his voluntary humiliation, Philip. ii. 8. 9. 10. *He humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs. Wherefore God alſo hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name,* (*i. e.* power and authority over all, to wit), That at (or in) the name of Jeſus (not the name Jeſus; that is not the name above every name, being common to others, as to Juſtus, Col. iv. 11. and Joſhua, Heb. iv. 8.) every knee ſhould bow. The which is explained by the apoſtle himſelf, of ſtanding before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, Rom. xiv. 10. 11. So he who was judged and condemned of men, ſhall be the Judge of men and angels.

II. Jeſus Chriſt the judge, deſcending from heaven into the air, (1 Theſſ. iv. 16. 17.) *ſhall come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory,* Matth. xxiv. 30. This his coming will be a mighty ſurprize to the world, which will be found in deep ſecurity; fooliſh virgins ſleeping, and the wiſe ſlumbering. There will then be much luxury and debauchery in the world, little ſobriety and watchfulneſs; a great throng of buſineſs, but a great ſcarcity of faith and holineſs. *As it was in the days of Noah, ſo alſo ſhall it be in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, untill the day that Noah entered into the ark: and the flood came, and deſtroyed them all. Likewiſe alſo as it was in the days of Lot: they did eat, they drank, they bought, they ſold, they planted, they builded. Even thus ſhall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed,* Luke xvii. 26. 27. 28. 30. The coming of the Judge will ſurpriſe ſome at markets, buying and ſelling; others at table, eating and drinking, and making merry; others buſy with their new plantings; ſome building new houſes; nay, ſome's wedding-day will be their own and the world's judgment-day. But the Judge cometh! the markets are marred; the buyer throws away what he has bought; the ſeller caſts down his money; they are raiſed from the table, and their mirth is extinguiſhed in a moment; though the tree be ſet in the earth, the gardiner may not ſtay to caſt the earth about it; the workmen throw away their tools, when the houſe is half built, and the owner regards it no more; the bridegroom, bride, and gueſts, muſt leave the wedding feaſt, and appear before the tribunal: for, Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye ſhall ſee him, Rev. i. 7. He ſhall come moſt gloriouſly; for he will come in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels, Mark viii. 38. When he came in the fleſh, to die for ſinners, he laid aſide the robes of his glory, and was deſpiſed, and rejected of men: but when he comes again, to judge the world, ſuch ſhall be his viſible glory and majeſty, that it ſhall caſt an eternal vail over all earthly glory, and fill his greateſt enemies with fear and dread. Never had prince or potentate in the world, ſuch a glorious train, as will accompany this Judge: all the holy angels ſhall come with him, for his honour and ſervice. Then he, who was led to the croſs with a band of ſoldiers, will be gloriouſly attended to the place of judgment, by (not a multitude of the heavenly hoſt, but) the whole hoſt of angels; all his holy angels, ſays the text.

III. At the coming of the Judge, the ſummons are given to the parties by the ſound of the laſt trumpet; at which the dead are raiſed, and theſe found alive changed; of which before, 1 Theſſ. iv. 16. 17. O loud trumpet, that ſhall be heard at once, in all corners of the earth, and of the ſea! O wonderful voice, that will not only diſturb thoſe who ſleep in the duſt; but effectually awaken, rouſe them out of their ſleep, and raiſe them from death! Were trumpets ſounding now, drums beating, furious ſoldiers crying and killing men, women and children running and ſhrieking, the wounded groaning and dying; thoſe who are in the graves, would have no more diſturbance, than if the world were in moſt profound peace. Yea, were ſtormy winds caſting down the lofty oaks, the ſeas roaring and ſwallowing up the ſhips, the moſt dreadful thunders going along the heavens, lightnings every where flaſhing, the earth quaking, trembling, opening, and ſwallowing up whole cities, and burying multitudes at once; the dead would ſtill enjoy a perfect repoſe, and ſleep ſoundly in the duſt; though their own duſt ſhould be thrown out of its place. But at the ſound of this trumpet, they ſhall all awake. The morning is come, they can ſleep no longer; the time of the dead, that they muſt be judged: they muſt get out of their graves, and appear before the Judge.

IV. The Judge ſhall ſit down on the tribunal; he ſhall ſit on the throne of his glory. Sometime he ſtood before a tribunal on earth, and was condemned as a malefactor: then he ſhall ſit on his own tribunal, and judge the world. Sometime he hung upon the croſs, covered with ſhame: then he ſhall ſit on a throne of glory. What this throne ſhall be, whether a bright cloud, or what elſe, I ſhall not enquire. Our eyes will give an anſwer to that queſtion at length. John ſaw a great white throne, Rev. xx. 11. *His throne* (ſays Daniel) *was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire,* chap. vii. 9. Whatever it be, doubtleſs it ſhall be a throne glorious beyond expreſſion; and, in compariſon with which, the moſt glorious throne on the earth is but a ſeat on a dunghill; and the ſight of it will equally ſurpriſe kings, who ſat on thrones in this life, and beggars who ſat on dunghills. It will be a throne, for ſtatelineſs and glory, ſuited to the quality of him, who ſhall ſit on it. Never had a judge ſuch a throne, and never had a throne ſuch a judge in it.

Leaving the diſcovery of the nature of the throne, untill that day, it concerns us more nearly to conſider what a Judge will ſit upon it; a point in which we are not left to uncertain conjectures. The Judge on the throne will be (1.) *A viſible Judge,* viſible to our bodily eyes, Rev. i. 7. Every eye ſhall ſee him. When God gave the law on mount Sinai, the people ſaw no ſimilitude, only they heard a voice: but when he calls the world to an account, how they have obſerved his law; the man Chriſt being Judge, we ſhall ſee our Judge with our eyes, either to our eternal comfort or confuſion: according to the entertainment we give him now. That very body which was crucified without the gates of Jeruſalem, betwixt two thieves, ſhall then be ſeen on the throne, ſhining in glory. We now ſee him ſymbolically in the ſacrament of his ſupper; the ſaints ſee him by the eye of faith: then, all ſhall ſee him with theſe eyes now in their heads. (2.) *A Judge having full authority and power,* to render unto every one according to his works. Chriſt, as God, hath authority of himſelf; and as Mediator, he hath a judicial power and authority, which his Father has inveſted him with, according to the covenant betwixt the Father and the Son, for the redemption of ſinners. And his divine glory will be a light, by which all men ſhall ſee clearly to read his commiſſion for this great and honourable employment. All power is given unto him in heaven and in earth, Matth. xxviii. 18. He hath the keys of hell and of death, Revel. i. 18. There can be no appeal from his tribunal: ſentence once paſt there, muſt ſtand for ever; there is no reverſing of it. All appeals are from an inferior court to a ſuperior one; but when God gives ſentence againſt a man, where can he find a higher court to bring his proceſs to? This judgment is the Mediator's judgment; and therefore the laſt judgment. If the Interceſſor be againſt us, who can be for us? If Chriſt condemn us, who will abſolve us? (3.) *A Judge of infinite wiſdom.* His eyes will pierce into, and clearly diſcern the moſt intricate caſes. His omniſcience qualifies him for judging of the moſt retired thoughts, as well as of words and works. The moſt ſubtile ſinner, ſhall not be able to outwit him, nor, by any artful management, to palliate the crime. He is the ſearcher of hearts, to whom nothing can be hid or perplexed; but all things are naked and open unto his eyes, Heb. iv. 13. (4.) *A moſt juſt Judge:* a Judge of perfect integrity. He is the righteous Judge, (2 Tim. iv. 8.) and his throne a great white throne, (Rev. xx. 11.) from whence no judgment ſhall proceed, but what is moſt pure and ſpotleſs. The Thebans painted juſtice blind, and without hands: for judges ought not to reſpect perſons, nor take bribes. The Areopagites judged in the dark; that they might not regard who ſpoke, but what was ſpoken. With the Judge on this throne, there will be no reſpect of perſons; he will neither regard the perſons of the rich, nor of the poor; but juſt judgment ſhall go forth, in every one's cauſe. Laſtly, An *omnipotent Judge*, able to put his ſentence in execution. The united force of devils and wicked men will be altogether unable to withſtand him. They cannot retard the execution of the ſentence againſt them one moment; far leſs can they ſtop it altogether. Thouſand thouſands (of angels) miniſter unto him, Dan. vii. 10. And, by the breath of his mouth, he can drive the curſed herd whither he pleaſeth.

V. The parties ſhall compear. Theſe are men and devils. Although thoſe laſt, the fallen angels, were, from the firſt moment of their ſinning, ſubjected to the wrath of God, and were caſt down to hell; and whereſoever they go, they carry their hell about with them: yet it is evident, that they are *reſerved unto judgment*, (2 Pet. ii. 4.) namely, *unto the judgment of the great day*, Jude 6. And then they ſhall be ſolemnly and publicly judged, 1 Cor. vi. 3. Know ye not that we ſhall judge angels? At that day they ſhall anſwer for their trade of ſinning and tempting to ſin; which they have been carrying on from the beginning. Then many a helliſh brat, which Satan has laid down at the ſaints door, but not adopted by them, ſhall be laid at the door of the true father of it, that is, the devil. And he ſhall receive the due reward of all the diſhonour he has done to God, and of all the miſchief he has done to men. Thoſe wicked ſpirits now in chains, (though not in ſuch ſtrait cuſtody, but that they can go about, like roaring lions, ſeeking whom they may devour,) ſhall then receive their final ſentence, and be ſhut up in their den, namely, in the priſon of hell; where they ſhall be held in extreme and unſpeakable torment, through all eternity, Rev. xx. 10. *And the devil that deceived them, was caſt into the lake of fire and brimſtone, where the beaſt and the falſe prophet are, and ſhall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.* In proſpect of which, the devils ſaid to Chriſt, *Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?* Matth. viii. 29.

But what we are chiefly concerned to take notice of, is the caſe of men at that day. All men muſt compear before this tribunal. All of each ſex, of every age, quality, and condition; the great and ſmall, noble and ignoble: none are excepted. Adam and Eve, with all their ſons and daughters, (every one who has had, or, to the end of the world, ſhall have a living ſoul united to a body,) will make up this great congregation. Even thoſe, who refuſed to come to the throne of grace, ſhall be forced to the bar of juſtice: for there can be no hiding from the all-ſeeing Judge, no flying from him who is preſent every where, no reſiſting of him who is armed with Almighty power. We muſt all ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, 2 Cor. v. 10. *Before him ſhall be gathered all nations*, ſays the text. This is to be done by the miniſtry or angels. By them ſhall the elect be gathered, Mark xiii. 27. Then ſhall he ſend his angels, and ſhall gather together his elect from the four winds. And they ſhall alſo gather the reprobate. Matth. xiii. 40. 41. So ſhall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man ſhall ſend forth his angels, and they ſhall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity. From all corners of the world, ſhall the inhabitants thereof be gathered unto the place, where he ſhall ſet his throne for judgment.

VI. There ſhall be a ſeparation made betwixt the righteous and the wicked; the fair company of the elect ſheep being ſet on Chriſt's right hand, and the reprobate goats on his left. There is no neceſſity to wait for this ſeparation, till the trial be over; ſince the parties do riſe out of their graves, with plain outward marks of diſtinction, as was cleared before. The ſeparation ſeems to be effected by that double gathering, before mentioned, the one of the elect, Mark xiii. 27. the other of them that do iniquity, Matth. xiii. 41. The elect, being caught up together in the clouds, meet the Lord in the air, 1 Theſſ. iv. 17. and ſo are ſet on his right hand; and the reprobate left on the earth, (Matth. xxiv. 40.) upon the Judge's left hand. Here is now a total ſeparation of two parties, who were always oppoſite to each other, in their principles, aims, and manner of life, who, when together, were a burden the one to the other, under which the one groaned, and the other raged: but now they are freely parted; never to come together any more. The iron and clay (allude to Dan. ii. 41. 43.) which could never mix, are quite ſeparated; the one being drawn up into the air, by the attractive virtue of the ſtone cut out of the mountain, namely, Jeſus Chriſt; the other left upon its earth, to be trode under foot.

Now let us look to the right hand, and there we will ſee a glorious company of ſaints ſhining, as ſo many ſtars in their orbs; and with a chearful countenance beholding him who ſitteth upon the throne. Here will be two wonderful ſights, which the world uſed not to ſee. (1.) *A great congregation of ſaints, in which not ſo much as one hypocrite.* There was a bloody Cain in Adam's family; a curſed Ham in Noah's family in the ark: a treacherous Judas in Chriſt's own family; but in that company ſhall be none but ſealed ones, members of Chriſt, having all one Father. And this is a ſight reſerved for that day. (2.) *All the godly upon one ſide.* Seldom or never do the ſaints on earth make ſuch a harmony, but there are ſome jarring ſtrings among them. It is not to be expected, that men who ſee but in part, though they be all going to one city, will agree as to every ſtep in the way: no, we need not look for it, in this ſtate of imperfection. But at that day, Paul and Barnabas ſhall meet in peace and unity, though once the contention was ſo ſharp between them, that they departed aſunder, the one from the other, Acts xv. 39. There ſhall be no more diviſions, no more ſeparate ſtanding amongſt thoſe who belong to Chriſt. All the godly, of the different parties, ſhall then be upon one ſide; ſeeing, whatever were their differences in leſſer things, while in the world, yet even then they met and concentred all in one Lord Jeſus Chirſt, by a true and lively faith, and in the one way of holineſs, or practical godlineſs. And the naughty hypocrites, of whatſoever party, ſhall be led forth with the workers of iniquity.

Look to the left hand, and there you will ſee the curſed goats (all the wicked ones, from Cain to the laſt ungodly perſon, who ſhall be in the world) gathered together into one moſt miſerable congregation. There are many aſſemblies of the wicked now; then there ſhall be but one. But all of them ſhall be preſent there, brought together as one herd for the ſlaughter, bellowing and roaring, weeping and howling for the miſeries come, and that are coming on them. (And remember, thou ſhalt not be a mere ſpectator, to look at theſe two ſo different companies; but muſt thyſelf take thy place in one of the two, and ſhalt ſhare with the company, whatever hand it be upon.) Theſe who now abhor no ſociety ſo much as that of the ſaints, would then be glad to be allowed to get in among them; though it were but to ly among their feet. But then not one tare ſhall be found with the wheat; *he will thoroughly purge his floor.* Many of the right hand men of this world, will be left hand men in that day. Many, who muſt have the door on the right hand of theſe, who are better than they (if the righteous be more excellent than his neighbour) ſhall then be turned to the left hand, as moſt deſpicable wretches. O how terrible will this ſeparation be to the ungodly! How dreadful will this gathering of them together into one company be! What they will not believe, they will then ſee, namely, that but few are ſaved. They think it enough now, to be neighbour like, and can ſecurely follow the multitude: but the multitude on the left hand will yield them no comfort. How will it ſting the ungodly Chriſtian, to ſee himſelf ſet on the ſame hand with Turks and Pagans? How will it gall men to find themſelves ſtanding, profane Proteſtants, with idolatrous Papiſts; praying people, with their profane neighbours, who mocked at religious exerciſes; formal profeſſors, ſtrangers to the new birth and the power of godlineſs, with perſecutors! Now there are many oppoſite ſocieties in the world: but then all the ungodly ſhall be in one ſociety. And how dreadful will the faces of companions in ſin be to one another there! What doleful ſhrieks, when the whoremonger and his whore ſhall meet; when the drunkards, who have had many a jovial day together, ſhall ſee one another in the face; when the huſband and wife, the parents and children, maſters and ſervants, and neighbours, who have been ſnares and ſtumbling blocks to one another to the ruin of their own ſouls, and theſe of their relatives, ſhall meet again in that miſerable ſociety? Then there will be curſes inſtead of ſalutations; and tearing of themſelves, and raging againſt one another, inſtead of the wonted embraces.

VII. The parties ſhall be tried. The trial cannot be difficult, in regard the Judge is omniſcient, and nothing can be hid from him. But, that his righteous judgment may be made evident to all, he will ſet the hidden things of darkneſs in cleareſt light at that trial, 1 Cor. iv. 5.

Men ſhall be tried, Firſt, Upon their works; for God ſhall bring every work into judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil. Eccleſ. xii. 14. The Judge will try every man's converſation, and ſet his deeds done in the body, with all the circumſtances thereof, in a true light. Then will many actions, commended and applauded of men, as good and juſt, be diſcovered to have been evil and abominable, in the ſight of God: and many works, now condemned by the world, will be approven and commended by the great Judge, as good and juſt. Secret things will be brought to light; and what was hide from the view of the world, ſhall be laid open. Wickedneſs, which hath kept its lurking place in ſpight of all human ſearch, will then be brought forth to the glory of God, and the confuſion of impenitent ſinners who hide it. The world appears now very vile in the eyes of thoſe, who are exerciſed to godlineſs: but it will then appear a thouſand times more vile, when that which is done of men in ſecret, comes to be diſcovered. Every good action ſhall then be remembered; and the hidden religion and good works, moſt induſtriouſly concealed by the ſaints, from the eyes of men, ſhall no more lie hid: for though the Lord will not allow men to *proclaim every man his own goodneſs;* yet he himſelf will do it in due time. Secondly, Their words ſhall be judged, Matth. xii. 37. *For by thy words thou ſhalt be juſtified, and by thy words thou ſhalt be condemned.* Not a word ſpoken for God and his cauſe in the world, from love to himſelf, ſhall be forgotten. They are all kept in remembrance, and ſhall be brought forth as evidences of faith, and of an intereſt in Chriſt, . Mal. iii. 16. *Then they that feared the Lord ſpake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before him.*---ver. 17. *And they ſhall be mine, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, in that day when I make up my jewels.* And the tongue which did run at random, ſhall then confeſs to God; and the ſpeaker ſhall find it to have been followed, and every word noted, that dropped from his unſanctified lips. *Every idle word that men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give an account thereof in the day of judgment,* Matth. xii. 36. And if they ſhall give account of idle words, that is, words ſpoken to no good purpoſe, neither for God's glory, one's own, nor one's neighbour's good; how much more ſhall mens wicked words, their ſinful oaths, curſes, lies, filthy communications, and bitter words, be called over again, that day? The tongues of many ſhall then fall upon themſelves, and ruin them. Thirdly, Mens thoughts ſhall be brought into the judgment: the Judge will make manifeſt the counſels of the hearts, 1 Cor. iv. 5. Thoughts go free from man's judgment, but not from the judgment of the heart-ſearching God, who knows mens thoughts, without the help of ſigns to diſcern them by. The ſecret ſprings of mens actions will then be brought to light; and the ſins, that never came further than the heart, will then be laid open. O what a figure will man's corrupt nature make, when his inſide is turned out, and all his ſpeculative impurities are expoſed! The rottenneſs that is within many a whited ſepulchre, the ſpeculative filthineſs and wantonneſs, murder and malignity, now lurking in the hearts of men, as in the chambers of imagery, will then be diſcovered, and what good was in the hearts of any, ſhall no more lie concealed. If it was in their hearts to build a houſe to the Lord, they ſhall hear, that they did well that it was in their heart.

This trial will be righteous and impartial, accurate and ſearching, clear and evident. The Judge is the righteous Judge, and he will do right to every one. He has a juſt balance for good and evil actions, and for honeſt and falſe hearts. The fig-leaf cover of hypocriſy will then be blown aſide, and the hypocrite's nakedneſs will appear; as when the Lord came to judge Adam and Eve in the cool (or, as the word is, in the wind) of the day, Gen. iii. 8. *The fire* (which tries things moſt exquiſitely) *ſhall try every man's work, of what ſort it is,* 1 Cor. iii. 13. Man's judgment is oft-times perplexed and confuſed: but here the whole proceſs ſhall be clear and evident, as written with a ſun-beam. It ſhall be clear to the Judge, to whom no caſe can be intricate; to the parties, who ſhall be convinced, Jude 15. And the multitudes on both ſides ſhall ſee, the Judge is clear when he judgeth; for then the heavens ſhall declare his righteouſneſs in the audience of all the world; and ſo it ſhall be univerſally known, Pſal. l. 6.

On theſe accounts it is, that this trial is held out in the ſcripture, under the notion of opening of books; and men are ſaid to be judged out of thoſe things written in the books, Rev. xx. 12. The Judge of the world, who infallibly knoweth all things, hath no need of books to be laid before him, to prevent miſtake in any point of law or fact: but the expreſſion points at his proceeding, as moſt nice, accurate, juſt, and well grounded, in every ſtep of it. Now there are four books, that ſhall be opened in that day.

Firſt, The book of God's remembrance or omniſcience, Mal. iii. 16. This is an exact record of every man's ſtate, thoughts, words, and deeds, good or evil: it is, as it were, a day-book, in which the Lord puts down all that paſſeth in mens hearts, lips, and lives; and it is a filling up every day that one lives. In it are recorded mens ſins and good works, ſecret and open, with all their circumſtances. Here are regiſtered all their privileges, mercies, temporal and ſpiritual, ſometime laid to their hand; the checks, admonitions, and rebukes, given by teachers, neighbour's afflictions, and mens own conſciences; every thing in its due order. This book will ſerve only as a libel, in reſpect of the ungodly: but it will be for another uſe in reſpect of the godly, namely, for a memorial of their good. The opening of it is the Judge's bringing to light what is written in it; the reading, as it were, of the libel and memorial, reſpectively, in their hearing.

Secondly, The book of conſcience will be opened, and ſhall be as a thouſand witneſſes to prove the fact, Rom. ii. 15. ‘Which ſhew the work of the law written in ‘their hearts, their conſcience alſo bearing witneſs.’ Conſcience is a cenſor going with every man whitherſoever he goes, taking an account of his deeds done in the body, and, as it were, noting them in a book: the which being opened, will be found a double of the former, ſo far as it relates to one's own ſtate and caſe. Much is written in it, which cannot be read now; the writing of conſcience being, in many caſes, like to that which is made with the juice of lemons, not to be read, till it be held before the fire: but then men ſhall read it clearly and diſtinctly: the fire which is to try every man's work, will make the book of conſcience legible in every point.

Though the book be ſealed now, (the conſcience blind, dumb, and deaf), the ſeals will then be broken, and the book opened. There ſhall be no more a weak or miſinformed conſcience, among theſe on the right hand, or theſe on the left. There ſhall not be a ſilent conſcience, and far leſs a ſeared conſcience, amongſt all the ungodly crew: but their conſciences ſhall be moſt quick-ſighted, and moſt lively, in that day. None ſhall then call good evil, or evil good. Ignorance of what ſin is, and what things are ſins, will have no place among them: and the ſubtile reaſonings of men, in favour of their luſts, will then be for ever baffled by their own conſciences. None ſhall have the favour (if I may ſay ſo) of lying under the ſoft covert of deluſion: but they ſhall all be convicted by their conſcience. Nill they, will they, they ſhall look on this book, read, and be confounded, and ſtand ſpeechleſs; knowing that nothing is charged upon them by miſtake; ſince this is a book, which was always in their own cuſtody. Thus ſhall the Judge make every man ſee himſelf, in the glaſs of his own conſcience, which will make quick work.

Thirdly, The book of the law ſhall be opened. This book is the ſtandard and rule, by which is known what is right, and what is wrong; as alſo, what ſentence is to be paſſed accordingly, on theſe who are under it. As to the opening of this book, in its ſtatutory part, which ſhews what is ſin, and what is duty; it falls in with the opening of the book of conſcience. For conſcience is ſet by the ſovereign Lawgiver, in every man's breaſt, to be his private teacher, to ſhew him the law, and his private paſtor, to make application of the ſame; and at that day will be perfectly fit for its office; ſo that the conſcience, which is muſt ſtupid now, ſhall then read to the man, moſt accurate, but dreadful lectures on the law. But what ſeems (mainly at leaſt) pointed at, by the opening of this book, is the opening of that part of it, which determines the reward of mens works. Now, the law promiſeth life, upon perfect obedience: but none can be found on the right hand, or on the left, who will pretend to that, when once the book of conſcience is opened, it threateneth death upon diſobedience, and will effectually bring it upon all under its dominion. And this part of the book of the law, determining the reward of mens works, is opened, only to ſhew what muſt be the portion of the ungodly, and that there they may read their ſentence before it be pronounced. But it is not opened for the ſentence of the ſaints; for no ſentence abſolving a ſinner, could ever be drawn out of it. The law promiſeth life, not as it is a rule of actions, but as a covenant of works: And therefore innocent man could not have demanded life upon his obedience, till the law was reduced into the form of a covenant; as was ſhewn before. But the ſaints having been, in this life, brought under a new covenant, namely, the covenant of grace, were dead to the law, as a covenant of works, and it was dead to them. Wherefore, as they ſhall not have any fears of death from it, ſo they can have no hopes of life from it, ſince *they are not under the law, but under grace*, Rom. vi. 14. But, for their ſentence, *another book is opened*; of which in the next place.

Thus the book of the law is opened, for the ſentence againſt all thoſe on the left hand: and by it they will clearly ſee the juſtice of the judgment againſt them, and how the Judge proceeds therein according to law. Nevertheleſs, there will be this difference, namely, that theſe who had only the natural law, and lived not under any ſpecial revelation, ſhall be judged by that law of nature they had in their hearts; which law bears, that they who commit ſuch things (as they will ſtand convicted of) are worthy of death, Rom. i. 23. But theſe, who had the written law, to whom the word of God came, as it has ſounded in the viſible church, ſhall be judged by that written law. So ſays the apoſtle, Rom. ii. 12. *For as many as have ſinned without* (the written) *law, ſhall periſh without* (the written) *law; and as many as have ſinned in the law* (i. e. under the written law) *ſhall be judged by the* (written) *law*.

Laſtly, *Another book* ſhall be opened, *which is the book of life*, Rev. xx. 12. In this, the names of all the elect are written, as Chriſt ſaid to his diſciples, Luke x. 20. *Your names are written in heaven.* This book contains God's gracious and unchangeable purpoſe, to bring all the elect to eternal life; and that, in order thereto, they be redeemed by the blood of his Son, effectually called, juſtified, adopted, ſanctified, and raiſed up by him at the laſt day without ſin. It is now lodged in the Mediator's hand, as the book of *the manner of the kingdom*, and having perfected the work the Father gave him to do; he ſhall on the great day produce, and open the book, and preſent the perſons therein named, *faultleſs before the preſence of his glory*. Jude 24. *Not having ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing*, Eph. v. 27. None of them all, who are named in the book ſhall be miſſing. They ſhall be found qualified, according to the order of the book, redeemed, called, juſtified, ſanctified, raiſed up without ſpot: what remains then, but that, according to the ſame book, they obtain the great end, namely, everlaſting life. This may be gathered from that precious promiſe, Rev. iii. 5. *He that overcometh, the ſame ſhall be clothed in raiment* (being raiſed in glory) *and I will confeſs his name* (it ſhall be, as it were, read out among the reſt of God's elect) *before my father, and before his angels*. Here is the ground of the ſaints abſolviture, the ground of the bleſſed ſentence they receive. The book of life being opened, it will be known to all, who are elected and who are not. Thus far of the trial of the parties.

Eightly, Then ſhall the Judge pronounce that bleſſed ſentence on the ſaints, *Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*, Matth. xxv. 34. It is moſt probable, the man Chriſt will pronounce it with an audible voice; which not only all the ſaints, but all the wicked likewiſe ſhall hear and underſtand. Who can conceive the inexpreſſible joy, with which theſe happy ones ſhall hear theſe words? Who can imagine the fulneſs of joy, which ſhall be poured into their hearts, with theſe words reaching their ears? And who can conceive how much of hell ſhall break into the hearts of all the ungodly crew, by theſe words of heaven? It is certain this ſentence ſhall be pronounced, before the ſentence of damnation, Matth. xxv. 34. *Then ſhall the King ſay unto them on his right hand, Come ye bleſſed*, &c. *Ver.* 41. *Then ſhall he ſay alſo to them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye curſed*, &c. There is no need of this order, that the ſaints may, without fear or affrightment, hear the other ſentence on the reprobate: they who are raiſed in glory, caught up to meet the Lord in the air, preſented without ſpot, and whoſe ſouls (for the far greater part of them) have been ſo long in heaven before, ſhall not be capable of any ſuch fear. But hereby they will be orderly brought in, to ſit in judgment, as Chriſt's aſſeſſors, againſt the ungodly; whoſe torment will be aggravated by it. It will be a hell to them, to be kept out of hell, till they ſee the doors of heaven opened to receive the ſaints, who once dwelt in the ſame world with them; and perhaps in the ſame country, pariſh, or town, and ſat under the ſame miniſtry with themſelves. Thus will they ſee heaven afar off, to make their hell the hotter. Like that unbelieving lord, 2 Kings vii. 19. 20. They ſhall ſee the plenty with their eyes, but ſhall not eat thereof. Every word of the bleſſed ſentence ſhall be like an envenomed arrow ſhot into their hearts, while they ſee what they have loſt, and from thence gather what they are to expect.

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This ſentence paſſeth on the ſaints according to their works, Rev. xx. 12. but not for their works, nor for their faith neither, as if eternal life were merited by them. The ſentence itſelf overthrows this abſurd conceit. The kingdom they are called to, was prepared for them, from the foundation of the world; not left to be merited by themſelves, who were but of yeſterday. They inherit it as ſons, but procure it not to themſelves, as ſervants do the reward of their work. They were redeemed by the blood of Chriſt, and cloathed with his ſpotleſs righteouſneſs, which is the proper cauſe of the ſentence. They were alſo qualified for heaven, by the ſanctification of his Spirit; and hence it is according to their works: ſo that the ungodly world ſhall ſee now, that the Judge of the quick and dead does good to them, who were good. Therefore it is added to the ſentence, *For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat*, &c. ver. 35. 36. which doth not denote the ground, but the evidence of their right to heaven; as if a judge ſhould ſay, he abſolves a man purſued for debt; for the witneſſes depone that it is paid already. So the apoſtle ſays, 1 Cor. x. 5. *But with many of them God was not well pleaſed, for they were overthrown in the wilderneſs.* Their overthrow in the wilderneſs was not the ground of God's diſpleaſure with them, but it was an evidence of it. And thus our Lord teacheth us the neceſſary connection betwixt glory and good works, namely, works evangeſically good; works having a reſpect to Jeſus Chriſt, and done out of faith in him, and love to him, without which they will not be regarded in that day. And the ſaints will ſo far be judged according to ſuch works, that the degrees of glory amongſt them ſhall be according to theſe works! For it is an eternal truth, *He that ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall reap ſparingly*, 2 Cor. ix. 6.

Thus ſhall the good works of the godly have a glorious, but a gratuitous reward; a reward of grace, not of debt, which will fill them with wonder at the riches of free grace, and the Lord's condeſcending to take any notice, eſpecially ſuch public notice, of their poor worthleſs works. The which ſeems to be the import of what they are ſaid to anſwer, ſaying, Lord, when ſaw we thee an hungred? &c. ver. 37. 38. 39. And may they not juſtly wonder to ſee themſelves ſet down to the marriage-ſupper of the Lamb, in conſequenceof a dinner or ſupper, a little meat or drink, (ſuch as they had), which they gave to a hungry or thirſty member of Chriſt, for his ſake? O plentiful harveſt, following upon the ſeed of good works! Rivers of pleaſures ſpringing up from (perhaps) a cup of cold water given to a diſciple, in the name of a diſciple! Eternal manſions of glory riſing out of a night's lodging given to a ſaint, who was a ſtranger! Everlaſting robes of glory given in exchange of a new coat, or (it may be) an old one, beſtowed on ſome ſaint, who had not neceſſary cloathing! A viſit to a ſick ſaint, repayed by Chriſt himſelf, coming in the glory of his Father, with all his holy angels! A viſit made to a poor priſoner for the cauſe of Chriſt, repayed with a viſit from the Judge of all, taking away the viſitant with him to the palace of heaven, there to be ever with himſelf! Theſe things will be matter of everlaſting wonder; and ſhould ſtir up all, to ſow liberally in time, while the ſeed-time of good works do laſte. But it is Chriſt's ſtamp on good works, that puts a value on them, in the eye of a gracous God; which ſeems to be the import of our Lord's reply, ver. 40. *In as much as ye have done it unto one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

IX. Now the ſaints having received their own ſentence, they ſhall judge the world, 1 Cor. vi. 2. This was not fulfilled, when the empire became Chriſtian, and Chriſtians were made magiſtrates. No, the Pſalmiſt tells us, This honour have all the ſaints, Pſal. cxlix. 9. And the apoſtle, in the forecited place, adds, And if the world ſhall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the ſmalleſt matters? ver. 3. Know ye not that we ſhall judge angels? Being called, they come to receive their kingdom, in the view of angels and men: they go, as it were, from the bar to the throne, To him that overcometh, will I grant to ſit with me in my throne, Rev. iii. 21. They ſhall not only judge the world, in Chriſt their head, by way of communion with him; by their works compared with theſe of the ungodly; or by way of teſtimony againſt them: but they ſhall be aſſeſſors to Jeſus Chriſt the Judge, giving their voice againſt them, conſenting to his judgment as juſt, and ſaying Amen to the doom pronounced againſt all the ungodly: as is ſaid of the ſaints, upon the judgment of the great whore, Rev. xix. 1. 2. *Hallelujah-----for true and righteous are his judgments.* Thus the upright ſhall have dominion over them, in the morning of the reſurrection, Pſal. xlix. 14. Then, and not till then, ſhall that be fully accompliſhed, which ye may read, Pſal. cxlix. 6. 7. 8, 9. *Let the high praiſes of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged ſword in their hand, to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and puniſhments upon the people---- -this honour have all his ſaints.* O! what a ſtrange turn of affairs will appear here! What an aſtoniſhing ſight will it be, to ſee wicked church-men and ſtateſmen, ſtanding as criminals before the ſaints, whom ſometimes they condemned as heretics, rebels and traitors! To ſee men of riches and power ſtand pale-faced, before theſe whom they oppreſſed! To ſee the mocker ſtand trembling before theſe he mocked! The worldly-wiſe man, before theſe whom he accounted fools! Then ſhall the deſpiſed faces of the ſaints be dreadful faces to the wicked: and thoſe who ſometimes were the ſong of the drunkards, ſhall then be a terror to them. All wrongs muſt be righted at length, and every one ſet in his proper place.

X. The Judge ſhall pronounce the ſentence of damnation on all the ungodly multitude. *Then ſhall he ſay unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*, ver. 41. Fearful doom! and that from the ſame mouth from whence proceeded the ſentence of abſolution before. It was an aggravation of the miſery of the Jews, when their city was deſtroyed, that they were ruined by one who was accounted the darling of the world. O! what an aggravation of the miſery of the wicked will it be, that he ſhall pronounce this ſentence alſo! to hear the curſe from mount Zion, muſt needs be moſt terrible. To be damned by him, who came to ſave ſinners, muſt be double damnation. But thus it ſhall be. The lamb of God ſhall rore as a lion againſt them! he ſhall excommunicate them, and caſt them out of his preſence for ever, by a ſentence from the throne, ſaying, *Depart from me, ye curſed;* he ſhall adjudge them to everlaſting fire, and the ſociety of devils for evermore. And this ſentence alſo, we ſuppoſe, ſhall be pronounced with an audible voice, by the man Chriſt. And all the ſaints ſhall ſay, *Hallelujah, true and righteous are his judgments.* None were ſo compaſſionate as the ſaints, when on earth, during the time of God's patience. But now that time is at an end; their compaſſion on the ungodly is ſwallowed up in joy, in the Mediator's glory, and his execution of juſt judgment, by which his enemies are made his footſtool. Though ſometimes the righteous man did weep in ſecret places for their pride, and becauſe they would not hear; yet then he *ſhall rejoyce when he ſeeth the vengeance, he ſhall waſh his feet in the blood of the wicked*, Pſal. lviii. 10. No pity ſhall then be ſhewn to them from their neareſt relations. The godly wife ſhall applaud the juſtice of the Judge, in the condemnation of her ungodly huſband: the godly huſband ſhall ſay Amen to the damnation of her who lay in his boſom; the godly parents ſhall ſay Hallelujah, at the paſſing of the ſentence againſt their ungodly child: and the godly child ſhall, from his heart, approve the damnation of his wicked parents, the father who begat him, and the mother who bore him. The ſentence is juſt: they are judged according to their works, Rev. xx. 12.

There is no wrong done them. *For I was an hungry*, ſaith our Lord, *and ye gave me no meat: I was thirſty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a ſtranger, and ye took me.*

not in : naked, and ye clothed me not : ſick, and in priſon, and ye viſited me not, ver. 42. 43. Theſe are not only evidences of their ungodly and curſed ſtate, but moſt proper cauſes and grounds of their condemnation ; for though good works do not merit ſalvation, yet evil works merit damnation. Sins of one kind only, namely, of omiſſion, are here mentioned ; nor that theſe alone ſhall then be diſcovered, (for the opening of the books lays all open) but becauſe theſe, though there were no more, are ſufficient to damn unpardoned ſinners. And if men ſhall be condemned for ſins of omiſſion, much more for ſins of commiſſion. The omiſſion of works of charity and mercy, is condeſcended on particularly, to ſtop the mouths of the wicked ; for it is moſt juſt, that he have judgment without mercy, that hath ſhewed no mercy, James ii. 13. The mentioning of the omiſſion of acts of charity and mercy towards the diſtreſſed members of Chriſt, intimates, that it is the judgment of thoſe who have heard of Chriſt in the goſpel, that is principally intended here, in this portion of ſcripture ; and that the ſlighting of Chriſt will be the great cauſe of the ruin of thoſe who hear the goſpel ; but the enmity of the hearts of the wicked againſt Chriſt himſelf, is diſcovered by the entertainment they now give to his members.

In vain will they ſay, *When ſaw we thee an hungred, or a thirſt ?* &c. ver. 44. For the Lord reckons, and will reckon the world's unkindneſs to his people, unkindneſs to himſelf ; *In as much as ye did it not to one of the leaſt of theſe, ye did it not to me*, ver. 45. O meat and drink unhappily ſpared, when a member of Chriſt was in need of it ! O wretched neglect, that the ſtranger ſaint was not taken in ! it had been better for them, that they had quitted their own room, and their own bed, than he had wanted lodging. O curſed cloathing, may the wicked ſay, that was in my houſe, locked up in my cheſt, or hanging in my wardrobe, and was not brought out to clothe ſuch a one ! O that I had ſtripped myſelf, rather than he had gone away without cloathing ? Curſed buſineſs, that diverted me from viſiting ſuch a ſick ſaint ? O that I had rather watched whole nights with him. Wretch that I was ? why did I ſit at eaſe in my houſe, when he was in priſon, and did not viſit him ? But now the tables are turned : Chriſt's ſervants ſhall eat, but I ſhall be hungry ; his ſervants ſhall drink, but I ſhall be thirſty : they rejoyce, but I am aſhamed, Iſa. lxv. 13. They are taken in, but I am caſt out, and bid depart : they are cloathed with robes of glory, but I walk naked, and they ſee my ſhame, Rev. xvi. 15. They are raiſed up on high, beyond the reach of ſickneſs or pain ; but I muſt now ly down in ſorrow, Iſa. l. 11. Now ſhall they go to the palace of heaven, but I muſt go to the priſon of hell.

But if our Lord thus reſents men's neglecting to help his people under theſe, and the like diſtreſſes ; what may they expect, who are the authors and inſtruments of them ? if they ſhall be fed with wrath, who fed them not, when they were hungry ; what ſhall become of thoſe, who robbed and ſpoiled them, and took their own bread away from them ? What a full cup of wrath ſhall be the portion of thoſe who were ſo far from giving them meat or drink, when hungry or thirſty, that they made it a crime for others to entertain them, and made themſelves drunken with their blood ! they muſt lodge with devils for evermore, who took not in the Lord's people, when ſtrangers ; then, what a lodging ſhall thoſe have, who drave them out of their own houſes, out of their native land, and made them ſtrangers ? Men will be condemned for not cloathing them, when naked : then how heavy muſt the ſentence of thoſe be, who have ſtript them, and made them go without cloathing ? Surely, if not viſiting of them in ſickneſs, or in a priſon, ſhall be ſo ſeverely puniſhed : they ſhall not eſcape a moſt heavy doom, who have caſt them into priſons, and have put them under ſuch hardſhips, as have impaired their health, brought ſickneſs on them, and cut their days in priſon, or out of priſon.

To put a face upon ſuch wicked practices, men will pretend to retain an honour for Chriſt and religion, while they thus treat his members, walking in his ways, and keeping the truth. They are here repreſented to ſay, ‘ When ſaw we thee an hungred, or a-thirſt, or a ſtranger, or naked, or ſick, or in priſon, and did not miniſter unto thee ?’ ver. 44. As if they ſhould ſay, Our bread, drink, lodging, cloathing and viſits, were indeed refuſed, but not to Chriſt ; but to a ſet of men, of a bad character, men who turned the world upſide down, (Acts xvii. 9.) who troubled Iſrael, (2 Kings xviii. 17.) an humorous and fantaſtic ſort of people, having laws diverſe from all people ; factious and rebellious (they did not keep the king's laws) and therefore a very dangerous ſet of men ; it was not for the King's profit to ſuffer them, Eſther iii. 8. But although men caſt iniquity upon the godly, and give them ill names, that they may treat them as criminals ; all theſe pretences will avail them nothing, in the great day, before the righteous Judge, nor before their own conſciences neither : but the real ground of their enmity againſt the ſaints, will be found (to their own conviction) to be their enmity againſt Chriſt himſelf. This ſeems to be the import of the objection of the damned, (ver. 44. and of the anſwer to it, ver. 45.) ‘ In as much as ye did it not to one of the leaſt of theſe, ye did it not to me.’

Laſtly, Sentence being paſt on both parties, follows the full execution of the ſame, ver. 46. And theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment, but the righteous into life eternal. The damned ſhall get no reprieve, but go to their place without delay ; they ſhall be driven away from the judgment-ſeat into hell ; and the ſaints ſhall enter into the King's palace, Pſal. xlv. 15. namely, into heaven, the ſeat of the bleſſed. But our Lord Chriſt and his glorious company, ſhall keep the field that day, and ſee the backs of all their enemies ; for the damned go off firſt.

In this day of the Lord, the great day, ſhall be the general conflagration ; by which thoſe viſible heavens, the earth, and ſea ſhall paſs away. Not that they ſhall be annihilated, (or reduced to nothing) that is not the operation of fire ; but they ſhall be diſſolved, and purged by that fire, from all the effects of ſin, or of the curſe, upon them ; and then renewed, and made more glorious and ſtable. Of this conflagration, the Apoſtle Peter ſpeaks, 2 Pet. iii. 10. ‘ But the day of the Lord will come, as a thief in the night : in the which the heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat : the earth alſo, and the works that are therein ſhall be burnt up.’ See alſo ver. 7. 12. And of the renewing of the world, he adds, ver. 13. ‘ Nevertheleſs we, according to his promiſe, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs.

It ſeems moſt agreeable to the ſcriptures, and to the nature of the thing, to conceive this conflagration to follow after the general judgment ; ſentence being paſſed on both parties before it. And I judge it probable, that it will fall in with the putting of the ſentence in execution againſt the damned ; ſo as they ſhall (according to their ſentence) depart, and the heavens and the earth paſs away, together and at once, at that furious rebuke from the throne, driving away the damned, out of the world (in this fire) to the everlaſting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Even as, in the deluge, with which the apoſtle Peter compares the conflagration, or burning of the world, (2 Pet. iii. 6. 7.), the world itſelf, and the wicked upon it, periſhed together ; the ſame water which deſtroyed the earth, ſweeping away the inhabitants. For it is not likely that the wicked ſhall at all ſtand on the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs, (2 Pet. iii. 13.) And as for this earth, it ſhall flee away, (which ſeems to denote a very quick diſpatch), and it ſhall flee from his face, who ſits on the throne, Rev. xx. 11. *And I ſaw a great white throne, and him that ſat on it, from whoſe face the earth and the heavens fled away.* The execution of the ſentence on the wicked is alſo thus expreſſed; They *ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence, or from the face of the Lord,* 2 Theſſ. i. 9. The original word is the ſame in both texts, the which, being compared, ſeem to ſay, that theſe creatures, abuſed by the wicked, being left to ſtand as witneſſes againſt them, in the judgment, are, after ſentence paſſed on their abuſers, made to paſs away with them from the face of the Judge. It is true, the flying away of the earth and heaven is narrated (Rev. xx. 11.) before the judgment; but that will not prove its going before the judgment; more than the narrating of the judgment, ver. 12. before the reſurrection, ver. 13. will prove the judgment to be before it. Further, it is remarkable, in the execution of the ſentence, Rev. xx. 14. 15. that not only the reprobate are caſt into the lake, but death and hell are caſt into it likewiſe: all effects of ſin and of the curſe, are removed out of the world, (for which very cauſe ſhall the conflagration be), and they are confined to the place of the damned. Beſides all this, it is evident the end of the world is by the conflagration: and the apoſtle tells us, (1 Cor. xv. 24. 25.) that *then cometh the end, when he ſhall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he ſhall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. For he muſt reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.* The which laſt, as it muſt be done before the end; ſo it ſeems not to be done, but by putting the ſentence in execution, paſſed in the day of judgment, againſt the wicked.

Now, if the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, that are ſet forth for an example, (Jude 7.) was ſo dreadful, how terrible will that day be, when the whole world ſhall be at once in flames! How will wretched worldlings look, when their darling world ſhall be all on fire? Then ſhall ſtrong caſtles, and towering palaces, with all their rich furniture, go up together in one flame, with the loweſt cottages. What heart can fully conceive the terror of that day to the wicked, when the whole fabric of heaven and earth ſhall at once be diſſolved by that fire! When that miſerable company ſhall be driven from the tribunal to the pit, with fire within them, and fire without them; and fire behind them, and on every hand of them; and fire before them awaiting them in the lake: whither this fire (for ought appears) may follow them.

As for the particular place of this judgment, though ſome point us to the valley of Jehoſhaphat for it; yet our Lord, who infallibly knew it, being aſked the queſtion, by his diſciples, Where, Lord? told them only, *Whereſoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together,* Luke xvii. 37. After which anſwer, it is too much for men to renew the queſtion. As for the time, when it ſhall be, in vain do men ſearch for what the Lord has purpoſedly kept ſecret, Acts i. 7. *It is not for you to know the times or the ſeaſons, which the Father has put in his own power.* The apoſtle Paul, after having very plainly deſcribed the ſecond coming of Chriſt, 1 Theſſ. iv. 16. 17. adds, (chap. v. 1. 2.) *But of the times and ſeaſons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you: for yourſelves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord ſo cometh as a thief in the night.* Nevertheleſs, ſome, in ſeveral ages, have made very bold with the time; and ſeveral particular years, which are now paſt, have been given out to the world, for the time of the end, by men who have pried into the ſecrets of God. Time has proclaimed to the world their raſhneſs and folly; and it is likely they will be no more happy in their conjectures, whoſe determinate time is yet to come. Let us reſt in that he cometh. God hath kept that day hid from us, that we may be every day ready for it, Matth. xxv. 13. *Watch therefore: for ye know neither the day, nor the hour, wherein the Son of man cometh.* And let us remember, that the laſt day of our life, will determine our ſtate in the laſt day of the world: and as we die, ſo ſhall we be judged.

I ſhall now ſhut up this ſubject, with ſome application of what has been ſaid.

USE I. Of comfort to all the ſaints. Here is abundance of conſolation to all, who are in the ſtate of grace. Whatever be your afflictions in the world, this day will make up all your loſſes. *Though ye have lien among the pots: yet ſhall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with ſilver, and her feathers with yellow gold.* Pſal. lxviii. 13. Though the world reproach, judge, and condemn you; the Judge will at that day, abſolve you, and bring forth your righteouſneſs as the light. The world's fools, will then appear to have been the only wiſe men who were in it. Though the croſs be heavy, you may well bear it, in expectation of the crown of righteouſneſs, which the righteous Judge will then give you. If the world do deſpiſe you, and treat you with the utmoſt contempt, regard it not: the day cometh wherein you ſhall ſit with Chriſt, in his throne. Be not diſcouraged by reaſon of manifold temptations. But reſiſt the devil, in confidence of a full and complete victory: for you ſhall judge the tempter at laſt. Though you have hard wreſtling now, with the body of ſin and death; yet ye ſhall get all your enemies under your feet at length, and be preſented faultleſs before the preſence of his glory. Let not the terror of that day diſpirit you, when you think upon it: let theſe who have ſlighted the Judge, and continue enemies to him, and to the way of holineſs, droop and hang down their heads, when they think of his coming: but lift ye up your heads with joy, for the laſt day will be your beſt day. The Judge is your Head and Huſband, your Redeemer, and your Advocate. Ye muſt appear before the judgment-ſeat, but ye ſhall not come into condemnation, John v. 24. His coming will not be againſt you, but for you. He came in the fleſh, to remove the lawful impediments of the ſpiritual marriage, by his death: he came in the goſpel to you, to eſpouſe you to himſelf: he will come, at the laſt day, to ſolemnize the marriage, and take the bride home to his Father's houſe. *Even ſo, come Lord Jeſus.*

USE II. Of terror to all unbelievers. This may ſerve to awaken a ſecure generation, a world lying in wickedneſs, as if they were never to be called to an account for it; and ſlighting the Mediator, as if he were not to judge them. Ah! how few have the lively impreſſions of the judgment to come! Moſt men live, as if what is ſaid of it, from the word, were but idle tales. The profane lives of many, ſpeak the thoughts of it to be far from their hearts, and in very deed make a mock of it before the world, ſaying in effect, *Where is the promiſe of his coming?* The hypocriſy of others, who blind the eyes of the world with a ſplendid profeſſion, being in appearance Chriſt's ſheep, while they are indeed the devil's goats, is an evidence, that the great ſeparation of the ſheep from the goats, is very little laid to heart. How do many indulge themſelves in ſecret wickedneſs, of which they would be aſhamed before witneſſes; not conſidering, that their moſt ſecret thoughts and actions will, at that day, be diſcovered before the great congregation! How eagerly are mens hearts ſet on the world, as if it were to be their everlaſting habitation! The ſolemn aſſemblies, and public ordinances, wherein the Judge is upon a tranſaction of peace with the criminals, are undervalued: mens hearts will ſwim like feathers, in the waters of the ſanctuary; that will ſink like ſtones, to the bottom, in cares of this life: they will be very ſerious in trifles of this world; and trifle in the moſt ſerious and weighty things of another world. But O conſider the day, that is approaching, in which Chriſt ſhall come to judgment, the world ſhall be ſummoned, by the ſound of the laſt trumpet, to compear before his tribunal. The Judge ſhall ſit on his throne, and all nations ſhall be ſifted before him; the ſeparation ſhall be made betwixt the godly and the wicked; the books opened, and the dead judged out of them; one party ſhall be adjudged to everlaſting life, and the other to everlaſting fire, according to their works.

It would be a ſight of admirable curioſity, if thou couldſt wrap up thyſelf in ſome dark cloud, or hide thyſelf in the cleft of ſome high rock, from whence thou mighteſt eſpy wicked kings, princes, judges, and great ones of the earth, riſing out of their marble tombs, and brought to the bar, to anſwer for all their cruelty, injuſtice, oppreſſion, and profanity, without any marks of diſtinction, but what their wickedneſs puts upon them; profane, unholy, and unfaithful church men, purſued with the curſes of the ruined people, from their graves, to the judgment-ſeat, and charged with the blood of ſouls, to whom they gave not faithful warning: mighty men ſtanding trembling before the Judge, unable to recover their wonted boldneſs, to outwit him with their ſubtilities, or defend themſelves by their ſtrength; delicate women caſt forth of their graves, as abominable branches, dragged to the tribunal, to anſwer for their ungodly lives; the ignorant ſuddenly taught in the law, to their coſt; and the learned declared, before the world, fools and laborious triflers; the Atheiſt convinced, the hypocrite unmaſked; and the profane, at long run, turned ſerious about his eternal ſtate: ſecret murders, adulteries, thefts, cheats, and other works of darkneſs, which ſcorned all human ſearch, diſcovered and laid open before the world with their moſt minute circumſtances: no regard had to the rich, no pity ſhewn to the poor: the ſcales of the world turned; oppreſſed and deſpiſed piety ſet on high; and proſperous wickedneſs at laſt brought low: all, not found in Chriſt, arraigned, convicted, and condemned without reſpect of perſons, and driven from the tribunal to the pit; while theſe found in him, at that day, being abſolved before the world, go with him into heaven. Nay but thou canſt not ſo eſcape. Thyſelf, whoſoever thou art, not being in Chriſt, muſt bear a part in this tragical and frightful action.

Sinner, that ſame Lord Chriſt, whom thou now deſpiſeſt, whom thou woundeſt through the ſides of his meſſengers, and before whom thou doſt prefer thy luſts, will be thy Judge. And a neglected Saviour will be a ſevere Judge. O! what mountain, what rock wilt thou get to fall on thee, and hide thee from the face of him that ſitteth on the throne? thou haſt now a rock within thee, a heart of adamant, ſo that thou canſt count the darts of the word as ſtubble, and laugh at the ſhaking of the ſpear; but that rock will rent at the ſight of the Judge; that hard heart will then break, and thou ſhalt weep and wail, when weeping and wailing will be to no purpoſe. Death's bands will fall off; the grave will vomit thee out; and the mountains ſhall ſkip from thee, and the rocks refuſe to grind thee to powder. How will theſe curſed eyes abide the ſight of the Judge! behold he cometh! where is the profane ſwearer, who tore his wounds? the wretched worldling, now abandoned of his god? the formal hypocrite, who kiſſed him and betrayed him? The deſpiſer of the goſpel, who ſent him away in his meſſengers groaning, profaned his ordinances, and trampled under foot his precious blood? O murderer, the ſlain man is thy Judge: there is he whom thou didſt ſo maltreat: behold the neglected Lamb of God appearing as a lion againſt thee. How will thine heart endure the darts of his fiery looks! that rocky heart now kept out againſt him, ſhall then be blown up: that face, which refuſeth to bluſh now, ſhall then gather blackneſs: arrows of wrath ſhall pierce, where arrows of conviction cannot enter now. What wilt thou anſwer him, when he riſeth up, and chargeth thee with thy unbelief and impenitency? Wilt thou ſay, thou waſt not warned? Conſcience within thee will give thee the lie: the ſecret groans and wearineſs of thoſe who warned thee, will witneſs the contrary. If a child or a fool did tell you, that your houſe were on fire, you would immediately run to quench it; but, in matters of eternal concern, men will firſt fill their hearts with prejudices againſt the meſſengers, and then caſt their meſſage behind their backs. But theſe ſilly ſhifts and pretences will not avail in the day of the Lord. How will theſe curſed ears, now deaf to the call of the goſpel, inviting ſinners to come to Chriſt, hear the fearful ſentence, *Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?* No ſleepy hearer ſhall be there: no man's heart will then wander: their hearts and eyes will then be fixed on their miſery, which they will not now believe. O that we knew in this our day, the things that belong to our peace.

Laſtly, Be exhorted to believe this great truth; and believe it ſo as you may prepare for the judgment betimes. Set up a ſecret tribunal in your own breaſts, and often call yourſelves to an account there. Make the Judge your friend in time, by cloſing with him in the offer of the goſpel; and give all diligence, that ye may be found in Chriſt, at that day. Caſt off the works of darkneſs, and live, as believing you are, at all times, and in all places, under the eye of your Judge, who will bring every work into judgment, wirh every ſecret thing. Be fruitful in good works, knowing that as ye ſow ye ſhall reap. Study piety towards God, righteouſneſs and charity towards men. Lay up in ſtore plenty of works of charity and mercy, towards them who are in diſtreſs, eſpecially ſuch as are of the houſhold of faith, that they may be produced that day as evidences, that ye belong to Chriſt. Shut not up your bowels of mercy, now, towards the needy; leſt ye then find no mercy. Take heed, that in all your works, ye be ſingle and ſincere: aiming in them all, at the glory of your Lord, a teſtimony of your love to him, and obedience to his command. Leave it to hypocrites, who have their reward, to proclaim every man his own goodneſs, and to ſound a trumpet, when they do their alms. It is a baſe and unchriſtian ſpirit, which cannot have ſatisfaction in a good work, unleſs it be expoſed to the view of others: it is utterly unworthy of one, who believes that the laſt trumpet ſhall call together the whole world: before whom the Judge himſelf ſhall publiſh works truly good, how ſecretly ſoever they were done. Live in a believing expectation of the coming of the Lord. Let your loins be always girt, and your lamps burning; ſo when he comes, whether in the laſt day of your life, or in the laſt day of the world, ye ſhall be able to ſay with joy, Lo, this is our God, and we have waited for him.

HEAD V.

The Kingdom of HEAVEN.

MATTH. xxv. 34.

Then ſhall the King ſay unto them on his right hand, Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

HAving from this portion of ſcripture, which the text is a part of, diſcourſed of the general judgment; and being to ſpeak of the everlaſting happineſs of the ſaints, and the everlaſting miſery of the wicked, from the reſpective ſentences to be pronounced upon them, in the great day; I ſhall take them in the order wherein they lie before us; the rather that, as ſentence is firſt paſſed upon the righteous, ſo the execution thereof is firſt begun, though poſſibly the other may be fully executed before it be completed.

The words of the text contain the joyful ſentence itſelf, together with an hiſtorical introduction thereto, which gives us an account of the Judge pronouncing the ſentence, *the King*, Jeſus Chriſt; the parties on whom it is given, *them on his right hand;* and the time when, *then*, aſſoon as the trial is over. Of theſe I have ſpoke already. It is the ſentence itſelf we are now to conſider, *Come, ye bleſſed of my Father*, &c. Stand aback, O ye profane goats; have away all unregenerate ſouls, not united to Jeſus Chriſt: this is not for you. Come, O ye ſaints, brought out of your natural ſtate, into the ſtate of grace, behold here the ſtate of glory awaiting you. Here is glory let down to us in words and ſyllables; a looking-glaſs, in which you may ſee your everlaſting happineſs; a ſcheme (or draught) of Chriſt's Father's houſe, wherein there are many manſions.

This glorious ſentence bears two things. (1.) The complete happineſs, to which the ſaints are adjudged, the kingdom. (2.) Their ſolemn admiſſion to it, Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit, &c. Firſt, Their complete happineſs is a kingdom. A kingdom is the top of worldly felicity; there is nothing on earth greater than a kingdom; therefore the hidden weight of glory in heaven is held forth to us under that notion. But it is not an ordinary kingdom, it is the kingdom; the kingdom of heaven, ſurpaſſing all the kingdoms of the earth, in glory, honour, profit, and pleaſure, infinitely more than they do, in theſe, excel the low and inglorious condition of a beggar, in rags and on a dunghill. Secondly, There is a ſolemn admiſſion of the ſaints into this their kingdom, Come ye, inherit the kingdom. In the view of angels, men, and devils, they are inveſted with royalty, and ſolemnly inaugurated, before the whole world, by Jeſus Chriſt the heir of all things, who hath all power in heaven and in earth. Their right to the kingdom is ſolemnly recognized and owned. They are admitted to it, as undoubted heirs of the kingdom, to poſſeſs it by inheritance, or lot, as the word properly ſignifies, becauſe, of old, inheritances were deſigned by lot, as Canaan to Iſrael, God's firſt-born, as they are called, Exod. iv. 22. And becauſe this kingdom is the Father's kingdom, therefore they are openly acknowledged, in their admiſſion to it, to be the bleſſed of Chriſt's Father; the which bleſſing was given them, long before this ſentence, but is now ſolemnly recognized, and confirmed to them, by the Mediator, in his Father's name. It is obſervable, he ſays not, Ye bleſſed of *the* Father, but, Ye bleſſed of *my* Father; to ſhew us, that all bleſſings are derived upon us, from the Father, the Fountain of bleſſing, as he is the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, through whom we are bleſſed, Eph. i. 3. And finally, they are admitted to this kingdom, as that which was prepared for them from the foundation of the world, in God's eternal purpoſe, before they, or any of them, were; that all the world may ſee eternal life to be the free gift of God.

DOCTRINE, *The ſaints ſhall be made completely happy, in the poſſeſſion of the kingdom of heaven.*

Two things I ſhall here enquire into: (1.) The nature of this kingdom. (2.) The admiſſion of the ſaints thereto. And then I ſhall make ſome practical improvement of the whole.

FIRST, As to the nature of the kingdom of heaven, our knowledge of it is very imperfect; for *eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him*, 1 Cor. ii. 9. As, by familiar reſemblances, parents inſtruct their little children, concerning things, of which otherwiſe they can have no tolerable notion: ſo our gracious God, in conſideration of our weakneſs, is pleaſed to repreſent to us heaven's happineſs, under ſimilitudes taken from earthly things, glorious in the eyes of men; ſince naked diſcoveries of the heavenly glory, diveſted of earthly reſemblances, would be too bright for our weak eyes, and in them we would loſe ourſelves. Wherefore now, one can but ſpeak as a child, of theſe things, which the day will fully diſcover.

The ſtate of glory is repreſented under the notion of a kingdom; a kingdom among men, being that in which the greateſt number of earthly good things doth concentre. Now every ſaint ſhall, as a king, inherit a kingdom. All Chriſt's ſubjects ſhall be kings, each one with his crown upon his head: not that the great King ſhall diveſt himſelf of his royalty, but he will make all his children partakers of his kingdom.

I. The ſaints ſhall have kingly power and authority given them. Our Lord gives not empty titles to his favourites; he makes them kings indeed. The dominion of the ſaints will be a dominion, far exceeding that of the greateſt monarch ever was in earth. They will be abſolute maſters over ſin, that ſometime had the dominion over them. They will have a complete rule over their own ſpirits; an entire management of all their affections and inclinations, which now create them ſo much moleſtation: the turbulent rout of corrupt affections ſhall be for ever expelled out of that kingdom, and never be able any more to give the leaſt diſturbance. They ſhall have *power over the nations*, the ungodly of all nations, *and ſhall rule them with a rod of iron*, Rev. ii. 26. 27. The whole world of the wicked ſhall be broken before them: *Satan ſhall be bruiſed under their feet*, Rom. xvi. 20. He ſhall never be able to faſten a temptation on them any more: but he will be judged by them; and, in their ſight, caſt with the reprobate crew, into the lake of fire and brimſtone. So ſhall they rule over their oppreſſors. Having fought the good fight, and got the victory, Chriſt will entertain them, as Joſhua did his captains, cauſing them *come near, and put their feet on the necks of kings*, Joſh. x. 24.

II. They ſhall have the enſigns of royalty. For a throne, Chriſt will grant them to ſit with him in his throne, Rev. iii. 21. They will be advanced to the higheſt honour and dignity they are capable of; and in the enjoyment of it, they will have an eternal undiſturbed repoſe, after all the toſſings they met with in the world, in their way to the throne. For *a crown*, they ſhall *receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away*, 1 Pet. v. 4. Not a crown of flowers, as ſubjects being conquerors, or victors, ſometimes have got: ſuch a crown quickly fades, but their crown never fadeth. Not a crown of *gold*, ſuch as earthly kings do wear: even a crown of gold is often ſtained, and at beſt can never make them happy who wear it. But it ſhall be *a crown of glory*. A crown of glory is *a crown of life*, (Rev. ii. 10.), that life, which knows no end: a crown which death can never make to fall off one's head. It muſt be an abiding crown; for it is a *crown of righteouſneſs*, 2 Tim. iv. 8. It was purchaſed for them by Chriſt's righteouſneſs, which is imputed to them; they are qualified for it, by inherent righteouſneſs; God's righteouſneſs or faithfulneſs ſecures it to them. They ſhall have a ſceptre, a rod of iron. (Rev. ii. 27.) terrible to all the wicked world. And a ſword too, *a two-edged ſword in their hand, to execute vengeance upon the Heathen, and puniſhments upon the people,* Pſal. cxlix. 6. 7. They ſhall have royal apparel. The royal robes in this kingdom are white robes, Rev. iii. 4. *They ſhall walk with me in white.* And theſe laſt do, in a very particular manner, point at the inconceiveable glory of the ſtate of the ſaints in heaven.

The Lord is pleaſed often to repreſent unto us, the glorious ſtate of the ſaints, under the notion of their being clothed in *white garments*. It is promiſed to the overcomer, that he ſhall be clothed in white raiment, Rev. iii. 5. The elders about the throne, are clothed in white raiment, chap. iv. 4. The multitude before the throne, are clothed with white robes, chap. vii. 9. arrayed in white robes, ver. 13. made white in the blood of the Lamb, ver. 14. I own, the two laſt teſtimonies adduced, do reſpect the ſtate of the ſaints on earth: but withal the terms are borrowed from the ſtate of the church in heaven. All garments, properly ſo called, being badges of ſin and ſhame, ſhall be laid aſide by the ſaints, when they come to their ſtate of glory. But if we conſider on what occaſions white garments were wont to be put on, we ſhall find much of heaven under them.

Firſt, The Romans, when they manumitted their bond ſervants, gave them a white garment, as a badge of their freedom. So ſhall the ſaints, that day, get on their white robes; for it is the day of the glorious liberty of the children of God, (Rom. viii. 21.) the day of the redemption of their body, ver. 33. They ſhall no more ſee the houſe of bondage, nor ly any more among the pots. If we compare the ſtate of the ſaints on earth, with that of the wicked, it is indeed a ſtate of freedom, whereas the other is a ſtate of ſlavery: but in compariſon with their ſtate in heaven, it is but a ſervitude. A ſaint on earth is indeed a young prince, and heir to the crown; but his motto may be, *I ſerve;* for he differeth nothing from a ſervant, though he be lord of all, Gal. iv. 1. What are the groans of a ſaint, the ſordid and baſe work he is ſometimes found employed in, the black and tattered garments he walks in, but badges of this comparative ſervitude? But from the day the ſaints come to the crown, they receive their complete freedom, and ſerve no more. They ſhall be fully freed from ſin, which of all evils is the worſt, both in itſelf, and in their apprehenſion too: how great then muſt that freedom be, when theſe Egyptians whom they ſee to-day, they ſhall ſee them again no more for ever? They ſhall be free from all temptation to ſin: Satan can have no acceſs to tempt them any more, by himſelf, nor by his agents. A full anſwer will then be given to that petition, they have ſo often repeated, *Lead us not into temptation.* No hiſſing ſerpent can come into the paradiſe above: no ſnare nor trap can be laid there, to catch the feet of ſaints: they may walk there fearleſsly, for they can be in no hazard: there are no lions dens, no mountains of the leopards, in the promiſed land. Nay, they ſhall be ſet beyond the poſſibility of ſinning, for they ſhall be confirmed in goodneſs. It will be the conſummate freedom of their will, to be for ever unalterably determined to good. And they ſhall be freed from all the effects of ſin; *There ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain,* Rev. xxi. 4. What kingdom is like unto this? Death makes it way now into a palace, as eaſily as into a cottage: ſorrow fills the heart of one who wears a crown on his head: royal robes are no fence againſt pain, and crying by reaſon of pain. But in this kingdom no miſery can have place. All reproaches ſhall be wiped off; and never ſhall a tear drop any more from their eyes. They ſhall not complain of deſertions again; the Lord will never hide his face from them: but the Sun of righteouſneſs ſhining upon them, in his meridian brightneſs, will diſpel all clouds, and give them an everlaſting day, without the leaſt mixture of darkneſs. A deluge of wrath, after a fearful thunder-clap from the throne, will ſweep away the wicked from before the judgment-ſeat, into the lake of fire: but they are, in the firſt place, like Noah, brought into the ark, and out of harm's way.

Secondly, White raiment hath been a token of purity; therefore the Lamb's wife is arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, Rev. xix. 8. And thoſe who ſtood before the throne, waſhed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, chap. vii. 14. The ſaints ſhall then put on the robes of perfect purity, and ſhine in ſpotleſs holineſs, like the ſun in his ſtrength, without the leaſt cloud to intercept his light. Abſolute innocence ſhall then be reſtored, and every appearance of ſin baniſhed far from this kingdom. The guilt of ſin, and the reigning power of it, are now taken away in the ſaints; nevertheleſs ſin dwelleth in them, Rom. vii. 20. But then it ſhall be no more in them: the corrupt nature will be quite removed, that root of bitterneſs will be plucked up, and no veſtiges of it left in their ſouls; their nature ſhall be altogether pure and ſinleſs. There ſhall be no darkneſs in their minds: but the underſtanding of every ſaint, when he is come to his kingdom, will be as a globe of pure unmixed light. There ſhall not be the leaſt averſion to good, or inclination to evil in their wills: but they will be brought to a perfect conformity to the will of God; bleſt with angelical purity, and fixed therein. Their affections ſhall not be liable to the leaſt diſorder or irregularity: it will coſt them no trouble to keep them right: they will get ſuch a ſet of purity, as they can never loſe. They will be ſo refined from all earthly droſs, as never to ſavour more of any thing but heaven. Were it poſſible they ſhould be ſet again amidſt the enſnaring objects of an evil world, they ſhould walk among them without the leaſt defilement; as the ſun ſhines on the dunghill, yet untainted; and as the angels preſerved their purity in the midſt of Sodom. Their graces ſhall then be perfected; and all the imperfections now cleaving to them, done away. There will be no more ground for complaints of weakneſs of grace: none in that kingdom ſhall complain of an ill heart, or a corrupt nature. *It doth not yet appear what we ſhall be, but——when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him,* 1 John iii. 2.

Thirdly, Among the Jews, theſe who deſired to be admitted into the prieſtly office, being tried, and found to be of the prieſt's line, and without blemiſh, were clothed in white, and enrolled among the prieſts. This ſeems to be alluded to, Rev. iii. 5. *He that overcometh the ſame ſhall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life.* So the ſaints ſhall not be kings only, but prieſts withal; for they are a Royal Prieſthood, 1 Pet. ii. 9. They will be prieſts upon their thrones. They are judicially found deſcended from the great High-Prieſt of their profeſſion, begotten of him by his Spirit, of the incorruptible ſeed of the word, and without blemiſh: ſo the trial being over, they are admitted to be prieſts in the temple above, that they may dwell in the houſe of the Lord for ever. There is nothing upon earth more glorious than a kingdom, nothing more venerable than the Prieſthood: and both meet together in the glorified ſtate of the ſaints. The general aſſembly of the firſt-born, (Heb. xii. 23.) whoſe is the prieſthood and the double portion, appearing in their white robes of glory, will be a reverend and glorious company. That day will ſhew them to be the perſons whom the Lord has choſen out of all the tribes of the earth, to be near unto him, and to enter into his temple, even into his holy place. Their prieſthood begun on earth, ſhall be brought to its perfection, while they ſhall be employed in offering the ſacrifice of praiſe to God and the Lamb, for ever and ever. They got not their portion in the earth, with the reſt of the tribes;

but the Lord himſelf was their portion, and will be their double portion, through the ages of eternity.

Fourthly, They were wont to wear white raiment, in a time of triumph; to the which alſo there ſeems to be an alluſion, Rev. iii. 5. *He that overcometh, the ſame ſhall be clothed in white raiment.* And what is heaven, but an everlaſting triumph? None can get thither, but ſuch as fight, and overcome too. Though Canaan was given to the Iſraelites, as an inheritance: they behoved to conquer it, ere they could be poſſeſſors of it. The ſaints, in this world, are in the field of battle; often in red garments, garments rolled in blood: but the day approacheth in which they ſhall *ſtand before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands*, Rev. vii. 9. having obtained a complete victory over all their enemies. The palm was uſed as a ſign of victory; becauſe that tree, oppreſſed with weights, yieldeth not, but rather ſhooteth upwards. And palm-trees were carved on the doors of the moſt holy place, 1 Kings vi. 32. which was a ſpecial type of heaven; for heaven is the place which the ſaints are received into, as conquerors.

Behold the joy and peace of the ſaints, in their white robes. The joys ariſing from the view of paſt dangers, and of riches and honours gained at the very door of death do moſt ſenſibly touch one's heart: and this will be an ingredient in the everlaſting happineſs of the ſaints, which could have had no place, in the heaven of innocent Adam, and his ſinleſs offſpring, ſuppoſing him to have ſtood. Surely the glorified ſaints will not forget the entertainment they met with in the world: it will be for the glory of God to remember it, and alſo for the heightening of their joy. The Sicilian king, by birth the ſon of a potter, acted a wiſe part, in that he would be ſerved at his table with earthen veſſels; the which could not but put an additional ſweetneſs in his meals, not to be reliſhed by one born heir to the crown. Can ever meat be ſo ſweet to any as to the hungry man? Or can any have ſuch a reliſh of plenty, as he who has been under pinching ſtraits? The more difficulties the ſaints have paſſed through, in their way to heaven, the place will be the ſweeter to them, when they come at it. Every happy ſtroke, ſtruck in the ſpiritual warfare, will be a jewel in their crown of glory. Each victory obtained againſt ſin, Satan, and the world, will raiſe their triumphant joy the higher. The remembrance of the croſs will ſweeten the crown: and the memory of their travel through the wilderneſs will put an additional verdure on the fields of glory; while they walk through them, minding the day, when they went mourning without the ſun.

And now that they appear triumphing in white robes, it is a ſign they have obtained an honourable peace: ſuch a peace as their enemies can diſturb no more. So every thing peculiarly adapted to their militant condition is laid aſide. The ſword is laid down; and they betake themſelves to the pen of a ready writer, to commemorate the praiſes of him, by whom they overcame. Publick ordinances, preaching, ſacraments, ſhall be honourably laid aſide; there is no temple there, Rev. xxi. 22. Sometimes theſe were ſweet to them: but the travellers being all got home, the inns appointed for their entertainment by the way, are ſhut up: the candles are put out, when the ſun is riſen; and the tabernacle uſed in the wilderneſs is folded up, when the temple of glory is come in its room. Many of the ſaints duties will then be laid aſide; as one gives his ſtaff out of his hand, when he is come to the end of his journey. Praying ſhall then be turned into praiſing, and there being no ſin to confeſs, no wants to ſeek ſupply of: confeſſion and petition ſhall be ſwallowed up in everlaſting thankſgiving. There will be no mourning in heaven, they have ſown in tears. The reaping time of joy is come, and God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes, Rev. xxi. 4. No need of mortification there; and ſelf-examination is then at an end. They will not need to watch any more; the danger is over. Patience has had its perfect work, and there is no uſe for it there. Faith is turned into ſight, and hope is ſwallowed up in the ocean of ſenſible and full enjoyment. All the rebels are ſubdued, the ſaints quietly ſet on their throne; and ſo the forces, needful in the time of the ſpiritual warfare, are diſbanded; and they carry on their triumph in profoundeſt peace.

Laſtly, White garments were worn on feſtival days, in token of joy. And ſo ſhall the ſaints be clothed in white raiment, for they ſhall keep an everlaſting Sabbath to the Lord, Heb. iv. 9. *There remaineth therefore a reſt* (or keeping of a Sabbath) *to the people of God.* The Sabbath, in the eſteem of ſaints, is the queen of days; and they ſhall have an endleſs Sabbatiſm in the kingdom of heaven; ſo ſhall their garments be always white. They will have an eternal reſt, with an uninterrupted joy: for heaven is not a reſting place, where men may ſleep out an eternity: (there they reſt not day nor night) but their work is their reſt, and continual recreation; and toil and wearineſs have no place there. They reſt there in God, who is the centre of their ſouls. Here they find the completement, or ſatisfaction, of all their deſires; having the full enjoyment of God, and uninterrupted communion with him. This is the point unto the which till the ſoul come, it will always be reſtleſs: but that point reached, it reſts; for he is the laſt end, and the ſoul can go no further. It cannot underſtand, will, nor deſire more; but in him it has what is commenſurable to its boundleſs deſires. This is the happy end of all the labours of the ſaints; their toil and ſorrows iſſue in a joyful reſt. The Chaldeans meaſuring their natural day, put the day firſt, and the night laſt: but the Jews counted the night firſt, and the day laſt Even ſo the wicked begin with a day of reſt and pleaſure; but end with a night of everlaſting toil and ſorrow: but God's people have their gloomy night firſt, and then comes their day of eternal reſt. The which, Abraham in the parable, obſerved to the rich man in hell, Luke xvi. 25. *Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedſt thy good things, and likewiſe Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.*

III. If one enquires where the kingdom of the ſaints lies? It is not in this world; it lies in a better country, that is an heavenly, Heb. xi. 16. a country better than the beſt of this world; namely, the heavenly Canaan, Immanuel's land, where nothing is wanting to complete the happineſs of the inhabitants. This is the happy country, bleſſed with a perpetual ſpring, and which yieldeth all things, for neceſſity, conveniency, and delight. There men ſhall eat angels food; they ſhall be entertained with the hidden manna, Rev. ii. 17. without being ſet to the painful gathering of it: they will be fed to the full, with the product of the land falling into their mouths, without the leaſt toil to them. That land enjoys an everlaſting day; *for there is no night there*, Rev. xxi. 25. An eternal ſun ſhine beautifies this better country; but there is no ſcorching heat there. No clouds ſhall be ſeen there for ever; yet it is not a land of drought: the trees of the Lord's planting are ſet by the rivers of water, and ſhall never want moiſture; for they will have an eternal ſupply of the Spirit, by Jeſus Chriſt, from his Father. This is the country from whence our Lord came, and whither he is gone again; the country which all the holy patriarchs and prophets had their eye upon, while on earth; and which all the ſaints, who have gone before us, have fought their way to; and unto which, the martyrs have joyfully ſwimmed through a ſea of blood. This earth is the place of the ſaints pilgrimage; that is their country, where they find their everlaſting reſt.

IV. The royal city is that great city, the holy Jeruſalem, deſcribed at large, Rev. xxi. 10. to the end of the chapter. (It is true, ſome learned divines place this city in the earth: but the particulars of the deſcription ſeem to me favour thoſe moſt, who point us to the other world for it.) The ſaints ſhall reign in that city, whoſe wall is of jaſper, (verſe 16.) and *the foundations of the wall garniſhed with all manner of precious ſtones,* verſe 19. and *the ſtreet of pure gold,* (verſe 21.) So that their feet ſhall be ſet on that, which the men of this world ſet their hearts upon. This is the city God has prepared for them, (Heb. xi. 16.) *a city that hath foundations,* (verſe 10.) *a continuing city,* (chap. xiii. 14.) which ſhall ſtand and flouriſh, when all the cities of the world are laid in aſhes; and which ſhall not be moved, when the foundations of the world are overturned. It is a city, that never changeth its inhabitants; none of them ſhall ever be removed out of it; for life and immortality reign there, and no death can enter into it. It is bleſſed with a perpetual peace, and can never be in the leaſt diſturbed. Nothing from without can annoy it; the gates thereof are not ſhut at all by day; and there is no night there, Rev. xxi. 25. There can nothing from within trouble it. No want of proviſion there, no ſcarcity; no diſcord amongſt the inhabitants. Whatever contentions are amongſt the ſaints now, no veſtige of their former jarrings ſhall remain there. Love to God and to one another, ſhall be perfected: and theſe of them, who ſtood at greateſt diſtance here, will joyfully embrace and delight in one another there.

V. The royal Palace is Chriſt's Father's houſe in which are many manſions, John xiv. 2. There ſhall the ſaints dwell for ever. That is the houſe prepared for all the heirs of glory, even theſe of them who dwell in the meaneſt cottage now, or have not where to lay their heads. As our Lord calls his ſaints to a kingdom, he will provide them a houſe ſuitable to the dignity he puts upon them. Heaven will be a convenient, ſpacious, and glorious houſe, for thoſe whom the king delighteth to honour. Never was a houſe purchaſed at ſo dear a rate as this, being the purchaſe of the Mediator's blood; and no leſs could it be afforded for to them; never was there ſo much ado, to fit inhabitants for a houſe. The ſaints were, by nature, utterly unfit for this houſe, and human art and induſtry could not make them meet for it. But the Father gives the deſigned inhabitants to his Son, to be by him redeemed; the ſon pays the price of their redemption, even his own precious blood; that with the allowance of juſtice, they may have acceſs to the houſe: and the holy ſpirit ſanctifies them by his grace, that they may be meet to come in thither, where no unclean thing can enter. And no marvel, for it is the King's palace, they enter into, (Pſal. xlv. 15.) The houſe of the kingdom, where the great King keeps his court, where he has his throne, and ſhews forth his glory, in a ſingular manner, beyond what mortals can conceive.

VI. Paradiſe is their Palace-garden. *This day ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe,* ſaid our Saviour to the penitent thief on the croſs, Luke xxiii. 43. Heaven is a paradiſe for pleaſure and delight, where there is both wood and water; *A pure river of water of life, clear as cryſtal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb, and of either ſide of the river, the tree of life, which bears twelve manner of fruits, and yields her fruit every month,* Rev. xxii. 1. 2. How happy might innocent Adam have been in the earthly paradiſe, where there was nothing wanting for neceſſity, nor delight! Eden was the moſt pleaſant ſpot of the uncorrupted earth, and paradiſe the moſt pleaſant ſpot of Eden; but what is earth in compariſon of heaven? The glorified ſaints are advanced to the heavenly paradiſe. There they ſhall not only ſee, but eat of the tree of life, which is in the midſt of the paradiſe of God, Rev. ii. 7. They ſhall behold the Mediator's glory, and be ſatisfied with his goodneſs. No flaming ſword will be there, to keep the way of the tree of life, but they ſhall freely eat of it, and live for ever. And they ſhall drink of the river of pleaſures, (Pſal. xxxvi. 8.) theſe ſweeteſt and pureſt pleaſures, the which Immanuel's land doth afford; and ſhall ſwim in an ocean of unmixed delight for evermore.

VII. They ſhall have royal treaſures, ſufficient to ſupport the dignity they are advanced unto. Since the ſtreet of the royal city is pure gold, and the twelve gates thereof are twelve pearls; their treaſure muſt be of that which is better than gold or pearl. It is an eternal weight of glory, 2 Cor. iv. 17. O precious treaſure! a treaſure not liable to inſenſible corruption, by moth, or ruſt; a treaſure which none can ſteal from them, Matth. vi. 23. Never did any kingdom afford ſuch a precious treaſure, nor a treaſure of ſuch variety: for he that overcometh ſhall inherit all things, Rev. xxi. 7. No treaſures on earth are ſtored with all things; if they were all put together in one, there would be far more valuable things wanting in that one, than found in it. This then is the peculiar treaſure of theſe kings, who inherit the kingdom of heaven. They ſhall want nothing that may contribute to their full ſatisfaction. Now they are rich in hope: but then they will have their riches in hand. Now all things are theirs in reſpect of right: then all ſhall be theirs in poſſeſſion. They may go for ever through Immanuel's land, and behold the glory and riches thereof, with the ſatisfying thought, that all they ſee is their own. It is pity theſe ſhould ever be uneaſy under the want of earthly good things, who may be ſure they ſhall inherit all things at length.

VIII. Albeit there is no (material) temple therein, no mediate ſerving of God in the uſe of ordinances, as here on earth; yet, as for this kingdom, *The Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it,* Rev. xxi. 22. As the temple was the glory of Canaan, ſo will the celeſtial temple be the glory of heaven. The ſaints ſhall be brought in thither as a royal prieſthood, to dwell in the houſe of God for ever: for Jeſus Chriſt will then make every ſaint a pillar in the temple of God, and he ſhall go no more out, Rev. iii. 12. as the prieſts and Levites did, in their courſes, go out of the material temple. There the ſaints ſhall have the cloud of glory, the divine preſence, with moſt intimate and uninterrupted communion with God: there they ſhall have Jeſus Chriſt, the true ark, wherein the fiery law ſhall be for ever hid from their eyes: and the mercy-ſeat, from which nothing ſhall be breathed, but everlaſting peace and goodwill towards them: the cherubims, the ſociety of holy angels, who ſhall join with them in eternal admiration of the myſtery of Chriſt: the golden candleſtick, with its ſeven lamps, for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof, Rev. xxi. 23. the incenſe-altar, in the interceſſion of Chriſt, who ever liveth to make interceſſion for them, Heb. vii. 25. eternally exhibiting the merits of his death and ſufferings; and efficaciouſly willing for ever, that theſe, whom the Father had given him, be with him: and the ſhew-bread table, in the perpetual feaſt, they ſhall have together, in the enjoyment of God. This leads me more particularly to conſider

IX. *The ſociety* in this kingdom. What would royal power and authority, enſigns of royalty, richeſt treaſures, and all other advantages of kingdoms, avail, without comfortable ſociety? ſome crowned heads have had but a ſorry life through the want of it: their palaces have been but unto them as priſons, and their badges of honour as chains on a priſoner: while hated of all, they had none they could truſt in, or whom they could have comfortable fellowſhip with, but the chief part of heavens happineſs lies in the bleſſed ſociety the ſaints ſhall have there. For clearing of which, conſider theſe few things.

Firſt, The ſociety of the ſaints, among themſelves, will be no ſmall part of heaven's happineſs. The communion of ſaints on earth is highly prized by all theſe who are travelling through the world unto Zion: and companions in ſin can never have ſuch true pleaſure and delight in one another, as ſometimes the Lord's people have in praying together, and converſing about theſe things which the world is a ſtranger to. Here the ſaints are but few in company, at beſt: and ſome are ſo poſted as that they ſeem to themſelves to dwell alone; having no acceſs to ſuch, as they would freely unboſom themſelves to, in the matter of their ſpiritual caſe; they ſigh and ſay, *Wo is me! For I am as when they have gathered the ſummer-fruits--there is no cluſter to eat: the good man is periſhed out of the earth*, Micah vii. 1. 2. But in the general aſſembly of the firſt-born in heaven, none of all the ſaints, who ever were, or will be on the earth, ſhall be a-miſſing. They will be all of them together in one place, all poſſeſs one kingdom, all ſit down together to the marriage ſupper of the Lamb. Here the beſt of ſaints want not their ſinful imperfections, making their ſociety leſs comfortable: but there they ſhall be perfect, without ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing, Eph. v. 27. And all natural, as well as ſinful imperfections, are then done away: they ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament, Dan. xii. 3.

There we will ſee Adam and Eve in the heavenly paradiſe, freely eating of the tree of life; Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, and all the holy patriarchs, no more wandering from land to land, but come to their everlaſting reſt, all the prophets feeding their eyes on the glory of him, of whoſe coming they propheſied: the twelve apoſtles of the Lamb ſitting on their twelve thrones; all the holy martyrs in their long white robes, with their crowns upon their heads: the godly kings advanced to a kingdom which cannot be moved; and them that turn many to righteouſneſs, ſhining as the ſtars for ever and ever. There will we ſee our godly friends, relations, and acquaintances, pillars in the temple of God, to go no more out from us. And it is more than probable, that the ſaints will know one another in heaven; that at leaſt, they will know their friends, relatives, and theſe they were acquainted with on earth, and ſuch as have been moſt eminent in the church: howbeit that knowledge will be purged from all earthly thoughts and affections. This ſeems to be included in that perfection of happineſs to which the ſaints ſhall be advanced there. If Adam knew who and what Eve was, at firſt ſight, when the Lord God brought her to him, (Gen. ii. 23. 24.) why ſhould one queſtion, but huſbands and wives, parents and children will know each other in glory? If the Theſſalonians, converted by Paul's miniſtry, ſhall be his *crown of rejoicing in the preſence of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, at his coming*, (1 Theſſ. ix. 19.) why may not one conclude that miniſters will know their people, and people their miniſters, in heaven? And if the diſciples, on the mount of transfiguration, knew Moſes and Elias, whom they had never ſeen before, (Matth. xvii. 4.) we have ground to think, we ſhall know them too, and ſuch as they, when we come to heaven. The communion of ſaints ſhall be moſt intimate there; *they ſhall ſit down with Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven*, Matth. viii. 11. Lazarus was carried by the angels into Abraham's boſom, (Luke xvi. 23.) which denotes moſt intimate and familiar ſociety. And though diverſity of tongues ſhall ceaſe, 1 Cor. xiii. 8. I make no queſtion, but there will be an uſe of ſpeech in heaven; and that the ſaints ſhall glorify God in their bodies there, as well as in their ſpirits, ſpeaking forth his praiſes with an audible voice. (As for the language, we ſhall underſtand what it is, when we come thither.) When Paul was caught up to the third heavens, the ſeat of the Bleſſed, he *heard* there *unſpeakable words, which is not lawful for a man to utter*, 2 Cor. xii. 4. Moſes and Elias, on the mount with Chriſt, talked with him, Matth. xvii. 3. and ſpake of his deceaſe which he ſhould accompliſh at Jeruſalem, Luke ix. 31.

Secondly, The ſaints will have the ſociety of all the holy angels there. An innumerable company of angels ſhall be companions to them in their glorified ſtate. Happy were the ſhepherds, who heard the ſong of the heavenly hoſt, when Chriſt was born! but thrice happy they, who ſhall join their voices to theirs in the choir of ſaints and angels in heaven, when he ſhall be glorified in all who ſhall be about him there! Then ſhall we be brought acquainted with theſe bleſſed ſpirits who never ſinned. How bright will theſe morning-ſtars ſhine in the holy place! they were miniſtering ſpirits to the heirs of ſalvation, loved them for their Lord and Maſter's ſake; encamped round about them, to preſerve them from danger; how joyſully will they welcome them to their everlaſting habitations, and rejoice to ſee them come at length to their kingdom, as the tutor doth his pupils! The ſaints ſhall be no more afraid of them, as ſometime they were wont to be: they ſhall have put off mortality, and infirmities of the fleſh, and be themſelves, as the angels of God, fit to entertain communion and fellowſhip with theſe ſhining ones. And both being brought under one head, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, they ſhall join in the praiſes of God, and of the Lamb, ſaying with a loud voice, *Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain*, &c. Rev. v. 11. 12. Whether the angels ſhall (as ſome think) aſſume airy bodies, that they may be ſeen by the bodily eyes of the ſaints, and be in nearer capacity to converſe with them, I know not; but, as they want not ways of converſe amongſt themſelves, we have no reaſon to think that converſation betwixt them and the ſaints, ſhall be for ever blocked up.

Laſtly, They ſhall have ſociety with the Lord himſelf in heaven, glorious communion with God and Chriſt, which is the perfection of happineſs. I chuſe to ſpeak of communion with God and the man Chriſt, together; becauſe as we derive our grace from the Lamb, ſo we will derive our glory from him too, the man Chriſt being (if I may be allowed the expreſſion) the centre of the divine glory in heaven, from whence it is diffuſed unto all the ſaints. This ſeems to be taught us by theſe ſcriptures which expreſs heaven's happineſs, by being with Chriſt. Luke xxiii. 43. *This Day ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe.* John xvii 24. *Father, I will that theſe alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with me*, (and remarkable to this purpoſe is what follows,) *that they may behold my glory.* 1 Theſſ. iv. 17. *So ſhall we ever be with the Lord*, to wit the Lord Chriſt, whom we ſhall meet in the air. This alſo ſeems to be the import of theſe ſcriptures wherein God and the Lamb, the ſlain Saviour, are jointly ſpoken of, in the point of the happineſs of the ſaints in heaven, Rev. vii. 17. For the Lamb which is in the midſt of the throne, ſhall feed them, and ſhall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes, Chap. xxi. 3. Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, to wit, as in a tabernacle, (ſo the word ſignifies,) that is, in the fleſh of Chriſt, (Compare John i. 14.) and ver. 22. The Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it. Here lies the chief happineſs of the ſaints in heaven; that without which they could never be happy, though lodged in that glorious place, and bleſſed with the ſociety of angels there. What I will venture to ſay of it, ſhall be compriſed in three things.

1ſt. The ſaints in heaven ſhall have the glorious preſence of God, and of the Lamb: God himſelf ſhall be with them, Rev. xxi. 3. And they ſhall ever be with the Lord. God is every where preſent, in reſpect of his eſſence: the ſaints militant have his ſpecial gracious preſence. There they are brought near to the throne of the great King, and ſtand before him, where he ſhews his inconceivable glory. There they have the tabernacle of God, on which the cloud of glory reſts, the all glorious human nature of Chriſt, wherein the fulneſs of the Godhead dwells, not vailed as in the days of his humiliation, but, ſhining through that bleſſed fleſh (that all the ſaints may behold his glory) and making that body more glorious than a thouſand ſuns: ſo that the city has no need of the ſun, nor of the moon, but the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof, (properly the candle thereof) Rev. xxi. 23. *i. e.* The Lamb is the luminary, or luminous body, which gives light to the city; as the ſun and moon now give light to the world, or as a candle lightens a dark room: and the light proceeding from that glorious luminary, for the city is the glory of God. Sometime the candle burnt very dim, it was hid under a buſhel, in the time of his humiliation! but that, now and then, it darted out ſome rays of this light, which dazzled the eyes of the ſpectators; but now it is ſet on high, in the city of God, where it ſhines, and ſhall ſhine for ever, in perfection of glory. It was ſometimes laid aſide, as a ſtone diſallowed of the builders: but now it is, and forever will be the light or luminary of that city; and that, *like unto a ſtone moſt precious, even like a jaſper ſtone, clear as cryſtal,* ver 11.

Who can conceive the happineſs of the ſaints, in the preſence-chamber of the great King, where he ſits in his chair of ſtate, making his glory eminently to appear in the man Chriſt? His gracious preſence makes a mighty change upon the ſaints in this world: his glorious preſence in heaven then muſt needs ſcrew up their graces to their perfection, and elevate their capacities. The ſaints do experience, that the preſence of God now with them in his grace, can make a little heaven of a ſort of hell: how great then muſt the glory of heaven be, by his preſence there in his glory! If a candle, in ſome ſort, beautifies a cottage or priſon, how will the ſhining ſun beautify a palace or paradiſe! The gracious preſence of God made a wilderneſs lightſome to Moſes, the valley of the ſhadow of death to David, a fiery furnace to the three children: what a raviſhing beauty ſhall then ariſe from the ſun of righteouſneſs, ſhining in his meridian brightneſs on the ſtreet of the city laid with pure gold? This glorious preſence of God in heaven will put a glory on the ſaints themſelves. The pleaſanteſt garden hath no beauty, when the darkneſs of the night ſits down on it; but the ſhining ſun puts a glory on the blackeſt mountains; ſo theſe who are now as bottles in the ſmoke, when ſet in the glorious preſence ot God, will be glorious both in ſoul and body.

2dly, The ſaints in heaven ſhall have the full enjoyment of God and of the Lamb. This is it that perfectly ſatisfies the rational creature; and here is the ſaints everlaſting reſt. This will make up all their wants, and fill the deſires of their ſouls, which after all here obtained, ſtill cry, *Give, give,* not without ſome anxiety: becauſe though they do enjoy God, yet they do not enjoy him fully. As to the way and manner of this enjoyment, our Lord tells us, John xvii. 3. *This is life eternal, that they may know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.* Now there are two ways how a deſirable object is known moſt perfectly and ſatisfyingly; the one is by ſight, the other is by experience: ſight ſatisfies the underſtanding, and experience ſatisfies the will. Accordingly one may ſay, that the ſaints enjoy God and the Lamb in heaven. (1.) By an intuitive knowledge. (2.) By an experimental knowledge, both of them perfect, I mean, in reſpect of the capacity of the creature; for otherwiſe a creature's perfect knowledge of an infinite Being is impoſſible. The ſaints below enjoy God, in that knowledge they have of him by report, from his holy word, which they believe; they ſee him likewiſe darkly in the glaſs of ordinances, which do, as it were, repreſent the bridegroom's picture, or ſhadow, while he is abſent: they have alſo ſome experimental knowledge of him; they taſte that God is good, and the Lord is gracious. But the ſaints above ſhall not need a good report of the king, they ſhall ſee himſelf; therefore faith ceaſeth; they will behold his own face; therefore ordinances are no more: there is no need of a glaſs: they ſhall drink, and drink abundantly of that whereof they have taſted; and ſo hope ceaſeth, for they are at the utmoſt bounds of their deſires.

1. The ſaints in heaven ſhall enjoy God and the Lamb, by ſight, and that in a moſt perfect manner, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. *For now we ſee through a glaſs darkly; but then face to face.* Here our ſight is but mediate, as by a glaſs, in which we ſee not things themſelves, but the images of things: but there we ſhall have an immediate view of God and the Lamb. Here our knowledge is but obſcure: there it ſhall be clear without the leaſt mixture of darkneſs. The Lord doth now converſe with his ſaints, through the latteſſes of ordinances: but then ſhall they be in the preſence chamber with him. There is a vail now on the glorious face, as to us; but when we come to the upper-houſe, that vail, through which ſome rays of beauty are now darted, will be found entirely taken off; and then ſhall glorious excellencies and perfections, not ſeen in him by mortals, be clearly diſcovered, for we ſhall ſee his face, Rev. xxii. 4. The phraſe ſeems to be borrowed from the honour put on ſome in the courts of monarchs, to be attendants on the king's perſon. We read. Jer. lii. 25. *ſeven men of them, that were* (Heb. *Seers of the king's face, i. e.* as we read it) *near the king's perſon.* O unſpeakable glory! the great King keeps his court in heaven; and the ſaints his courtiers ever near the King's perſon, ſeeing his face. *The throne of God and of the Lamb ſhall be in it, and his ſervants ſhall ſerve him, and they ſhall ſee his face,* Rev. xxii. 3. 4.

(1.) They ſhall ſee Jeſus Chriſt with their bodily eyes, ſince he will never lay aſide the human nature. They will always behold that glorious bleſſed body, which is perſonally united to the divine nature, and exalted far above principalities and powers, and every name that is named. There we will ſee with our eyes, that very body which was born of Mary at Bethlehem, and crueified at Jeruſalem betwixt two thieves; the bleſſed head, that was crowned with thorns; the face, that was ſpit upon; the hands and feet, that were nailed to the croſs; all ſhining with inconceivable glory. The glory of the man Chriſt will attract the eyes of all the ſaints, and he will be for ever admired in all them that believe, 2 Theſſ. i. 10. Were each ſtar in the heavens, ſhining as the ſun in its meridian brightneſs, and the light of the ſun ſo increaſed, as the ſtars, in that caſe, ſhould bear the ſame proportion to the ſun, in point of light, that they do now; it might poſſibly be ſome faint reſemblance of the glory of the man Chriſt, in compariſon with that of the ſaints; for though the ſaints ſhall ſhine forth as the ſun; yet not they, but the Lamb ſhall be the light of the city. The wiſe men fell down, and worſhipped him, when they ſaw him a young child, with Mary his mother, in the houſe. But, O what raviſhing ſight will it be to ſee him in his kingdom, on his throne, at the Father's right hand! The Word was made fleſh, (John i. 14.) and the glory of God ſhall ſhine through that fleſh, and the joys of heaven ſpring out from it, unto the ſaints, who ſhall ſee and enjoy God in Chriſt. For ſince the union betwixt Chriſt and the ſaints is never diſſolved, but they continue his members for ever; and the members cannot draw their life, but from their head: ſeeing that which is independent on the head, as to vital influence, is no member: therefore Jeſus Chriſt will remain the everlaſtlaſting bond of union betwixt God and the ſaints; from whence their eternal life ſhall ſpring, John xvii. 2. 3. *Thou haſt given him power over all fleſh, that he ſhould give eternal life to as many as thou haſt given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God,* &c. ver. 22. 23. *And the glory which thou gaveſt me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one: I in him, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.* Wherefore the immediate enjoyment of God in heaven is to be underſtood, in reſpect of the laying aſide of the word and ſacraments, and ſuch external means as we enjoy God by in this world; but not as if the ſaints ſhould then caſt off their dependence ou their Head for vital influences: nay, *the Lamb which is in the midſt of the throne, ſhall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of waters,* Rev. vii. 17.

Now when we ſhall behold him, who died for us, that we might live for evermore, whoſe matchleſs love made him ſwim through the Red Sea of God's wrath to make a path in the midſt of it for us, by which we might paſs ſafely to Canaan's land; then we will ſee what a glorious one he is, who ſuffered all this for us; what entertainment he had in the upper-houſe; what hallelujahs of angels could not hinder him to hear the groans of a periſhing multitude on earth, and to come down for their help; and what a glory he laid aſide for us. Then will we be more able to comprehend with all ſaints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge, Eph. iii. 18. 19. When the ſaints ſhall remember, that the waters of wrath he was plunged into, are the wells of ſalvation, from whence they draw all their joy; that they have got the cup of ſalvation in exchange of the cup of wrath, his Father gave him to drink, which his ſinleſs human nature ſhivered at; how will their hearts leap within them, burn with ſeraphic love, like coals of juniper, and the arch of heaven ring with their ſongs of ſalvation! The Jews, celebrating the feaſt of tabernacles, (which was the moſt joyful of all their feaſts, and laſted ſeven days) went once every day about the altar, ſinging Hoſanna, with their myrtle palms, and willow branches in their hands, (the two former ſigns of victory, the laſt of chaſtity) in the mean time bending their boughs towards the altar. When the ſaints are preſented, as a chaſte virgin to Chriſt; and as conquerors have got their palms in their hands, how joyfully will they compaſs the altar evermore, and ſing their Hoſannas, or rather their Hallelujahs about it, bending their palms towards it, acknowledging themſelves to owe all unto the Lamb that was ſlain, and redeemed them with his blood! And to this agrees what John ſaw, Rev. vii. 9. 10. *A great multitude—ſtood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, ſaying, Salvation to our God which ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.*

(2.) They ſhall ſee God, Matth. v. 8. They will be happy in ſeeing the Father, Son, and holy Ghoſt, (not with their bodily eyes, in reſpect of which God is inviſible, 1 Tim. i. 17. but) with the eyes of their underſtanding; being bleſſed with the moſt perfect, full, and clear knowledge of God and divine things, which the creature is capable of. This is called the beatific viſion, and is the perfection of the underſtanding, the utmoſt term thereof, it is but an obſcure delineation of the glory of God, that mortals can have on earth; a ſight as it were, of his back parts, Exod. xxxiii. 23. But there they will ſee his face, Rev. xxii. 4. They ſhall ſee him in the fulneſs of his glory, and behold him fixedly: whereas it is but a paſſing view they can have of him here, Exod. xxxiv. 6. There is a vaſt difference betwixt the ſight of a king in his night-cloaths, quickly paſſing by us; and a fixed leiſure view of him, ſitting on his throne in his royal robes, his crown on his head, and his ſceptre in his hand: ſuch a difference will there be, betwixt the greateſt manifeſtation of God that ever a ſaint had on earth, and the diſplay of his glory that ſhall be ſeen in heaven. There the ſaints ſhall eternally, without interruption, feed their eyes upon him, and be ever viewing his glorious perfections. And as their bodily eyes ſhall be ſtrengthened, and fitted to behold the glorious majeſty of the man Chriſt; as eagles gaze on the ſun without being blinded thereby; ſo their minds ſhall have ſuch an elevation as will fit them to ſee God in his glory: their capacities ſhall be enlarged, according to the meaſure in which he ſhall be pleaſed to communicate himſelf unto them for their complete happineſs.

This bliſsful ſight of God, being quite above our preſent capacities, we muſt needs be much in the dark about it. But it ſeems to be ſomething elſe, than the ſight of that glory, which we will ſee with our bodily eyes, in the ſaints, and in the man Chriſt, or any other ſplendor or refulgence from the Godhead whatſoever; for no created thing can be our chief good and happineſs, nor fully ſatisfy our ſouls; and it is plain, that theſe things are ſomewhat different from God himſelf. Therefore I conceive, that the ſouls of the ſaints ſhall ſee God himſelf: ſo the ſcriptures teach us, that we ſhall ſee face to face, and know even as we are known, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. and that we ſhall ſee him as he is, 1 John iii. 2. Howbeit the ſaints can never have an adequate conception of God: they cannot comprehend that which is infinite. They may touch the mountain, but cannot graſp it in their arms. They cannot, with one glance of their eye, behold what grows on every ſide: but the divine perfections will be an unbounded field, in which the glorified ſhall walk eternally, ſeeing more and more of God; ſince they can never come to the end of that which is infinite. They may bring their veſſels to this ocean every moment, and fill them with new waters. What a raviſhing ſight would it be, to ſee all the perfections, and lovely qualities, that are ſcattered here and there among the creatures, gathered together into one! But even ſuch a ſight would be infinitely below this bliſsful ſight the ſaints ſhall have in heaven. For they ſhall ſee God, in whom all theſe perfections ſhall eminently appear, with infinitely more; whereof there is no veſtige to be found in the creatures. In him ſhall they ſee every thing deſirable, and nothing but what is deſirable.

Then ſhall they be perfectly ſatisfied as to the love of God towards them, which they are now ready to queſtion on every turn. They will be no more ſet to perſuade themſelves of it, by marks, ſigns, and teſtimonies: they will have an intuitive knowledge of it. They ſhall (with the profoundeſt reverence be it ſpoken) look into the heart of God, and there ſee the love he bore to them from all eternity, and the love and good-will he will bear to them for evermore. The glorified ſhall have a moſt clear and diſtinct underſtanding of divine truths, for in his light we ſhall ſee light, Pſal. xxxvi. 9. The light of glory will be a complete commentary on the Bible, and looſe all the hard and knotty queſtions in divinity. There is no joy on earth, comparable to that which ariſeth from the diſcovery of truth; no diſcovery of truth comparable to the diſcovery of ſcripture-truth, made by the Spirit of the Lord unto the ſoul. *I rejoice at thy word,* ſays the Pſalmiſt, *as one that findeth great ſpoil,* Pſal. cxix. 162. Yet it is but an imperfect diſcovery we have of it while here. How raviſhing then will it be, to ſee the opening of the whole treaſure, hid in that field! They ſhall alſo be let into the underſtanding of the works of God. The beauty of the works of creation and providence will then be ſet in a due light. Natural knowledge will be brought to perfection by the light of glory. The web of providence, concerning the church, and all men whatſoever, will then be cut out, and laid before the eyes of the ſaints: and it will appear a moſt beautiful mixture; ſo as they ſhall all ſay together, on the view of it, *He hath done all things well.* But, in a ſpecial manner, the work of redemption ſhall be the eternal wonder of the ſaints, and they will admire and praiſe the glorious contrivance for ever. Then ſhall they get a full view of its ſuitableneſs to the divine perfections, and to the caſe of ſinners; and clearly read the covenant, that paſſed betwixt the Father and the ſon, from all eternity, touching their ſalvation. They ſhall for ever wonder and praiſe, and praiſe and wonder, at the myſteries of wiſdom and love, goodneſs and holineſs, mercy and juſtice, appearing in the glorious device. Their ſouls ſhall be eternally ſatisfied with the ſight of God himſelf, and of their election by the Father, their redemption by the Son, and application thereof to them by the Holy Spirit.

2. The ſaints in heaven ſhall enjoy God in Chriſt by experimental knowledge, which is, when the object itſelf is given and poſſeſſed. This is the participation of the divine goodneſs in full meaſure; which is the perfection of the will, and utmoſt term thereof. *The Lamb ſhall lead them unto living fountains of waters,* Rev. vii. 17. Theſe are no other but God himſelf, *the fountain of living waters,* who will fully and freely communicate himſelf unto them. He will pour out of his goodneſs eternally into their ſouls, and then ſhall they have a moſt lively ſenſation, in the innermoſt part of their ſouls of all that goodneſs they have heard of, and believed to be in him; and of what they ſee in him by the light of glory. This will be an everlaſting practical expoſition of that word, which men and angels cannot ſufficiently unfold, to wit, God himſelf ſhall—be their God, Rev. xxi. 3. God will communicate himſelf unto them fully: they

will no more be ſet to taſte of the ſtreams of divine goodneſs in ordinances, as they were wont; but ſhall drink at the fountain head. They will be no more entertained with ſips and drops, but filled with all the fulneſs of God. And this will be the entertainment of every ſaint: for though in created things, what is given to one is withheld from another, yet infinite good can fully communicate itſelf to all, and fill all. Theſe who are heirs of God, the great heritage, ſhall then enter into a full poſſeſſion of their inheritances: and the Lord will open his treaſures of goodneſs unto them, that their enjoyment may be full. They ſhall not be ſtinted to any meaſure: but the enjoyment ſhall go as far as their enlarged capacities can reach. As a narrow veſſel cannot contain the ocean, ſo neither can the infinite creature comprehend an infinite good; but no meaſure ſhall be ſet to the enjoyment, but what ariſeth from the capacity of the creature; ſo that, although there be degrees of glory, yet all ſhall be filled, and have what they can hold; though ſome would be capable to hold more than others, there will be no want to any of them; all ſhall be fully ſatisfied, and perfectly bleſſed in the full enjoyment of divine goodneſs, according to their enlarged capacities. As when bottles of different ſizes are filled, ſome contain more, others leſs; yet all of them have what they can contain. The glorified ſhall have all, in God, for the ſatisfaction of all their deſires. No created thing can afford ſatisfaction to all our deſires: clothes may warm us, but they cannot feed us; the light is comfortable, but cannot nouriſh us. But in God we ſhall have all our deſires, and ſhall deſire nothing without him. They ſhall be happy ones, that deſire nothing but what is truly deſirable: and withal have all they deſire. God will be all in all to the ſaints: he will be their life, health, riches, honour, peace, and all good things. He will communicate himſelf freely to them: the door of acceſs to him ſhall never be ſhut again, for one moment. They may, when they will, take of the tree of life, for they will find it on each ſide of the river, Rev. xxii. 2. There will be no vail betwixt God and them, to be drawn aſide; but his fulneſs ſhall ever ſtand open to them. No door to knock at, in heaven; no aſking to go before receiving; the Lord will allow his people an unreſtrained familiarity with himſelf there.

Now they are in part made partakers of the divine nature; but then they ſhall perfectly partake of it; that is to ſay, God will communicate to them his own image, make all his goodneſs not only paſs before them, but paſs into them, and ſtamp the image of all his own perfections upon them, ſo far as the creature is capable to receive the ſame; from whence ſhall reſult a perfect likeneſs to him, in all things in or about them, which completes the happineſs of the creature. And this is what the Pſalmiſt ſeems to have had in view, Pſal. xvii. 15. *I ſhall be ſatisfied, when I awake, with thy likeneſs*; the perfection of God's image, following upon the beatifick viſion. And ſo ſays John, 1 John iii. 2. *We ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.* Hence there ſhall be a moſt cloſe and intimate union betwixt God and the ſaints: God ſhall be in them, and they in God, in the way of a moſt glorious and perfect union; for then ſhall they dwell in love made perfect. *God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him,* 1 John iv. 16. How will the ſaints knit with God, and he with them; when he ſhall ſee nothing in them but his own image; when their love ſhall arrive at its perfection: no nature, but the divine nature, being left in them, and all imperfection ſwallowed up in that glorious transformation into the likeneſs of God! their love to the Lord being purged from the droſs of ſelf-love, ſhall be moſt pure; ſo as they will love nothing but God, and in God. It ſhall be no more faint and languiſhing, but burn like coals of juniper. It will be a light without darkneſs, a flaming fire without ſmoak. As the live coal, when all the moiſture is gone out of it, is all fire; ſo will the ſaints be all love, when they come to the full enjoyment of God in heaven, by intuitive and experimental knowledge of him by ſight, and full participation of the divine goodneſs.

Laſtly, From this glorious preſence and enjoyment ſhall ariſe an unſpeakable joy, which the ſaints ſhall be filled with. *In thy preſence is fulneſs of joy.* Pſal. xvi. 11. The ſaints ſometimes enjoy God in the world, when their eyes being held they cannot perceive it, they have not the comfort of the enjoyment; but then, all miſtakes being removed, they ſhall not only enjoy God, but reſt in the enjoyment with inexpreſſible joy and ſatisfaction. The deſire of earthly things breeds torment, and the enjoyment of them often ends in loathing. But though the glorified ſaints ſhall ever deſire more and more of God, their deſires ſhall not be mixt with the leaſt anxiety, ſince the fulneſs of the God-head ſtands always open to them: therefore they ſhall hunger no more, they ſhall not have the leaſt uneaſineſs, in their eternal appetite after the hidden manna, neither ſhall continued enjoyment breed loathing; they ſhall never think they have too much; therefore it is added, neither ſhall the ſun light on them, nor any heat, Rev. vii. 16. The enjoyment of God and the Lamb will be ever freſh and new to them, through the ages of eternity; for they ſhall drink of living fountains of waters, where new waters are continually ſpringing up in abundance, ver. 17. They ſhall eat of the tree of life, which for variety, affords twelve manner of fruits, and theſe always new and freſh, for it yields every month, Rev. xxv. 1. Their joy ſhall be pure and unmixed, without any dregs of ſorrow, not ſlight and momentary, but ſolid and everlaſting, without interruption. They will enter into joy, Matth. xxv. 21. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. The expreſſion is ſomewhat unuſual, and brings me in mind of that word of our ſuffering Redeemer, Mark xiv. 34. *My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful unto death.* His ſoul was beſet with ſorrows, as the word, there uſed, will bear; the floods of ſorrow went round about him, encompaſſing him on every hand: whitherſoever he turned his eyes, ſorrow was before him, it ſprang in upon him from heaven, earth, and hell, all at once; thus was he entered into ſorrow, and therefore ſaith, Pſal. lxix. 2. *I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.* Now wherefore all this, but that his own might enter into joy? Joy ſometimes enters into us now, with much ado to get acceſs, while we are encompaſſed with ſorrows; but then joy ſhall not only enter into us, but we ſhall enter into it, and ſwim for ever in an ocean of joy: where we will ſee nothing but joy, whitherſoever we turn our eyes. The preſence and enjoyment of God and the Lamb will ſatisfy us with pleaſures for evermore: and the glory of our ſouls and bodies, ariſing from thence, will afford us everlaſting delight. The ſpirit of heavineſs, how cloſely ſoever it cleaves to any of the ſaints now, ſhall drop off then: their weeping ſhall be turned into ſongs of joy, and bottles of tears ſhall iſſue in rivers of pleaſures. Happy they who now ſow in tears, which ſhall ſpring up in joy, in heaven, and bow their heads there with a weight of glory upon them.

Thus far of the ſociety in this kingdom of the ſaints.

X. In the laſt place, the kingdom ſhall endure for ever. As every thing in it is eternal, ſo the ſaints ſhall have an undoubted certainty and full aſſurance of the eternal duration of the ſame. This is a neceſſary ingredient in perfect happineſs; for the leaſt uncertainty, as to the continuance of any good with one, is not without ſome fear, anxiety and torment: and therefore is utterly inconſiſtent with perfect happineſs. But the glorified ſhall never have fear, nor cauſe of fear, of any loſs: they ſhall be *ever with the Lord*, 1 Theſſ. iv. 17. They ſhall all attain the full perſuaſion, that nothing ſhall be able to ſeparate them from the love of God; nor from the full enjoyment of him, for ever. The inheritance reſerved in heaven is incorruptible; it hath no principle of corruption in itſelf, to make it liable to decay; but endures for evermore: it is undefiled; nothing from without can mar its beauty, nor is there any thing in itſelf to offend thoſe who enjoy it. And therefore it fadeth not away; but ever remains in its native luſtre, and primitive beauty, 1 Pet. i. 4. Hitherto of the nature of the kingdom of heaven.

Secondly, Proceed we now to ſpeak of the admiſſion of the ſaints into this their kingdom; where I ſhall briefly touch upon two things: (1.) The formal admiſſion, in the call unto them from the Judge, to come to their kingdom. (2.) The quality in which they are admitted and introduced to it.

I. Their admiſſion, the text ſhews to be, by a voice from the throne; the King calling to them, from the throne, before angels and men, to come to their kingdom. *Come* and *go* are but ſhort words: but they will be ſuch as will afford matter of thought to all mankind, through the ages of eternity: ſince upon the one depends everlaſting happineſs, and upon the other everlaſting miſery.

Now our Lord bids the worſt of ſinners, who hear the goſpel, come; but the moſt part will not come unto him. Some few, whoſe hearts are touched by his ſpirit, do embrace the call, and their ſouls within them ſay, *Behold, we come unto thee;* they give themſelves to the Lord, forſake the world and their luſts for him; they bear his yoke, and caſt it not off, no not in the heat of the day, when the weight of it (perhaps) makes them ſweat the blood out of their bodies. Behold the fools! ſaith the carnal world, whither are they going? But ſtay a little, O fooliſh world! From the ſame mouth, whence they had the call they are now following, another call ſhall come which will make amends for all. *Come ye bleſſed of my father, inherit the kingdom.*

The ſaints ſhall find an inexpreſſible ſweetneſs in this call, *Come.* (1.) Hereby Jeſus Chriſt ſhews his deſire of their ſociety in the upper houſe, that they may be ever with him there. Thus he will open his heart unto them, as ſometimes he did to his Father concerning them, ſaying, *Father, I will that they—be with me, where I am,* John xvii. 24. Now the travel of his ſoul ſtands before the throne, not only the ſouls, but the bodies he has redeemed; and they muſt come, for he muſt be completely ſatisfied. (2.) Hereby they are ſolemnly invited to the marriage-ſupper of the Lamb. They were invited to the lower table, by the voice of the ſervants, and the ſecret workings of the Spirit within them; and they came, and did partake of the feaſt of divine communications in the lower houſe: but Jeſus Chriſt in perſon ſhall invite them, before all the world, to the higher table. (3.) By this he admits them into the manſions of glory. The keys of heaven hang at the girdle of our royal Mediator. All power in heaven is given to him, (Matth. xxviii. 18.) and none can get in thither but whom he admits. When they were living on earth, with the reſt of the world, he opened the everlaſting doors of their hearts, entered into them himſelf, and ſhut them again: ſo as ſin could never re-enter, to reign there as formerly: and now he opens heaven's doors to them, and draws his doves into the ark, and ſhuts them in there; ſo as the law, death, and hell, can never get them out again. The ſaints in this life were ſtill labouring to enter into that reſt: but Satan was always pulling them back, their corruptions always drawing them down; inſomuch that they have ſometimes been left to hang by a hair of a promiſe, (if I may be allowed the expreſſion) not without fears of falling into the lake of fire; but now Chriſt gives the word for their admiſſion: they are brought in, and put beyond all hazard. Laſtly, thus he ſpeaks to them, as the perſon introducing them into the kingdom, into the preſence chamber of the great king, and unto the throne. Jeſus Chriſt is the great Secretary of heaven, whoſe it is to bring the ſaints into the gracious preſence of God, and to whom alone it belongs to bring them into the glorious preſence of God in heaven. Truly heaven would be a ſtrange place to them, if Jeſus was not there: but the Son will introduce his brethren into his Father's kingdom; they ſhall go in with him to the marriage, Matth. xxv. 10.

II. Let us conſider in what quality they are introduced by him.

Firſt, He brings them in as the bleſſed of his Father; ſo runs the call from the throne, *Come, ye bleſſed of my Father,* &c. It is Chriſt's Father's houſe they are to come into: therefore he puts them in mind, that they are bleſſed of his Father; dear to the Father, as well as to himſelf. This is it that makes heaven home to them, namely, that it is Chriſt's father's houſe, where they may be aſſured of welcome, being married to the Son, and being his Father's choice for that very end. He brings them in for his Father's ſake, as well as for his own: they are the bleſſed of his Father; who as he is the fountain of the Deity, is alſo the fountain of all bleſſings conferred on the children of men. They are theſe to whom God deſigned well from eternity. They were bleſſed in the eternal purpoſe of God, being elected to everlaſting life. At the opening of the book of life, their names were found written therein: ſo that, bringing them to the kingdom, he doth but bring them to what the Father, from all eternity, deſigned for them: being ſaved by the Son, they are ſaved according to his (i. e. the Father's) purpoſe, 2 Tim. i. 9. They are theſe to whom the Father has ſpoken well. He ſpoke well to them in his word, which muſt now receive its full accompliſhment. They had his promiſe of the kingdom, lived aud died in the faith of it; and now they come to receive the thing promiſed. Unto them he has done well. A gift is often in ſcripture called a bleſſing; and God's bleſſing is ever real, like Iſaac's bleſſing, by which Jacob became his heir: they were all by his grace juſtified, ſanctified, and made to perſevere to the end; now they are raiſed up in glory, and being tried, ſtand in the judgment: what remains then, but that God crown his own work of grace in them, in giving them their kingdom in the full enjoyment of himſelf for ever? Finally they are theſe whom God has conſecrated; the which alſo is a ſcripture notion of bleſſing, 1 Cor. x. 16. God ſet them apart for himſelf, to be kings and prieſts unto him; and the Mediator introduceth them as ſuch to their kingdom and prieſthood.

Secondly, Chriſt introduceth them, as heirs of the kingdom, to the actual poſſeſſion of it. *Come ye bleſſed, inherit the kingdom.* They are children of God, by regeneration and adoption. *And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Chriſt,* Rom. viii. 17. Now is the general aſſembly of the firſt-born before the throne: their minority is overpaſt, and the time appointed of the Father for receiving of their inheritance is come. The Mediator purchaſed the inheritance for them with his own blood; their rights and evidences were drawn long ago, and regiſtered in the Bible: nay, they had infeftment of their inheritance in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, as their proxy, when he aſcended into heaven, whither the forerunner is for us entered, Heb. vi. 20. Nothing remaineth, but that they enter into perſonal poſſeſſion thereof, which, begun at death, is perfected at the laſt day; when the ſaints, in their bodies as well as their ſouls, go into their kingdom.

Laſtly, They are introduced to it, as theſe it was prepared for, from the foundation of the world. The kingdom was prepared for them in the eternal purpoſe of God, before they, or any of them, had a being; which ſhews it to be a gift of free grace to them. It was from eternity the divine purpoſe, that there ſhould be ſuch a kingdom for the elect; and that all impediments which might mar their acceſs to it, ſhould be removed out of the way: and withal, by the ſame eternal decree, every one's place in it was determined and ſet apart, to be reſerved for him, that each of the children coming at length into their Father's houſe, might find his own place awaiting him, and ready for him: as at Saul's table, David's place was empty, when he was not there to occupy it himſelf, 1 Sam. xx. 25. And now that the appointed time is come, they are brought in to take their ſeveral places in glory, ſet apart and reſerved for them, till they ſhould come at them.

USE. I ſhall ſhut up my diſcourſe on this ſubject, with a word of application. (1.) To all who claim a right to this kingdom. (2.) To theſe who have indeed a right to it. (3.) To theſe who have not a right thereto.

Firſt, Since it is evident, there is no promiſcuous admiſſion into the kingdom of heaven, and none do obtain it, but theſe whoſe claim to it is ſolemnly tried by the great Judge, and, after trial, ſuſtained as good and valid; it is neceſſary that all of us impartially try and examine, whether, according to the laws of the kingdom, contained in the holy ſcriptures, we can verify and make good our claim to this kingdom? The hopes of heaven, which moſt men have, are built on ſuch ſandy foundations, as can never abide the trial; having no ground in the world, but in their own deluded fancy: ſuch hopes will leave thoſe, who entertain them, miſerably diſappointed at laſt. Wherefore it is not only our duty, but our intereſt, to put the matter to a fair trial, in time. If we find we have no right to heaven indeed, we are yet in the way; and what we have not, we may obtain: but if we find we have a right to it, we will then have the comfort of a happy proſpect into eternity; which is the greateſt comfort one is capable of in the world. If ye enquire, How ye may know whether ye have a right to heaven, or not? I anſwer, ye muſt know that by the ſtate ye are now in. If ye are yet in your natural ſtate, ye are children of wrath, and not children of this kingdom; for that ſtate, to them who live and die in it, iſſues in eternal miſery. If you be brought into the ſtate of grace, you have a juſt claim to the ſtate of glory; for grace will certainly iſſue in glory at length. This kingdom is an inheritance, which none but the children of God can juſtly claim. Now, we become the children of God by regeneration, and union with Chriſt his Son; *And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Chriſt*, Rom. viii. 17. Theſe then are the great points, upon which one's evidences for the ſtate of glory do depend. And therefore I refer you to what is ſaid on the ſtate of grace, for clearing of you as to your right to glory.

If you be heirs of glory, the kingdom of God is within you, by virtue of your regeneration and union with Chriſt. (1.) The kingdom of heaven has the throne in thy heart, if thou haſt a right to that kingdom: Chriſt is in thee, and God is in thee: and having choſen him for thy portion, thy ſoul has taken up its everlaſting reſt in him, and gets no kindly reſt but in him; as the dove, until ſhe came into the ark. To him the ſoul habitually inclines, by virtue of the new nature, the divine nature, which the heirs of glory are partakers of, Pſal. lxxiii. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee.* (2.) The laws of heaven are in thy heart, if thou art an heir of heaven, Heb. viii. 10. *I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.* Thy mind is enlightened in the knowledge of the laws of the kingdom, by the Spirit of the Lord, the inſtructor of all the heirs of glory: for whoſoever may want inſtruction, ſure an heir to a crown ſhall not want it. *It is written in the prophets, and they ſhall all be taught of God*, John vi. 45. Therefore, though father and mother leave them early, or be in no concern about their Chriſtian education, and they be ſoon put to work for their daily bread; yet they ſhall not lack teaching. Withal thy heart is changed, and thou beareſt God's image, which conſiſts in righteouſneſs and true holineſs, Eph. iv. 24. Thy ſoul is reconciled to the whole law of God, and at war with all known ſin. In vain do they pretend to the holy kingdom, who are not holy in heart and life; for without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord, Heb. xii. 14. If heaven is a reſt, it is for ſpiritual labourers, and not for loiterers. If it is an eternal triumph, they are not in the way to it, who avoid the ſpiritual warfare, and are in no care to ſubduecorruption, reſiſt temptation, and to cut their way to it, through the oppoſition made by the devil, the world, and the fleſh. (3.) The treaſure in heaven is the chief in thy eſteem and deſire; for it is your treaſure, and where your treaſure is, there will your heart be alſo, Matth. vi. 21. If it is not the things that are ſeen, but the things that are not ſeen, which thy heart is in greateſt care and concern to obtain: if thou art driving a trade with heaven, and thy chief buſineſs lies there; it is a ſign thy treaſure is there, for thy heart is there. But if thou art of theſe, who wonder why ſo much ado about heaven and eternal life, as if leſs may ſerve the turn; thou art like to have nothing ado with it at all. Carnal men value themſelves moſt on their treaſures upon earth; with them the things that are not ſeen, are weighed down by the things that are ſeen, and no loſſes do ſo much affect them as earthly loſſes: but the heirs of the crown of glory will value themſelves moſt on their treaſures in heaven, and will not put their private eſtate in the balance with their kingdom; nor will the loſs of the former go ſo near their hearts, as the thoughts of the loſs of the latter. Where theſe firſt fruits of heaven are to be found, the eternal weight of glory will ſurely follow after; while the want of them muſt be admitted, according to the word, to be an unconteſtable evidence of an heir of wrath.

Secondly, Let the heirs of the kingdom behave themſelves ſuitable to their character and dignity. Live as having the faith and hope of this glorious kingdom: let your converſation be in heaven, Philip. iii. 20. Let your ſouls delight in communion with God, while ye are on earth, ſince you look for your happineſs in communion with him in heaven. Let your ſpeech and actions ſavour of heaven: and in your manner of life, look like the country to which ye are going; that it may be ſaid of you, as of Gideon's brethren, Judg. viii. 18. *Each one reſembled the children of a king.* Maintain a holy contempt of the world, and of the things of the world. Although others, whoſe earthly things are their beſt things do ſet their hearts upon them; yet it becomes you to ſet your feet on them, ſince your beſt things are above. This world is but the country, through which lies your road to Immanuel's land: therefore paſs through it as pilgrims and ſtrangers: and dip not into the incumbrances of it, ſo as to retard you in your journey; it is unworthy of one born to a palace, to ſet his heart on a cottage, to dwell there; and of one running for a prize of gold, to go off his way, to gather the ſtones of the brook: but much more is it unworthy of an heir of the kingdom of heaven to be hid among the ſtuff of this world, when he ſhould be going on to receive his crown. The prize ſet before you challengeth your utmoſt zeal, activity, and diligence: and holy courage, reſolution, and magnanimity, become thoſe who are to inherit the crown. Ye cannot come at it, without fighting your way to it, through difficulties from without, and from within: but the kingdom before you is ſufficient to balance them all, though ye ſhould be called to reſiſt even unto blood. Prefer Chriſt's croſs before the world's crown, and wants in the way of duty before eaſe and wealth in the way of ſin: *Chuſe rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon*, Heb. xi. 25. In a common inn, ſtrangers (perhaps) fare better than the children: but here lies the difference, the children are to pay nothing for what they have got; but the ſtrangers get their bill, and muſt pay completely for all they have had. Did we conſider the wickeds after-reckoning for all the ſmiles of common providence they meet with in the world, we would not grudge them their good things here, nor take it amiſs that God keeps our beſt things laſt. Heaven will make up all the ſaints loſſes, and all tears ſhall be wiped away from their eyes there.

It is worth obſerving, that there is ſuch a variety of ſcripture notions of heaven's happineſs, as may ſuit every afflicted caſe of the ſaints. Are they oppreſſed? The day cometh, in which they ſhall have the dominion. Is their honour laid in the duſt? A throne to ſit upon, a crown on their head, and a ſcepter in their hand, will raiſe it up again. Are they reduced to poverty? Heaven is a treaſure. If they be forced to quite their own habitations, yet Chriſt's Father's houſe is ready for them. Are they driven to the wilderneſs? There is a city prepared for them. Are they baniſhed from their native country? they ſhall inherit a better country. If they are deprived of publick ordinances, the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple there whither they are going: a temple, the doors of which none can ſhut: if their life be full of bitterneſs, heaven is a paradiſe for pleaſure. If they groan under the remains of ſpiritual bondage, there is a glorious liberty abiding them. Do their defiled garments make them aſhamed? The day cometh, in which their robes ſhall be white, pure and ſpotleſs. The battle againſt fleſh and blood, principalities and powers, is indeed ſore; but a glorious triumph is awaiting them. If the toil and labours of the chriſtian life be great, there is an everlaſting reſt for them in heaven. Are they judged unworthy of ſociety in the world? They ſhall be admitted into the ſociety of angels in heaven. Do they complain of frequent interruptions of their communion with God? there they ſhall go no more out, but ſhall ſee his face for evermore. If they are in darkneſs here, eternal light is there. If they grapple with death, there they ſhall have everlaſting life. And to ſum up all in one word, *He that overcometh ſhall inherit all things*, Rev. xxi. 7. He ſhall have plenty, profit, and pleaſure, every thing deſirable; full ſatisfaction to his moſt enlarged deſires. Let the expectants of heaven, then, lift up their heads with joy, gird up their loins, and ſo run, as they may obtain; trampling on every thing that may hinder them in the way to the kingdom. Let them never account any duty too hard, nor any croſs too heavy, nor any pains too much, ſo as they may obtain the crown of glory.

Laſtly, Let thoſe who have no right to the kingdom of heaven, be ſtirred up to ſeek it with all diligence. Now is the time, wherein the children of wrath may become heirs of glory: and when the way to everlaſting happineſs is opened, it is no time to ſit ſtill and loiter. Raiſe up your hearts towards the glory that is to be revealed; and do not always ly along on this periſhing earth. What can all your worldly enjoyments avail you, while you have no ſolid ground to expect heaven, after this life is gone? Theſe riches and honours, profits, and pleaſures, that muſt be buried with us, and cannot accompany us into another world, are but a wretched portion, and will leave men comfortleſs at long run. Ah! why are men ſo fond, in their life time, to receive their good things! why are they not rather in care, to ſecure an intereſt in the kingdom of heaven, which would never be taken from them, but afford them a portion, to make them happy through the ages of eternity! if you deſire honour, there you may have the higheſt honours, which will laſte when the world's honours are laid in duſt; if riches, heaven will yield you treaſure; even pleaſures for evermore. O! be not deſpiſers of the pleaſant land, neither judge yourſelves unworthy of eternal life; but marry the heir, and heaven ſhall be your dowry; cloſe with Chriſt, as he is offered to you in the goſpel, and ye ſhall inherit all things. Walk in the way of holineſs, and it will lead you to the kingdom. Fight againſt ſin and Satan, and ye ſhall receive the crown. Forſake the world, and the doors of heaven will be open to receive you.

HEAD VI.

HELL.

MATTH. xxv. 41.

Then ſhall he ſay alſo unto them on the left Hand, Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels.

WERE there no other place of eternal lodging but heaven, I ſhould here have cloſed my diſcourſe of man's eternal ſtate; but ſeeing in the other world, there is a priſon for the wicked, as well as a palace for the ſaints, we muſt alſo enquire into that ſtate of everlaſting miſery; the which the worſt of men may well bear with, without crying, *Art thou come to torment us before the time?* Since there is yet acceſs to fly from the wrath to come; and all that can be ſaid of it, comes ſhort of what the damned ſhall feel; for who knoweth the power of God's anger?

The laſt thing our Lord did before he left the earth, was, he lift up his hands, and bleſſed his diſciples, Luke xxiv. 50. 51. But the laſt thing he will do, before he leave the throne, is to curſe and condemn his enemies; as we learn from the text, which contains the dreadful ſentence, wherein the everlaſting miſery of the wicked is wrapt up. In which three things may be taken notice of. Firſt, The quality of the condemned, ye curſed. The Judge finds the curſe of the law upon them, as tranſgreſſors, and ſends them away with it, from his preſence into hell, there to be fully execute upon them. 2dly, The puniſhment which they are adjudged to; and to which they were always bound over, by virtue of the curſe. And it is twofold, the puniſhment of loſs, in ſeparation from God and Chriſt. Depart from me: and the puniſhment of ſenſe, in moſt exquiſite and extreme torments, *Depart from me into fire.* 3dly, The aggravation of their torments. (1.) They are ready for them, they are not to expect a moment's reſpite. The fire is prepared, and ready to catch hold of thoſe who are thrown into it. (2.) They will have the ſociety of devils in their torments, being ſhut up with them in hell. They muſt depart into the ſame fire prepared for Beelzebub the prince of devils, and his angels; namely, other reprobate angels who fell with him, and became devils. It is ſaid to be prepared for them; becauſe they ſinned, and were condemned to hell before man ſinned. This ſpeaks further terror to the damned, that they muſt go into the ſame torments, and place of torment, with the devil and his angels. They hearkened to his temptations, and they muſt partake in his torments; his works they would do, and they muſt receive the wages, which is death. In this life they joined with devils, in enmity againſt God and Chriſt, and the way of holineſs; and in the other they muſt lodge with them. Thus all the goats ſhall be ſhut up together; for that name is common to devils and wicked men, in ſcripture, Lev. xvii. 7. Where the word rendered devils, properly ſignifies hairy ones, or goats, in the ſhape of which creatures, devils delighted much to appear to their worſhippers. (3.) The laſt aggravation of their torment is the eternal duration thereof, they muſt depart into everlaſting fire. This is it that puts the cape-ſtone upon their miſery, namely, that it ſhall never have an end.

DOCTRINE.

The wicked ſhall be ſhut up under the curſe of God, in everlaſting Miſery, with the devils in Hell.

After having evinced that there ſhall be a reſurrection of the body, and a general judgment, I think it not needful to inſiſt to prove the truth of future puniſhments. The ſame conſcience there is in men of a future judgment, bears witneſs alſo of the truth of future puniſhment. (And that the puniſhment of the damned ſhall not be annihilation, or a reducing them to nothing, will be clear in the progreſs of our diſcourſe.) In treating of this awful ſubject, I ſhall enquire into theſe four things. (1.) The *curſe* under which the damned ſhall be ſhut up. (2.) Their *miſery* under that curſe. (3.) Their *ſociety* with devils in this miſerable ſtate. (4.) The *eternity* of the whole.

I. As to the *curſe* under which the damned ſhall be ſhut up in hell; it is the terrible ſentence of the law, by which they are bound over to the wrath of God, as tranſgreſſors. This curſe does not firſt ſeize them, when, ſtanding before the tribunal, they receive their ſentence: but they were born under it, they led their life under it in this world, they died under it, roſe with it out of their graves; and the Judge finding it upon them, ſends them away with it into the pit; where it ſhall ly on them through all the ages of eternity. By nature all men are under the curſe; but it is removed from the elect, by virtue of their union with Chriſt. It abides on the reſt of ſinful mankind, and by it they are devoted to deſtruction, ſeparated to evil, as one may deſcribe the curſe, from Deut. xxix. 21. *And the Lord ſhall ſeparate him unto evil.* Thus ſhall the damned, for ever be perſons devoted to deſtruction: ſeparate and ſet apart from the reſt of mankind, unto evil, as veſſels of wrath, ſet up for marks to the arrows of divine wrath; and made the common receptacle and ſhore of vengeance.

The curſe hath its firſt fruits on earth, which are a pledge of the whole lump that is to follow. And hence it is, that as temporal and eternal benefits are bound up together, under the ſame expreſſions of the promiſe to the Lord's people, as Iſa. xxxv. 10. *And the ranſomed of the Lord ſhall return, and come to Zion,* &c. relating both to the return from Babylon, and to the ſaints going to their eternal reſt in heaven: even ſo temporal and eternal miſeries, on the enemies of God, are ſometimes wrapt up under one and the ſame expreſſion in the threatning, as Iſa. xxx. 33. *For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared, he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood, the breath of the Lord, like a ſtream of brimſtone, doth kindle it.* Which relates both to the temporal and eternal deſtruction of the Aſſyrians, who fell by the hand of the angel before Jeruſalem. See alſo Iſa. lxvi. 24. What is that judicial blindneſs to which many are given up, in whom the God of this world hath blinded their eyes, 2 Cor. iv. 4. but the firſt fruits of hell and of the curſe; Their ſun is going down at noon day: their darkneſs is increaſing as if it would not ſtop, till it iſſue in utter darkneſs. Many a laſh, in the dark, doth conſcience give the wicked, which the world doth not hear of: and what is that, but that the never-dying worm is already begun to gnaw them? And there is not one of theſe, but they may call it *Joſeph,* for *the Lord ſhall add another;* or rather *Gad,* for *a troop cometh.* Theſe drops of wrath are terrible forebodings of the full ſhower which is to follow. Sometimes they are given over to their vile affections, that they have no more command over them, Rom. i. 26. So their luſts grow up more and more towards perfection, if I may ſo ſpeak. As in heaven grace comes to its perfection, ſo in hell ſin arrives at its higheſt pitch; and as ſin is thus advancing upon the man, he is the nearer and the liker to hell. There are three things that have a fearful aſpect here. Firſt, When every thing that might do good to mens ſouls, is blaſted to them! ſo that their bleſſings are curſed, (Mal. ii. 2.) ſermons, prayers, admonitions, and reproofs, which are powerful towards others, are quite inefficacious to them. 2dly, When men go on ſinning ſtill, in the face of plain rebukes from the Lord, in ordinances and providences: God meets them with rods in the way of their ſin, as it were ſtriking them back; yet they ruſh forward. What can be more like hell, where the Lord is always ſmiting, and the damned always ſinning againſt him? Laſtly, When every thing in one's lot is turned into fuel to one's luſts. Thus adverſity and proſperity, poverty and wealth, the want of ordinances, and the enjoyment of them, do all but nouriſh the corruptions of many. Their vicious ſtomachs corrupt whatſoever they receive, and all does but increaſe noxious humours.

But the full harveſt follows in that miſery which they ſhall for ever ly under in hell; that wrath, which, by virtue of the curſe, ſhall come upon them to the uttermoſt; the which is the curſe fully executed. This black cloud opens upon them, and the terrible thunder-bolt ſtrikes them, by that dreadful voice from the throne, *Depart from me, ye curſed,* &c. Which will give the whole wicked world a diſmal view of what is in the boſom of the curſe. It is, (1.) A voice of extreme indignation and wrath, a furious rebuke from the lion of the tribe of Judah. His looks will be moſt terrible to them; his eyes will caſt flames of fire on them; and his words will pierce their hearts, like envenomed arrows. When he will thus ſpeak them out of his preſence for ever, and by his word chace them away from before the throne, they will ſee how keenly wrath burns in his heart againſt them for their ſins. (2.) It is a voice of extreme diſdain and contempt from the Lord. Time was when they were pitied, beſought to pity themſelves, and to be the Lord's: but they deſpiſed him, they would have none of him: but now they ſhall be buried out of his ſight, under everlaſting contempt. (3.) It is a voice of extreme hatred. Hereby the Lord ſhuts them out of his bowels of love and mercy: *Depart, ye curſed: q. d.* I cannot endure to look at you: there is not one purpoſe of good to you in mine heart; nor ſhall ye ever hear one word more of hope from me. Laſtly, It is a voice of eternal rejection from the Lord. He commands them to be gone, and ſo caſts them off for ever. Thus the doors of heaven are ſhut againſt them; the gulf is fixed between them and it, and they are driven to the pit. Now ſhould they cry with all poſſible earneſtneſs, *Lord, Lord, open to us,* they will hear nothing, but, *Depart, depart, ye curſed.* Thus ſhall the damned be ſhut up under the curſe.

USE Firſt. Let all theſe who, being yet in their natural ſtate, are under the curſe, conſider this, and flee to Jeſus Chriſt betimes, that they may be delivered from it. How can ye ſleep in that ſtate, being wrapt up in the curſe! Jeſus Chriſt is now ſaying unto you, *Come, ye curſed,* I will take the curſe from off you, and give you the bleſſing. The waters of the ſanctuary are now running to heal the curſed ground; take heed to improve them for that end to your own ſouls, and fear it as hell, to get no ſpiritual advantage thereby. Remember that the miry places, (which are neither ſea nor dry land, a fit emblem of hypocrites,) and the marſhes, (that neither breed fiſhes, nor bear trees, but the waters of the ſanctuary leave them, as they find them, in their barrenneſs,) ſhall not be healed; (ſeeing they ſpurn the only remedy,) they ſhall be given to ſalt, (left under eternal barrenneſs, ſet up for monuments of the wrath of God, and concluded for ever under the curſe,) Ezek. xlvii. 11. 2dly, Let all curſers conſider this, whoſe mouths are filled with curſing themſelves and others. He who *clothes himſelf with curſing,* ſhall find the curſe, *come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones,* (Pſal. cix. 18.) if repentance prevent it not. He ſhall get all his imprecations againſt himſelf fully anſwered, in that day wherein he ſtands before the tribunal of God; and ſhall find the killing weight of the curſe of God, which he makes light of now.

II. I proceed to ſpeak of the miſery of the damned, under that curſe; a miſery which the tongues of men and angels cannot ſufficiently expreſs. God always acts like himſelf: no favours can be equal to his, and his wrath and terrors are without a parallel. As the ſaints in heaven are advanced to the higheſt pitch of happineſs, ſo the damned in hell arrive at the height of miſery. Two things here I ſhall ſoberly enquire into, the puniſhment of *loſs*, and the puniſhment of *ſenſe*, in hell. But ſince theſe alſo are ſuch things as eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, we muſt (as geographers do) leave a large void for the unknown land, which the day will diſcover.

Firſt, *The puniſhment of loſs* which the damned ſhall undergo, is ſeparation from the Lord, as we learn from the text, *Depart from me, ye curſed.* This will be a ſtone upon their grave's mouth, as the talent of lead, Zech. v. 7. 8. that will hold them down for ever. They ſhall be eternally ſeparated from God and Chriſt. Chriſt is the way to the Father: but the way, as to them, ſhall be everlaſtingly blocked up, the bridge ſhall be drawn, and the great gulf fixed; ſo ſhall they be ſhut up in a ſtate of eternal ſeparation from God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. They will be locally ſeparated from the man Chriſt, and ſhall never come into the ſeat of the Bleſſed, where he appears in his glory, but be caſt out into utter darkneſs, Matth. xxii. 13. They cannot indeed be locally ſeparated from God, they cannot be in a place where he is not; ſince he is, and will be preſent every where; *If I make my bed in hell*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *behold thou art there*, Pſal. cxxxix. 8. But they ſhall be miſerable beyond expreſſion, in a relative ſeparation from God. Though he will be preſent in the very centre of their ſouls, (if I may ſo expreſs it,) while they are wrapt up in fiery flames, in utter darkneſs; it ſhall not only be to feed them with the vinegar of his wrath, to entertain them with the emanations of his revenging juſtice; but they ſhall never taſte more of his goodneſs and bounty, nor have the leaſt glimpſe of hope from him: They will ſee his heart to be abſolutely alienated from them, and that it cannot be towards them: but that they are the party againſt whom the Lord will have an indignation for ever. They ſhall be deprived of the glorious preſence and enjoyment of God: they ſhall have no part in the beatific viſion; nor ſee any thing in God towards them, but one wave of wrath rolling at the back of another. This will bring upon them overwhelming floods of ſorrow for evermore. They ſhall never taſte of the rivers of pleaſure the ſaints in heaven enjoy; but ſhall have an everlaſting winter, and a perpetual night, becauſe the Sun of righteouſneſs has departed from them, and ſo they are left in utter darkneſs. So great as heaven's happineſs is, ſo great will their loſs be; for they can have none of it for ever.

This ſeparation of the wicked from God will be, (1.) An involuntary ſeparation. Now they depart from him, they will not come to him, though they are called, intreated, and obteſted to come: but then they ſhall be driven away from him, when they would gladly abide with him. Although the queſtion, *What is thy beloved more than another beloved?* is frequent now amongſt the deſpiſers of the goſpel, there will be no ſuch queſtion among all the damned crew; for then they will ſee that man's happineſs is only to be found in the enjoyment of God, and that the loſs of him is a loſs that can never be balanced. (2.) It will alſo be a total and utter ſeparation. Albeit the wicked are in this life ſeparated from God, yet there is a kind of intercourſe betwixt them: he gives them many good gifts, and they give him, at leaſt, ſome good words; ſo that the peace is not altogether hopeleſs. But then there ſhall be a total ſeparation, the damned being caſt into utter darkneſs, where there will not be the leaſt gleam of light or favour from the Lord: the which will put an end unto all their fair words to him. Laſtly, It ſhall be a final ſeparation; they will part with him, never more to meet, being ſhut up under everlaſting horror and deſpair. The match betwixt Jeſus Chriſt, and unbelievers, which has ſo often been carried forward, and put back again, ſhall then be broken up for ever: and never ſhall one meſſage of favour or good-will go betwixt the parties any more.

This puniſhment of loſs, in a total and final ſeparation from God, is a miſery beyond what mortals can conceive, and which the dreadful experience of the damned can only ſufficiently unfold. But that we may have ſome conception of the horror of it, let theſe following things be conſidered.

1ſt, God is the chief good, and therefore to be ſeparated from him muſt be the chief evil. Our native country, our relations, and our life, are good; and therefore to be deprived of them we reckon a great evil: and the better any thing is, ſo much the greater evil is the loſs of it. Wherefore, God being the chief good, and no good comparable to him, there can be no loſs ſo great as the loſs of God. The full enjoyment of him is the higheſt pinnacle of happineſs the creature is capable of arriving at; to be fully and finally ſeparated from him, muſt then be the loweſt ſtep of miſery which the rational creature can be reduced to. To be caſt off by men, by good men, by the beſt of men, is heavy: what muſt it then be, to be rejected of God, of goodneſs itſelf! 2dly, God is the fountain of all goodneſs, from which all goodneſs flows unto the creatures, and by which it is continued in them, and to them. Whatſoever goodneſs or perfection, natural as well as moral, is in any creature, it is from God, and depends upon him, as the light is from, and depends on the ſun: for every created being, as ſuch, is a dependent one. Wherefore a total ſeparation from God, wherein all comfortable communication betwixt God and a rational creature is abſolutely blocked up, muſt of neceſſity bring along with it a total eclipſe of all light of comfort and eaſe whatſoever. If there is but one window, or open place, in a houſe, and that be quite ſhut up; it is evident there can be nothing but darkneſs in that houſe. Our Lord tells us, (Matth. xix. 17.) *There is none good but one, that is God.* Nothing good or comfortable is originally from the creature: whatever good or comfortable thing one finds in one's ſelf, as health of body, peace of mind: whatever ſweetneſs, reſt, pleaſure, or delight, one finds in other creatures, as in meat, drink, arts, and ſciences: all theſe are but ſome faint rays of the divine perfections, communicate from God unto the creature, and depending on a conſtant influence from him, for their conſervation, which failing, they would immediately be gone; for it is impoſſible that any created thing can be to us more or better than what God makes it to be. All the rivulets of comfort we drink of, within or without ourſelves, come from God as their ſpring-head: the courſe of which toward us being ſtopt, of neceſſity they muſt all dry up. So that when God goes, all that is good and comfortable goes with them: all eaſe and quiet of body or mind, Hoſ. ix. 12. *Wo alſo to them, when I depart from them.* When the wicked are totally and finally ſeparate from him, all that is comfortable in them, or about them, returns to its fountain, as the light goes away with the ſun, and darkneſs ſucceeds in the room thereof. Thus, in their ſeparation from God, all peace is removed far away from them, and pain in body and anguiſh of ſoul ſucceed to it: all joy goes, and unmixed ſorrow ſettles in them: all quiet and reſt ſeparate from them, and they are filled with horror and rage: hope flees away, and deſpair ſeizeth them, common operations of the Spirit, which now reſtrain them, are withdrawn for ever, and ſin comes to its utmoſt height. And thus we have a diſmal view of the horrible ſpectacle of ſin and miſery, which a creature proves, when totally ſeparated from God, and left to itſelf; and one may ſee this ſeparation to be the very hell of hell.

Being ſeparated from God, they are deprived of all good. The good things, which they ſet their hearts upon in this world, are beyond their reach there. The covetous man cannot enjoy his wealth there, nor the ambitious man his honours, nor the ſenſual man his pleaſures, no not a drop of water to cool his tongue, Luke xxi. 23. 25. No meat nor drink there to ſtrengthen the faint; no ſleep to refreſh the weary; and no muſick, nor pleaſant company to comfort and chear up the ſorrowful. And as for theſe good things they deſpiſed in the world, they ſhall never more hear of them, nor ſee them. No offers of Chriſt there, no pardons, no peace: no wells of ſalvation in the pit of deſtruction. In one word, they ſhall be deprived of whatſoever might comfort them, being totally and finally ſeparated from God, the fountain of all goodneſs.

3dly, Man naturally deſires to be happy, being withal conſcious to himſelf that he is not ſelf-ſufficient; and therefore has ever a deſire of ſomething, without himſelf, to make him happy: and the ſoul being, by its natural make and conſtitution, capable of enjoying God, and nothing elſe being commenſurable to its deſires; it can never have true and ſolid reſt, till it reſt in the enjoyment of God. This deſire of happineſs the rational creature can never lay aſide, no not in hell. Now while the wicked are on earth, they ſeek their ſatisfaction in the creature; and when one fails, they go to another: thus they put off their time in the world, deceiving their own ſouls, and luring them on with vain hopes. But in the other world, all comfort in the creatures having failed together at once: and the ſhadows they are now purſuing, having all of them evaniſhed in a moment; they ſhall be totally and finally ſeparated from God, and ſee they have thus loſt him. So the doors of earth and heaven both are ſhut againſt them at once. This will create them unſpeakable anguiſh, while they ſhall live under an eternal gnawing hunger after happineſs, which they certainly know ſhall never be in the leaſt meaſure ſatisfied, all doors being cloſed on them. Who then can imagine how this ſeparation from God ſhall cut the damned to the heart! How will they rore and rage under it, and how will it ſting them and gnaw them through the ages of eternity!

4thly, The damned ſhall know that ſome are perfectly happy in the enjoyment of that God, from whom they themſelves are ſeparate: and this will aggravate the ſenſe of their loſs, that they can never have any ſhare with theſe happy ones. Being ſeparated from God, they are ſeparated from the ſociety of the glorified ſaints and angels. They may *ſee Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his boſom,* (Luke xvi. 23.) but can never come into their company; being as unclean lepers, thruſt out without the camp, and excommunicated from the preſence of the Lord, and of all his holy ones. It is the opinion of ſome, that every perſon, in heaven or hell, ſhall hear and ſee all that paſſeth in either ſtate. Whatever is to be ſaid of this, we have ground from the word to conclude, that the damned ſhall have a very exquiſite knowledge of the happineſs of the ſaints in heaven; for what elſe can be meant by the rich man in hell his ſeeing Lazarus in Abraham's boſom? One thing is plain in this caſe, that their own torments will give them ſuch notions of the happineſs of the ſaints, as a ſick man has of health, or a priſoner has of liberty. And as they cannot fail of reflecting on the happineſs of thoſe in heaven, more than they can attain to contentment with their own lot; ſo every thought of that happineſs will aggravate their loſs. It would be a mighty torment to a hungry man, to ſee others liberally feaſting, while he is ſo chained up, as he cannot have one crumb to ſtay his gnawing appetite. To bring muſick and dancing before a man labouring under extreme pains, would but encreaſe his anguiſh: how then will the ſongs of the bleſſed, in their enjoyment of God, make the damned rore under their ſeparation from him!

5thly, They will remember that time was, when they might have been made partakers of the bleſſed ſtate of the ſaints, in their enjoyment of God: and this will aggravate their ſenſe of the loſs. All may remember, there was once a poſſibility of it: that ſometime they were in the world, in ſome corners of which the way of ſalvation was laid open to mens view; and may wiſh they had gone round the world, till they had found it out. Deſpiſers of the goſpel will remember with bitterneſs, that Jeſus Chriſt, with all his benefits, was offered to them, that they were exhorted, intreated, and preſſed to accept, but would not; and they were warned of the miſery they feel, and obteſted to flee from the wrath to come, but they would not hearken. The goſpel-offer ſlighted will make a hot hell, and the loſs of an offered heaven will be a ſinking weight on the ſpirits of unbelievers in the pit. Some will remember that there was a probability of their being eternally happy; that ſometime they ſeemed to ſtand fair for it, and were *not far from the kingdom of God*; that they had once almoſt conſented to the bleſſed bargain, the pen was in their hand (as it were) to ſign the marriage contract betwixt Chriſt and their ſouls: but unhappily they dropped it, and turned back from the Lord to their luſts again. And others will remember that they thought themſelves ſure of heaven, but, being blinded with pride and ſelf conceit, they were above ordinances, and beyond inſtruction, and would not examine their ſtate, which was their ruin; but then they ſhall in vain wiſh, they had reputed themſelves the worſt of the congregation in which they lived, and curſe the fond conceit they had of themſelves, and that others had of them too. Thus it will ſting the damned, that they might have eſcaped this loſs.

Laſtly, They will ſee the loſs to be irrecoverable; that they muſt eternally ly under it, never, never, to be repaid. Might the damned, after millions of ages in hell, regain what they have loſt, it would be ſome ground of hope; but the prize is gone, and can never be recovered. And there are alſo two things here, which will pierce them to the heart. (1.) *That they never knew the worth of it, till it was irrecoverably loſt.* Should a man give away an earthen pot full of gold for a trifle, never knowing what was in it till it were quite gone from him, and paſt recovery; how would this fooliſh action gall him, upon the diſcovery of the riches in it! Such a one's caſe may be a faint reſemb'ance of the caſe of deſpiſers of the goſpel, when in hell they lift up their eyes, and behold that, to their torment, which they will not ſee now, to their ſalvation. (2.) *That they have loſt it for loſs and dung:* ſold their part of heaven, and not enriched themſelves with the price. They have loſt heaven for earthly profits and pleaſures, and now both are gone together from them. The drunkards cups are gone, the covetous man's gain, the voluptuous man's carnal delights, and the ſluggard's eaſe: nothing is left to comfort them now. The happineſs they loſt remains indeed, but they can have no part in it for ever.

USE. Sinners, be perſuaded to come to God through Jeſus Chriſt, uniting with him through a Mediator; that ye may be preſerved from this fearful ſeparation from him. O be afraid to live in a ſtate of ſeparation from God, leſt that which you now make your choice, become your eternal puniſhment hereafter. Do not reject communion with God, caſt not off the communion of ſaints: for it will be the miſery of the damned to be driven out from that communion. Ceaſe to build up the wall of ſeparation betwixt God and you, by continuing in your ſinful courſes: repent rather in time, and ſo pull it down: leſt the capeſtone be laid upon it, and it ſtand for ever between you and happineſs. Tremble at the thoughts of rejection and ſeparation from God. By whomſoever men are rejected upon earth, they ordinarily find ſome to pity them: but, if ye be thus ſeparated from God, ye will find all doors ſhut againſt you. Ye will find no pity from any in heaven: neither ſaints nor angels will pity them whom God has utterly caſt off: none will pity you in hell, where there is no love but loathing; all being loathed of God, loathing him, and loathing one another. This is a day of loſſes and fears. I ſhew you a loſs; ye would do well to fear in time; be afraid leſt you loſe God, if ye do, a long eternity will be ſpent in roaring out lamentations for this loſs. O horrid ſtupidity! men are in a mighty care and concern to prevent worldly loſſes: but they are in hazard of loſing the enjoyment of God for ever and ever: in hazard of loſing heaven, the communion of the bleſſed, and all good things for ſoul and body in another world; yet as careleſs in that matter, as if they were uncapable of thought. O! compare this day with the day our text aims at. This day heaven is opened to them who hitherto have rejected Chriſt, and yet there is room, if they will come; but that day the doors ſhall be ſhut. Now, Chriſt is ſaying unto you, *Come:* then he will ſay, *Depart;* ſeeing ye would not come when ye were bidden. Now pity is ſhown; the Lord pities you, his ſervants pity you, and tell you that the pit is before you, and cry to you, that ye do yourſelves no harm: but then ſhall ye have no pity from God nor man.

Secondly, The damned ſhall be puniſhed in hell with *the puniſhment of ſenſe;* they muſt depart from God into everlaſting fire. I am not in a mind to diſpute, *what kind of fire it is* which they ſhall depart into, and be tormented by for ever, *whether a material fire, or not?* Experience will more than ſatisfy the curioſity of thoſe who are diſpoſed rather to diſpute about it, than to ſeek how to eſcape it. Neither will I meddle with that queſtion, *Where it is?* It is enough, that *the worm which never dieth,* and *the fire that is never quenched,* will be found ſomewhere by impenitent ſinners. But, (1.) I ſhall evince that, whatever kind of fire it is, it is more vehement and terrible than any fire we on earth are acquainted with. (2.) I ſhall condeſcend on ſome properties of theſe fiery torments.

As to the firſt of theſe; burning is the moſt terrible puniſhment, and brings the moſt exquiſite pain and torment with it. By what reward could a man be induced to hold but his hand in the flame of a candle for one hour? All imaginable pleaſures on earth would never prevail with the moſt voluptuous man, to venture to lodge but one half hour in a burning fiery furnace; nor would all the wealth in the world prevail with the moſt covetous to do it: yet, on much lower terms, do moſt men, in effect, expoſe themſelves to everlaſting fire in hell, which is more vehement and terrible than any fire we on earth are acquainted with; as will appear by the following conſiderations.

1. As, in heaven, grace being brought to its perfection, profit and pleaſure do alſo arrive at their height there; ſo ſin being come to its height in hell, the evil of puniſhment doth alſo arrive at its perfection there. Wherefore, as the joys in heaven are far greater than any joys which the ſaints obtain on earth, ſo the puniſhments of hell muſt be greater than any earthly torments whatſoever; not only in reſpect of the continuance of them, but alſo in reſpect of vehemency and exquiſiteneſs.

2. Why are things of the other world repreſented to us, in an earthly dreſs, in the word; but that the weakneſs of our capacities in ſuch matters (which the Lord is pleaſed to condeſcend unto) does require it; it being always ſuppoſed, that theſe things of the other world are in their kind more perfect than that by which they are repreſented? When heaven is repreſented to us under the notion of a city, with gates of pearl, and the ſtreet of gold; we look not to find gold and pearls there, which are ſo mightily prized on earth, but ſomething more excellent than theſe fineſt and moſt precious things in the world: when therefore we hear of hell-fire, it is neceſſary we underſtand by it ſomething more vehement, piercing and tormenting, than any fire ever ſeen by our eyes. And here it is worth conſidering, that the torments of hell are held forth under ſeveral other notions than that of fire ſimply: and the reaſon of it is plain; namely, that hereby what of horror is wanting in one notion of hell, is ſupplied by another. Why is heaven's happineſs repreſented under the various notions of a treaſure, a paradiſe, a feaſt, a reſt, &c. but that there is not one of theſe things ſufficient to expreſs it? Even ſo hell-torments are repreſented under the notion of fire, which the damned are caſt into. A dreadful repreſentation indeed! yet not ſufficient to expreſs the miſery of the ſtate of ſinners in them. Wherefore we hear alſo of the ſecond death, (Rev. xxi. 6.) for the damned in hell ſhall be ever dying: of the wine preſs of the wrath of God, (chap. xiv. 16.) wherein they will be troden in anger, trampled in the Lord's fury, (Iſa. lxiii. 3.) preſſed, broken, and bruiſed, without end: the worm that dieth not, (Mark ix. 44.) which ſhall eternally gnaw them: a bottomleſs pit, where they will be ever ſinking, Rev. xx. 3. It is not ſimply called *a fire,* but *the lake of fire and brimſtone,* (ver. 19.) *a lake of fire burning with brimſtone,* (chap. xix. 20.) than which one can imagine nothing more dreadful. Yet, becauſe fire gives light, and light (as Solomon obſerves, Eccleſ. xi. 7.) is ſweet, there is no light there, but darkneſs, utter darkneſs, Matth. xxv. 30. For they muſt have an everlaſting night, ſince nothing can be there which is in any meaſure comfortable or refreſhing.

3. Our fire cannot affect a ſpirit, but by way of ſympathy with the body to which it is united: but hell-fire will not only pierce into the bodies, but directly into the ſouls of the damned: for it is prepared for the devil and his angels, theſe wicked ſpirits whom no fire on earth can hurt. Job complains heavily under the chaſtiſements of God's fatherly hand, ſaying, *The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poiſon whereof drinketh up my ſpirit,* Job vi. 4. But how will the ſpirits of the damned be pierced with the arrows of revenging juſtice; how will they be drunk up with the poiſon of the curſe on theſe arrows? how vehement muſt that fire be that pierceth directly into the ſoul, and makes an everlaſting burning in the ſpirit, the moſt lively and tender part of a man, wherein wounds or pain are moſt intolerable!

Laſtly, The preparation of this fire evinceth the inexpreſſible vehemency and dreadfulneſs of it. The text calls it *prepared fire,* yea, the prepared fire by way of eminency. As the three children were not caſt into an ordinary fire, but a fire prepared on a particular deſign, which therefore was exceeding hot, the furnace being *heated ſeven times more than ordinary,* Dan. ii. 22. So the damned ſhall find in hell a prepared fire, the like to which was never prepared by human art; it is a fire of God's own preparing, the product of infinite wiſdom on a particular deſign, to demonſtrate the moſt ſtrict and ſevere divine juſtice againſt ſin; which may ſufficiently evidence to us the unconceivable exquiſiteneſs thereof. God always acts in a peculiar way becoming his own infinite greatneſs, whether for, or againſt the creature: and therefore as the things he hath prepared for them that love him, are great and good beyond expreſſion, or conception: ſo one may conclude, that the things he hath prepared againſt thoſe who hate him, are great and terrible beyond what men can either ſay, or think of them. The pile of *Tophet* is *fire and much wood,* (the coals of fire are *coals of juniper,* a kind of wood, which ſet on fire burns moſt fiercely, Pſal. cxx. 4.) *and the breath of the Lord, like a ſtream of brimſtone doth kindle it,* Iſa. xxx. 33. Fire is more or leſs violent, according to the matter of it, and the breath by which it is blown; what heart then can fully conceive the horror of *coals of juniper,* blown up with *the breath of the Lord?* Nay, God himſelf will be *a conſuming fire,* (Deut. iv. 24.) to the damned; intimately preſent, as a devouring fire, in their ſouls and bodies. It is a fearful thing to fall into a fire, or to be ſhut up in a fiery furnace, on earth: but the terror of theſe evaniſheth, when one conſiders, how *fearful it is to fall into the hands of the living God,* which is the lot of the damned; for *who ſhall dwell with the devouring fire? Who ſhall dwell with everlaſting burnings?* Iſa xxxiii. 14.

As to the ſecond point propoſed, namely, the properties of the fiery torments in hell.

1. They will be *univerſal* torments, every part of the creature being tormented in that flame. When one is caſt into a burning fiery furnace, the fire makes its way into the very bowels, and leaves no member untouched; what part then can have eaſe, when the damned ſwim in a lake of fire burning with brimſtone? There will their bodies be tormented, and ſcorched for ever. And as they ſinned, ſo ſhall they be tormented, in all the parts thereof: that they ſhall have no ſound ſide to turn them to; for what ſoundneſs or eaſe can be to any part of

that body, which being ſeparated from God, and all refreſhment from him, is ſtill in the pangs of the ſecond death, ever dying, but never dead? But as the ſoul was chief in ſinning, it will be chief in ſuffering too; being brimful of the wrath of a ſin revenging God. The damned ſhall ever be under deepeſt impreſſions of God's vindictive juſtice againſt them: and this fire will melt their ſouls, within them, like wax. Who knows the power of that wrath which had ſuch an effect on the Mediator, ſtanding in the room of ſinners, Pſal. xxii. 14. *My heart is like wax, it is melted in the midſt of my bowels?* Their minds ſhall be filled with the terrible apprehenſions of God's implacable wrath: and whatever they can think upon, paſt, preſent, or to come, will aggravate their torment and anguiſh. Their will ſhall be croſſed in all things for evermore; as their will was ever contrary to the will of God's precepts; ſo God in his dealings with them, in the other world, ſhall have war with their will for ever. What they would have, they ſhall not in the leaſt obtain; but what they would not, ſhall be bound upon them, without remedy. Hence no pleaſant affection ſhall ever ſpring up in their hearts any more: their love of complacency, joy, and delight, in any object whatſoever, ſhall be pluckt up by the root: and they will be filled with hatred, fury, and rage, againſt God, themſelves, and their fellow creatures, whether happy in heaven, or miſerable in hell, as they themſelves are. They will be ſunk in ſorrow, racked with anxiety, filled with horror, galled to the heart with fretting, and continually darted with deſpair; which will make them weep, gnaſh their teeth, and blaſpheme for ever. Matth. xxii. 13. *Bind them hand and foot, and take him away, and caſt him into utter darkneſs; there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth,* Rev. xvi. 21. *And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every ſtone about the weight of a talent: and men blaſphemed God becauſe of the hail, for the plague thereof was exceeding great.* Conſcience will be a worm to gnaw and prey upon them; remorſe for their ſins ſhall ſeize them and torment them for ever, and they ſhall not be able to ſhake it off, as ſometimes they did; for in hell—their worm dieth not, Mark. ix. 45. 46. Their memory will ſerve but to aggravate their torment, and every new reflection will bring another pang of anguiſh, Luke xvi. 25. *But Abraham ſaid,* viz. to the rich man in hell, *Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedſt thy good things.*

2. The torments in hell are *manifold.* Put the caſe that a man were, at one and the ſame time, under the violence of the gout, gravel, and whatſoever diſeaſes and pains have ever met together in one body; the torment of ſuch a one would be but light in compariſon with the torments of the damned. For as in hell there is an abſence of all that is good and deſirable, ſo there is the confluence of all evils there: ſince all the effects of ſin and of the curſe take their place in it, after the laſt judgment, Rev. xx. 14. *And death and hell were caſt into the lake of fire.* There they will find a priſon they can never eſcape out of; a lake of fire, wherein they will be ever ſwimming and burning; a pit whereof they will never find a bottom. The worm that dieth not ſhall feed on them, as on bodies which are interred: the fire that is not quenched ſhall devour them, as dead bodies which are burned. Their eyes ſhall be kept in blackneſs of darkneſs, without the leaſt comfortable gleam of light: their ears filled with the frightful yellings of the infernal crew. They ſhall taſte nothing but the vinegar of God's wrath, the dregs of the cup of his fury. The ſtench of the burning lake of brimſtone will be the ſmell there; and they ſhall feel extreme pains for evermore.

3. They will be *moſt exquiſite* and *vehement* torments, cauſing *weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth,* Matth. xiii. 42. and xxii. 13. They are repreſented to us under the notion of pangs in travail, which are very ſharp and exquiſite. So ſays the rich man in hell, Luke xvi. 24. *I am tormented,* (to wit, as one in the pangs of child-bearing) *in this flame.* Ah! dreadful pangs; horrible travail, in which both ſoul and body are in pangs together; helpleſs travail, hopeleſs and endleſs! The word uſed for hell, Matth. v. 22. and in divers other places of the New Teſtament properly denotes the valley of Hinnom; the name being taken from the valley of the children of Hinnom, in which was Tophet, (2 Kings xx. 10.) where idolaters offered their children to Moloch. This is ſaid to have been a great braſen idol, with arms like a man's: the which being heated by fire within it, the child was ſet in the burning arms of the idol; and, that the parents might not hear the ſhrieks of the child burning to death, they beat drums in the time of the horrible ſacrifice; whence the place had the name of Tophet. Thus the exquiſiteneſs of the torments in hell are pointed out to us. Some have endured grievous tortures on earth, with a ſurpriſing obſtinacy and undaunted courage: but mens courage will fail them there, when they find themſelves fallen into the hands of the living God; and no out gate to be expected for ever. It is true, there will be degrees of torment in hell: *It ſhall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, than for Chorazin and Bethſaida,* Matth. xi. 21. 22. But the leaſt load of wrath there will be unſupportable; for how can the heart of the creature endure, or his hands be ſtrong, when God himſelf is a conſuming fire to him? When the tares are bound up in bundles for the fire, there will be bundles of covetous perſons, of drunkards, prophane ſwearers, unclean perſons, formal hypocrites, unbelievers, and deſpiſers of the goſpel, and the like: the ſeveral bundles being caſt into hell-fire, ſome will burn more keenly than others, according as their ſins have been more heinous than theſe of others: a fiercer flame will ſeize the bundles of the prophane than the bundles of the unſanctified moraliſts; the furnace will be hotter to thoſe who ſinned againſt light, than to theſe who lived in darkneſs, Luke vii. 37. 38. *That ſervant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his will, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of ſtripes, ſhall be beaten with few ſtripes.* But the ſentence common to them all, Matth. xiii. 30. Bind them in bundles to burn them, ſpeaks the greateſt vehemency and exquiſiteneſs of the loweſt degree of torment in hell.

4. They will be *uninterrupted:* there is no intermiſſion there; no eaſe, no not for a moment. They *ſhall be tormented day and night for ever and ever,* Rev. xx. 10. Few are ſo toſſed in this world, but ſometimes they get reſt; but the damned ſhall get none; they took their reſt in the time appointed of God for labour. No ſtorms are readily ſeen, but there is ſome ſpace between ſhowers: but no intermiſſion in the ſtorm that falls on the wicked in hell. There deep will be calling unto deep, and the waves of wrath continually rolling over them. There the heavens will be always black to them, and they ſhall have a perpetual night, but no reſt, Rev. xiv. 11. *They ſhall have no reſt day nor night.*

5. They will be *unpitied.* The puniſhments inflicted on the greateſt malefactors on earth, do draw forth ſome compaſſion from them who behold them in their torments: but the damned ſhall have none to pity them. God will not pity them, but *laugh at their calamity,* Prov. i. 26. The bleſſed company in heaven ſhall rejoice in the execution of God's righteous judgment, and ſing while their ſmoke riſeth up for ever, Rev. xix. 3. *And again they ſaid, Allelujah; and her ſmoke roſe up for ever and ever.* No compaſſion can be expected from the devil and his angels, who delight in the ruin of the children of men, and are and will be for ever void of pity. Neither will one pity another there, where every one is weeping and gnaſhing his teeth, under his own inſupportable anguiſh and pain. There, natural affection will be extinguiſhed: the parents will not love their children, nor children their parents; the mother will not pity the daughter in theſe flames, nor will the daughter pity the mother: the ſon will ſhew no regard

to his father there, nor the ſervant to his maſter, where every one will be roaring under his own torment.

Laſtly, To complete their miſery, their torments ſhall be *eternal*, Rev. xiv. 11. *And the ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up for ever and ever.* Ah! what a frightful caſe is this, to be tormented in the whole body and ſoul, and that not with one kind of torment, but many; all of theſe moſt exquiſite, and all this without any intermiſſion, and without pity from any! What heart can conceive thoſe things without horror! Nevertheleſs, if this moſt miſerable caſe were at length to have an end, that would afford ſome comfort: but the torments of the damned will have no end; of the which more afterwards.

USE. Learn from this, (1.) The evil of ſin. It is a ſtream that will carry down the ſinner, till he be ſwallowed up in an ocean of wrath. The pleaſures of ſin are bought too dear at the rate of everlaſting burnings. What availed the rich man's purple clothing and ſumptuous fare, when in hell he was wrapt up in purple flames, and could not have a drop of water to cool his tongue? Alas! that men ſhould indulge themſelves in ſin, which will be ſuch bitterneſs in the end! that they ſhould drink ſo greedily of the poiſonous cup, and hug that ſerpent in their boſom, that will ſting them to the heart, and gnaw out their bowels at length? (2.) What a God he is, with whom we have to do; what a hatred he bears to ſin, and how ſeverely he puniſheth it. Know the Lord to be moſt juſt, as well as moſt merciful, and think not that he is ſuch an one as you are: away with that fatal miſtake, ere it be too late, Pſal. l. 21. 22. *Thou thoughteſt that I was altogether ſuch an one as thyſelf; but I will reprove thee, and ſet them in order before thine eyes. Now conſider this, ye that forget God, leſt I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.* The fire prepared for the devil and his angels, as dark as it is, will ſerve to diſcover God to be a ſevere revenger of ſin. Laſtly, The abſolute neceſſity of fleeing to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt by faith; the ſame neceſſity of repentance, and holineſs of heart and life. The avenger of blood is purſuing thee, O ſinner! haſte and eſcape to the city of refuge. Waſh now in the fountain of the Mediator's blood, that you may not periſh in the lake of fire. Open thy heart to him, leſt the pit cloſe its mouth on thee. Leave thy ſins, elſe they will ruin thee: kill them, elſe they will be thy death for ever.

Let not the terror of hell-fire put thee upon hardening thy heart more, as it may do, if thou entertain that wicked thought, viz. *There is no hope*, Jer. ii. 25. Which perhaps is more riſe among the hearers of the goſpel, than many are aware of. But there is hope for the worſt of ſinners, who will come unto Jeſus Chriſt. If there are no good qualifications in thee, (as certainly, there can be none in a natural man, none in any man, but what are received from Chriſt in him,) know, that he has not ſuſpended thy welcome on any good qualifications; do thou take himſelf and his ſalvation, freely offered unto all to whom the goſpel comes. *Whoſoever will, let him take of the water of life freely*, Rev. xxii. 17. *Him that cometh to me, I will in no ways caſt out*, John vi. 37. It is true, thou art a ſinful creature, and canſt not repent; thou art unholy, and canſt not make thyſelf holy: nay, thou haſt eſſayed to repent, to forſake ſin, and to be holy, but ſtill miſſed of repentance, reformation, and holineſs; and therefore, *Thou ſaideſt, There is no hope. No, for I have loved ſtrangers, and after them will I go.* Truly, no marvel that the ſucceſs has not anſwered thy expectation, ſince thou haſt always begun thy work amiſs. But do thou, firſt of all, honour God, by believing the teſtimony he has given of his Son, namely, that eternal life is in him: and honour the Son of God, by believing on him, that is, embracing and falling in with the free offer of Chriſt, and of his ſalvation from ſin and from wrath, made to thee in the goſpel; truſting in him confidently for righteouſneſs to thy juſtification, and alſo for ſanctification; ſeeing of God he is made unto us both righteouſneſs and ſanctification, 1 Cor. i. 30. Then, if thou haſt as much credit to give to the word of God, as thou wouldſt allow to the word of an honeſt man, offering thee a gift, and ſaying, Take it, and it is thine; thou mayeſt believe, that God is thy God, Chriſt is thine, his ſalvation is thine, thy ſins are pardoned, thou haſt ſtrength in him for repentance and for holineſs; for all theſe are made over to thee in the free offer of the goſpel. Believing on the Son of God, thou art juſtified, the curſe is removed. And while it lies upon thee, how is it poſſible thou ſhouldeſt bring forth the fruits of holineſs? But, the curſe removed, that death which ſeized on thee with the firſt Adam, (according to the threatening, Gen. ii. 17.) is taken away. In conſequence of which, thou ſhalt find the bands of wickedneſs (now holding thee faſt in impenitency) broken aſunder, as the bands of that death; ſo as thou wilt be able to repent indeed from the heart: thou ſhalt find the Spirit of life, by whoſe departure that death enſued, returned to thy ſoul; ſo as thenceforth thou ſhalt be enabled to live unto righteouſneſs. No man's caſe is ſo bad, but it may be mended this way, in time, to be perfectly right in eternity: and no man's caſe is ſo good, but, another way being taken, it will be marred for time and eternity too.

III. The damned ſhall have the ſociety of devils in their miſerable ſtate in hell; for they muſt depart into fire prepared for the devil and his angels. O horrible company! O frightful aſſociation! who would chuſe to dwell in a palace haunted by devils? To be confined to the moſt pleaſant ſpot of earth, with the devil, and his infernal furies, would be a moſt terrible confinement. How would mens heart fail them, and their hair ſtand up, finding themſelves environed with the helliſh crew, in that caſe! But ah! how much more terrible muſt it be, to be caſt with the devils into one fire, locked up with them in one dungeon, ſhut up with them in one pit! To be cloſed up in a den of roaring lions, girded about with ſerpents, ſurrounded with venomous aſps, and to have the bowels eaten out by vipers, altogether, and at once, is a compariſon too low, to ſhew the miſery of the damned, ſhut up in hell with the devil and his angels. They go about now, as roaring lions, ſeeking whom they may devour: but then ſhall they be confined in their den with their prey. They ſhall be filled to the brim with the wrath of God, and receive the full torment, (Matth. viii. 29.) which they tremble in expectation of, (Jam. ii. 19,) being caſt into the fire prepared for them. How will theſe lions roar and tear! how will theſe ſerpents hiſs! theſe dragons vomit out fire! what horrible anguiſh will ſeize the damned, finding themſelves in the lake of fire, with the devil who deceived them; drawn thither with the ſilken cords of temptation, by theſe wicked ſpirits; and bound with them in everlaſting chains under darkneſs! Rev. xx. 10. *And the devil that deceived them was caſt into the lake of fire and brimſtone, where the beaſt and the falſe prophet are, and ſhall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

O! that men would conſider this in time, renounce the devil and his luſts, and join themſelves to the Lord in faith and holineſs. Why ſhould men chuſe that company in this world, and delight in that ſociety, they would not deſire to aſſociate with in the other world? Thoſe who like not the company of the ſaints on earth, will get none of it in eternity: but as godleſs company is their delight now, they will afterwards get enough of it: when they have an eternity to paſs in the roaring and blaſpheming ſociety of devils and reprobates in hell. Let thoſe who uſe to invocate the devil to take them, ſoberly conſider, that the company, ſo often invited, will be terrible at laſt, when come.

IV. And laſtly, Let us conſider the eternity of the whole, the everlaſting continuance of the miſerable ſtate of the damned in hell.

Firſt, If I could, I ſhould ſhew what eternity is, I mean the creature's eternity. But who can meaſure the waters of the ocean, or who can tell you the days, years, and ages of eternity, which are infinitely more than the drops of the ocean? None can comprehend eternity, but the eternal God. Eternity is an ocean, whereof we will never ſee the ſhore: it is a deep, where we can find no bottom; a labyrinth, from whence we cannot extricate ourſelves, and where we ſhall ever loſe the door. There are two things one may ſay of it. (1.) *It has a beginning.* God's eternity has no beginning, but the creature's eternity has. Sometime there was no lake of fire; and thoſe who have been there, for ſome thouſand years, were once, in time, as we now are. But, (2.) *It ſhall never have an end.* The firſt who entered into the eternity of wo, is as far from the end of it, as the laſt, who ſhall go thither, will be at his entry. They who have launched out furtheſt into that ocean, are as far from land, as they were in the firſt moment they went into it: and thouſands of ages after this, they will be as far from it as ever. Wherefore, eternity, which is before us, is a duration that hath a beginning, but no end. It is a beginning without a middle, a beginning without an end. After millions of years paſt in it, ſtill it is *a beginning*. God's wrath, in hell, will ever be *the wrath to come*. But there is no middle in eternity. When millions of ages are paſt in eternity, what is paſt bears no proportion to what is to come; no not ſo much as one drop of water, falling from the tip of one's finger, bears to all the waters of the ocean. There is *no end* of it: while God, is, it ſhall be. It is an entry without an out-gate, a continual ſucceſſion of ages, a glaſs always running, which ſhall never run out.

Obſerve the continual ſucceſſion of hours, days, months and years, how one ſtill follows upon another: and think of eternity, wherein there is a continual ſucceſſion without end. When you go out in the night, and behold the ſtars of heaven, how they cannot be numbered for multitude, think of the ages of eternity; conſidering withal, there is a certain definite number of the ſtars, but no number of the ages of eternity. When you ſee a water running, think how vain a thing it would be, to ſit down by it, and wait till it ſhould run out, that you may paſs over; look how new water ſucceeds to that which paſſeth by you: and therein you will have an image of eternity, which is a river that never dries up. They who wear rings have an image of eternity on their fingers; and they who handle the wheel have an emblem of eternity before them: for to which part ſoever of the ring or wheel one looks, one will ſtill ſee another part beyond it: and on whatſoever moment of eternity you condeſcend, there is ſtill another beyond it. When you are abroad in the fields, and behold the piles of the graſs on the earth, which no man can reckon; think with yourſelves, that, were there as many thouſand years to come, as there are piles of graſs on the ground, even thoſe would have an end at length, but eternity will have none. When you look to a mountain, imagine in your hearts, how long it would be, ere that mountain ſhould be removed, by a little bird coming but once every thouſand years, and carrying away but one grain of the duſt thereof at once; the mountain would at length be removed that way, and brought to an end; but eternity will never end. Suppoſe this with reſpect to all the mountains of the earth! nay, with reſpect to the whole globe of the earth; the grains of duſt, whereof the whole earth is made up, are not infinite, and therefore the laſt grain would, at long-run, come to be carried away, in the way ſuppoſed: but when that ſloweſt work would be brought to an end, eternity would be, in effect, but beginning.

Theſe are ſome rude draughts of eternity: and now add miſery and woe to this eternity, what tongue can expreſs it? What heart can conceive it? In what balance can that miſery and that woe be weighed?

Secondly, Let us take a view of what is eternal in the ſtate of the damned in hell. Whatſoever is included in the fearful ſentence, determining their eternal ſtate, is everlaſting: therefore all the doleful ingredients of their miſerable ſtate will be everlaſting: they will never end. The text expreſly declares the fire, into which they muſt depart, to be everlaſting fire. And our Lord elſewhere tells us, that in hell the fire ſhall never be quenched, (Mark ix. 43.) with an eye to the valley of Hinnom, in which, beſides the already mentioned fire, for the burning of the children to Moloch, there was alſo another fire burning continually, to conſume the dead carcaſes, and filth of Jeruſalem: ſo the ſcripture repreſenting hell fire by the fire of that valley, ſpeaks it not only to be moſt exquiſite, but alſo everlaſting. Seeing then the damned muſt depart, as curſed ones, into everlaſting fire, it is evident that

1ſt, The damned themſelves ſhall be eternal: they will have a being for ever, and will never be ſubſtantially deſtroyed, or annihilated. To what end is the fire eternal; if theſe who are caſt into it, be not eternally in it! It is plain, the everlaſting continuance of the fire is, an aggravation of the miſery of the damned; but ſurely, if they be annihilated, or ſubſtantially deſtroyed, it is all a caſe to them, whether the fire be everlaſting or not. Nay, but they depart into everlaſting fire, to be everlaſtingly puniſhed in it; Matth. xxv. 46. *They ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment.* Thus the execution of the ſentence, is a certain diſcovery of the meaning of it. The worm that dieth not, muſt have a ſubject to live in; they, who ſhall have *no reſt day nor night*, Rev. xiv. 11. but ſhall be *tormented day and night for ever and ever*, chap. xx. 10. will certainly have a being for ever and ever, and not be brought into a ſtate of eternal reſt in annihilation. Deſtroyed indeed they ſhall be; but their deſtruction ſhall be an everlaſting deſtruction, (2 Theſſ. i. 9.) a deſtruction of their well being, but not of their being. What is deſtroyed, is not therefore annihilated; *Art thou come to deſtroy us?* ſaid the devil unto Jeſus Chriſt, Luke iv. 34. Howbeit the devils are afraid of torment, not of annihilation, Matth. viii. 29. *Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?* The ſtate of the damned is indeed a ſtate of death: but ſuch a death it is, as is oppoſite only to a happy life; as is clear from other notions of their ſtate, which neceſſarily include an eternal exiſtence; of which before. As they who are dead in ſin, are dead to God and holineſs, yet live to ſin: ſo dying in hell, they live, but ſeparated from God and his favour, in which life lies, Pſal. xxx. 5. They ſhall ever be under the pangs of death: ever dying, but never dead, or abſolutely void of life. How deſirable would ſuch a death be to them; but it will fly from them for ever. Could each one kill another there, or could they, with their own hands, rent themſelves into lifeleſs pieces, their miſery would quickly be at an end: but there they muſt live, who chuſed death, and refuſed life; for there death lives, and the end ever begins.

2dly, The curſe ſhall lie upon them eternally, as the everlaſting chain, to hold them in the everlaſting fire; a chain that ſhall never be looſed, being fixed for ever about them, by the dreadful ſentence of the eternal judgment. This chain, which ſpurns the united force of devils held faſt by it, is too ſtrong to be broken by men, who being ſolemnly anathematized, and devoted to deſtruction, can never be recovered to any other uſe.

3dly, Their puniſhment ſhall be eternal; Matth. xxv. 46. *Theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment.* They will be for ever ſeparated from God and Chriſt, and from the ſociety of the holy angels and ſaints; between whom and them an impaſſable gulf will be fixed, Luke xvi. 26. *Between us and you*, (ſays Abraham in the parable, to the rich man in hell,) *there is a great gulf fixed: ſo that they which would paſs from hence to you cannot: neither can they paſs to us, that would come from* *thence.* They ſhall for ever have the horrible ſociety of the devil and his angels. There will be no change of company for evermore, in that region of darkneſs. Their torment in the fire will be everlaſting: they muſt live for ever in it. Several authors, both ancient and modern, tell us of earth-flax, or ſalamander's hairs, that cloth made of it, being caſt into the fire, is ſo far from being burnt or conſumed, that it is only made clean thereby, as other things are by waſhing. But, however that is, it is certain, the damned ſhall be tormented for ever and ever in hell-fire, and not ſubſtantially deſtroyed, Rev. xx. 10. And indeed nothing is annihilated by fire, but only diſſolved. Of what nature ſoever hell fire is, no queſtion, the ſame God, who kept the bodies of the three children from burning in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, can alſo keep the bodies of the damned from any ſuch diſſolution by hell-fire, as may infer privation of life.

Laſtly, Their knowledge and ſenſe of their miſery ſhall be eternal; and they ſhall aſſuredly know that it will be eternal. How deſirable would it be to them, to have their ſenſes for ever locked up, and to loſe the conſciouſneſs of their own miſery! as one may rationally ſuppoſe it to fare at length with ſome, in the puniſhment of death inflicted on them on earth; and as it is with ſome mad people in their miſerable caſe: but that agrees not with the notion of torment for ever and ever, nor the worm that dieth not. Nay, they will ever have a lively feeling of their miſery, and ſtrongeſt impreſſions of the wrath of God againſt them. And the dreadful intimation of the eternity of their puniſhment, made to them by the Judge, in their ſentence, will fix ſuch impreſſions of the eternity of their miſerable ſtate upon their minds, as they will never be able to lay aſide, but will continue with them for evermore, to complete their miſery. This will fill them with everlaſting deſpair; a moſt tormenting paſſion, which will continually rent their hearts, as it were, in a thouſand pieces: To ſee floods of wrath ever coming, and never to ceaſe; to be ever in torment, and withal to know there ſhall never never be a releaſe, will be the capeſtone put on the miſery of the damned. If hope deferred maketh the heart ſick, (Prov. xiii. 12.) how killing will it be, hope rooted up, ſlain outright, and buried for ever out of the creature's ſight! this will fill them with hatred and rage againſt God, their known irreconcileable enemy; and under it, they will roar for ever like wild bulls in a net, and fill the pit with blaſphemies for evermore.

Laſtly, I might here ſhew the reaſonableneſs of the eternity of the puniſhment of the damned; but having already ſpoke of it in vindicating the juſtice of God, in his ſubjecting men in their natural ſtate to eternal wrath, I only remind you of three things. (1.) The infinite dignity of the party offended by ſin, requires an infinite puniſhment to be inflicted for the vindication of his honour; ſince the demerit of ſin riſeth according to the dignity and excellency of the perſon againſt whom it is committed. The party offended is the great God, the chief good: the offender a vile worm; in reſpect of perfection infinitely diſtant from God, to whom he is indebted for all that ever he had, implying any good, or perfection whatſoever. This then requires an infinite puniſhment to be inflicted on the ſinner: the which ſince it cannot, in him, be infinite in value, muſt needs be infinite in duration, that is to ſay, eternal. Sin is a kind of infinite evil, as it wrongs an infinite God; and the guilt and defilement thereof is never taken away, but endures for ever, unleſs the Lord himſelf in mercy do remove it. God, who is offended, is eternal, his being never comes to an end: the ſinful ſoul is immortal, and the man ſhall live for ever: the ſinner being without ſtrength, Rom. v. 6. to expiate his guilt, can never put away the offence; therefore it ever remains, unleſs the Lord do put it away himſelf, as in the elect, by his ſon's blood. Wherefore the party offended, the offender, and the offence, ever remaining, the puniſhment cannot but be eternal. (2.) The ſinner would have continued the courſe of his provocations againſt God, for ever without end, if God had not put a check to it by death. As long as they were capable to act againſt him, in this world, they did it; and therefore juſtly will he act againſt them, while he is; that is for ever. God who judgeth of the will, intents, and inclinations of the heart, may juſtly do againſt ſinners, in puniſhing, as they would have done againſt him, in ſinning. Laſtly, (though I put not the ſtreſs of the matter here, yet) it is juſt and reaſonable the damned ſuffer eternally, ſince they will ſin eternally in hell, gnaſhing their teeth, (Matth. viii. 12.) under their pain, in rage, envy, and grudge, (compare Acts vii. 54. Pſal. cxii. 10. Luke xiii. 28.) and blaſpheming God there, (Rev. xvi. 21.) whither they are driven away in their wickedneſs, Prov. xiv. 32. That the wicked be puniſhed for their wickedneſs, is juſt; and it is no ways inconſiſtent with juſtice, that the being of the creature be continued for ever: wherefore, it is juſt, that the damned, continuing wicked eternally, do ſuffer eternally for their wickedneſs. The miſery, under which they ſin, can neither free them from the debt of obedience, nor excuſe their ſinning, and make it blameleſs. The creature, as a creature, is bound unto obedience to his Creator, and no puniſhment, inflicted on him can free him from it, more than the malefactor's priſons, irons, whipping, and the like, do ſet him at liberty, to commit anew the crimes for which he is impriſoned, or whipt. Neither can the torments of the damned excuſe or make blameleſs their horrible ſinning under them, more than exquiſite pains, inflicted upon men on earth, can excuſe their murmuring, fretting, and blaſpheming againſt God under them: for it is not the wrath of God, but their own wicked nature, that is the true cauſe of their ſinning under it: and ſo the holy Jeſus bore the wrath of God, without ſo much as one unbecoming thought of God, and far leſs any one unbecoming word.

USE I. Here is a *meaſuring reed:* O! that men would apply it. 1ſt, Apply it to your time in this world, and you will find your time to be very ſhort. A proſpect of much time to come proves the ruin of many ſouls. Men will be reckoning their time by years, (like that rich man, (Luke xii. 19. 20.) when, it may be, there are not many hours of it to run. But reckon as you will, laying your time to the meaſuring reed of eternity, you will ſee your age is as nothing. What a ſmall and inconſiderable point is ſixty, eighty, or a hundred years, in reſpect of eternity? Compared with eternity, there is a greater diſproportion, than between a hair's breadth and the circumference of the whole earth. Why do we ſleep then in ſuch a ſhort day, while we are in hazard of loſing reſt through the long night of eternity? 2dly, Apply it to your endeavours for ſalvation, and they will be found very ſcanty. When men are preſſed to diligence in their ſalvation-work, they are ready to ſay, To what purpoſe is this waſte? Alas! if it were to be judged by our diligence, what it is that we have in view; as to the moſt part of us, no man could thereby conjecture, that we have an eternity in view. If we duly conſidered eternity, we could not but conclude, that, to leave no means appointed of God uneſſayed, till we get our ſalvation ſecured; to refuſe reſt or comfort in any thing, till we are ſheltered under the wings of the Mediator; to purſue our great intereſt with the utmoſt vigour, to cut off luſts dear as right hands and right eyes; to ſet our faces reſolutely againſt all difficulties, and fight our way through all the oppoſition made by the devil, the world, and the fleſh; are, all of them together, little enough for eternity.

USE II. Here is *balance of the ſanctuary,* by which one may underſtand the lightneſs of what is falſely thought weighty; and the weight of ſome things, by many reckoned to be very light.

Firſt, Some things ſeem very weighty, which, weighed in this balance, will be found very light. (1.) Weigh the world, and all that is in it, the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life, and the whole will be found light in the balance of eternity. Weigh herein all worldly profits, gains, and advantages; and you will quickly ſee, that a thouſand worlds will not quit the coſt of the eternity of woe. *For what is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul?* Matth. xvi. 26. Weigh the pleaſures of ſin, which are but for a ſeaſon, with the fire that is everlaſting, and you muſt account yourſelves fools and madmen, to run the hazard of the one for the other. (2.) Weigh your afflictions in this balance, and you will find the heavieſt of them very light, in reſpect of the weight of eternal anguiſh. Impatience under affliction, eſpecially when worldly troubles do ſo embitter mens ſpirits, that they cannot reliſh the glad tidings of the goſpel, ſpeaks great regardleſſneſs of eternity. As a ſmall and inconſiderable loſs will be very little at heart with him, who ſees himſelf in hazard of loſing his whole eſtate: ſo troubles in the world will appear but light to him who has a lively view of eternity. Such a one will ſtoop, and take up his croſs, whatever it be, thinking it enough to eſcape eternal wrath. (3.) Weigh the moſt difficult and uneaſy duties of religion here, and you will no more reckon the yoke of Chriſt unſupportable. Repentance, and bitter mourning for ſin, on earth, are very light in compariſon of eternal weeping, wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth in hell. To wreſtle with God in prayer, weeping and making ſupplication for the bleſſing in time, is far eaſier than to ly under the curſe through all eternity. Mortification of the moſt beloved luſt is a light thing, in compariſon with the ſecond death in hell. Laſtly, Weigh your convictions in this balance. O! how heavy do theſe ly upon many, till they get them ſhaken off! They are not diſpoſed to fall in with them, but ſtrive to get clear of them, as of a mighty burden. But the worm of an ill conſcience will neither die nor ſleep in hell, though one may now lull it aſleep for a time. And certainly it is eaſier to entertain the ſharpeſt convictions in this life, ſo as they may lead one to Chriſt, than to have them fixed for ever in the conſcience, while in hell one is totally and finally ſeparated from him.

Secondly, But, on the other hand, (1.) Weigh ſin in this balance; and, though it now ſeems but a light thing to you, ye will find it a weight ſufficient to turn up an eternal weight of wrath upon you. Even idle words, vain thoughts, and unprofitable actions, weighed in this balance, and conſidered as following the ſinner into an eternity, will each of them be heavier than the ſand of the ſea: time idly ſpent will make a weary eternity. Now is your ſeed-time; thoughts, words, and actions are the feed ſown: eternity is the harveſt. Though the ſeed now lies under the clod unregarded by moſt men, every the leaſt grain ſhall ſpring up at length: and the fruit will be according to the ſeed, Gal. vi. 8. *For he that ſoweth to his fleſh, ſhall of the fleſh reap corruption, (i. e. deſtruction;) but he that ſoweth to the Spirit, ſhall of the Spirit reap life everlaſting.* (2.) Weigh in this balance your time and opportunities of grace and ſalvation, and you will find them very weighty. Precious time, and ſeaſons of grace, Sabbaths, communions, prayers, ſermons, and the like, are by many now-a-days made light of: but the day is coming, when one of theſe will be reckoned more valuable than a thouſand worlds, by thoſe who now have the leaſt value for them. When they are gone for ever, and the loſs cannot be retrieved; theſe will ſee the worth of them, who will not now ſee it.

USE III. and laſt. Be warned and ſtirred up to flee from the wrath to come. Mind eternity, and cloſely ply the work of your ſalvation. What are you doing, while you are not ſo doing? Is heaven a fable, or hell a mere ſcarecrow? Muſt we live eternally, and will we be at no more pains to eſcape everlaſting miſery? Will faint wiſhes take the kingdom of heaven by force? And will ſuch drowſy endeavours, as moſt men ſatisfy themſelves with, be accounted flying from the wrath to come? Ye who have already fled to Chriſt, up and be doing: ye have begun the work: go on, loiter not, but *work out your ſalvation with fear and trembling*, Phil. ii. 12. *Fear him which is able to deſtroy both ſoul and body in hell*, Matth. x. 28. Remember, ye are not yet aſcended into heaven: ye are but in your middle ſtate. The everlaſting arms have drawn you out of the gulf of wrath ye were plunged into, in your natural ſtate; they are ſtill underneath you, that ye can never fall down into it again; nevertheleſs, ye have not yet got up to the top of the rock: the deep below you is frightful; look at it, and haſten your aſcent. Ye who are yet in your natural ſtate, lift up your eyes, and take a view of the eternal ſtate. Ariſe, ye prophane perſons, ye ignorant ones, ye formal hypocrites, ſtrangers to the power of godlineſs, flee from the wrath to come. Let not the young adventure to delay a moment longer, nor the old put off this work any more: *To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts;* leſt he ſwear in his wrath, that ye ſhall never enter into his reſt. It is no time to linger in a ſtate of ſin, as in Sodom, when fire and brimſtone are coming down on it from the Lord. Take warning in time. They who are in hell, are not troubled with ſuch warnings; but are enraged againſt themſelves, for that they ſlighted the warning when they had it.

Conſider, I pray you, (1.) How uneaſy it is to ly one whole night on a ſoft bed, in perfect health, when one very fain would have ſleep, but cannot get it; ſleep being departed from him. How often will one in that caſe wiſh for reſt! How full of toſſings to and fro! But ah! how dreadful muſt it then be to ly in ſorrow, wrapt up in ſcorching flames through long eternity, in that place where they have no reſt day nor night! (2.) How terrible would it be to live under violent pains of the cholic or gravel, for forty or ſixty years together, without any intermiſſion! yet, that is but a very ſmall thing in compariſon of eternal ſeparation from God, the worm that never dieth, and the fire that is never quenched. (3.) Eternity is an awful thought: O long, long, endleſs eternity! But will not every moment, in eternity of woe, ſeem a month, and every hour a year, in that moſt wretched and deſperate condition? Hence ever and ever, as it were a double eternity. The ſick man in the night, toſſing to and fro on his bed, ſays, it will never be day: complains that his pain ever continues, never, never, abates. Are theſe petty time-eternities, which men form to themſelves, in their own imaginations, ſo very grievous? Alas! then how grievous, how utterly unſupportable muſt real eternity of woe, and all manner of miſeries be! Laſtly, There will be ſpace enough there, to reflect on all the ills of one's heart and life, which one cannot get time to think of now; and to ſee that all that was ſaid of the impenitent ſinner's hazard, was true, and that the half was not told. There will be ſpace enough in eternity to think on delayed repentance, to rue one's follies, when it is too late; and in a ſtate paſt remedy, to ſpeak forth the fruitleſs wiſhes: 'O that I had never been born; that the womb had been my grave, and I had never ſeen the ſun! O that I had taken warning in time, and fled from his wrath, while the door of mercy was ſtanding open to me! O that I had never heard the goſpel, that I had lived in ſome corner of the world, where a Saviour and the great ſalvation were not once named!' But all in vain. What is done cannot be undone; the opportunity is loſt, and can never be retrieved; time is gone, and cannot be recalled. Wherefore improve time, while you have it, and do not wilfully ruin yourſelves, by ſtopping your ear to the goſpel call.

And now, if you would be ſaved from the wrath to come, and never go into this place of torment, take no reſt in your natural ſtate; believe the ſinfulneſs and miſery of it, and labour to get out of it quickly, fleeing unto Jeſus Chriſt by faith. Sin in you is the ſeed of hell: and if the guilt and reigning power of it be not removed in time, they will bring you to the ſecond death in eternity. There is no way to get them removed, but by receiving of Chriſt, as he is offered in the goſpel, for juſtification and ſanctification: and he is now offered to you with all his ſalvation. Rev. xxii. 12. 17. *And behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his works ſhall be. And the Spirit and the Bride ſay, Come. And let him that heareth, ſay, Come. And let him that is a thirſt, Come. And whoſoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* Jeſus Chriſt is the Mediator of peace, and the Fountain of holineſs: he it is who delivereth us from the wrath to come. *There is no condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus, who walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit*, Rom. viii. 1. And the terrors of hell, as well as the joys of heaven, are ſet before you, to ſtir you up to a cordial receiving of him with all his ſalvation; and to determine you unto the way of faith and holineſs, in which alone you can eſcape the everlaſting fire. May the Lord himſelf make them effectual to that end.

Thus far of man's *eternal ſtate*: the which, becauſe it is eternal, admits no ſucceeding one for ever.

The END *of the* FOURFOLD STATE.

* The Author of the Temple of Truth asserts that this view of the Covenant of Grace by Boston is the clearest & most scriptural he knows, & that he felt it his duty to recommend it to his serious readers — Chs. [illegible]

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A
VIEW
OF THE
*COVENANT OF GRACE,
FROM THE
SACRED RECORDS.

WHEREIN

The **Parties** in that **COVENANT**, the **Making** of it, its **Parts** *Conditionary* and *Promiſſory*, and the **Administration** thereof, are diſtinctly conſidered.

Together with

The **Trial** of a ſaving Perſonal **Inbeing** in it, and the Way of **Instating** Sinners therein unto their eternal Salvation.

To which is ſubjoined,

A **MEMORIAL** concerning *Perſonal* and *Family Faſting* [illegible]*on*, preſented to **Saints** and **Sinners**.

BRITISH MUSEUM

ADVERTISEMENT.

This Treatiſe, *and the* Memorial *adjoined, being poſthumous works of my father's, I thought it neceſſary to teſtify to the world, that they are publiſhed as he left them, being printed from his own* Manuſcript, *prepared for the preſs, without any addition or alteration whatſoever.*

Thomas Boston.

Psal. lxxxix. 3.

I have made a covenant with my choſen.

1 Cor. xv. 45.

The laſt Adam was made a quickening Spirit.

As man's ruin was originally owing to the breaking of the covenant of works, ſo his recovery, from the firſt to the laſt ſtep thereof, is owing purely to the fulfilling of the covenant of grace; which covenant, being that wherein the whole myſtery of our ſalvation lies, I am to eſſay the opening of, as the Lord ſhall be pleaſed to aſſiſt. And there is the more need of humble dependence on the Father of lights, through Jeſus Chriſt his Son, for the manifeſtation of his Spirit in this manner, that whereas the firſt covenant is known in part by the light of nature, the knowledge of this ſecond is owing entirely to revelation.

It was from this covenant the Pſalmiſt, in the verſe immediately preceding the firſt text, took a comfortable view of a glorious building, infallibly going up in the midſt of ruins; even a building of mercy: *For I have ſaid, Mercy ſhall be built up for ever;* the ground of which confident aſſertion is, in our text, pointed out to be God's covenant with his choſen. From the type of the covenant of grace, namely, the covenant of royalty made to David, he ſaw a building up of mercy for the royal family of Judah, when they were brought exceeding low. From the ſubſtance of it, he ſaw a building of mercy for ſinners of mankind, who were laid in ruins by the breach of the firſt covenant. This is that new building free grace ſet on foot for us; into which they that believe are inſtantly thereupon received, and, where once received, they ſhall dwell for ever: a building of mercy, in which every ſtone, from the bottom to the top, from the foundation ſtone to the capeſtone, is pure mercy, rich and free mercy to us.

Of this building of mercy I ſhall drop a few words.

And, 1. The plan of it was drawn from all eternity, in the council of the Trinity: for it is *according to the eternal purpoſe purpoſed in Jeſus Chriſt*, Eph. iii. 11. The objects of mercy, the time, and place, the way and means of conferring it on them, were deſigned particularly, before man was miſerable; yea before he was at all. 2. The builder is God himſelf, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, 1 Cor. iii. 9. *Ye are God's building.* All hands of the glorious Trinity are at work in this building. The Father choſe the objects of mercy, and gave them to the Son to be redeemed; the Son purchaſed redemption for them; and the Holy Ghoſt applies the purchaſed redemption unto them. But it is ſpecially attributed to the Son, on the account of his ſingular agency in the work: Zech. vi. 12. *Behold the man whoſe name is the* BRANCH——HE *ſhall build the temple of the Lord:* verſ. 13. *Even* HE *ſhall build the temple of the Lord, and* HE *ſhall bear the glory.* 3. The foundation was laid deep in the eternal counſel; beyond the reach of the eyes of men or angels. Paul conſidering it, cries out, *O the depth!* Rom. xi. 33. *For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counſellor?* verſ. 34. 4. It is more than five thouſand years ſince this building roſe above ground. And the firſt ſtone of it that appeared, was a promiſe of a Saviour, made in paradiſe after the fall, Gen. iii. 15. namely, that the ſeed of the woman ſhould bruiſe the head of the ſerpent. Here was mercy. And mercy was laid upon mercy. Upon promiſing mercy was laid quickening mercy, whereby our loſt firſt parents were enabled to believe the promiſe: and upon quickning mercy was laid pardoning mercy to them; and upon that again ſanctifying and eſtabliſhing mercy: and at length glorifying mercy. 5. The cement is blood; the blood of Jeſus Chriſt the Mediator, which is the blood of God, Acts xx. 28. No ſaving mercy for ſinners could conſiſt, nor could one mercy lie firm upon another in the building, without being cemented with that precious blood: but by it the whole building conſiſts, and ſtands firm for ever, Heb. ix. 22. 23. vii. 24. 25. 6. Ever ſince the time it appeared above ground, it has been going on. And many hands have been employed, to ſerve in carrying on the work. In the firſt ages of the world, patriarchs were employed in it, ſuch as Adam, Enoch, and Noah; in the middle ages, prophets, prieſts, and Levites, in theſe laſt ages, the apoſtles, and other extraordinary officers and ordinary miniſters of the goſpel. Great has been the oppoſition made to the building from the beginning, by Satan and his agents, both in the way of violence and deceit; yet has it all along been going on ſtill. And now it is come far above mid-height; it is drawing towards the top, and the time when the laſt ſtone ſhall be laid thereon; for it is evident, we are far advanced in the days of the voice of the ſeventh angel, wherein the myſtery of God is to be finiſhed, Rev. x. 7. 7. The copeſtone will be laid on it at the laſt day: at what time the promiſe will receive its accompliſhment, in the complete ſalvation of all the objects of mercy, then to be advanced unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt, Eph. iv. 13. In that day our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the great builder, ſhall bring forth the headſtone thereof with ſhoutings, even the laſt and crowning mercy, ſaying, *Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* And then ſhall they dwell in the building of mercy perfected, and ſing of mercies for ever and ever. 8. Laſtly. The foundation on which it ſtands, is a firm one. It is neceſſary that it be ſo: for a building of mercy to ſinners, from a holy juſt God, is a building of huge weight, more weighty than the whole fabric of heaven and earth: and if it ſhould fall, all is ruined a ſecond time, without any more hope of relief. But it is a ſure foundation, being God's everlaſting covenant: *I have made a covenant with my choſen.*

In which words, together with the ſecond text, there are four things to be conſidered. 1. The foundation on which the building of mercy ſtands; to wit, A covenant. 2. The parties-contractors in that covenant. 3. The making of it. And, 4. The nature of it.

I. The foundation on which the building of mercy ſtands, is a covenant, a divine covenant, a ſure one. The firſt building for man's happineſs, was a building of bounty and goodneſs, but not of mercy; for man was not in miſery, when it was a rearing up. And it was founded on a covenant too; namely, on the covenant of works made with the firſt Adam: but he broke the covenant, and the whole building tumbled down in an inſtant. But this is another covenant, and of another nature. In the type indeed, and ſhadow, it is the covenant of royalty with David, 2 Sam. vii. 11.---17. which was a foundation of mercy to his family, ſecuring the continuance of it, and that as a royal family. Howbeit, in the antitype and truth, it is the covenant of grace, the covenant of eternal life and ſalvation to ſinners, the ſpiritual ſeed of the head thereof, to be given them in the way of free grace and mercy, Pſal. lxxxix. 24. 29. 36. and in which they are freed from the curſe, ſo that it cannot reach them, notwithſtanding of their failures; but the Lord deals with them as his children ſtill, though offending children, verſe 30.——33. and all by the means of Jeſus Chriſt the Saviour, the mighty One, verſe 19. This is the foundation of the whole building of mercy to ſinners in their low eſtate, into which they were brought by Adam's fall. The revelation, promulgation, and offer made unto the ſons of men, of this covenant which lay hid in the depths of the eternal counſel, is called the goſpel; the glad tidings of a new covenant for life and ſalvation to ſinners.

II. The parties-contractors in this covenant are, GOD, and his Choſen, the laſt Adam: for it is evident from the nature of the things here ſpoken of, verſe 3, 4. and from 2 Sam. viii. 8. that theſe words, *I have made a covenant with my choſen*, are the Lord's own words. Both heaven and earth were concerned in this covenant; for it was a covenant of peace between them: and accordingly the intereſts of both are ſeen to by the parties-contractors. 1. On Heaven's ſide is God himſelf, the party-propoſer of the covenant, *I have made a covenant with my choſen.* He was the offended party, yet the motion for a covenant of peace comes from him; a certain indication of the good-will of the whole glorious Trinity towards the recovery of loſt ſinners. The God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of mercies, beholding a loſt world, his mercy ſeeks a vent, that it may be ſhown to the miſerable; but juſtice ſtands in the way of the egreſs and building of mercy, without there be a covenant whereby it may be ſatisfied. Then ſaith the Father, 'The firſt covenant will not ſerve the purpoſe of mercy; there muſt be a new bargain: but the loſt creatures have nothing left, to contract for themſelves; unleſs another take the burden upon him for them, there is no remedy in the caſe: they cannot chuſe ſuch an one for themſelves; I will make a choice for them, and make the covenant with my choſen.' 2. On man's ſide, then, is God's choſen, or choſen one; for the word is ſingular. This choſen one, in the type, the covenant of royalty, is David; but in the antitype, the covenant of grace, it is the ſon of God, the laſt Adam, even Chriſt the choſen of God, Luke xxiii. 35. The truth is, ſuch great things are ſaid of this party with whom this covenant was made, of his ſeed, and of the efficacy of this covenant, as can fully agree to none but Chriſt and his ſpiritual ſeed, verſ. 4. 27. 29. 36. 37. The royal family of Judah, the houſe of David, never recovered their ancient ſplendor, after the Babyloniſh captivity; with a view to which time, this pſalm ſeems to have been penned. Their kingdom is extinct many ages ago; and the grandeur of that family, according to the fleſh, is quite ſunk. But the promiſe made to David in the covenant of royalty, ſtill flouriſheth, and will flouriſh for ever in Jeſus Chriſt, the top-branch of the family of David. How then can it be, but that, in the perpetual building of mercy, mentioned verſ. 2. and the eſtabliſhing of David's ſeed, and building up his throne to all generations, verſe 4, Chriſt himſelf is chiefly aimed at? And indeed he only was the mighty One, fit for the vaſt undertaking in this covenant, verſ. 19. and him the Father points out to us, as his elect, or choſen One, Iſ. xlii. 1.

III. As to the making of this covenant between the contracting parties: the Father made it with his own Son, *I have made a covenant with my choſen,* and that *before the world began*, Tit. i. 2. By their mutual agreement thereto, this covenant was completely made from eternity, even as the covenant of works with the firſt Adam was before we were in being. The original text calls it cutting off a covenant; which phraſe is taken from that ancient uſage of cutting off a beaſt, by cutting it aſunder, at the making of a covenant, Jer. xxxiv. 18. It intimates this covenant to be a covenant by ſacrifice; wherein the party-contractor on man's ſide was the ſacrifice, and divine juſtice the ſword that cut it aſunder, according to Zech. xiii. 8. *Awake, O ſword, againſt my ſhepherd, and againſt the man that is my fellow, ſaith the Lord of hoſts: ſmite the ſhepherd.* And withal it imports the inviolableneſs and perpetuity of the covenant made; no more for ever to be diſſolved, than the parts of the beaſt cut off one from the other, to be joined together as formerly.

IV. For the nature of this covenant: there are five things belonging thereto that appear from the texts, namely, 1. The being of a repreſentation in it. 2. The deſign for which it was ſet on foot. 3. That there are in it a condition; and 4. A promiſe: and 5. Into whoſe hands the adminiſtration of it is put.

1. There is a repreſentation taking place in this covenant. As it was in the firſt covenant, ſo it was likewiſe in the ſecond; the party-contractor and undertaker on man's ſide, was a repreſentative, repreſenting and ſuſtaining the perſons of others. This appears, in that the choſen One with whom the covenant was made, is called the laſt Adam: for it is plain, he is ſo called in relation to the firſt Adam, who was the figure (or type) of him, Rom. v. 14. namely, in that likeas the firſt Adam repreſenting his ſeed in the covenant of works, brought ſin and death on them; ſo he repreſenting his, brings righteouſneſs and life to them; as the apoſtle teacheth at large in that chapter.

2. The deſign of this covenant was life, the moſt valuable intereſt of mankind. *The laſt Adam was made a quickening ſpirit*, to wit, to give life to his ſeed. So it is a covenant of life, as the covenant of Levi, a type thereof, is expreſly called, Mal. ii. 5. The firſt covenant was a covenant of life too; but there is this difference, to wit, that the firſt was for life in perfection to upright man having life before; the ſecond, for life in perfection to ſinful man legally and morally dead. The parties contracted for in this ſecond covenant, were conſidered as under the bands of death, abſolutely void of life; and therefore utterly incapable to act for helping themſelves. They lay like dry bones ſcattered about the grave's mouth before the parties-contractors; juſtice forbidding to give them life, but upon terms conſiſtent with, and becoming its honour.

3. The condition of the covenant, the terms of that life, agreed to by the repreſentative, is implied in that he was the laſt Adam, namely, to go through with what the firſt Adam had ſtuck in. Adam, in the covenant of works, ſtumbled in the courſe of his obedience, and fell; and by his fall was quite diſabled to begin it anew: he thereby came under the penalty of that covenant alſo, but was utterly unable to diſcharge it. So the laſt Adam comes in the room of the firſt, not as the firſt Adam ſtood in his integrity; for in that caſe there was no place for a ſecond Adam; but as he lay a broken man under the firſt bargain. And coming in his room in this caſe, his buſineſs was to ſatisfy the demands of the firſt covenant, in behalf of his ſeed. Theſe demands were now run up high, quite beyond what they were to innocent Adam: the penalty was become payable, as well as the principal ſum. Wherefore the firſt covenant being ingroſſed in the ſecond, is declared broken; and the principal and penalty being ſummed up together, the clearing of the whole is laid upon the laſt or ſecond Adam, as the condition of the ſecond covenant.

4. The promiſe of the covenant to be that on condition, performed by the party-contractor on Heaven's ſide, is implied in theſe words, *I have made a covenant with* (in the original, *to*) *my choſen*; that is, 'I have made a covenant, binding and obliging myſelf by ſolemn promiſe to my choſen One, for ſuch and ſuch benefits, upon the condition therein ſtated and agreed to.' Compare the following clauſe, I have ſworn unto David my ſervant. The nature of this promiſe will be enquired into in the due place.

5. Laſtly, The adminiſtration of this covenant is put into the hands of the party-contractor on man's ſide: The laſt Adam was made a quickening ſpirit. Each of the contracting parties being God, it was not poſſible that either party ſhould fail, or that the laſt Adam ſhould break, as the firſt had done. Whereupon the time of Chriſt's fulfilling of the condition of the covenant being prefixed by the Father, God took Chriſt's ſingle bond for ſufficient ſecurity, and thereupon conſtituted him adminiſtrator of the covenant. Thoſe whom he repreſented, were conſidered as being under death, which, in the language of the covenant, is a very extenſive term: the Spirit and life were to be purchaſed by him, and did belong to the promiſe of the covenant. So, upon the credit of his fulfilling the condition of the covenant in due time, the fulneſs of the Spirit, and eternal life, were lodged in him, to be communicated by him, Rev. iii. 1. *Theſe things ſaith he that hath the ſeven Spirits of God.* 1 John v. 11. *God hath given to us eternal life: and this life is in his Son.* John xvii. 2. *As thou haſt given him power over all fleſh, that he ſhould give eternal life.* Thus was he made a quickening ſpirit.

Now the Doctrine of theſe texts thus compared and explained, is,

That the covenant of grace for life and ſalvation to loſt ſinners of mankind, was made with JESUS CHRIST *the* LAST ADAM; *and he conſtituted adminiſtrator of it.*

In handling of this weighty ſubject, I deem it not neceſſary to inſiſt, to prove that there is a covenant of grace; the being of which is obvious from the texts, and many other ſcriptures, ſuch as, Iſa. xlii. 6. xlix. 8. and liv. 10. Heb. viii. 6. and xiii. 20. But the following account of it ſhall be ranged under theſe ſix heads; namely,

1. The *parties* in the covenant of grace.
2. The *making* of that covenant.
3. The *parts* of it.
4. The *adminiſtration* of it.
5. The *trial* of a ſaving perſonal inbeing in it.
6. The way of *inſtating* ſinners perſonally and ſavingly in it.

HEAD I.

The PARTIES *in the Covenant of Grace.*

IN all covenants, of whatſoever nature they be, whether covenants of abſolute promiſe, or conditional ones, there muſt needs be diſtinct parties: for howbeit one may decree, reſolve, or purpoſe with himſelf, without another party; yet one's covenanting or bargaining, vowing or promiſing, ſpeaks an obligation thence ariſing to another diſtinct party. Accordingly, in the covenant of grace there are three parties to be conſidered; 1. The party-contractor on Heaven's ſide; 2. The party-contractor on man's ſide; and, 3. The party contracted and undertaken for. Of which in order. And,

I. *Of the party contractor on heaven's ſide.*

AS it was in the covenant of works in this point, ſo it is likewiſe in the covenant of grace; the party upon the one ſide is GOD himſelf, and he only. There was no need of any other to ſee to the intereſts of Heaven in this covenant; and there was no other when it was made, being made from eternity, before the world began, Tit. i. 2. This is plain from the words of the covenant, *I will be their God*, Jer. xxxi. 33.

But whether God is herein to be conſidered perſonally or eſſentially, is not quite ſo clear. Some divines think, that the Father, perſonally conſidered, namely, as the firſt perſon of the glorious Trinity, is the party-contractor on Heaven's ſide; others, that God, eſſentially conſidered, that is, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, is that party-contractor. But however we conceive of that matter, we are aſſured from the holy oracles, that theſe three are one God; and judge, that, according to the ſcripture, it may be ſafely ſaid, that God eſſentially conſidered, was the party-contractor in the perſon of the Father. Hereby it is owned, that the Son and the Holy Ghoſt have their part in the covenant, on Heaven's ſide; as the party offended by man's ſin: and, in the mean time, a peculiar agency in this great work of power and authority, on that ſide, is attributed to the Father; as there is unto the Son, on man's ſide.

And that of the party-contractor on Heaven's ſide we may conceive aright in this matter, theſe two things are, in the firſt place, to be taken notice of. 1. He from all eternity decreed the creation of man after his own image, and the making of the covenant of works with him, in time. All things brought forth in time, lay from eternity in the womb of God's decree; in virtue whereof they have their being in time: for which cauſe the decree is ſaid to bring forth, as a woman doth a child, Zeph. ii. 2. And the creation of angels and men, with the providence about them, made many lines in the volume of the ſealed book of the decrees. God ſelf-ſufficient needed neither man nor angel: but, for the manifeſtation of his own glory, he purpoſed from eternity to create them; and moreover, to enter into ſuch a covenant with man, as one ſhould therein repreſent the whole family; ſovereign pleaſure mean while taking another method with the angelic tribe; but withal purpoſing to give both the one and the other a ſufficient ability to ſtand in their integrity, if they would. Thus, from eternity, the covenant of works, in all the parts and appurtenances thereof, was before the eternal mind; though being made with a mere man, it could not actually be entered into, till once man was created. But, *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world*, Acts xv. 18. 2. He decreed alſo from eternity, to permit the firſt man, the repreſentative of the whole family, to fall, and ſo to break the covenant, and involve himſelf, and all his poſterity, in ruins. It is evident from the ſpotleſs holineſs of God, and the nature of the thing, that the divine permiſſion was not the cauſe of man's fall; and from the neceſſary dependence of the creature upon the Creator, that without it, he could not have fallen. But the ſovereign Lord of the creatures permitted the fall of man, for his own holy ends, purpoſing to bring about good from it.

Now, God, the party-contractor on Heaven's ſide in the covenant of grace, is to be conſidered in that matter in a threefold view.

1. He is to be conſidered in it as an offended God; offended with all the ſins of all mankind, original and actual. Looking upon the children of men the whole maſs of mankind appeared in the eyes of his glory corrupt and loathſome, the very reverſe of his holineſs: he ſaw them all gone aſide, together become filthy, none doing good, no not one, Pſal. xiv. 2. 3. In the firſt covenant, God contracted with man himſelf as a friend, without the interpoſition of a Mediator: but in the ſecond covenant it was not ſo, and it could not be ſo; for in it man was conſidered as a fallen creature, a tranſgreſſor of the law, and an enemy to God; and it is a covenant of reconciliation, a covenant of peace for thoſe who had been at war with Heaven.

2. But withal God is to be conſidered herein as a God purpoſing and decreeing from eternity to manifeſt the glory of his free grace, love, and mercy, in the ſalvation of ſome of mankind loſt. Accordingly, we are ſaid to be ſaved in time, *according to his own purpoſe and grace given us in Chriſt Jeſus, before the world began*, 2 Tim. i. 9. Without ſuch a purpoſe of grace in God, there could not have been a covenant of grace. But the ſovereign Lord of the creatures overlooking the fallen angels as to any purpoſe of mercy, entertained thoughts of love and peace towards fallen mankind, purpoſing in himſelf to make ſome of them everlaſting monuments of his free grace and mercy, partakers of life and ſalvation; and ſo ſet on foot the covenant of grace.

3. Laſtly, Yet we are to conſider him alſo in this matter as a juſt God, who cannot but do right, give ſin a juſt recompenſe, and magnify his holy law, and make it honourable, Gen. xviii. 25. Heb. ii. 2. Iſ. xlii. 21. Upon the motion for extending mercy to ſinners of mankind, the juſtice of God interpoſeth, pleading that mercy cannot be ſhewn them, but upon terms agreeable to law and juſtice. And indeed it was neither agreeable to the nature of God, nor to his truth in his word, to erect a throne of grace on the ruins of his exact juſtice, nor to ſhew mercy in prejudice of it. Now, the juſtice of God required, that the law which was violated, ſhould be fully ſatisfied, and the honour thereof repaired by ſuffering and obedience: the former ſuch as might ſatisfy the penal ſanction of the law, and the latter, the commanding part of it. The which being quite beyond the reach of ſinners themſelves, they behoved to die without mercy, unleſs another, who could be accepted as a ſufficient ſurety, ſhould undertake for them, as a ſecond Adam, coming in their room and ſtead, as they lay ruined by the breach of the covenant of works.

Thus ſtood the impediments in the way of mercy to fallen man, quite inſuperable to him, or any of his fellow creatures; and the covenant of grace was made, for removing thoſe impediments out of the way, and that it might be the channel wherein the whole rich flood of ſaving mercy might flow freely, for the quickening, purging, ſanctifying, and perfecting of loſt ſinners of mankind, who were under the bands of death and the curſe, through the breach of the firſt covenant by the firſt Adam.

From what is ſaid on this point, we may draw this inference, to wit, That the redemption of the ſoul is precious. The ſalvation of loſt ſinners was a greater work than the making of the world: the powerful word commanded, and this laſt was done; but the former was not to be compaſſed, but with more ado.

II. *Of the party-contractor on man's ſide.*

WE have ſeen, that, upon the one ſide, in the covenant of grace, is God himſelf. Now, upon the other ſide is Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God, with his ſpiritual ſeed, Heb. ii. 13. *Behold, I and the children which God hath given me*, the former, as the party-contractor, and undertaker; the latter, as the party contracted and undertaken for: a good reaſon for his name *Immanuel, which being interpreted, is, God with us*, Mat. i. 23.

The party-contractor then with God, in the covenant of grace, is our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. He alone managed the intereſts of men in this eternal bargain: for at the making of it none of them were in being; nor, if they had been, would they have been capable of affording any help.

Now, Jeſus Chriſt, the party-contractor on man's ſide, in the covenant of grace, is, according to our texts, to be conſidered in that matter as the laſt or ſecond Adam, head and repreſentative of a ſeed; loſt ſinners of mankind, the party contracted for. And thus he ſiſted himſelf Mediator between an offended juſt God, and offending men guilty before him. In which point lay one main difference betwixt the firſt Adam and the laſt Adam: for *there is one Mediator between God and men, the man Chriſt Jeſus: who gave himſelf a ranſom*, 1 Tim. ii. 5. 6. And ſo the covenant of grace, which could not be made immediately with ſinners, was made with Chriſt the laſt Adam, their head and repreſentative, mediating between God and them; therefore called *Jeſus the Mediator of the new covenant*, to whom we come by believing, Heb. xii. 22. 24.

The term Mediator is not, to my obſervation, applied in the holy ſcripture to any other except Moſes, Gal. iii. 19. *The law—was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.* And of him, a typical mediator, it is worth obſerving, that he was not only an inter-meſſenger between God and Iſrael; but, in God's renewing his covenant, in a way of reconciliation, after the breaking of the tables, the covenant was made with him, as their head and repreſentative, Exod. xxxiv. 27. *And the Lord ſaid unto Moſes, Write thou theſe words: for after the tenor of theſe words I have made a covenant with thee and with Iſrael.* This refers unto the gracious anſwer made to Moſes's prayer, ver. 9. *Pardon our iniquity and our ſin, and take us for thine inheritance.* Ver. 10. *And he* (namely, the Lord) *ſaid, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels*, &c. Ver. 28. *And he wrote upon the tables* (to wit, the new ones) *the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.* Now, Moſes was alone on the mount with God during the whole time of this tranſaction; and in it the Lord ſpeaks of him and the people as one, all along.

For clearing of this purpoſe anent the party-contractor on man's ſide, I ſhall, 1. Evince, that the covenant of grace was made with Chriſt as the laſt Adam, head and repreſentative of a ſeed; and, 2. Shew why it was ſo made.

Firſt, That the covenant of grace, the ſecond covenant, was made with Chriſt as the laſt or ſecond Adam, head and repreſentative of a ſeed, to wit, his ſpiritual ſeed, appears from the following conſiderations.

1. Covenants typical of the covenant of grace were made or eſtabliſhed with perſons repreſenting their reſpective ſeed. Thus it was in the typical covenant in our text, the covenant of royalty made with David, an undoubted type of the covenant of grace. In it David was God's ſervant, having a ſeed comprehended with him therein, Pſal. lxxxix. 3. 4. He was an eminent type of Chriſt; who is therefore called David, Hoſ. iii. 5. *Afterwards ſhall the children of Iſrael return, and ſeek the Lord their God, and David their king.* And the benefits of the covenant of grace are called the ſure mercies of David, Iſa. lv. 3. Thus was it alſo in the covenant of the day and night, (Jer. xxxiii. 20.) eſtabliſhed with Noah and his ſons, repreſentatives of their ſeed, the new world, Gen. ix. 9. *Behold, I eſtabliſh my covenant with you, and with your ſeed after you.* And that this covenant was a type of the covenant of grace, appears from its being made upon a ſacrifice, chap. viii. 20. 21. 22.; and from the ſign and token of it, the rainbow, chap. ix. 13. appearing round about the throne, Rev. iv. 3.; but eſpecially from the nature and import of it, to wit, that there ſhould not be another deluge, Gen. ix. 11.; the ſubſtance of which is plainly declared, Iſa. liv. 9. *As I have ſworn that the waters of Noah ſhall no more go over the earth; ſo have I ſworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.* Ver. 10. *For the mountains ſhall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, neither ſhall the covenant of my peace be removed, ſaith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.* And ſuch alſo was the covenant of the land of Canaan, made with Abraham, repreſenting his ſeed, Gen. xv. 18. and afterwards confirmed by oath, chap. xxii. 16, 17. In all which he was an eminent type of Chriſt, the true Abraham, father of the multitude of the faithful, who, upon God's call, left heaven, his native country, and came and ſojourned among the curſed race of mankind, and there offered up his own fleſh and blood a ſacrifice unto God, and ſo became the true heir of the world, and received the promiſes for his ſpiritual ſeed; the ſum whereof is given by Zacharias, in his account of the covenant with Abraham, Luke i. 72. *To remember his holy covenant*, ver. 73. *the oath which he ſware to our father Abraham*, ver. 74. *that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might ſerve him without fear*, ver. 75. *in holineſs and righteouſneſs before him, all the days of our life.* And finally, thus it was in the covenant of everlaſting prieſthood made with Phinehas, another type of the covenant of grace. In it Phinehas ſtood a repreſentative of his ſeed, Numb. xxv. 13. *And he ſhall have it, and his ſeed after him, even the covenant of an everlaſting prieſthood; becauſe he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Iſrael.* And therein he typified Jeſus Chriſt, repreſenting his ſpiritual ſeed in the covenant of grace; for it is evident, that as in Chriſt, who made the great atonement for ſinners, the everlaſting prieſthood promiſed to Phinehas, hath its full accompliſhment, his ſpiritual ſeed partaking of the ſame in him; according to Pſal. cx. 4. *Thou art a prieſt for ever.* Rev. i. 6. *And hath made us kings and prieſts unto God and his Father.*

Now, foraſmuch as theſe typical covenants were made or eſtabliſhed with parties ſtanding therein as public perſons, heads, and repreſentatives of their ſeed; it natively follows, that the covenant of grace typified by them, was made with Chriſt as the head and repreſentative of his ſpiritual ſeed: for whatſoever is attributed to any perſon or thing as a type, hath its accompliſhment really and chiefly in the perſon or thing typified.

2. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt being, in the phraſeology of the Holy Ghoſt, the laſt Adam, the reaſon hereof cannot be taken from the nature common to the firſt Adam and him; for all mankind partake of that; but from their common office of federal headſhip and repreſentation, in the reſpective covenants, touching man's eternal happineſs; the which is peculiar unto Adam, and the man Chriſt. Accordingly, Adam is called *the firſt man*, and Chriſt *the ſecond man*, 1 Cor. xv. 47.; but Chriſt is no otherwiſe the ſecond man, than as he is the ſecond fe-

deral head, or the repreſentative in the ſecond covenant; as Adam was the firſt federal head, or the repreſentative in the firſt covenant. Agreeable to which, the Apoſtle repreſents Adam as the head of the earthly men, and Chriſt as the head of the heavenly men, ver. 48.; the former being thoſe who bear Adam's image, namely, all his natural ſeed; the latter, thoſe who partake of the image of Chriſt, namely, his ſpiritual ſeed, ver. 49. All this is confirmed from Adam's being a figure or type of Chriſt, which the Apoſtle expreſly aſſerts, Rom. v. 14. and from the parallel he draws betwixt them two, namely, that as by Adam's covenant-breaking, ſin and death came on all that were his, ſo by Chriſt's covenant-keeping, righteouſneſs and life came to all that are his, ver. 17, 18, 19. Wherefore, as the firſt covenant was made with Adam as the head and repreſentative of his natural ſeed, ſo the ſecond covenant was made with Chriſt as the head and repreſentative of his ſpiritual ſeed.

3. As the firſt man was called Adam, that is to ſay, *man*; he being the head and repreſentative of mankind, the Perſon in whom God treated with all men, his natural ſeed, in the firſt covenant; and on the other hand, all men therein repreſented by him, do in the language of the Holy Ghoſt, go under the name of Adam, Pſal. xxxix. 5, 11. *Surely every man* (in the original it is, *all Adam*) *is vanity*: ſo Chriſt bears the name of his ſpiritual ſeed, and they, on the other hand, bear his name; a plain evidence of their being one in the eye of the law, and of God's treating with him as their repreſentative in the ſecond covenant. Iſrael is the name of the ſpiritual ſeed, Rom. ix. 6.; and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is called by the ſame name, Iſa. xlix. 3. *Thou art my ſervant, O Iſrael, in whom I will be glorified*: as ſeveral learned and judicious commentators do underſtand it; and it is evident from the whole context, ver. 1, 2, 4,—9. The truth is, Chriſt is here ſo called with a peculiar ſolemnity; for the original text ſtands preciſely thus: *Thou art my ſervant: Iſrael, in whom I will glorify myſelf*: that is, thou art Iſrael's repreſentative, in whom I will glorify myſelf, and make all mine attributes illuſtrious; as I was diſhonoured, and they darkened, by Iſrael, the collective body of the ſpiritual ſeed. And this leads us to a natural and unreſtrained interpretation of that paſſage, Pſal. xxiv. 6. *This is the generation of them that ſeek him, that ſeek thy face, O Jacob*: that is, in other words, that long for the appearing (Prov. vii. 15. Gen. xxxiii. 39.) of the Meſſias, the Lord whom the Old Teſtament church did ſo ſeek; a pledge of whoſe coming to his temple, (Mal. iii. 1.) was the bringing in of the ark into the tabernacle that David had erected for it, on which occaſion that Pſalm was penned. Accordingly it follows immediately, ver. 7. *Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlaſting doors, and the King of glory ſhall come in.* And in another Pſalm, penned on the ſame occaſion, and expreſly ſaid to have been *delivered on that very day in the hand of Aſaph*, 1 Chron xvi. 1, 7. is that expreſſion found, ver. 11. *Seek his face continually*; juſtly to be interpreted, agreeable to the circumſtances of the main thing which David through the Spirit had in view that day, namely, the coming of the Meſſias. Thus, Chriſt bears the name of his ſpiritual ſeed; and they, on the other hand, bear his name too: 1. Cor. xii. 12. *For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: ſo alſo is Chriſt.*

4. The promiſes were made to Chriſt as the ſecond Adam, the head and repreſentative of his ſeed: Gal. iii. 6. *Now to Abraham and his ſeed were the promiſes made. He ſaith not, And to ſeeds, as of many; but as of one; And to thy ſeed, which is Chriſt.* I own, that here, even as in the text immediately before cited, is meant, Chriſt myſtical, the head and members. It is to them that the promiſes are here ſaid to be made; but primarily to the head, ſecondarily to the members in him; even as the promiſe of life in the firſt covenant, was primarily made to Adam as the head, and ſecondarily to all his natural ſeed in him. Thus, in the typical covenant with Abraham, the promiſes of the earthly inheritance were primarily made to Abraham himſelf, and ſecondarily to his ſeed according to the fleſh. And even ſo the promiſe of the eternal inheritance plainly ſtands made to Chriſt, Tit. i. 2. *In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promiſed before the world began*: when there was none but Chriſt to whom that promiſe could be made perſonally. Accordingly the covenant is ſaid to be made with the houſe of Iſrael, namely, the ſpiritual Iſrael; yet are the promiſes of it directed, not to them, but to another perſon, Heb. viii. 10. *I will be to them a God, and they ſhall be to me a people.* The reaſon of which plainly appears, in the promiſes being made to Chriſt as their head and repreſentative. Now, foraſmuch as theſe promiſes belong to the covenant of grace, which is therefore called *the covenants of promiſe*, Eph. ii. 12. it is manifeſt, that if they were made to Chriſt as the head and repreſentative of a ſeed, the covenant of grace was made with him as ſuch; and he to whom they were primarily made, was ſurely the party-contractor therein.

5. Laſtly, This federal headſhip of Chriſt, and his repreſenting his ſpiritual ſeed in the covenant of grace appears from his ſuretiſhip in that covenant, the *better teſtament* whereof *Jeſus was made a ſurety*, Heb. vii. 22. Now, he became ſurety for them in the way of ſatisfaction for the debt of puniſhment and obedience; and that taking the whole burden on himſelf, as for perſons utterly unable to anſwer for themſelves. This will afterwards fall in to be cleared. Mean while ſuch a ſurety is a true repreſentative of the party he is ſurety for, and one perſon with them in the eye of the law. Hence, not only is Chriſt ſaid to have been made ſin for us, 2 Cor. v. 21. to have had the iniquity of us all laid on him, Iſa. liii. 6. and to have died for us, Rom. v. 8.; but alſo we are ſaid to have been crucified with Chriſt, Gal. ii. 20. to be made the righteouſneſs of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 21. yea, to be raiſed up together, and glorified, being made to ſit together in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus, Eph. ii. 6. and to be made alive in Chriſt, as we die in Adam, 1 Cor. xv. 22. All which neceſſarily requires this his headſhip and repreſentation in the covenant.

And thus it appears, that the ſecond covenant was made with Chriſt as the laſt or ſecond Adam, head and repreſentative of his ſpiritual ſeed.

Secondly, We are to enquire, wherefore the ſecond covenant, the covenant of grace, was ſo made? And this ſhall be accounted for in the following particulars.

1. The covenant of grace was made with Chriſt as the laſt Adam, head and repreſentative of his ſpiritual ſeed, that infinite love might have an early vent, even from eternity. The ſpecial love of God to the ſpiritual ſeed took vent in the covenant of grace. And that love and that covenant are of the ſame eternal date: as the love was everlaſting or eternal, Jeremiah xxxi. 3. ſo was the covenant, Heb. xiii. 20. Tit. i. 2. But ſince the ſeed are but of yeſterday, the covenant of grace behoved to be like the covenant of works, a yeſterday's covenant, a time-covenant, if it was not made with Chriſt as their repreſentative; it could not otherwiſe have been an eternal covenant. The promiſe of eternal life, which is undoubtedly a promiſe of the covenant of grace, could not otherwiſe have been of ſo ancient a date, as before the world began, as the apoſtle ſays it is, Tit. i. 2. How could an eternal covenant be originally made with creatures of time, but in their eternal head and repreſentative? Or how could an eternal covenant be perſonally made with them, by way of perſonal application to them, had it not been from eternity made with another as their head and repreſentative? But in this method of infinite wiſdom, free love took an early vent; not waiting the ſlow motion of its objects creeping out of the womb of time, in which many of them lie wrapt up, even to this day. But as princes ſometimes do, by proxy, marry

young princeſſes, before they are marriageable, or capable to give their conſent; ſo God, in his infinite love, married to himſelf all the ſpiritual ſeed, in and by Jeſus Chriſt as their repreſentative, not only before they were capable of conſenting, but before they were at all. The which they do afterwards, in their effectual calling, approve of by faith, and give their conſent perſonally to; and ſo they enjoy God as their God, and God hath them as his people: John xx. 17. *I aſcend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.*

2. Otherwiſe it could not have been made at all a conditional covenant anſwering the deſign of it. This covenant taking place only upon the breach of the firſt covenant, the great deſign of it was, that dead ſinners might have life, as was before obſerved. Now, in order to this, a holy juſt God ſtood upon conditions, without performing of which that life was not to be given: and they were high conditions, Pſal. xl. 6. *Sacrifice and offering thou didſt not deſire.* 1 Theſſ. v. 9. 10. *Jeſus Chriſt who died for us, that-----we ſhould live.* But how could an effectual conditional covenant for life be made with dead ſinners, otherwiſe than in a repreſentative? Dead ſouls cannot perform any condition for life at all, which can be pleaſing to God. They muſt needs have life before they can do any thing of that nature, be it ever ſo ſmall a condition: therefore a conditional covenant for life, could not be made with ſinners in their own perſons; eſpecially conſidering, that the conditions for life were ſo high, that man at his beſt ſtate was not able to perform them. Wherefore, if ſuch a covenant was made at all, it behoved to be made with Chriſt as their repreſentative, Rom. viii. 3. 4.

3. It was ſo ordered, to the end it might be unto us poor ſinners a covenant of grace indeed. It is evident from the holy ſcriptures, that this covenant was deſigned for exalting the free grace of God; and that it is ſo framed, as to be a covenant of pure grace, and not of works, in reſpect of us, whatever it was in reſpect of Chriſt: Rom. iv. 16. *Therefore it is of faith: that it might be by grace.* Eph. ii. 9. *Not of works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt.* And at this rate, indeed, it is a covenant of pure grace; and all ground of boaſting is taken away from us; the Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, as repreſentative, being ſole undertaker and performer of the conditions thereof. But it is not ſo, if it is made with the ſinner himſelf, ſtanding as principal party, contracting with God, and undertaking and performing the conditions of the covenant for life: for how low ſoever theſe conditions undertaken and wrought by the ſinner in his own perſon, are ſuppoſed to be, the promiſe of the covenant is made to them; and ſo, according to the ſcripture-reckoning, it is a covenant of works, Rom. iv. 4. *Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt;* and betwixt Adam's covenant and ſuch a covenant there is no difference, but in degree, which leaves it ſtill of the ſame kind.

4. This method was taken, that the communication of righteouſneſs and life might be in as compendious a way, as the communication of ſin and death was: *As by one man's diſobedience many were made ſinners; ſo by the obedience of one ſhall many be made righteous,* Rom. v. 19. The covenant of works having been made with Adam, as a repreſentative of his natural ſeed, upon the breaking thereof, ſin and death are communicate to them all from him as a deadly head. This being ſo, it was not agreeable to the method of divine procedure with men, to treat with theſe predeſtinated unto ſalvation ſeverally, as principal parties, each contracting for himſelf in the new covenant for life; but to treat for them all as one public perſon, who, through his fulfilling of the covenant ſhould be a quickening head to them, from whence life might be derived to them in as compendious a way, as death was from the firſt Adam. For his mercies are above all his other works.

5. Laſtly, The covenant of grace was ſo made, that it might be a ſure covenant; even *to the end the promiſe might be ſure to all the ſeed,* Rom. iv. 16. The firſt covenant was made with a mere creature, as a principal party and contractor: and though he was a holy and righteous man, yet was he ſo fickle and unſtable, that he failed of performing the condition he undertook; and ſo the benefit of the promiſe was loſt: wherefore fallen men were not at all fit to be principal parties, or parties-contractors in the new covenant, wherein the promiſe was to be ſure, and not to miſs of an accompliſhment. They being then wholly a broken company, not to be truſted in the matter, Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God was conſtituted head of the new covenant, to act for, and in the name of the ſpiritual ſeed: and that to the end, the covenant being in this manner ſure in point of the fulfilling of the condition, might be alſo ſure in point of the accompliſhment of the promiſe. And this is the very hinge of the ſtability of the covenant of grace, according to the ſcripture: Pſal. lxxxix. 28. *My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant ſhall ſtand faſt with him.* Verſe 22. *The enemy ſhall not exact upon him,* or, as others read it, and I think juſtly, *The enemy ſhall not beguile him,* namely, as he did the firſt Adam. The original phraſe is elliptical, q. d. *The enemy ſhall not beguile* (his ſoul, Jer. xxxvii. 9.) *in him.* Before I leave this point, I offer the following inferences from it.

Inf. 1. The covenant of redemption and the covenant of grace, are not two diſtinct covenants, but one and the ſame covenant. I know that many divines do expreſs themſelves otherwiſe in this matter; and that upon very different views, ſome of which are no ways injurious to the doctrine of free grace. But this I take to be ſcripture-truth, and a native conſequent of the account given of the covenant of grace in our Larger Catechiſm, to wit, 'That the covenant of grace was made with Chriſt 'as the ſecond Adam, and in him with all the elect as 'his ſeed. Gal. iii. 16. *Now to Abraham and his ſeed were the promiſes made. He ſaith not, And to ſeeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy ſeed, which is Chriſt,* Rom. v. 15. to the end——Iſ. liii. 10. 11.———*When thou ſhalt make his ſoul an offering for ſin, he ſhall ſee his ſeed, he ſhall prolong his days, and the pleaſure of the Lord ſhall proſper in his hand. He ſhall ſee the travel of his ſoul, and ſhall be ſatisfied, &c.* So the covenant of redemption and the covenant of grace are but two names of one and the ſame ſecond covenant, under different conſiderations. By a covenant of redemption, is meant a bargain of buying and ſelling: and ſuch a covenant it was to Chriſt only; for as much as he alone engaged to pay the price of our redemption, 1 Pet. i. 18. 19. By a covenant of grace, is meant a bargain whereby all is to be had freely: and ſuch a covenant it is to us only, to whom the whole of it is of free grace; God himſelf having provided the ranſom, and thereupon made over life and ſalvation to us, by free promiſe, without reſpect to any work of ours, as the ground of our right thereto.

To confirm this, conſider, (1.) That, in ſcripture reckoning, the covenants for life and happineſs to man are but two in number, whereof the covenant of works is one: Gal. iv. 24. *Theſe are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage,* namely, generating bond-children, excluded from the inheritance, verſe 30. This is a diſtinguiſhing character of the covenant of works; for ſuch are indeed the children of that covenant, but not the children of the covenant of grace under any diſpenſation thereof. Theſe two covenants are called, the old covenant, and the new covenant; and the old is called the firſt, which ſpeaks the new to be the ſecond: Heb. viii. 13. *In that he ſaith, A new covenant, he hath made the firſt old.* This is agreeable to the two ways unto life, revealed in the ſcripture; the one by works, the other by grace, Rom. xi. 6. The one is called the law, the other grace, chap. vi. 14. The former is the law-covenant with the firſt Adam repreſenting all his natural ſeed; made firſt in paradiſe, and afterward repeated on mount Sinai, with the covenant of grace: the latter is the covenant of grace, made with the ſecond Adam repreſenting his ſpiritual ſeed: 1 Cor. xv. 47. 48. (2.) It is evident that the ſalvation of ſinners is by the blood of the covenant, which is the blood of Chriſt, Heb. x. 29. 1 Cor. xi. 25. And the ſcripture mentions the *blood of the covenant* four times; but never the *blood of the covenants*; therefore the covenant, the *blood* whereof the ſcripture mentions, and our ſalvation depends upon, is but *one* covenant, and not *two*. Now, that covenant is Chriſt's covenant, or the covenant of redemption: for it was through the blood of it he was brought again from the dead; namely, in virtue of the promiſe made therein to be fulfilled to him upon his performing of the condition thereof, Heb. xiii. 20. And it is alſo his people's covenant, or the covenant of grace, Exod. xxiv. 8. *Behold, the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you.* It is expreſsly called their covenant, Zech. ix. 11. *As for thee alſo, by the blood of thy covenant, I have ſent forth thy priſoners out of the pit, wherein is no water.* The words expreſſing the party here ſpoke of, being of the feminine gender in the firſt language, make it evident, that this is not directed to Chriſt, but to the church: ſo the covenant is propoſed as their covenant. And the ſpiritual priſoners are delivered, in virtue of this their covenant, which certainly muſt be the covenant of grace. By all which it appears, that the covenant of grace is the very ſame covenant that was made with Chriſt, in reſpect of whom it is called the covenant of redemption.

Inf. 2. Likeas all mankind ſinned in Adam, ſo believers obeyed and ſuffered in Chriſt the ſecond Adam. For as the covenant of works was made with Adam as a public perſon and repreſentative, all ſinned in him, when he broke that covenant! ſo the covenant of grace being made with Chriſt, as a public perſon and repreſentative, all believers obeyed and ſuffered in him, when he ſo fulfilled this covenant. This is the doctrine of the apoſtle, Rom. v. 19. *As by one man's diſobedience many were made ſinners; ſo by the obedience of one ſhall many be made righteous.* Chap. viii. 3. *God ſending his own Son, in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin condemned ſin in the fleſh:* verſ. 4. *That the righteouſneſs of the law might be fulfilled in us.* 2 Cor. v. 21. *That we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.* Gal. ii. 20. *I am crucified with Chriſt.* And it affords a ſolid anſwer for believers, unto the laws demand of obedience and ſuffering for life and ſalvation.

3. Believers are juſtified immediately, by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, without any righteouſneſs of their own intervening; even as all men are condemned, upon Adam's ſin, before they have done any good or evil in their own perſons: Rom. v. 18. *As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation: even ſo by the righteouſneſs of one, the free gift came upon all men unto juſtification of life.* And thus believers are righteous before God with the ſelf ſame righteouſneſs which was wrought by Jeſus Chriſt, in his fulfilling of the covenant. The which righteouſneſs is not imputed to them in its effects only; ſo as their faith, repentance and ſincere obedience, are therefore accepted as their evangelical righteouſneſs, on which they are juſtified: but it is imputed to them in itſelf, even as Adam's ſin was.

4. The covenant of grace is abſolute, and not conditional to us. For being made with Chriſt, as repreſentative of his ſeed, all the conditions of it were laid on him, and fulfilled by him. Wherefore all that remains of it to be accompliſhed, is, the fulfilling of the promiſes unto him and his ſpiritual ſeed; even as it would have been in the caſe of the firſt covenant, if once the firſt Adam had fulfilled the condition thereof.

5. The covenant of grace is a contrivance of infinite wiſdom and love, worthy to be embraced by poor ſinners as well ordered in all things and ſure, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. O admirable contrivance of help for a deſperate caſe! Wonderful contrivance of a covenant of God, with them who were incapable of ſtanding in the preſence of his holineſs, or of performing the leaſt condition for life and ſalvation! A new bargain for the relief of loſt ſinners made on the higheſt terms with thoſe who were not able to come up to the loweſt terms! Infinite wiſdom found out the way, to wit, by a repreſentative. The love of the Father engaged him to propoſe the repreſentation; and the love of the Son engaged him to accept of it. Thus God had one, with whom he might contract with the ſafety of his honour; and who was able to fulfil the covenant, to the reparation of the injuries done to his glory: and ſinners alſo had one able to act for them and to purchaſe ſalvation for them at the hand of a holy juſt God. So a ſure covenant was made, and a firm foundation laid, upon which God laid the weight of his honour, and on which ſinners may ſafely lay their whole weight: *Therefore thus ſaith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion——a ſure foundation: he that believeth, ſhall not make haſte,* Iſ. xxviii. 16. ſhall not be aſhamed, Rom. ix. 33.

6. Laſtly, The way to enter perſonally into the covenant of grace, ſo as to partake of the benefits thereof, unto ſalvation, is, to unite with Chriſt the head of the covenant by faith. Being thus ingrafted into him, ye ſhall partake of all that happineſs which is ſecured to Chriſt myſtical, in the everlaſting covenant: even as, through your becoming children of Adam, by natural generation, ye are perſonally entered into the firſt covenant, ſo as to fall under that ſin and death which paſſed upon all men, by the breach thereof, Rom. v. 12.

III. *Of the party contracted and undertaken for.*

AS the party contractor and undertaker on man's ſide, in the covenant of grace, was a repreſentative; ſo the party contracted and undertaken for, was repreſented by him. And that theſe two, namely, the repreſented, and thoſe contracted for, are of equal latitude is plain from the nature of the thing: for theſe whom one repreſents in a covenant, he contracts for in that covenant; and thoſe for whom one contracts in a covenant made with him as repreſentative, are repreſented by him in that covenant. Thus it was in the covenant of the firſt Adam, who was a figure of Chriſt the head of the ſecond covenant. In it, thoſe whom Adam contracted for, he repreſented; and thoſe whom he repreſented, he contracted for: he repreſented his natural ſeed only, and for them alone he contracted: therefore thoſe whom the ſecond Adam contracted for, he repreſented; and whom he repreſented, he contracted for.

Now, the party repreſented and contracted for, by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in the covenant of grace, was the elect of mankind; being a certain number of mankind, choſen from eternity to everlaſting life; children partakers of fleſh and blood, which God gave to Chriſt, Heb. ii. 13. 14. In their perſon he ſtood, making this covenant with his Father: in their name he acted, ſtriking this bargain with him, as a ſurety to obey the law, and ſatisfy juſtice.

And this I ſhall, in the firſt place, confirm; and then ſhall enquire how the elect were conſidered in this covenant and federal repreſentation.

Firſt, That the elect were the party repreſented, or contracted and undertaken for, in the covenant of grace appears from the following grounds.

1. The party with whom the covenant was made, is in the text called God's choſen; as repreſenting and contracting for all the choſen or elect: even as the firſt man was called Adam or man, as repreſenting and contracting for all mankind, in his covenant. For as the apoſtle teacheth, Heb. ii. 11. He—and they—are all of one; not only of one nature, but alſo of one body, to wit, the election: Chriſt is the head elect, Iſ. xlii. 1. they the body elect, Eph. v. 23. Therefore they go under one name, principally belonging to him, and then to them by participation with him. Thus he is alſo called Abraham's ſeed, as repreſenting all the ſpiritual ſeed of Abraham, that is, the elect, Gal. iii. 16. And to thy ſeed, which is Chriſt; and the ſeed of the woman, as oppoſed

to the ſerpent's ſeed: and under that name alſo the elect are comprehended; they and they only, being the party betwixt whom and the ſerpent with his ſeed, God puts the enmity, according to the promiſe, Gen. iii. 15.

2. Thoſe whom Chriſt repreſented and contracted for in the covenant of grace, are the heavenly men: 1 Cor. xv. 47. 48. The firſt man is of the earth, earthly: the ſecond man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, ſuch are they alſo that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, ſuch are they alſo that are heavenly. Now, the heavenly men, belonging to Chriſt the ſecond man, are none other but the elect. For they are contra-diſtinguiſhed to the earthy men, belonging to the firſt man; to wit, all mankind taken into the firſt covenant in Adam: and therefore they are the elect men, taken into the ſecond covenant, in the ſecond Adam. Again, the heavenly men are thoſe who ſhall bear the image of the heavenly man, Chriſt, verſ. 49. and ſuch are the elect, and they alone. And, finally, they are thoſe to whom Chriſt is, in reſpect of efficacy, a quickening ſpirit: for as is the heavenly ſuch are they alſo that are heavenly. As Adam's deadly efficacy goes as wide as his repreſentation did in the firſt covenant, reaching all mankind his natural ſeed, and them only: ſo Chriſt's quickening efficacy goes as wide as his repreſentation did in the ſecond covenant, reaching all the elect, his ſpiritual ſeed, and them only: and if it did not, ſome would be deprived of the benefit, which was purchaſed and paid for, by the ſurety, in their name: the which is not conſiſtent with the juſtice of God.

3. They whom Chriſt repreſented and contracted for in the covenant, are his ſeed, his ſpiritual ſeed: Gal. iii. 16. Now to Abraham and his ſeed were the promiſes made. He ſaith---And to thy ſeed, which is Chriſt. Pſal, lxxxix. 3. 4. I have ſworn unto David my ſervant. Thy ſeed will I eſtabliſh for ever. In the covenants typical of the covenant of grace, the parties repreſented were the ſeed of the repreſentatives they were made with, as was cleared before: and in the firſt Adam's covenant, his natural ſeed were the repreſented. Wherefore, in the ſecond Adam's covenant, his ſpiritual ſeed are the repreſented. Now, Chriſt's ſpiritual ſeed are the elect, and none other; for they are thoſe whom he begets with the word of truth, Jam. i. 18. and are born again (1 Pet. i. 23.) unto him in their regeneration; whom therefore he ſees as his ſeed, with his own image on them, Iſ. liii. 10. They are the travail of his ſoul, who, ſooner or latter, are all of them, juſtified, ver. 11. They are the ſeed that ſhall ſerve him, Pſal. xxii. 30. which ſhall be eſtabliſhed and endure for ever, namely, in a ſtate of happineſs, Pſalm xxxix. 4. 29. 36.

4. Laſtly, Chriſt was in the covenant of grace Iſrael's repreſentative, according to that text, Iſ. xlix. 3. Thou art my ſervant, O Iſrael, in whom I will be glorified. Now, Iſrael the collective body, is the elect, Rom. ix. 6. They are not all Iſrael which are of Iſrael: therefore the elect were the party repreſented and contracted for in the covenant. So thoſe whom Chriſt took with him into the bond of his covenant, are deſcribed to be the ſeed of Abraham, Heb. ii. 16. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the ſeed of Abraham: or rather, as it is read in the margin of our Bibles, more agreeable to the original, He taketh not hold of angels, but of the ſeed of Abraham he taketh hold. The original word ſignifies, to take hold of a thing running away or falling down; and, in the ſame manner of conſtruction, it is uſed of Chriſt's catching hold of Peter ſinking in the water, Matth. xiv. 31. Fallen angels and men were both run away from God, and ſinking in the ſea of his wrath: and Chriſt with the bond of the covenant, takes hold of men; but not of the fallen angels: them he leaves to ſink unto the bottom. All the ſeed of Adam was ſinking, as well as the ſeed of Abraham, which is but a part of the ſeed of Adam, even ſome of all mankind: but Chriſt is not ſaid to have taken hold of the ſeed of Adam, that is, all mankind; but of the ſeed of Abraham, that is, all the elect, or the ſpiritual Iſrael, called the houſe of Jacob, Luke i. 33.

Accordingly it is obſervable, that the firſt time the covenant of grace was heard of in the world, the diſcourſe was directed to the ſerpent, by way of narration, Gen. iii. 14, 15.; not to Adam, as the firſt covenant was, chap. ii. 16, 17. that Adam might know, he was to come in here as a private perſon only, and not as a public perſon with his ſeed. And for this cauſe alſo, our Lord Jeſus is not ſimply called Adam, or Man; but the laſt Adam, and the ſecond Man, whoſe ſeed differs from that of the firſt man, as Abraham's ſeed from Adam's ſeed; but he is ſimply called Iſrael, without any epithet at all: and his ſeed is plainly determined to be the elect, Iſa. xlv. 25. *In the Lord ſhall all the ſeed of Iſrael be juſtified:* even as in the firſt man all the ſeed of Adam was condemned, Rom. v. 18. For the firſt man was ſimply called Adam or Man, becauſe, in the firſt covenant, he was a compend of all mankind; he was all man in law reckoning, they being all repreſented by him: ſo Jeſus Chriſt was a compend of all Iſrael; that is, all the elect; he was all Iſrael in law-reckoning, they being all repreſented by him. And thus we have the true ground of the univerſality of that expreſſion, Iſa. liii. 6. *The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all;* i. e. of all Iſrael, that is to ſay, all the elect. The which is confirmed by a parallel text, bearing the type, whereof this hath the antitype, *viz.* Lev. xvi. 21. *And Aaron ſhall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confeſs over him all the iniquities of the children of Iſrael, and all their tranſgreſſions in all their ſins, putting them upon the head of the goat.* For as Iſrael was a people entertained with types, ſo they themſelves were indeed a typical people.

Secondly, We are to enquire, how the elect were conſidered in this covenant and federal repreſentation. And therein they came under a threefold conſideration.

1. They were conſidered as ſinners, loſt, ruined, and undone in Adam; *loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael,* Matth. xv. 24. In the firſt covenant, the whole flock of mankind was put under the hand of one ſhepherd, to wit, Adam; but he loſing himſelf, loſt all the flock, and was never able to recover ſo much as one of them again. God had, from all eternity, put a ſecret mark on ſome of them, whereby he diſtinguiſhed them from the reſt, 2 Tim. 19. *Having this ſeal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.* And them alſo he ſaw among others, gone away from their paſture, wandering as waifs and ſtrays, a prey to every devourer; but, in order to their being ſought out, and returned, and kept in ſafety for ever, the new covenant was entered into with another ſhepherd, even our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: and they are put under his hand, as the ſhepherd of Iſrael. In Adam's repreſentation in the covenant of works, the party repreſented was conſidered as an upright ſeed, Eccleſ. vii. 29.: but in Chriſt's repreſentation in the covenant of grace, the party repreſented was conſidered as a corrupt ſinful maſs, laden with guilt, under the wrath of God and curſe of the law. And who would have repreſented ſuch a company, putting himſelf in their room and ſtead? But free love engaged our Lord Jeſus to it. So the holy One of God repreſented wretched ſinners: the beloved of the Father repreſented the curſed company.

2. They were conſidered alſo as utterly unable to help themſelves, in whole or in part; as being without ſtrength, Rom, v. 6. They were debtors, but quite unable to pay off one farthing of the debt: they were criminals, but unable to bear their own puniſhment, to the ſatisfaction of juſtice: had it lain on them to have paid the debt, or borne the puniſhment, they behoved to have ſunk under the load for ever. So it was neceſſary they ſhould have one to repreſent them, taking burden on him for them all.

3. Laſtly. They were conſidered withal as the objects of eternal, ſovereign, and free love, given to Chriſt by his Father. The Father loved them, John xvii. 23. and therefore gave them to Chriſt, verſ. 6. The Son loved them, Eph. v. 2. and accepting of the gift, repreſented

them in the covenant, as a father his own children, Iſ. ix. 6. His name ſhall be called-----The everlaſting Father. Compare Heb. ii. 13. Behold, I, and the children which God hath given me. It was owing to his free love, and mere good pleaſure, that they, and not others in the ſame condemnation, by the breach of the firſt covenant, were repreſented and contracted for by Jeſus Chriſt, in the ſecond; that their names were put in the eternal contract, while the names of others were loſt out. They were his Father's choice, and his own choice; ſo he became their repreſentative.

From what is ſaid concerning the party repreſented and contracted for, we make the following inferences.

Inf. 1. There is a ſovereign freedom of the love of God appearing in the ſecond covenant, the covenant of grace. And it appears eſpecially in two things. (1.) In that there was a love towards fallen man, and not towards fallen angels, Tit. iii. 4. whereby it came to paſs that men, and not devils, were taken hold of, repreſented and contracted for by Jeſus Chriſt, in the covenant, Heb. ii. 16. Doubtleſs he could have contracted for the one, as well as for the other: but ſovereignty paſſed by fallen angels, and caught hold of men; howbeit the former were, in their own nature, the more worthy and excellent creatures. But in all the diſpenſation of grace, there is no reſpect to creature worth; all is owing to the mere good pleaſure of God, who *hath mercy on whom he will have mercy.* (2.) It appears in that there was an electing love of men; whereby it came to paſs, that ſome men, and not all men, were repreſented and contracted for in the covenant. All men were alike by nature; and there was nothing in one more than in another, to recommend him: but free love pitched on objects altogether unlovely; and ſovereign love pitches on ſome ſuch objects, paſſing by others of the ſame condition: Even ſo, Father, for ſo it ſeemeth good in thy ſight, Matth. xi. 26. The veſſels of honour, and the veſſels of diſhonour, are both made of the ſame ſinful lump: a myſtery that muſt be reſolved into ſovereign will and pleaſure, Rom. ix. 21. *Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the ſame lump to make one veſſel unto honour, and another unto diſhonour?* But ſay not, that this diſparageth the federal repreſentation of the ſecond Adam, that he repreſented only ſome of mankind, whereas the firſt Adam repreſented all mankind. For as it is more to be ſurety for a vaſt ſum, for one man who neither hath, nor can have any thing at all wherewithal to pay his debt, than to be ſurety for a hundred ſuch as have abundance of their own; ſo it was more for Jeſus Chriſt to contract and undertake for one ſinner, than for Adam to contract for a righteous world. And ſtill it holds true, that *where ſin abounded, grace did much more abound,* Rom. v. 20. for it is more by far to ſave one, than to ruin many. Mean while, thoſe repreſented by Chriſt in the ſecond covenant, are *a great multitude, which no man can number,* Rev. vii. 9. even as the ſtars of heaven, Gen. xv. 5. Rom. iv. 18.

Inf. 2. There is no univerſal redemption, nor univerſal atonement. Jeſus Chriſt died not for all and every individual perſon of mankind; but for the elect only. The contrary doctrine may conſiſt with the opinion which holds the covenant of redemption, and the covenant of grace, to be two diſtinct covenants; the former made with Chriſt, and the latter with believers; the condition of the one undertaken and performed by him, the condition of the other undertaken and performed by us. Accordingly that opinion concerning the covenant, is readily embraced by Univerſaliſts of different denominations. But that doctrine is utterly inconſiſtent with this account of the covenant, which doth at once overthrow univerſal redemption or atonement, together with the federal conditionality of our holineſs and good works in the covenant of grace. For if the covenant of grace was made with Chriſt as a repreſentative, and the elect only were the party repreſented by him in it: then ſurely the conditions of the covenant, his doing and dying, were accompliſhed for them only; and he died for no other: as when one hath entered into a bond of ſuretyſhip, his payment of that bond can never be reckoned a payment of their debt, whoſe names were not in the bond, and whom he was not ſurety for.

Inf. 3. and laſt, Whoever they be that reject the covenant of grace offered to them in the goſpel, and ſo periſh; all God's elect ſhall infallibly be entered perſonally into it, and be ſaved. Like as all thoſe whom Adam repreſented in the covenant of works, have been, are, or ſhall be brought perſonally into that covenant, and ſin and death paſs upon them, Rom. v. 12. even ſo all thoſe whom Chriſt repreſented in the covenant of grace, have been, are, or ſhall be brought perſonally into this covenant and partake of righteouſneſs and life. Our Lord Jeſus has fulfilled the conditions of the covenant for them whom he repreſented; and it would neither be ſuitable to the juſtice of God, nor to the wiſdom of Chriſt, the party contracting with him, that he ſhould repreſent, contract, and fulfil the conditions, for any who ſhall never enjoy the benefit of the contract. Wherefore, ſince there are who, by a purpoſe of God that cannot be fruſtrated, ſhall without peradventure, be brought perſonally into this covenant; and ye who hear the goſpel, having the means for compaſſing that end uſed towards you, do ſtand as fair for it as any: this may encourage you to come to Chriſt, and take hold of the covenant. Beſtir yourſelves therefore, O ſinners, to take hold of the covenant of grace, which is offered to you in the goſpel; and come ye to Chriſt by faith, thereby winding yourſelves perſonally into the bond of this covenant, and the communion thereof.

Objection. 'But I fear I am none of thoſe whom 'Chriſt repreſented in the covenant of grace: how 'then can I take hold of it by believing? Anſwer. Though your name were the firſt name that the Lamb wrote down in his book of life; yet you nor no man can know, that it is there at all, until that you have by believing taken hold of the covenant. 2 Pet. i. 10. *Make your calling and election ſure;* but firſt your calling and then your election. And, on the other hand, though you were a monſter of all manner of wickedneſs, and had all the deſperate marks of a caſt-away about you, except that one only, the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, you nor no man can know that you were not repreſented in the covenant: Matth. xii. 31. *All manner of ſin and blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven unto men: but the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt ſhall not be forgiven unto men.* Wherefore that matter is an abſolute ſecret unto you, which, in this caſe, you are not to meddle to determine in: for *the ſecret things belong unto the Lord our God: but thoſe things which are revealed, belong unto us,* Deut. xxix. 29. Neither does your warrant to believe, and to lay hold on the covenant, any manner of way depend on it: for the reprobate have as good and fair a revealed warrant to believe and take hold of the covenant as the elect have, elſe they could not be condemned for unbelief, and not taking hold of the covenant. Be what you will, ſince you are certainly a ſinner of mankind, your warrant is uncontestable, according to the word: *For God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.* John iii. 16. *This is his commandment, that we ſhould believe on the name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt,* 1 John iii. 23. Wherefore believe ye, and take hold of the covenant for yourſelves; ſo ſhall ye know your election, and your repreſentation in the covenant, by the effects thereof.

This difficulty caſt in the way of a ſinner ſenſible of his need of Chriſt, to beat him off from believing on Chriſt, is a dangerous device and temptation of the devil. But do thou repel it, ſaying, O enemy of my ſalvation, it is true, I do not know whether Chriſt repreſented me or not, in the eternal covenant; neither am I obliged nor concerned to know it, in order to my taking hold of that covenant: but one thing I know aſſuredly, namely, that the covenant, in the free promiſe of life and ſalvation upon the ground of Chriſt's obedience and death allenarly, is held out to me, even to me, to be believed, truſted to, and reſted upon, by me, even by me: and therefore I will believe, and lay hold on it; and, upon the infallible ground of the faithfulneſs of God in the promiſe, *Whoſoever believeth ſhall not periſh, but have everlaſting life*, I will aſſuredly conclude, that it ſhall be made out to me.

QUESTION. *But are there no marks or ſigns whereby a poor ſinner may know himſelf to be one of thoſe who were repreſented by Chriſt in the ſecond covenant, and whoſe names be put in the bond of ſuretyſhip that he gave to his Father from eternity?* ANSWER. Yea, there are; but then they are ſuch, as although the having of them will prove a man to have been repreſented by Jeſus Chriſt in the eternal covenant; yet the want of them will not prove a man not to have been repreſented therein, foraſmuch as what one has not now, he may come to have afterwards. And, under this limitation, I offer theſe two marks of the thing in queſtion.

Mark 1. A deliberate and cordial complacency in the covenant. As it was with the repreſentative from eternity; ſo it is in time, in that matter, with the repreſented, when once by grace they become capable of perſonal conſenting: there is a deliberate and cordial complacency in the covenant being propoſed, Pſalm. xl. 7. Then ſaid I—ver. 8.—thy law is within my heart. The children of men diſcover themſelves to be Adam's natural ſeed, repreſented by him in the covenant of works, by the inclination and bent of their hearts towards that covenant. There is ſuch a bias to that covenant hung upon the minds of men naturally, that Do and live, or Work and win, is the religion of all natural men, ſo far as they have any practical religion at all; and they cannot be brought off from it, but by the power of renewing grace. Even ſo the elect of God diſcover themſelves to be Chriſt's ſpiritual ſeed, repreſented by him in the covenant of grace, by their deliberate and cordial complacency in this covenant. The heart touched with divine grace, ſays of it, This is all my ſalvation, and all my deſire, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. The new bias hung on their minds by renewing grace, carries them to a hearty approbation, reliſh, and liking of the new covenant held forth in the goſpel: they are well pleaſed with the parties-contractors, repreſentative and repreſentation in it; the conditions and promiſes of it; the adminiſtrator, the adminiſtration, and order thereof. In a word, the covenant is in their eyes a faultleſs contrivance: there is nothing in it they would have out, and there is nothing out of it they would have in. So there they caſt anchor for their own ſouls. But it is not ſo with others: 1 Pet. ii. 7. Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious: but unto them which be diſobedient, the ſtone which the builders diſallowed, the ſame is made the head of the corner; verſ. 8. and a ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which ſtumble at the word, being diſobedient, whereunto alſo they were appointed.

Mark 2. The image of Chriſt begun to be drawn on the ſoul, together with a longing for the perfection thereof: 1 Cor. xv. 48. *As is the heavenly, ſuch are they alſo that are heavenly.* verſe 49. *And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we ſhall alſo bear the image of the heavenly.* Likeas all whom Adam repreſented, when he entered into the covenant of works in paradiſe, do afterwards, every one in his time, perſonate Adam, looking as like him as ever child was like a father, acting even as he acted, as I ſhewed elſewhere: ſo all whom Chriſt repreſented in the covenant of grace from eternity, do in time put on Chriſt, Gal. iii. 27. perſonating him, and repreſenting him in another ſenſe, namely, bearing his image, and walking even as he walked, 1 John ii. 6. It is a promiſe of the covenant to our Lord Jeſus, Iſ. liii. 10. *He ſhall ſee his ſeed*, to wit, as one ſees a new-born babe. But do not others ſee them too? Yea indeed they do. Satan and wicked men ſee them, as rebels and traitors do with grudge and hatred ſee a new-born prince heir to the crown. The godly ſee them, as in that caſe the princeſſes do with a particular ſatisfaction ſee their new-born brother. But our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf ſees them, as the king, the father of the babe, does with a peculiar ſatisfaction ſee him as his own ſon and his own picture. Mean while, as Adam's children do not open out all at once what of old Adam is in them, but by degrees as they grow up; but they are ſtill longing for the perfection thereof, when they ſhall be grown men: ſo Chriſt's children are but imperfect in this life, as in the ſtate of childhood: but they are longing to arrive at perfection, at the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt, the principle of which they have in them, Eph. iv. 13.

Thus far of the firſt head, the Parties in the covenant of grace.

HEAD II.

The MAKING *of the Covenant of Grace.*

HAving conſidered the parties in the covenant of grace, we come now to take a view of the making of that covenant betwixt the parties contracting therein. And here we find ourſelves at the fountain-head of the ſalvation of loſt ſinners, the origin and riſe of the glorious plan, laid from eternity in the ſecret council of the ever-bleſſed Trinity, for remedy of man's miſery. And this is a manifold myſtery, the ſeveral folds of which we are not able fully to diſcover. With God it was all one piece, if I may ſo phraſe it; for with him all things are together and at once; and not one thing before, and another after, as with us. Howbeit, we cannot conceive of it but in parcels; firſt one piece of the myſtery, and then another: and that becauſe of the weakneſs of our capacity, as we are creatures: and much more, as we are creatures under much ſpiritual darkneſs. Wherefore we muſt of neceſſity addreſs ourſelves to the conſideration of it in parcels; but ſtill remembering, we are in the eternal myſtery, tranſacted in the eternal decree of the Holy Trinity all at once, by one eternal act of the divine will; in which, nevertheleſs, we are allowed to conceive a certain order, ſince otherwiſe we cannot take up the myſtery.

We have already ſeen, that the Father, the party-contractor on Heaven's ſide, is in that matter to be conſidered as an offended God; but purpoſing to manifeſt the glory of his mercy in the ſalvation of ſome of mankind loſt; yet withal as a juſt God, who cannot but give ſin a juſt recompence: and alſo, that Jeſus Chriſt, the party-contractor on man's ſide, is to be conſidered therein as the laſt or ſecond Adam, repreſentative of a ſeed. Wherefore, firſt of all, we are to enquire, How Chriſt the Son of God became the ſecond Adam? and then, How the covenant was made with him as ſuch? the former being as it were preliminary to the latter.

Firſt, *How Chriſt the Son of God became ſecond Adam?* This we may take up in two things.

1. The Father willed and deſigned, that his own Son the eternal Word, ſhould, for the purpoſe of mercy towards mankind loſt, take on their nature, and become

man. He ſaw that ſacrifice and offering would not anſwer the caſe; the debt was greater than to be paid at that rate; the redemption of ſouls could not be managed but by a perſon of infinite dignity: wherefore, having purpoſed that the darling attribute of mercy ſhould be illuſtrated in the caſe of loſt mankind, he willed the human nature to be united in time to the divine nature, in the perſon of the Son.

And hereunto the ſon, as the eternal Word, the ſecond Perſon of the glorious Trinity, having no nearer relation to man than as his Sovereign Lord Creator, readily agreed: Heb. x. 5. *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldſt not, but a body haſt thou prepared me.*——Ver. 7. *Then ſaid I, Lo, I come (in the volume of thy book it is written of me) to do thy will, O my God.* The eternal Word conſented to be made fleſh, that all fleſh might not periſh: he conſented to become man, to take into a perſonal union with himſelf a human nature, to wit, a true body and a reaſonable ſoul, according to the eternal deſtination of his Father. This was an inſtance of amazing condeſcenſion. The higheſt monarch's conſent to lay aſide his robes of majeſty, to clothe himſelf with rags, and become a beggar, is not to be compared with it. Nay the higheſt angel's conſent to become a worm, is not to be named in one day with the eternal Son of God, the Father's Equal, his conſenting to become man: for the diſtance between the divine nature and the human is infinite; whereas the diſtance between the angelic nature, and the nature of worms of the earth, is but finite.

Now the effect of this was, that hereby the Son of God was conſtituted ſubſtantial Mediator, or Mediator in reſpect of nature, between God and man. Being from eternity God equal with the Father, he ſo ſtood related to heaven, and having from eternity conſented to become man, he ſo ſtood related to earth: for though he did not actually take on him the nature of man untill the fulneſs of time appointed by the Father; yet foraſmuch as he had from eternity conſented to take it on, and it was impoſſible that his conſent ſhould miſs to take effect, he was reckoned in law, to all intents and purpoſes thereof, as if he had actually been incarnate. A type of this his ſubſtantial mediation was Jacob's ladder, which was ſet upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven, Gen. xxviii. 12. A clear emblem of the divine and human nature in Chriſt, through whom, as ſubſtantial Mediator, there was a way opened towards a communication for peace between heaven and earth. Accordingly our Lord Jeſus applies it to himſelf; John i. 51. *Hereafter you ſhall ſee heaven open, and the angels of God aſcending and deſcending upon the ſon of man;* to wit, as on Jacob's ladder, Gen. xxviii. 12.

2. The Father choſe him to be the head of the election; to be the laſt Adam, federal head and repreſentative of ſuch as ſovereign pleaſure ſhould pitch upon to be veſſels of mercy, and enrolled in the book of life; a head and repreſentative with whom he might make the new covenant for life and ſalvation to them.

And to this alſo he readily agreed, conſenting to be the laſt or ſecond Adam, head and repreſentative of the election; to ſuſtain their perſons, and tranſact in their name: Iſa. xlii. 1. *Behold---mine elect in, whom my ſoul delighteth.* Pſalm lxxxix. 19. *I have exalted one choſen out of the people,* 1 Cor. xv. 47. *The ſecond man is the Lord from heaven.* The breach between God and man was greater than to be done away by a mere intermeſſenger, who travelling between parties at variance, reconciles them with bare words. There could be no covenant of peace betwixt God and ſinners without reparation of damages done to the honour of God through ſin, and without honouring of the holy law by an exact obedience: but theſe things being quite beyond their reach, Chriſt the Son of God, ſaith "*Lo, I come;* I am content to take their place, and put myſelf in their room as a ſecond Adam."

Now, the effect of this was, that hereby he was conſtituted laſt Adam, or the ſecond Man, 1 Cor. xv. 47.; and official Mediator, or Mediator in reſpect of office, between God and man, 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. *There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Chriſt Jeſus: who gave himſelf a ranſom for all.* Being called of his Father unto that office, and having embraced the call thereto, he was inveſted with the office, and treated with as ſuch, before the world began, Tit. i. 2. And indeed he, and he only, was fit for it. The two families of heaven and earth being at war, there could be no peace between them but through a Mediator. But where could a mediator be found to interpoſe between ſuch parties, who could not either have been too high, or elſe too low, in reſpect of one of the parties at variance? Men or angels would have been too low, in reſpect of God; and an unvailed God would have been too high, in reſpect of ſinful men, unable to bear intercourſe with ſuch heavenly majeſty. Wherefore the Son of God, that he might be fit to mediate; as he being God equal with the Father, was high enough in reſpect of the party offended: ſo he conſented to become low enough, in reſpect of the party offending, by his becoming man.

Secondly, It is to be enquired, How the covenant was made with Chriſt as the ſecond Adam? And this alſo may be taken up in two things.

1. The Father deſigned a certain number of loſt mankind, as it were by name, to be conſtituent members of that body choſen to life, of which body Chriſt was the deſigned head; and he gave them to him for that end: Philip. iv. 3. *My fellow-labourers, whoſe names are in the book of life.* John xvii. 6. *Thine they were, and thou gaveſt them me.* Theſe were a choſen company, whom ſovereign free grace picked out from among the reſt of mankind, on a purpoſe of love, and gave to the ſecond Adam for a ſeed; on which account they are ſaid to have been choſen in him, Eph. i. 4.; being in the decree of election laid upon him as the foundation ſtone, to be built upon him, and obtain ſalvation by him, 1 Theſſ. v. 9.; which decree, as it relates to the members-elect, is therefore called the *book of life;* being as it were the roll which the Father gave to the ſecond Adam, the head-elect, containing the names of thoſe deſigned to be his ſeed, to receive life by him.

Now, our Lord Jeſus ſtanding as the ſecond Adam, head of the election, to wit, ſuch as ſovereign pleaſure ſhould pitch upon to be veſſels of mercy, did accept of the gift of the particular perſons elected or choſen by his Father: John xvii. 6. *Thine they were, and thou gaveſt them me.* Ver. 10. *And thine are mine.* Likeas the firſt Adam, in the making of the firſt covenant, ſtood alone without actual iſſue, yet had deſtinated for him a numerous iſſue, to be comprehended with him in that covenant, to wit, all mankind; the which Adam did at leaſt virtually accept: ſo a certain number of loſt mankind being elected to life, God, as their original proprietor, gave them to Chriſt the appointed head, to be his members, and comprehended with him in the ſecond covenant, though as yet none of them were in being; and he accepted of the gift of them, being well pleaſed to take them in particular for his body myſtical, for which he ſhould covenant with his Father. And, in token thereof, he, as it were, received and kept as his own the book of life, containing their names, which is therefore called, *the Lamb's book of life,* Rev. xxi. 27.

2. The Father propoſed to him as the ſecond Adam, the new covenant for life and ſalvation to them, in the full tenor, promiſes, and condition thereof; treating in him with all thoſe particular perſons of loſt mankind, elected unto life, and given to him, even as he treated with all mankind in Adam in the firſt covenant. The promiſes therein propoſed, were indeed great and glorious: but withal the condition, or terms on which they were propoſed, were exceeding high

Howbeit, as the firſt Adam, ſtanding as head and repreſentative of all his natural ſeed, entered into the firſt covenant with God, accepting the promiſe thereof, upon the terms and condition therein propoſed, which he engaged to fulfill; ſo our Lord Jeſus, ſtanding as the ſecond Adam, head and repreſentative of the particular perſons of loſt mankind, by name elected to life, and given to him as his ſpiritual ſeed, entered into the ſecond covenant with his Father; accepting the promiſes thereof, upon the terms and condition therein propoſed; conſenting and engaging to fulfill the ſame, for them. And thus the covenant of grace was made, and concluded, betwixt the Father and Chriſt the ſecond Adam, from all eternity; being the ſecond covenant, in reſpect of order and manifeſtation to the world, though it was firſt in being: 1 Cor. xv. 47. *The ſecond man is the Lord from heaven.* Iſa. liii. 10. *When thou ſhalt make his ſoul an offering for ſin, he ſhall ſee his ſeed.* Tit. ii. 2. *In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promiſed before the world began.* Pſalm xl. 6. *Sacrifice and offering thou didſt not deſire, mine ears haſt thou opened.*--7. *Then ſaid I, Lo, I come.*—8. *I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.*

Now, Chriſt the ſecond Adam, giving this conſent, took upon him a threefold character of unparallelled weight and importance; ſiſting himſelf, (1.) The kinſman-redeemer in the covenant, (2.) The ſurety of the covenant, and, (3.) The prieſt of the covenant. The mediation of Chriſt doth indeed run through the whole of the covenant. And there are ſeveral other parts of that mediation, which reſpecting the promiſes of the covenant, do belong to the adminiſtration thereof. But theſe I have now mentioned, do reſpect the condition of the covenant, and ſo belong to the making thereof; under which head we ſhall conſider them in order.

I. *Chriſt the Kinſman-redeemer in the covenant.*

OUR Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the ſecond Adam, giving his conſent to the covenant, as propoſed to him by the Father, ſiſted himſelf Kinſman-redeemer in the covenant: Job xix. 25. *I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon the earth.*

Under the law, when a man was not able to act for himſelf, to aſſert and uſe his own right, one that was akin to him, had a right to act for him, coming in his room, and ſtanding up in his right. And ſuch a one was called his Goel; which properly ſignifies a Kinſman-redeemer. Hence that word is ſometimes rendered a kinſman; as Numb. v. 8. *If the man have no* (Goel) *kinſman to recompenſe the treſpaſs unto.* Ruth iii. 12. *I am thy* (Goel) *near kinſman: howbeit there is a* (Goel) *kinſman nearer than I.* Sometimes it is rendered a Redeemer; as Prov. xxiii. 11. *Their* (Goel) *Redeemer is mighty.* Iſ. xlvii. 4. *As for our* (Goel) *Redeemer the Lord of hoſts is his name.* One's acting in that capacity, is called doing the kinſman's part, or redeeming, to wit, by right of kin, Ruth iii. 13. and iv. 6. Howbeit, ſuch a one might refuſe to do the kinſman's part; as Ruth's kinſman-redeemer did, who reſigned his right to Boaz, and in token thereof drew off his own ſhoe, and gave it him, Ruth iv. 6. 7. 8.

Now, Chriſt the ſecond Adam ſaw ſinners, his ruined kinſmen, quite unable to act for themſelves. Not one of them all was able to redeem himſelf, and far leſs his brother. Withal, the angels, near akin to them in the rational world, durſt not meddle with the redemption; being ſure they could not have miſſed to mar their own inheritance thereby, nor have delivered their poor kinſmen neither. If he ſhould have declined it, and drawn off his ſhoe to them, or to any other of the whole creation, there was none who durſt have ventured to receive it, or put his foot in it. *I looked,* ſaith he, *and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought ſalvation.* Iſ. lxiii. 5. He took on himſelf the character of their Kinſman-redeemer; and of him as ſuch Job ſpeaks in the forecited paſſage, which I conceive to be thus expreſſed in the original: *I know my Kinſman redeemer liveth; and the latter one he ſhall ſtand up upon the duſt.* In which words Job comforts himſelf with a view of Chriſt as his Kinſman-redeemer living, even in his day, in reſpect of his divine nature; and as the latter or ſecond one, (in oppoſition to the former or firſt, Exod. iv. 8. 9. Deut. xxiv. 3. 4.) namely, the latter or ſecond Adam Redeemer, in oppoſition to the former or firſt Adam Deſtroyer; firmly believing, that the one, uniting to himſelf a human nature, ſhould as ſurely ſtand up upon the duſt of the earth, and do the Kinſman's part for him; as the other, having the breath of life breathed into his noſtrils, ſtood up upon it and ruined all.

Now, there were four things the kinſman-redeemer was to do for his kinſmen, unable to act for himſelf; all which Chriſt the ſecond Adam undertook in the covenant.

1. He was to marry the widow of his deceaſed kinſman, to raiſe up ſeed to his brother. Hereof Boaz was put in mind by Ruth, chap. iii. 9. *I am Ruth thine handmaid; ſpread therefore thy ſkirt over thine handmaid, for thou art a near kinſman.* Compare verſ. 10.—13. chap. iv. 10. and Ezek. xvi. 8. *I ſpread my ſkirt over thee—and thou becameſt mine.* Our nature was in a comfortable and fruitful condition, while the image of God, impreſſed thereupon in Adam, remained with it; but that image being removed, in the ſpiritual death cauſed by his ſin, there enſued an abſolute barrenneſs, as to the fruits of holineſs, in our nature thus left. But our Kinſman-redeemer conſented to marry the widow. Being to take to himſelf a human nature, he undertook to take on our human nature in particular, taking his fleſh of Adam's family. Thus was it provided, that his body ſhould not be made of nothing, nor of any thing whatſoever that was not derived from Adam as its original. It was a low match indeed for him; and would have been ſo, even if the family of Adam had been in its primitive ſtate and ſplendor; but now it was conſidered as in the depth of poverty and diſgrace. Yet being neceſſary for our redemption, he conſented thereto, as our Kinſman-redeemer. Accordingly, in the fulneſs of time, he was made of a woman, a daughter of Adam's family, Gal. iv. 4. and ſo was a ſon of Adam, Luke iii. 23.——38. Thus was a foundation laid for the myſtical marriage of believers with him, which myſtical marriage doth not belong to the condition and making of the covenant properly ſo called, but to the promiſe and adminiſtration of it, being a ſinner's perſonal entrance thereinto. And the great end, in ſubordination to the glory of God, for which this more intimate union and match with our nature was gone into by our Kinſman-redeemer, was to render it yet again fruitful in the fruits of true holineſs; and without it our nature had for ever remained under abſolute barrenneſs in that point, even as the nature of fallen angels doth.

2. He was to redeem the mortgaged inheritance of his poor kinſman: Lev. xxv. 25. *If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath ſold away ſome of his poſſeſſion, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then ſhall he redeem that which his brother ſold:* or rather, *then ſhall come in his kinſman redeemer, that is near unto him; and he ſhall redeem that which his brother ſold.* Our father Adam waxing poor through the deceitful dealing of the tempter with him, quite ſold away the inheritance of eternal life for a morſel of forbidden fruit: and his children waxen poorer ſtill, thro' their own perſonal fault, had ſet themſelves farther and farther from it. They could not have raiſed, amongſt them all, what would have redeemed ſo much as one man's part of it. Howbeit, without it was redeemed, they could never have had acceſs to it. Wherefore the ſecond Adam, as Kinſman-redeemer, took the burden of the redemption on himſelf, and agreed to pay the price of that purchaſe; dying for us, that we might live together with him, 1 Theſſ. v. 10.

3. He was to ranſom his poor kinſman in bondage, pay the price of his redemption: Lev. xxv. 47. *If--thy brother---wax poor, and ſell himſelf,*---verſ. 48. *After that he is ſold, he may be redeemed again: one of his brethren may redeem him.* Verſ. 52.---- *according unto his*

years ſhall he give him again the price of his redemption. Being ſold in the loins of our firſt father, we were brought into bondage, under the curſe of the law; ſo we are by nature the law's bond men, and conſequently ſlaves to ſin and Satan, never to have been releaſed without a ranſom, the full worth of ſo many ſouls. This ranſom was ſtated in the covenant; to wit, That the Kinſman-redeemer ſhould give himſelf a ranſom for his poor kinſmen; and he agreed to it, for purchaſing their liberty, 1 Tim. ii. 5. 6. The ranſom was great, ſoul for ſoul, body for body; a perſon of infinite dignity, for his poor kinſmen in bondage. But he conſented to take on him the form of a ſervant, that they might be ſet free; to have his ear bored at the law's door-poſt, that they might be delivered out of their bondage.

4. Laſtly, He was to avenge the blood of his ſlain kinſman on the ſlayer: Deut. xix. 12. *The elders of his city ſhall ſend and fetch him thence, and deliver him into the hand of the* (Goel) *avenger of blood, that he may die.* Our Kinſman-redeemer ſaw all his poor kindred ſlain men. And the devil was the murderer, John viii. 44. He had miniſtered poiſon to them in the loins of our firſt parent; yea, he had ſmitten them to death, killed them with an arrow ſhot through the eye. But no avenger of their blood could be found, till the ſecond Adam, as their Kinſman-redeemer, did, in the ſecond covenant, undertake the avenging of it. Mean while, the murderer had the power of death, Heb. ii. 14. and *the ſting of death is ſin, and the ſtrength of ſin is the law*, 1 Cor. xv. 56. Wherefore there was no diſarming and deſtroying of the murderer, without taking the ſting out of death which he had the power of. And that was not to be done, but by removing the guilt of ſin, whereby ſinners were bound over to death: neither was this to be done, but by ſatiſfying the law, whoſe awful ſanction of death ſtrongly kept faſt the guilt of death on the ſinners. Theſe were the iron gates to be broke through, ere the Kinſman-redeemer, the avenger of blood, could get at the murderer. But the mighty redeemer undertook, by his own death and ſufferings, to ſatiſfy the law; and by that means to remove the ſtrength of ſin: and by this means again, to take away the ſting of death; and ſo by his own death to deſtroy the murderer that had the power of death; and thus to avenge the blood of his ſlain kinſmen upon him, Heb. ii. 14. So did Samſon, a type of our Kinſman-redeemer, avenge Iſrael of the Philiſtines their oppreſſors, pulling down the houſe on the Philiſtines, and dying himſelf to deſtroy them, Judg. xvi.

II. *Chriſt the Surety of the covenant.*

CHriſt the ſecond Adam conſenting to the covenant, ſiſted himſelf alſo Surety of it; Heb. vii. 22. *By ſo much was Jeſus made a ſurety for a better Teſtament*; or rather, as others read it, *of a better covenant.* A ſurety is one who undertakes for another, obliging himſelf whether for paying his debt, civil or criminal, or for his performing a deed. That we may then rightly underſtand Chriſt's ſuretiſhip, it is neceſſary we conſider, 1. For whom, 2. For what he became ſurety in the covenant.

Firſt, For whom Chriſt became ſurety in the covenant. I find two things advanced on this head, namely, (1.) That he became *ſurety for God to ſinners*; and 2. *Surety for ſinners to God.* To the firſt of theſe, the Socinians reſtrain Chriſt's ſuretiſhip, denying the ſecond; and ſo overthrow the foundation of our ſalvation. But all orthodox divines agree, in that the ſecond of theſe is the main thing in it. Some of them indeed make no difficulty of admitting, that Chriſt became ſurety for God to ſinners, as well as ſurety for ſinners to God, undertaking, on God's part, that all the promiſes ſhall be made good to the ſeed, even to all that believe.

There is no queſtion, but God's promiſes are in reſpect of his infallible truth and veracity, moſt firm and ſure in themſelves, and cannot miſs to be performed; but we, being guilty creatures, are ſlow of heart to believe; and therefore do need what may make them more ſure to us, or aſſure our hearts they ſhall be performed to us. And for this cauſe he hath given us his word of promiſe under his hand, in the holy ſcriptures, and an earneſt of the promiſed inheritance, Eph. i. 14. the ſeal of the Spirit, verſ. 13. 2 Cor. i. 22. the ſacramental ſeals, Rom. iv. 11. yea, and his ſolemn oath too, in the matter, to ſhew unto the heirs of promiſe the immutability of his counſel, Heb. vi. 17. And if Jeſus Chriſt is ſurety for God to us, it is no doubt for the ſame end.

But I doubt if the holy Scriptures calls Chriſt a ſurety in that ſenſe at all. In the forecited paſſage, Heb. vii. 22. the only text wherein Chriſt is expreſly called a Surety, it is evident, that his ſuretyſhip therein mentioned, reſpects his prieſtly office, wherein he deals with God for us: Ver. 20. *And in as much as not without an oath he was made prieſt.* Ver. 21. (*——by him that ſaid unto him, The Lord ſware, and will not repent, Thou art a prieſt for ever, after the order of Melchiſedeck*) Ver. 22. *By ſo much was Jeſus made a ſurety of a better teſtament.* But his ſuretyſhip for God to us, cannot relate to his prieſtly office, but to his kingly office, in reſpect of which all power is given to him in heaven and in earth; and conſequently a power to ſee that all the promiſes be performed to his people. And therefore his ſuretyſhip mentioned in that text, is for us to God, and not for God to us. It is but in other two texts only as far as I have obſerved, that we read of ſuretiſhip relative to the caſe between God and a ſinner: and in both of them, the ſuretyſhip is not to the ſinner, but for him. They are Pſalm cxix. 122. *Be ſurety for thy ſervant for good*; and Job xvii. 3. *Put me in a ſurety with thee.* The original phraſeology or expreſſion is the ſame in the latter text as in the former; and the ſame in them both, as in the caſe of Judah's ſuretyſhip, for Benjamin, to his father, Gen. xliii. 9. and xliv. 32. Now, unleſs the ſacred oracles go before us, in propoſing Chriſt as a ſurety for God to us, I ſee no reaſon, why the being of ſuch a thing at all ſhould be yielded to the adverſaries, who make ſuch a pernicious uſe of it. As for the comfort that might ariſe from it to us, the ſame is fully ſecured, in that the whole adminiſtration of the covenant is committed into the hand of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and he is the Truſtee and Teſtator of the covenant or covenant-benefits; as ſhall be ſhown in the due place.

But, without all peradventure, Chriſt the Mediator and ſecond Adam, became ſurety in the covenant, for ſinners to God; as the ſcriptures do abundantly declare. Pſal. lxxxix. 19. *I have laid help upon one that is mighty.* 1 Tim. ii. 5. *One Mediator between God and men, the man Chriſt Jeſus*; verſ. 6. *Who gave himſelf a ranſom for all.* 2 Cor. v. 21. *He hath made him to be ſin for us, who knew no ſin.* Iſ. liii. 6. *The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* Gal. iii. 13. *Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us.* Iſ. liii. 5. *He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities.* The covenant of grace was made with the ſpiritual ſeed in Chriſt the ſecond Adam, taking burden for them upon himſelf as their ſurety. And without a ſurety it could not have been made with them. For they were a company of broken men, owing a thouſand times more than they were all worth: and their word in a new bargain for life and ſalvation was worth nothing; there could be no regard had to it in heaven. There was neither truth nor ability left them after the firſt covenant was broken. Behold their character, in the point of truth or veracity, Rom. iii. 5. *Let God be true, but every man a liar*: and in point of ability, chap. v. 6. *When we were yet without ſtrength, in due time Chriſt died for the ungodly.* The demands in this covenant were high, and quite above their ability to anſwer: and, beſides, they themſelves were falſe and fickle. They brake their word in the firſt covenant when able to have kept it; how could they be truſted in this new bargain, when their ability was gone? So there was an abſolute neceſſity of a ſurety for them in it. And Jeſus Chriſt became ſurety for them: ſo the new covenant, on which depends all their ſalvation, was made and made ſure.

Solomon tells us, That he that is ſurety for a ſtranger, ſhall ſmart for it: and he that hateth ſuretiſhip, is ſure, Prov. xi. 15. Our Lord Jeſus knew very well, the burden he took on himſelf in his ſuretyſhip for ſinners; the character of thoſe whom he became ſurety for; and that he could have no relief from them; but his love to his Father's glory, and the ſalvation of ſinners, engaged him in it, being perfectly ſure to ſmart for it, as will appear from conſidering,

Secondly, For what he became ſurety in the covenant. Suretiſhip, in reſpect of the ſubject-matter of it, is of two ſorts. 1. There is a ſuretiſhip for paying one's debt: Prov. xxii. 26. *Be not thou one of them that ſtrike hands, or of them that are ſureties for debts.* 2. A ſuretiſhip for one's performing of a deed: chap. xx. 16. *Take his garment that is ſurety for a ſtranger: and take a pledge of him for a ſtrange woman*: that is, of him who is ſurety for her good behaviour; for ſhe will leave him in the lurch.

Now, our Lord's ſuretiſhip for ſinners was of the firſt ſort. Chriſt as the ſecond Adam, conſenting to the covenant, ſiſted himſelf ſurety for the debt of the ſeed repreſented by him. Their debt was, by God's eternal fore-knowledge, ſtated from the broken covenant of works, in the whole latitude of the demands it had on them: and he became ſurety for it, ſtriking hands with his Father to pay it completely, And,

1. He became ſurety for their debt of puniſhment, which they as ſinners were liable in payment of, as the original phraſeth it, 2 Theſſ. i. 9. That was the debt owing to the divine juſtice, for all and every one of their ſins, original or actual. The demerit of their ſins, as offences againſt an infinite God, was an infinite puniſhment. They were liable to bear the pains of death, in the full latitude thereof; to ſuffer the force of revenging wrath, to the complete ſatisfaction of infinite juſtice, and full reparation of God's injured honour. This was their debt of puniſhment: a debt which they themſelves could never have cleared, though paying to the utmoſt of their power, through the ages of eternity. But this their debt Chriſt became ſurety for, obliging himſelf to lay down his life for theirs which was loſt in law: Pſal. xl. 6. 7. Sacrifice and offering thou didſt not deſire, mine ears haſt thou opened——Then ſaid I, Lo, I come. John x. 15. I lay down my life for the ſheep. Verſ. 18. I lay it down of myſelf: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. Here is a ſuretiſhip that never had a match! David, in a tranſport of grief for the death of his ſon Abſalom, wiſhes he had died for him, 2 Sam. xviii. 33. Reuben will venture the life of his two ſons for Benjamin. Gen. xlii. 37. and Judah will venture his own for him, chap. xliii. 9. while yet there was hope that all would be ſafe: but our Lord Jeſus deliberately pledgeth his own life for ſinners, when it was beyond all peradventure, the precious pledge would be loſt in the cauſe, and that the death he would ſuffer, would be a thouſand deaths in one. Some have offered themſelves ſureties in capital caſes, and embraced death for their country or friends: and peradventure for a good man ſome would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet ſinners, (and enemies,) Chriſt died for us, Rom. v. 7. 8. 10.

Now, in the ſecond Adam's ſuretyſhip for the criminal debt of his ſpiritual ſeed, there was not an enſuring of the payment thereof one way or other, only; as in ſimple cautionry: but there was an exchange of perſons in law; Chriſt ſubſtituting himſelf in their room, and taking the whole obligation on himſelf. This the free grace of God the creditor did admit, when he might have inſiſted, that the ſoul that ſinned ſhould die: and, a delay being withal granted as to the time of the payment, God thus manifeſted his forbearance, celebrated by the apoſtle, Rom. iii. 25. And, in virtue of that ſubſtitution, Chriſt became debtor in law, bound to pay that debt which he contracted not; to reſtore that which he took not away, Pſalm lxix. 4. For, becoming ſurety for them, to the end there might be laid a foundation, in law and juſtice, for exacting their debt of puniſhment from him, their guilt was transferred on him, Iſa. liii. 6. The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. This was pointed at, in the laying of the hand on the head of the ſacrifices under the law, eſpecially on the head of the ſcape-goat, Lev. xvi. 21. *And Aaron ſhall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confeſs over him all the iniquities of the children of Iſrael, and all their tranſgreſſions in all their ſins, putting them upon the head of the goat.* All the ſins of all the elect were at once imputed to the ſurety, and ſo became his, as his righteouſneſs becomes ours, namely, in law-reckoning, 2 Cor. v. 21. For he hath made him to be ſin for us, who knew no ſin; that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him. And he himſelf ſpeaks ſo of them, Pſalm. xl. 12. Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me; as ſeveral interpreters do underſtand it, according as the apoſtle gives us direction, determining Chriſt himſelf to be the ſpeaker in this pſalm, Heb. x. 5, 6, 7. He was indeed without ſin inherent in him; but not without ſin imputed to him, till in his reſurrection he got up his diſcharge, having cleared the debt by his death and ſuffering. Then was he juſtified in the Spirit, 1 Tim. iii. 16. and ſo ſhall appear the ſecond time, without ſin, Heb. ix. 28.; the ſin which was upon him, by imputation, the firſt time he appeared, being done away at his reſurrection. This relation of our ſin to Chriſt, is neceſſary from the nature of ſuretyſhip for debts; in which caſe, nobody doubts but the debt becomes the ſurety's when once he hath ſtricken hands for it. And how elſe could the law have juſtly proceeded againſt Chriſt? How could our puniſhment have been, in juſtice, inflicted on him, if he had not had ſuch a relation to our ſin? If the law could not charge our ſin on him, in virtue of his own voluntary undertaking, it could have no ground in juſtice to inflict our puniſhment on him.

2. He became ſurety for their debt of duty or obedience; the which alſo is a debt, according to the ſtyle of the holy ſcripture, Gal. v. 3. A debtor to do the whole law. The law as a covenant of works, though it was broken by them, and they had incurred the penalty thereof, yet had neither loſt its right, nor ceaſed to exact of them the obedience which at firſt it required of man, as the condition of life. They were ſtill bound to perfect obedience, and on no lower terms could have eternal life, as our Lord taught the lawyer for his humiliation, Luke x. 28. Thou haſt anſwered right: this do, and thou ſhalt live. The paying of the debt of puniſhment might ſatiſfy as to the penalty of the bond; but there is yet more behind, for him who will *meddle* in the affairs of the broken company. How ſhall the principal ſum therein contained, be paid; namely the debt of obedience to the law, for life and ſalvation? The honour of God would not allow the quitting of it: and they were abſolutely unable to pay one mite of it, that would have been current in heaven; foraſmuch as they were without ſtrength, Rom. v. 6. and dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, Eph. ii. 1. quite as unfit for the doing part, as for the ſuffering part. But Chriſt became ſurety for this debt of theirs too, namely, the debt of obedience to the law as a covenant, which was, and is the only obedience to it for life; obliging himſelf to clear it by obeying in their room and ſtead, and fulfilling what the law could demand of them in this kind: Pſalm xl. 7, 8. Then ſaid I, Lo, I come——I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart. Matth. iii. 15. Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteouſneſs. Chap. v. 17. Think not that I am come to deſtroy the law.—I am not come to deſtroy, but to fulfil.

And here alſo there was an exchange of perſons in law, Chriſt ſubſtituting himſelf in their room, and taking their obligation on himſelf: in virtue of which he became the law's debtor, for that obedience owing by them: and this he himſelf ſolemnly owned, by his being circumciſed, Luke ii. 21. according to that of the apoſtle, Gal. v. 3. *I teſtify again to every man that is circumciſed, that he is a debtor to the whole law.* For becoming ſurety for them in this point alſo, he transferred on himſelf their ſtate of ſervitude, whereby the law had a right to exact that debt of him, which they, upon the breach of the covenant of works, were liable in payment of.

For clearing of this, it it to be conſidered, that all mankind was by the firſt covenant, the covenant of works conſtitute God's hired ſervants; and actually entered to that their ſervice, in their head the firſt Adam. And in token hereof, we are all naturally inclined in that character to deal with God; though by the fall we are rendered incapable to perform the duty of it, Luke xv. 19. *Make me as one of thy hired ſervants.* The work they were to work, was perfect obedience to the holy law; the hire they were to have for their work, was life, Rom. x. 5. *The man that doth thoſe things ſhall live by them.* The penalty of breaking away from their maſter, was bondage under the curſe, Gal. iii. 10. *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* But violating that covenant of hired ſervice, they brake away from their Lord and maſter: ſo they not only loſt all plea for the hire, but they became bond-men under the curſe; ſtill obliged to make out their ſervice, and that furthermore in the miſery of a ſtate of ſervitude or bondage, Gal iv. 24. *Theſe are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage.* Their falling under the curſe inferred the loſs of their liberty, and conſtituted them bond-men: as appears from the nature of the thing, and inſtances of the curſed in other caſes, as Gen. ix. 25. Curſed be Canaan; a ſervant of ſervants ſhall he be. Joſh. ix. 23. Now therefore ye (namely, the Gibeonites) are curſed, and there ſhall none of you be freed from being bond-men. The very ground being curſed, (Gen. iii. 17.) falls under bondage, according to the ſcripture, Rom. viii. 21.

Now, Chriſt ſaw all his ſpiritual ſeed in this ſtate of ſervitude: but unable to bear the miſery of it, or to fulfil the ſervice: and he put himſelf in their room, as they were bond men; transferring their ſtate of ſervitude on himſelf, and ſo ſiſting himſelf a bond-ſervant for them.

The holy ſcripture ſets this matter in a clear light. That is a plain teſtimony unto it, Phil. ii. 6. 7. 8. Who being in the form of God—took upon him the form of a ſervant—and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs. The form of a ſervant which he took upon him, was the form of a bond-ſervant. For ſo the word in the original properly ſignifies; being the ſame word that is conſtantly uſed in that New Teſtament phraſe, which we read bond or free, or bond and free, 1 Cor. xii. 13. Gal. iii. 28. Eph. vi. 8. Col. iii. 11. Rev. xiii. 16. and xix. 18. And the apoſtle leads us to underſtand it ſo here, telling us, that this great ſurety-ſervant became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs. The which kind of death was a Roman puniſhment, called by them, the ſervile puniſhment, or puniſhment of bond-ſervants: becauſe it was the death that bond-men malefactors were ordinarily doomed unto; freemen ſeldom, if ever, according to law. And foraſmuch as his being in the form of God, denotes his being very God, having the very nature and eſſence of God; for the form is that which eſſentially diſtinguiſheth things, and makes a thing to be preciſely what it is: and this form is, according to the apoſtle, the foundation of his equality with God his Father, which nothing really different from the divine eſſence, can be: therefore his taking upon him the form of a bond-ſervant, muſt neceſſarily denote his becoming really a bond-ſervant as really as ever man did, who was brought into bondage, or a ſtate of ſervitude.

The Father ſolemnly declares the transferring of our ſtate of ſervitude on Chriſt, ſpeaking to him under the name of Iſrael, as was cleared before, Iſa. xlix. 3. *Thou art my ſervant, O Iſrael, in whom I will be glorified.* As if the Father had ſaid to him, 'Son, be it known, it is 'agreed, that I take thee in the room and place of Iſrael, 'the ſpiritual ſeed, to perform the ſervice due in virtue 'of the broken original contract: Thou in their ſtead 'art my ſervant; my bond-ſervant (as the word is rendered, Lev. xxv. 32. and elſewhere): it is from thy 'hand I will look for that ſervice.' Agreeable hereunto is the account we have of our redemption from the curſe, Gal. iii. 13. namely, that it was by Jeſus Chriſt being made a curſe for us; for it is written, Curſed is every one that hangeth on a tree; the which Chriſt did, dying on a croſs, the capital puniſhment of bond-men.

Behold the ſolemnity of the tranſlation, Pſalm xl. 6. *Sacrifice and offering thou didſt not deſire, mine ears haſt thou opened.* The word here rendered *opened*, properly ſignifies *digged*, as may be ſeen in the margin of our Bibles; and ſo the words are, Mine ears thou diggeſt through; that is boredſt, as it is expreſſed in our paraphraſe of the Pſalms in metre, *Mine ears thou bor'd.* This has a manifeſt view to that law concerning the bond-ſervant, Exod. xxi. 6. *Then his maſter ſhall bring him unto the judges: he ſhall alſo bring him to the door, or unto the door poſt: and his maſter ſhall bore his ear through with an aul; and he ſhall ſerve him for ever;* that is, in the language of the law, till death. This is confirmed from Hoſea iii. 2. So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of ſilver; which was the half of the ſtated price of a bond woman, Exod. xxi. 32. In the original it is, So I digged her through to me; the ſame word being here uſed by the Holy Ghoſt, as Pſalm xl. 6. It is a pregnant word, which is virtually two in ſignification: and the ſenſe is, I bought her, and bored her ear to my door-poſt, to be my bond woman; according to the law, Deut. xv. 17. *Thou ſhalt take an aul; and thruſt it through his ear unto the door, and he ſhall be thy ſervant for ever: and alſo unto thy maid-ſervant thou ſhalt do likewiſe.* That the boring of her ear as a bond-woman, was no wiſe inconſiſtent with the prophet's betrothing of her to himſelf, Hoſea iii. 3. appears from Exod. xxi. 8.

Joſeph was an eminent type of Chriſt as the Father's ſervant. And it is obſervable, that he was firſt a bond ſervant, and then an honorary ſervant. In the former ſtate, being ſold for a ſervant, Pſalm cv. 17. he was a type of Chriſt, a bond-ſervant in his ſtate of humiliation; whoſe moſt precious life was accordingly ſold by Judas for thirty pieces of ſilver, the ſtated price of the life of a bond-ſervant: Exod. xxi. 32. *If the ox ſhall puſh a man-ſervant, or maid-ſervant: he ſhall give unto their maſter thirty ſhekels of ſilver, and the ox ſhall be ſtoned.* In the latter ſtate, being made ruler over all the land of Egypt, Pſalm cv. 21, 22. Gen. xli. 40. he was a type of Chriſt, in that moſt honourable and glorious ſervice or miniſtry, which was conferred on him in his ſtate of exaltation, wherein he was conſtituted a ſervant, for whoſe law the iſles ſhall wait, Iſa. xlii. 1, 4.; God having given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, Philip. ii. 9, 10. This latter ſervice of Chriſt belongs to the promiſe of the covenant; but the former, to wit, the bond ſervice, being his ſurety ſervice, belongs to the condition of the covenant. Wherefore, riſing from the dead, having fulfilled the condition of the covenant, paid the debt for which he became ſurety, and got up the diſcharge, he put off for ever the form and character of a bond-ſervant, and roſe and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living, Rom. xiv. 9.

And hence it clearly appears, how the obedience of the man Chriſt comes, in virtue of the covenant, to be imputed to believers for righteouſneſs, as well as his ſatisfaction by ſuffering: for that kind of obedience which he performed as our ſurety, was no more due by him, antecedently to his contract of ſuretiſhip, than his ſatisfaction by ſuffering. It is true, the human nature of Chriſt, being a creature, owed obedience to God in virtue of its creation; and muſt owe it for ever, forasmuch as the creature, as a creature, is ſubject to the natural law, the eternal rule of righteouſneſs: but Chriſt's putting himſelf in a ſtate of ſervitude, taking on him the form of a bond-ſervant, and in the capacity of a bond ſervant performing obedience to the law, as it was ſtated in the covenant, for life and ſalvation, was entirely voluntary. Obedience to the natural law was due by the man Chriſt, by a natural tie; but obedience to the poſitive law, binding to be circumciſed, baptized, and the like, which ſuppoſed guilt on the party ſubjected thereto, was not due but by his own voluntary engagement. And the obedience of a ſon to the natural law, he owed naturally: but obedience to that or any other law, in the character of a bond ſervant, and thereby to gain eternal life and ſalvation, he owed not but by compact. The human nature of Chriſt had a complete right to eternal life, and was actually poſſeſſed thereof, in virtue of its union with the divine nature; ſo that there was no occaſion for him to gain life to himſelf by his obedience. Wherefore Chriſt's taking on him the form of a bond-ſervant, and in that character obeying the law for life and ſalvation, were a mere voluntary work of his, as ſurety for ſinners; wherein he did that which he was no otherwiſe bound to, than by his own voluntary undertaking. Now, forasmuch as the obedience of Chriſt imputed to believers for righteouſneſs, is his obedience of this kind only; there is a clear ground for its imputation to them, according to the covenant.

And thus have we ſeen Chriſt's ſuretiſhip in the covenant to be of the nature of a ſuretiſhip for paying one's debt; and what the debt was which he became ſurety for.

If it be enquired, Whether or not Chriſt's ſuretiſhip is alſo of the nature of ſuretiſhip for one's performing of a deed? or, Whether Chriſt became ſurety in the way of caution to his Father, that the elect ſhould believe, repent, and perform ſincere obedience? I anſwer, Tho' the elect's believing, repenting, and ſincere obedience, are infallibly ſecured in the covenant; ſo that whoſoever, being ſubjects capable of theſe things, do live and die without them, ſhall undoubtedly periſh, and are none of God's elect: yet I judge, that Chriſt did not become Surety in the covenant, in way of caution to his Father, that the elect ſhould perform theſe deeds, or any other; and that that way of ſpeaking doth not ſo well agree with the ſcripture-account of the covenant. Becauſe,

1. It doth ſomewhat obſcure the grace, the free grace of the covenant; whereas the covenant is purpoſedly ſo ordered, as to manifeſt it moſt illuſtriouſly, being of faith, that it might be by grace, Rom. iv. 16. For ſuch a ſuretiſhip, or cautionary for the elects performing of theſe things, muſt needs belong to the condition of the covenant, properly ſo called; as being a deed of the Mediator, whereby he promiſeth ſomething to God, and engageth that it ſhall be performed by them; and ſo theſe things performed by them accordingly, muſt be a part of the condition of the covenant. But that ſinners themſelves perform any part of the condition of the covenant, properly ſo called, cannot be admitted, without prejudice to the grace of the covenant; for ſo far as we perform, in our own perſons, any part of the condition, the reward is not of grace, but of debt; for *to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt*, Rom. iv. 4. But the reward is wholly of grace to us, tho' it is of debt unto Chriſt: for *to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that juſtifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteouſneſs*, verſ. 5. Chap. xi. 6. *And if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwiſe grace is no more grace.* Suppoſe a man is ſurety for a thouſand pounds for his neighbour, who is thereupon to have a right to a certain valuable benefit; and that this man abſolutely becomes ſurety for the whole ſum, excepting only an hundred pence; for which hundred pence alſo he is cautioner, that it ſhall be paid by the principal: it is evident, that the condition of this bargain is divided between the ſurety and the principal, though indeed their ſhares are very unequal: but however unequal they are, as far as the hundred pence which the principal pays in his own perſon, do reach, ſo far the benefit is of debt to him. Or put the caſe, A ſurety engageth for the whole of the ſum payable; and, beſides, is ſurety for the principal's good behaviour; it is evident, that in this caſe, the good behaviour of the principal is a part of the condition of the bargain, as well as the payment of the money; ſince caution for it is required by him who is to communicate the benefit. At this rate, the condition is ſtill divided between the ſurety and principal; and the latter performs a part of it as well as the former: and ſo the reward is, in part, of debt unto him, as well as to the ſurety. The application hereof to the caſe in hand is obvious. The ſum of the matter lies here: If Chriſt did in the covenant become Surety in way of caution for his people's performing ſome deed; the performing of the condition of the covenant, properly ſo called, is divided betwixt CHRIST and them, however unequal their ſhares are: and if the performing of the condition is divided betwixt Chriſt and them, ſo far as their part of the performance goes, the reward is of debt to them, which obſcures the grace of the covenant.

2. According to the ſcripture, the elect's believing, repenting, and ſincere obedience, do belong to the promiſſory part of the covenant. If we conſider them in their original ſituation, they are benefits promiſed in the covenant by God unto Chriſt the Surety, as a reward of his fulfilling the condition of the covenant. And ſo they are, by the unchangeable truth of God, and his exact juſtice, inſured beyond all poſſibility of failure: Pſal. xxii. 27. *All the ends of the world ſhall remember and turn unto the Lord.* Verſ. 30. *A ſeed ſhall ſerve him.* Verſe 31. *They ſhall come, and ſhall declare his righteouſneſs unto a people that ſhall be born.* Pſal. cx. 3. Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power. See Iſ. liii. 10. with verſ. 1. Ezek. xxxiv. 26, 27. 31. Heb. viii. 10, 11. If it be aſked, To whom are theſe promiſes made, and the promiſes of the like nature through the Bible? It is evident, that ſeveral of them are made to Chriſt expreſsly; and the apoſtle anſwers as to them all, Gal. iii. 16. *To Abraham and his ſeed were the promiſes made.--To thy ſeed, which is Chriſt.* And whereas there are found promiſes wherein Chriſt himſelf is the undertaker, as John vi. 37. All that the Father giveth me, ſhall come to me; they are not to be taken for Chriſt's engaging to his Father, as cautioner for a deed to be done by the ſeed: but therein he ſpeaks to men, as adminiſtrator of the covenant, intruſted with the conferring on ſinners the benefits purchaſed by his obedience and death, and made over to him by the promiſe of the Father, Matth. xi. 27. All things are delivered unto me of my Father. Verſ. 28. Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt. Luke xxii. 29. And I appoint (or diſpone) unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed (or diſponed) unto me.

Thus far of Chriſt's ſuretiſhip in the covenant.

III. *Chriſt the Prieſt of the Covenant.*

AS it was neceſſary for Chriſt the ſecond Adam his doing the part of a Kinſman redeemer, that he ſhould become *Surety* in the covenant; ſo it was neceſſary to his performing of what he became ſurety for, that he ſhould be a *Prieſt*. And accordingly, conſenting to the covenant, he became the prieſt of the covenant, Heb. ix. 11. *Chriſt being come, an high prieſt of good things to come.* A prieſt is a public perſon, who deals with an offended God in the name of the guilty, for reconciliation, by ſacrifice, which he offereth to God upon the altar, being thereto called of God, that he may be accepted. So a prieſt ſpeaks a relation to an altar, an altar to a ſacrifice, and a ſacrifice to ſin.

Thoſe whom Chriſt repreſented in the covenant, being ſinners, he became their prieſt, their high-prieſt, appearing before God in their name, to make atonement and reconciliation for them: and this was the great thing that the whole prieſthood under the law, and eſpecially the high prieſthood, did typify and point at. Their nature was the prieſt's garment he put on, to exerciſe his prieſtly office in; the ſame being pure and undefiled in him; and in their nature he ſuſtained their perſons, repreſenting them before God, as their great high-prieſt. A lively type hereof was Aaron's bearing before the Lord, the names of the children of Iſrael, the twelve tribes, upon his two ſhoulders, in the ſhoulder-pieces of the ephod; theſe names being engraven on two onyx-ſtones ſet therein by divine appointment, Exod. xxviii. 9, 10, 12.: as alſo his bearing them in the breaſt-plate, being engraven on twelve ſtones ſet therein, ver. 15,——29. Thus Aaron the high-prieſt was all Iſrael repreſentatively; an illuſtrious type of Chriſt the Prieſt of the covenant, the ſpiritual Iſrael repreſentative, Iſa. xlix. 3.

The neceſſity of Chriſt the ſecond Adam his becoming a prieſt, appears in theſe following things jointly conſidered.

1. Thoſe whom he repreſented, were ſinners: and there could not be a new covenant without proviſion made for removing of their ſin; and that required a prieſt. The firſt covenant was made without a prieſt, becauſe then there was no ſin to take away; the parties therein repreſented, as well as the repreſentative, were conſidered as innocent perſons. But the ſecond covenant was a covenant of peace and reconciliation between an offended God and ſinners, not to be made but by the mediation of a prieſt; who ſhould be able to remove ſin, and repair the injured honour of God: Zech. vi. 13. *He ſhall be a prieſt upon his throne, and the counſel of peace ſhall be between them both.* And there was none fit to bear that character but Chriſt himſelf. No man was fit to bear it; becauſe all men were ſinners themſelves, and ſuch an high-prieſt became us, as was undefiled, ſeparated from ſinners, Heb. vii. 26. It is true, the elect angels were indeed undefiled; but yet none of them could be a prieſt of the covenant; becauſe,

2. Sin could not be removed without a ſacrifice of ſufficient value, which they were not able to afford. The new covenant behoved to be a covenant by ſacrifice, a covenant written in blood, and without ſhedding of blood there was no remiſſion, Heb. ix. 22. Therefore the typical covenant with Abraham was not made without the ſolemnity of ſacrifice, Gen. xv. 9.: that he might know the covenant to be a covenant of reconciliation, in which a juſt God did not ſhew his mercy, but in a way conſiſtent with the honour of his juſtice. Now, the ſacrifices of beaſts, yea, and whatſoever the creatures could afford for ſacrifice in this caſe, were infinitely below the value. But Jeſus Chriſt becoming a prieſt, gave himſelf a ſacrifice to God, for eſtabliſhing the covenant; and that ſacrifice was for a ſweet ſmelling ſavour, Eph. v. 2. or, as the Old Teſtament phraſe is, a ſavour of reſt, Gen. viii. 21. marg. The repreſented being ſinners, were corrupt and abominable before God; and he as it were ſmelled a ſavour of diſquiet from them, they being a ſmoke in his noſe, Iſa. lxv. 5. their ſin ſet his revenging juſtice and wrath aſtir. But the ſacrifice of Chriſt himſelf, was fit to ſend forth ſuch a ſweet ſmelling ſavour unto God, as ſhould quite overcome the abominable ſavour ariſing from them, and lay his revenging juſtice and wrath to the moſt calm and profoundeſt reſt.

The neceſſity of a ſacrifice in the ſecond covenant, aroſe from the juſtice of God requiring the execution of the curſe of the broken firſt covenant; whereby the ſinner ſhould fall a ſacrifice for his ſin, according to that, Pſal. xciv. 23. *He ſhall bring upon them their own iniquity, and ſhall cut them off in their own wickedneſs.* It was an ancient cuſtom in making of covenants, to cut a beaſt in twain, and to paſs between the parts of it: and that paſſing between the parts, reſpected the falling of the curſe of the covenant upon the breaker; Jer. xxxiv. 18. *And I will give the men that have tranſgreſſed the covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and paſſed between the parts thereof*: or rather, more agreeable to the original, *I will make the men that have tranſgreſſed my covenant—the calf which they cut in twain, and paſſed between the parts thereof*: that is, I will make them as that calf which they cut in twain; I will execute the curſes on them, cutting them aſunder as covenant-breakers, Matth. xxiv. 51. Now the covenant of works being broken, juſtice required this execution of the curſe of it, in order to the eſtabliſhing of a new covenant, the covenant of grace and peace. But had it been execute on the ſinners themſelves, the fire of wrath would have burnt continually on them; but never would ſuch a ſacrifice have ſent forth a ſavour ſmelling ſo ſweet, as to be a ſavour of reſt to revenging juſtice; foraſmuch as they were not only mere creatures, whoſe moſt exquiſite ſufferings could not be a ſufficient compenſation for the injured honour of an infinite God; but they were ſinful creatures too, who ſhould ſtill have remained ſinful under their ſufferings. Wherefore Jeſus Chriſt, being both ſeparate from ſinners, and equal with God, conſented in the covenant to be the ſacrifice, on which the curſe of the firſt covenant might be execute, in their room and ſtead.

This is lively repreſented in the covenant made with Abraham, in which he was a type of Chriſt, Gen. xv. In that covenant, God promiſed the deliverance of Abraham's ſeed out of the Egyptian bondage, and to give them the land of Canaan; a type of the deliverance of Chriſt's ſpiritual ſeed from the bondage of ſin and Satan, and of putting them in poſſeſſion of heaven, ver. 13, 14. 16. 18. Awful was the ſolemnity uſed at the making of this covenant. There were taken a heifer, a ſhe-goat, and a ram, each of them of three years old; typifying Chriſt, who was about three years in his public miniſtry, ver. 9. Theſe were, each of them, divided in the midſt, hacked aſunder by the middle; which typified the execution of the curſe of the broken firſt covenant on Chriſt our ſurety, and ſacrifice for us, ver. 10. Abraham's driving away the fowls that came down upon the carcaſes, typified Chriſt's victory over the devils all along during the ſtate of his humiliation, and eſpecially his triumphing over them on the croſs, ver. 11. And finally, there was, *a ſmoking furnace, and a burning lamp that paſſed between the pieces*; which ſignified the revenging wrath of God ſeizing on Chriſt the ſacrifice, and juſtice therewith ſatisfied, ver. 17.

3. No ſacrifice could be accepted, but on ſuch an altar as ſhould ſanctify the gift to its neceſſary value and deſigned effect, Matth. xxiii. 19. And who could furniſh that but Chriſt himſelf, whoſe divine nature was the altar, from whence the ſacrifice of his human nature derived its value and efficacy as infinite? Heb. ix. 14. *How much more ſhall the blood of Chriſt, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered up himſelf without ſpot to God, purge your conſcience from dead works?* His bleſſed body ſuffering and bleeding to death on the croſs, and his holy ſoul ſcorched and melted within him with the fire of divine wrath, both in the mean time united to his divine nature, were the ſacrifice burning on the altar, from the which God ſmelled a ſweet ſavour, to the appeaſing of his wrath, and the ſatisfying of his juſtice fully. Not that Chriſt was a ſacrifice only while on the croſs; but that his offering of himſelf a ſacrifice, which was begun from his incarnation in the womb, the ſacrifice being laid on the altar in the firſt moment thereof; and was continued through his whole life; was completed on the croſs, and in the grave: Heb. x. 5. 'Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he ſaith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldeſt not, but a body haſt thou prepared me:' ver. 7. 'Then ſaid I, Lo, I come.' Iſ. liii. 2. 'When we ſhall ſee him, there is no beauty that we ſhould deſire him.' ver. 3. 'He is a man of ſorrows, and acquaint-

ed with grief,' 2 Cor. v. 21. 'He hath made him to be ſin for us.'

4. Laſtly, There behoved to be a prieſt to offer this ſacrifice, this valuable ſacrifice, unto God upon that altar; elſe there could have been no ſacrifice to be accepted, and ſo no removal of ſin, and conſequently no new covenant. And ſince Chriſt himſelf was the ſacrifice, and the altar too, he himſelf alone could be the Prieſt. And foraſmuch as the weight of the ſalvation of ſinners lay upon his call to that office, he was made Prieſt of the covenant by the oath of God, Heb. vii. 20. 21. As he had full power over his own life, to make himſelf a ſacrifice for others; ſo his Father's ſolemn inveſting of him with this office by an oath, gave him acceſs to offer himſelf effectually; even in ſuch ſort as thereby to fulfil the condition of the covenant, and to purchaſe eternal life for them.

INFERENCES *from the ſecond head.*

I ſhall ſhut up this head, of the making of the covenant of grace, with two inferences from the whole.

Inf. 1. What remains for ſinners, that they may be perſonally and ſavingly in covenant with God, is not, as parties contractors and undertakers, to make a covenant with him, for life and ſalvation; but only, to take hold of God's covenant already made from eternity, between the Father and Chriſt the ſecond Adam, and revealed and offered to us in the goſpel, Iſ. lvi. 4. 6. I have no deſign hereby to diſparage our covenants made for national reformation by our godly progenitors, and commonly called the national covenant, and ſolemn league and covenant, on which God ſet the ſeal of his good will in the experience of many. Theſe and the like are covenants of duties, conſequential enough to the taking hold of God's covenant of grace. Neither would I diſcourage any ſerious ſouls, from taking hold of God's covenant of grace, for eternal life and ſalvation to themſelves, with all the awful ſolemnity of the moſt expreſs words, yea, and of writing and ſubſcribing it with their hands; which is commonly called perſonal covenanting. But I would have all to beware of a practical corrupting of the covenant of grace, by making covenants of their own, upon ſuch and ſuch terms, which they will fulfil for life and ſalvation. The carnal Jews miſtaking the deſign of the giving of the law, did ſo corrupt the covenant of grace; looking for life and ſalvation, not for the ſake of the promiſed ſeed alone, but for their obedience, ſuch as it was, to the moral and ceremonial laws. And thus many, thinking that eternal ſalvation is propoſed to them in the word, upon the condition of faith, repentance, and ſincere obedience to God's law, do conſent to theſe terms, and ſolemnly undertake to perform them: juſt binding themſelves to ſuch and ſuch duties, that God may ſave their ſouls: and ſo they make their covenant. And while they can perſuade themſelves, that they perform their part of the covenant, they look for life and ſalvation thereupon. This doth quite overturn the nature of the covenant of grace: for *to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned of grace, but of debt*, Rom. iv. 4. and *if it be of works, then it is no more grace*, chap. xi. 6. The ſinfulneſs of this practice is great, as overlooking Chriſt, the great undertaker and party-contractor by the appointment of the Father; and putting themſelves in his room, to do and work for themſelves for life. And the danger of it muſt needs be great, as laying a foundation to bear the weight of their ſalvation, which divine wiſdom ſaw to be quite unable to bear it. The iſſue whereof muſt be, that ſuch covenanters ſhall ly down in ſorrow. So the apoſtle determines, Gal. v. 4. *Chriſt is become of no effect unto you, whoſoever of you are juſtified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.*

Our part then, in this caſe, is only to take hold of God's covenant made already, and offered and exhibited to us in the goſpel. This hold is taken by faith; which is, in ſcripture-account, the hand of the ſoul, John i. 12. So the original expreſſion plainly carries it, Iſ. lvi. 46. *That faſten in my covenant.* In which phraſeology, the correlate word *hand* (expreſſed Gen. xxi. 18.) is underſtood; *q. d. That faſten* [their hand] *in my covenant*; that is to ſay, 'Who by the hand of faith take faſt hold of my covenant;' as Adonijah did of the horns of the altar, 1 Kings i. 50. wherein the ſame manner of expreſſion is uſed. And this you do, by taking hold of Chriſt in the free promiſe of the goſpel; believing that he is held forth to you in particular, confiding and truſting in him as your Saviour, for your ſalvation from ſin and wrath, upon the ground of God's faithfulneſs in the promiſe, that *whoſoever believeth in him, ſhall not periſh, but have everlaſting life*, for he is given for a covenant to you, Iſ. xlix. 8. and to receive him, is to believe on his name, John i. 12.

This is our *making a covenant* with God *by ſacrifice*, which is mentioned, Pſal. l. 5. The original expreſſion is, *That cut my covenant upon a ſacrifice*; namely, by laying their hands in faith on the head of the ſacrifice, thereupon cut down in their ſtead: and ſo ceremonially transferring their guilt on the ſacrifice; but really and ſpiritually, approving of the device of ſalvation by a crucified Saviour, and falling in with it as the method of ſalvation for them. In this way of covenanting, the free grace of the covenant is preſerved pure and entire: for *to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that juſtifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteouſneſs*, Rom. iv. 5. Here the honour of ſole undertaker and party-contractor in the covenant, is, according to the Father's appointment, left to Chriſt, the one that is mighty, Pſal. lxxxix. 19. Here the ſecond Adam builds the temple, without our laying one ſtone therein in our own perſons; even as the firſt Adam laid it in ruins, without our pulling down one ſtone of it in our own perſons: and Chriſt bears the perſonal glory of the reparation, even as Adam the perſonal blame of the ruin, Zech. vi. 13. And at this rate the ſoul doth in time, for her own part, give her ſolemn approbation of the covenant made from eternity, and a perſonal conſent to what Chriſt from everlaſting conſented to in her name: even as the princeſs married by proxy in her childhood, ratifies all when ſhe is come to age, by receiving her huſband. Likeas all Adam's children, as ſuch, taking ſalvation to heart, and therefore covenanting with God, do in effect repeat the covenant of works made with Adam their repreſentative; ſo all the ſecond Adam's ſeed, as ſuch, taking ſalvation to heart, and therefore covenanting with God, do in effect repeat the covenant of grace made with Chriſt their repreſentative. In the making of the covenant before the world began, the Father propoſed to Chriſt as ſecond Adam, their head and repreſentative, that he ſhould take burden upon him for them, and be their Kinſman-redeemer, their ſurety for their debt of puniſhment and duty, and their Prieſt; and Chriſt conſented thereto from eternity. Amen, for my part, ſays the elect ſoul in time, in the covenanting day: it is infinitely well ordered; I am a loſt ſinner, a debtor to divine juſtice, a guilty creature; he is, with my whole heart and ſoul, MY Kinſman-redeemer, MY Surety, MY Prieſt: my part of the puniſhment incurred, and of the duty owing, is a vaſt and exceeding great part of that debt, but my ſoul is well content of, and reſts in that method of paying it: 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. *He hath made with me an everlaſting covenant*, (Heb. *he hath put to me an everlaſting covenant*) ——*This is all my ſalvation, and all my deſire.* The father ſaid to Chriſt as their repreſentative, For thy ſo doing and ſuffering, *I will be their God, and they ſhall be* MY *people.* Amen, ſaid Chriſt from eternity; All mine are thine, John xvii. 10. Amen, for my part, ſays the elect ſoul in the time of perſonal covenanting. This heart of mine muſt have ſome God, I muſt belong to one or other; and too long have I been for another: but now, the timber of the houſe, and ſtones of the wall bear witneſs, my ſoul is content with, conſents to, and reſts in this method of diſpoſing of me; namely that the God and father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be my God in Chriſt, and I one of his people from henceforth and for ever.

This manner of covenanting is inconſiſtent with a purpoſe or deſire of continuing in ſin; even as one's committing himſelf into the hands of a Phyſician who cures infallibly, is inconſiſtent with a deſire to keep his diſeaſe hanging about him. Chriſt being *made of God unto us wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption*, 1 Cor. i. 33. it neceſſarily carries along with it, a taking of Chriſt for a Prophet, and a King, and Lord unto us; as ſuch a one doth neceſſarily yield himſelf to the Phyſician's management. In it one joins himſelf to Chriſt as his covenant head, who alſo was the Adminiſtrator of the covenant; and ſo ſubjects himſelf to his teaching and government. And it is ſuch a way of covenanting as no profane perſon, nor hypocrite, continuing ſo, ever did or can fall in with. For, (1.) It ſpeaks a heart content to part with all ſin, well pleaſed with Chriſt's whole ſalvation, whereof the principal part is to ſave his people from their ſins, Matth. i. 21. whereas unſound covenanters are always offended with ſome one thing or other in Chriſt, chap. xi. 6. (2.) It ſpeaks a ſoul carried out of all confidence in itſelf, its own working and doing for life and ſalvation, and bottomed only upon Chriſt's doing and ſuffering for that end. And thus, ſuch a covenanter, being poor in ſpirit, Matth. v. 3. and *rejoicing in Chriſt Jeſus, and having no confidence in the fleſh*, Phil. iii. 3. is diſtinguiſhed from the preſumptuous hypocrite, whoſe confidence for life and ſalvation is ever upon his own doing and working, either in whole or in part; as alſo from the deſpairing unbeliever, who hath no confidence, neither in Chriſt, nor in himſelf, that he ſhall have life and ſalvation, however he may believe firmly that others ſhall. So this faith, this covenanting, is quite another thing, than either the falſe faith of the preſumptuous profane, and preſumptuous hypocrite, or the no-faith of the deſperate, or the wavering doubter, who can never fix in greater or leſſer meaſure of confidence in Chriſt, for ſalvation to himſelf: Jam. i. 6. *But let him aſk in faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavereth, is like a wave of the ſea, driven with the wind, and toſſed.* Verſ. 7. *For let not that man think that he ſhall receive any thing of the Lord.*

If any think this to be an eaſy way of believing or covenanting, either they miſtake it, or they try it not. To believe upon ſome ground we ſee in ourſelves, is very natural; but to believe merely upon a ground in another, namely righteouſneſs in Chriſt, and faithfulneſs in God, while all in ourſelves tends to make us deſpair, is above the reach of nature. A conſcience thoroughly awakened will convince a ſinner, that it is a matter of greateſt difficulty.

Inf. 2. Juſtifying faith, though it receives Chriſt in all his offices, as Prophet, Prieſt, and King; yet as it enters us perſonally into the covenant, and juſtifies, it eyes him in his prieſtly office particularly; namely, as the great High Prieſt, who hath made atonement for ſin, by the ſacrifice of himſelf; as the Surety, who undertook and completed the payment of the debt of puniſhment and duty; and as the Kinſman-redeemer, who having married our nature to the divine nature in himſelf, redeemed the mortgaged inheritance with his own blood, gave himſelf a ranſom for us, to deliver us from our ſpiritual bondage, and by his death, deſtroyed him that had the power of death; Rom. iii. 25. *Whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood.* Chap. v. 11. *Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom we have now received the atonement.* The comfort for a wounded conſcience, ſick with the guilt of ſin, lies here. This is that office of Chriſt to which the convinced ſinner, ſtanding trembling before the juſt Judge of the world, lifts his eyes, and make his recourſe for ſafety: for there, and only there, can one ſee a ranſom, a righteouſneſs, an atonement. In his prophetical and kingly office, he adminiſtrates the covenant; but in his prieſtly office, he performed the condition of it. So it is the foundation of the other two. It was by the ſacrifice of himſelf, that the word and ſpirit of the covenant, whereby he teacheth ſinners, were purchaſed: and thereby alſo he obtained his kingdom. And his interceſſion is founded upon his oblation. So his prieſtly office, and that conſidered particularly in point of his offering his ſacrifice, doth, as the foundation ſtone, bear the weight of the ſalvation of ſinners, and of the honour of God and the Mediator therein. Wherefore it is not ſtrange, that his inveſtiture with the prieſtly office was confirmed by the oath of God; a ſolemnity not uſed in the caſe of his prophetical and kingly offices.

And thus far of the making of the covenant.

HEAD III.

The PARTS *of the Covenant of Grace.*

THE *parts* of the covenant of grace, being the things therein agreed upon betwixt God and Chriſt the ſecond Adam, are two, to wit, the *conditionary* part, and the *promiſſory* part. Theſe comprehend the whole of the covenant, and of them we ſhall treat in order.

The firſt part of the covenant, namely, the conditionary part.

THE condition of a covenant or bargain, properly and commonly ſo called, is, That part of a covenant or bargain, upon the performing of which one's right to the benefit promiſed is founded, and his plea for it is ſtated, as becoming due to him for that his performance, according to, and in virtue of the agreement between the parties. This is a federal condition, a covenant condition, or the condition of a covenant; and what all men, in common converſation, underſtand by condition of a covenant or bargain. As for inſtance, the paying of ſuch a ſum of money for ſuch a commodity, according to the agreement between the parties, is the condition of a covenant of commerce, ſale, or traffic: the working of ſuch a piece of work, or doing of ſuch a deed, for ſuch a reward agreed upon by the parties, is the condition of a covenant of ſervice or hire.

Beſides this, there is alſo what is called *a condition of connection* or order in a covenant; whereby one thing neceſſarily goes before another, in the order of the covenant, without being the ground upon which one's right and title to that other thing is founded. As in the former inſtances, the buyer's receiving of the commodity, and the hireling's receiving of the reward, covenanted or bargained for, muſt needs go before their poſſeſſion or enjoyment of them; but it is evident, that that receiving is not the thing upon which the buyer's right and title to the commodity, or the hireling's right and title to the reward, is founded: therefore though it may be called a condition of connection in the reſpective covenants, yet it cannot, in any propriety of ſpeech, be called the condition of them.

Now to apply theſe things to our purpoſe: in the order of the covenant of grace, foraſmuch as the having of the Spirit muſt go before faith, faith before juſtification, juſtification before ſanctification, holineſs before heaven's happineſs; theſe may be called conditions in the covenant of grace, to wit, conditions of certain connection; and this belongs to the eſtabliſhed order of the promiſes of the covenant, which are contra-diſtinguiſhed to the condition of the covenant. Howbeit ſuch conditions can in no proper ſenſe be called the condition or conditions of the covenant of grace, more than the buyer's receiving of the commodity can be called the condition of the covenant, or bargain of ſale. But the condition of the covenant of grace, properly ſo called, is, Chriſt in the form of a bond-ſervant, as laſt Adam, Repreſentative, Kinſman-redeemer, Surety, and Prieſt, his fulfilling all righteouſneſs owing, in virtue of the broken covenant of works, unto God by his ſpiritual ſeed: Matth. iii. 15. *Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteouſneſs.*

For clearing of this purpoſe, I ſhall, (1.) Evince this to be the condition of the covenant; (2.) Explain and unfold that righteouſneſs, the fulfilling whereof was made the condition of the covenant.

Firſt, to evince that this is the condition of the covenant of grace, conſider,

1. Chriſt's fulfilling all righteouſneſs as ſecond Adam is what the Father propoſed unto him, as the terms on which his ſeed ſhould be ſaved, and upon which he founded his promiſe of eternal life to be given them; and not any work or deed of theirs: Iſ. liii. 10. *When thou ſhalt make his ſoul an offering for ſin, he ſhall ſee his ſeed.* Ver. 11. *He ſhall ſee of the travel of his ſoul, and ſhall be ſatisfied: by his knowledge ſhall my righteous ſervant juſtify many; for he ſhall bear their iniquities.* Luke xxii. 20. *This cup is the new teſtament in my blood, which is ſhed for you.* And the ſame is that which Chriſt as the ſecond Adam did from eternity conſent unto, undertake and bind himſelf for: and which he did in time, according to agreement, perform. Thus he himſelf repreſents it, Matth. iii. 15. *Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteouſneſs;* namely, as it becometh a perſon of honour and credit to fulfil his bargain. Luke xxiv. 26. *Ought not Chriſt to have ſuffered theſe things?* to wit, as one ought to perform the condition of a covenant or bargain he has agreed to.

2. This is the only ground of a ſinner's right and title to eternal life; and upon nothing elſe can he ſafely found his plea before the Lord for life and ſalvation: Eph. i. 7. *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins, according to the riches of his grace.* Philip. iii 8. 9. *That I may win Chriſt, and be found in him, not having mine own righteouſneſs——but —the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith.* Surely upon the condition of the covenant fulfilled, one may found his plea before the Lord for the benefits promiſed in the covenant: but no man may found his plea before the Lord for theſe on any work or deed of his own whatſoever, no not on faith itſelf, but only Chriſt's fulfilling all righteouſneſs: therefore no work or deed of ours whatſoever, no not faith itſelf can be the condition of the covenant of grace properly ſo called; but only on Chriſt's fulfilling all righteouſneſs. The ſinner ſtanding in the court of conſcience, trembling before the Lord, flees in under the covert of that righteouſneſs fulfilled by the Mediator, and dare oppoſe nothing but it to the condemning ſentence of the law, giving up with all other pleas for life and ſalvation. Believing in Chriſt is the pleading upon that ground, not the ground of the ſinner's plea; it ſaith, my Lord and my God in the promiſe, upon the ground of Chriſt's fulfilling all righteouſneſs allenarly, as the condition of the covenant. If any will make it the ground of their plea, they muſt needs produce it as a work of a law, that is, as a deed done by them, whereby they have fulfilled and anſwered a law, and whereupon they crave the benefit promiſed: the which will, according to the ſcripture, be found a dangerous adventure, Rom. iii. 20. Gal. ii. 16. and v. 4.

3. It is by this, and this alone, the ſalvation of ſinners becomes a debt: therefore this alone is the condition of the covenant. For the reward is of debt to him, and him only, who fulfils the condition of a covenant: *to him that worketh,* not *to him that worketh not, but believeth,* Rom. iv. 4. 5. And ſo it is of debt to Chriſt alone, not to us: and therefore it was he that fulfilled the condition of the covenant; we fulfil no part of it. This is confirmed from the primitive ſituation of mankind with reference to eternal life, in the firſt Adam's covenant, duly conſidered. The condition thereof was perfect active obedience. And according to the nature of that covenant, if this obedience had been fulfilled by Adam, eternal life to him and his would thereupon have become a debt to him. And the plea of his poſterity for life, in that caſe, would not have been founded on their perſonal obedience coming after that fulfilment; ſince it would not have been the performance of the condition, but the fruit of the promiſe of the covenant; but it would have been founded on that performance of Adam their repreſentative; foraſmuch as, in the caſe ſuppoſed, it would have been the only obedience whereby the condition of that covenant was fulfilled; and ſo they would have obtained life, not for any perſonal work or deed of theirs, but for the obedience of the firſt Adam their repreſentative, to which God did graciouſly make the promiſe of life, in the firſt covenant.

4. Faith and obedience are benefits promiſed in the covenant, upon the condition of it, as hath been already evinced; and in virtue of the promiſes of the covenant, they are produced in the elect: therefore they cannot be the condition of the covenant. And elect infants are ſaved, though they are neither capable of believing nor of obeying: howbeit, the condition of the covenant muſt needs be performed, either by themſelves who are ſaved, or elſe by another in their ſtead. Therefore Chriſt's fulfilling all righteouſneſs, which is the only obedience performed in their ſtead, muſt be the alone proper condition of the covenant.

5. Laſtly, The covenant of grace doth ſo exclude our boaſting, as the covenant of works did not. This is clear from Rom. iii. 27. *Where is boaſting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.* But if any deed or work of ours be the condition of the covenant of grace, in whole or in part, our boaſting is not excluded, but hath place therein, as in the covenant of works; the difference being at moſt but in point of degrees: for, according to the ſcripture, it is working, or fulfilling the condition of a covenant, that gives the ground of boaſting; foraſmuch as to him that worketh, the reward is reckoned of debt: and life being of or by works in the covenant of works, though not in the way of proper merit, but in way of paction or compact only, this gave men the ground of boaſting in that covenant, according to the ſcripture. Therefore, ſo far as life and ſalvation are of or by any work or deed of ours, as fulfilling the condition of the covenant of grace, our boaſting is not excluded, but hath place therein, as in the covenant of works. Wherefore, ſince the covenant of grace is ſo framed, as to leave no ground for our boaſting, no work or deed of ours, but Chriſt's fulfilling all righteouſneſs, even that alone is the condition of the covenant of grace: and our life and ſalvation are neither of works, nor by works, as fulfilling the condition of the covenant: Tit. iii. 5. *Not by works of righteouſneſs, which we have done, but according to his mercy he ſaved us:* Eph. ii. 9. *Not of works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt.*

God forbid we ſhould go about to juſtle faith and obedience out of the covenant of grace! Thoſe who do ſo in principle or practice, will thereby juſtle themſelves out of the kingdom of heaven: Matth. v. 19. Whoſoever ſhall break one of theſe leaſt commandments, and ſhall teach men ſo, he ſhall be called the leaſt in the kingdom of heaven; that is, he ſhall be treated as he treated that one of theſe commandments, he ſhall be judged unworthy of the fellowſhip of that kingdom.

Faith is neceſſary ſavingly to intereſt us in Jeſus Chriſt the head of the covenant; and none can attain to eternal happineſs, without actual believing, who are ſubjects capable of it; nor can any attain it without the Spirit of faith indwelling in them. Obedience is neceſſary, as the chief ſubordinate end of the covenant, being that whereby God hath his glory he deſigned therein: and without obedience begun here, none who are ſubjects capable of it, can ſee heaven. But withal it is neceſſary, that they be kept in the place and ſtation aſſigned them in the covenant by the Father and the Son from eternity. By faith we perſonally embrace the covenant, conſent to, and reſt in the condition of the covenant fulfilled by Chriſt; and ſo are juſtified and brought into a ſtate of ſalvation: John x. 9. I am the door, by me if any man enter in, he ſhall be ſaved. Compare John i. 12. and iii. 16. and xiv. 6. By evangelical repentance and goſpel-obedience, we teſtify our thankfulneſs to God, and evidence the truth of our faith, and our being within the covenant; 1 Pet. ii. 9. ‘ Ye are a choſen generation, ‘ a royal prieſthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people: ‘ that ye ſhould ſhew forth the praiſes of him who hath ‘ called you out of darkneſs into his marvelous light:’ verſ. 10. ‘ Which in time paſt were not a people, but ‘ are now the people of God: which had not obtained ‘ mercy, but now have obtained mercy.’ Compare Rom. vi. 13. and xii. 1, 2. 1 Cor. vi. 20.

This the Prophet taught the Jewiſh church of old, Mic. vi. 8. ‘ He hath ſhewed thee, O man, what is good, ‘ and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do juſt‘ ly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy ‘ God?’ In the 6th verſe, a moſt important queſtion is put, concerning the acceptance of a ſinner with God, how it may be obtained, *Wherewith ſhall I come before the Lord?* and ſeveral coſtly expedients for that purpoſe are propoſed by the ſinner, even to the *giving of the fruit of his body for the ſin of his ſoul,* ver. 6. 7. But the prophet anſwers that queſtion in a word, tacitly upbraiding them with groſs ſtupidity, in their groping for the wall in broad day-light, even as in the night; He hath ſhewed thee, O man, what is good; that is what is goodly, valuable, and acceptable, in the ſight of God, for that purpoſe, even for a ſinner's obtaining pardon and acceptance with God; namely, the Meſſias, Jeſus Chriſt ſacrificed for ſinners. This was God had all along, by his prophets, and by the whole ceremonial law, pointed out to them, and ſet before them, as the good for that purpoſe, that they might by faith look thereunto, and be ſaved, Iſa. xlv. 22. And, in the ſtile of the Holy Ghoſt, Chriſt crucified is elſewhere ſpoken of under the ſame notion; 2 Chron. xxx. 18. ‘ The good Lord pardon e‘ very one that prepareth his heart to ſeek God.’ Orig. *Jehovah the good make atonement for,* &c. Pſal. lxxxv. 12. ‘ The Lord ſhall give that which is good;’ or, *ſhall give the good.* Compare John iv. 10. ‘ If thou knew‘ eſt the gift of God, and who it is.’ Iſa. lv. 2. ‘ Eat ‘ ye that which is good.’ Compare John vi. 55. ‘ My ‘ fleſh is meat indeed.’ Job xxxiv. 4. ‘ Let us know ‘ among ourſelves what is good.’ Ver. 5. For Job hath ‘ ſaid, I am righteous.’ Now, being thus accepted of God, *what doth he require of thee* in point of gratitude, *but to do juſtly,* as one accepted not without a righteouſneſs anſwering the demands of juſtice and judgment; *and to love mercy,* as one who hath obtained mercy; *and to walk humbly with thy God,* as one who is free grace's debtor? In the ſame manner of expreſſion doth Moſes addreſs himſelf to the people ſecured of the poſſeſſion of Canaan by the oath of God, and being juſt to enter upon it, Deut. x. 11, 12. ‘ And now, Iſrael, what doth ‘ the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord ‘ thy God,’ &c.? namely, in point of gratitude, for his giving thee that good land.

Infer. From what is ſaid it appears, that your life and ſalvation entirely depend on your ſpecial intereſt in Chriſt's righteouſneſs. If ye are poſſeſſed of it, your ſalvation is ſecure; if not, ſalvation is far from you. If you were never ſo full of your own righteouſneſs, works, doings, and ſufferings, all is but filthy rags in this caſe, and cannot give you a right or title to life; and although you can ſee nothing of your own in yourſelves, which you can lean to before the Lord, yet if the righteouſneſs of Chriſt is yours in poſſeſſion, by faith, your life and ſalvation are firm as a rock.

Caſe. How then ſhall I know that Chriſt's righteouſneſs is indeed mine in poſſeſſion? *Anſw.* The Lord himſelf gives a diſtinguiſhing character of ſuch happy poſſeſſors, Iſa. li. 7. *Hearken unto me, ye that know righteouſneſs, the people in whoſe heart is my law.* They that know righteouſneſs, are, in the ſtile of the ſcripture, thoſe whoſe it is, agreeable to the phraſe, Matth. xxv. 12. I know you not, q. d. Ye are none of mine, I acknowledge you not as mine. So this character conſiſts of two parts. (1.) They are ſuch as acknowledge Chriſt's righteouſneſs as their only righteouſneſs in the ſight of God, and look to it alone for life and ſalvation, renouncing all their own righteouſneſs: Iſa. liii. 11. ‘ By his knowledge ‘ ſhall my righteous ſervant juſtify many;’ that is, by the knowledge or the acknowledgement of him, which is by faith. (2.) They have the law of God in their hearts. The righteous people, righteous by faith, are a holy people. They make conſcience of internal obedience; for the holy law rules within them, even there whither no eye reacheth, but the eyes of God and their own conſciences. So they are diſtinguiſhed from *hypocrites,* who are *like unto whited ſepulchres, beautiful outward, but within full of all uncleanneſs.* They make conſcience of external obedience too; for as the candle burning within the lanthorn will ſhine through it, ſo the law of God ruling in the heart, cannot miſs to rule in the life and converſation too: Matth. vi. 22. ‘ If ‘ therefore thine eye be ſingle, thy whole body ſhall be ‘ full of light.’ And ſo they are diſtinguiſhed from the profane, whoſe unholy lives declare them to have neither part nor lot in this righteouſneſs: Pſal. xxiv. 3. 4. ‘ Who ‘ ſhall ſtand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands.’ And the law is not only in their minds by its light, to drive them to obedience; as in the caſe of legaliſts, who work like ſlaves; but it is in their hearts and affections, diſcovering to their ſouls the beauty of holineſs, and ſo drawing them to all obedience, and cauſing them to work like ſons to a father. Their hearts are reconciled to the purity of the holy law, and they *delight in it after the inward man,* Rom. ii. 22. and would fain reach a full conformity unto it, ſaying from the heart, ‘ O ‘ that my ways were directed to keep thy ſtatutes!’ Pſal. cxix. 5.

Secondly, To unfold that righteouſneſs, the fulfilling of which was made the condition of the covenant of grace, we ſhall view it in the ſeveral parts thereof. That righteouſneſs, foraſmuch as it was to be fulfilled in the room and ſtead of ſinners, was and muſt be ſtated from the law, or broken covenant of works, which they were lying under: for the law, or broken covenant of works, was ſo far from being neglected in the new bargain, that whatſoever it had to charge upon, or demand of the parties contracted for in the new covenant, was ſummed up, and ſet down therein, to be fully cleared by Chriſt their Surety contracting for them. Now, ſtating that righteouſneſs from thence, it will be found to conſiſt of *three* parts, making ſo many conditionary articles of the covenant of grace: to wit, *holineſs of nature, righteouſneſs of life,* and *ſatisfaction for ſin.* Of the which in order.

ARTICLE I.

Holineſs of nature.

THE law required *holineſs of nature* as a condition of life, inaſmuch as condemning original ſin, ſaying, *Thou ſhalt not covet,* it concluded all men to be by nature children of wrath. For God being eſſentially holy, holy by neceſſity of nature, nothing can be ſo contrary to God as an unholy nature is, becauſe, howbeit perſons or things of a like nature may be contrary in ſome points, yet they can never be ſo contrary one to another, as thoſe of quite oppoſite natures. But the parties contracted for in the covenant of grace, having their nature wholly corrupted, and being incapable to purify it, or make their heart clean, Prov. xx. 9; it is evident, they could by no means anſwer this demand of the law by themſelves. Wherefore, for the ſatisfaction of the law in this point, it was ſettled as a conditionary article of the covenant of grace, "That Chriſt the ſecond "Adam, repreſenting them, ſhould be a man of a per"fectly holy, pure, and untainted nature, fully anſwer"ing for them the holineſs and perfection of nature re"quired by the law." 'For ſuch an high prieſt be'came us, who is holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate 'from ſinners,' Heb. vii. 26. And this article contains two clauſes.

1. "That he, as the ſecond Adam, ſhould be con"ceived and born holy, for and inſtead of them corrupt"ed in their nature, conceived and born in ſin." There was a holy nature given to Adam as the root of mankind, to be by him kept and tranſmitted to his poſterity, in the way of natural generation. And upon this ground, the law requires all men to be born holy, pronouncing them unclean and children of wrath, in the contrary event, Job xiv. 4. Eph. ii. 3. But how could this demand be anſwered by ſinners? They are born in ſin: they cannot enter again into their mother's womb, and be born a ſecond time, without ſin. No, they cannot: yet the law will not bate of that demand for life. Wherefore it was provided, that Chriſt, as a public perſon, repreſenting his ſpiritual ſeed, ſhould be born perfectly holy; that, whereas they brought a ſinful corrupt nature into the world with them, he ſhould bring a holy human nature into the world with him. And ſo he was *the laſt Adam*, 1 Cor. xv. 45. holy and undefiled, Heb. vii. 26. *that holy thing born*, Luke i. 35. And the effect thereof with reſpect to that law-demand for life is, that all believers are, in law-reckoning, born holy in the ſecond Adam, even as they were created holy in the firſt Adam. Hence they are expreſsly ſaid to be circumciſed in him, Col. ii. 11. which plainly preſuppoſeth their being born in him. And it is is in virtue of their being legally born holy in Chriſt, when he was born, that, being united to him in the time of loves, they are really born again, and at length perfected; even as in virtue of their being legally defiled in Adam, when he ſinned, they are actually and really defiled in their own perſons, coming into the world; the holy nature being actually communicated to them from Chriſt their ſpiritual head, in whom they were legally born holy; even as the corruption of nature is actually conveyed to them from Adam their natural head, in whom they ſinned in law-reckoning.

2. The other clauſe is, "That Chriſt, as the ſecond "Adam, ſhould retain the holineſs of nature inviolate "unto the end, for them and in their name." The law, or covenant of works, required, as a condition of life, that the holineſs of nature given to mankind in Adam, ſhould be preſerved pure and uncorrupt. But it was loſt: and put the caſe, that it had been reſtored, they could not have retained it, in their own perſons, unſtained amidſt ſo many ſnares. Wherefore, to ſatiſfy the law-demand in this point, it was provided, that in the man Chriſt, as a public perſon repreſentative of his ſeed, their nature ſhould be kept perfectly holy, unto the end, without the leaſt ſtain or defilement: Iſa. xliii. 4. *He ſhall not fail*; or, *he ſhall not wax dim*, or *wrinkle*, as the ſkin doth when the moiſture is exhauſted. Therein the firſt Adam failed. He ſhone in purity of nature, as he came from the Creator's hand; but he failed, he waxed dim; the holineſs of his nature being exhauſted by ſin, all mankind in him loſt their ſpiritual beauty, and wrinkled. But now that the ſecond Adam failed not, but preſerved the holineſs of human nature in him unſtained, not in the leaſt darkened, even to the end of his life; the remains of the corruption of nature in believers are not imputed to them, Rom. iv. 8; but as defiled as they are in themſelves, through thoſe remains cleaving to them, yet in Chriſt their beauty is freſh, and not marred in the leaſt, according to that, Cant. iv. 7. 'Thou art all fair, my love, there is no ſpot in thee.'

ARTICLE II.

Righteouſneſs of life.

THIS alſo the law inſiſted upon as a condition of life, and juſtly: for God gave to Adam, and all mankind in him, a law to be obeyed in all points, not only in virtue of the tie of natural duty, but in virtue of the bond of a covenant for life; but it was never fulfilled by them. The firſt Adam began indeed the courſe of obedience; but he quickly fell off from it, with all his natural ſeed in him. Now, it being inconſiſtent with the honour of the law, that the prize, to wit, eternal life, ſhould be obtained, without the race was run; it ſtill inſiſted, ſaying, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments*, Matth. xix. 17. Howbeit, we are weak, moveleſs, without ſtrength for running that race. Wherefore it was ſettled as another conditionary article of the covenant, "That Chriſt as a public perſon, repre"ſenting thoſe he contracted for, ſhould begin and "perfect the courſe of obedience to the law, in righte"ouſneſs of life." And accordingly, he *became obedient unto death*, Philip. ii. 8.

The law, which was the rule of this obedience, exacted of him, was the ſame law of the ten commands, that was given to Adam, and binding on us as under it: for he was made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, Gal. iv. 4. 5. It extended to all divine inſtitutions which the ſecond Adam found in being, whether obliging men as men, or as members of the church of God on earth: even as the rule of the firſt Adam's obedience, extended to the poſitive law touching the forbidden fruit, which was in being when he was ſet to fulfill his covenant-obedience.

That we may the more diſtinctly comprehend this article, it may be obſerved to bear theſe three things following.

1. "That he as the ſecond Adam, ſhould obey the "whole law, in the name of thoſe he repreſented." This was a debt owing by them all; and was required of them by the law, as a condition of life: Gal. iii. 10. 'Cur'ſed is every one that continueth not in ALL things 'which are written in the book of the law to do them.' But the anſwering of this demand was quite beyond their reach. Man, by the fall, having loſt much of his knowledge of the law, had loſt ſight of many of the duties required therein: howbeit, ignorance of the law excuſeth no man. His heart was averſe to, and enmity againſt the law, Rom. viii. 7. And he was without ſtrength to perform the duties therein required of him, chap. v. 6. So that by reaſon of ignorance, averſion, and impotency in that matter, the obedience of the whole law was not to be had from them. Wherefore it was provided, that Chriſt, as their repreſentative, ſhould give obedience to the whole law for them; that both tables of the law, and each command of each table, ſhould have their due obedience from him; that the law being laid before him in its ſpirituality and full extent, he ſhould fully anſwer it, in internal and external obedience, in his mind, will, and affections, in thought, word, and deed; that he ſhould conform himſelf to the whole natural law, and to all divine inſtitutions, ceremonial or political, ſo as to be circumciſed, keep the paſſover, to be baptized, to be a ſervant of or ſubject to rulers, pay tribute to whom it was due, and the like: in one word, that he ſhould perform the whole will of God, ſignified in his law; ſo that with the ſafety of the law's honour, his people might have life. What the firſt Adam failed

In, the ſecond Adam was to do. And this I take to be repreſented unto us, in the caſe of the firſt and ſecond king of Iſrael, to wit, Saul and David, Acts xiii. 22. *I have found David the ſon of Jeſſe, a man after mine own heart, which ſhall fulfill* all *my will*; Gr. *all my wills.* In which there is a plain view to Saul, who was partial in his obedience to the will of God, (1 Sam. xv.) and upon that ſcore loſt the kingdom for him and his.

2. "That every part of that obedience ſhould be car-"ried to the higheſt pitch and degree." This the law required of them, as a condition of life; as our Lord himſelf ſhewed unto the lawyer, Luke x. 27. 'Thou 'ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with 'all thy ſoul, and with all thy ſtrength, and with all thy 'mind; and thy neighbour as thyſelf.' Verſ. 28.—'This, do, and thou ſhalt live.' But it was a demand they could never have anſwered, ſince Adam had ſquandered away their ſtock of ability, and left them without ſtrength. They might as ſoon have reached up their hand to the ſun in the firmament, ſo far above them, as have attained to the perfection of obedience demanded of them by the law. Wherefore it was agreed, that Chriſt ſhould in their name obey the law in that perfection, being *made under the law*, as they *were under it*, Gal. iv. 4. 5, that every action of his, ſhould bear, not only a goodneſs of the matter, but of the manner too, and that in perfection; that love to God and man ſhould flame in his holy human ſoul, to the utmoſt pitch required by the law; and ſo that debt owing by his ſeed, might be cleared by him, acting as a public man in their name."

3. Laſtly, "That all this ſhould be continued to the "the end, without the leaſt failure in one jot of parts, "or degrees of obedience." This alſo was a condition of life ſtated in the firſt covenant: Gal. iii. 10. 'Curſ'ed is every one that *continueth* not in all things which 'are written in the book of the law to do them.' But it was a demand they could by no means anſwer; man's nature being ſo vitiated by the fall, that if a thouſand hells were lying upon it, the beſt on earth could not keep perfectly right one hour. Wherefore it was agreed, that the ſecond Adam ſhould, in the name of thoſe he repreſented, continue in all things written in the law to do them, even to the end; that he ſhould not fail in his begun courſe of obedience, but run to the end of the race ſet before him; that from the womb to the grave, his heart and life ſhould ſhine in perfection of holineſs. All which he did accordingly fulfil, being obedient unto death, Philip. ii. 8.

ARTICLE III.

Satisfaction for ſin.

THE former two were in the condition of Adam's covenant: but this was not in it; for while there was no ſin, there was no place for ſatisfaction for ſin. But the new covenant behoved to be ſettled on the condition of a ſatisfaction for ſin; becauſe the broken law or covenant of works, inſiſted for it as a condition of life to ſinners, in virtue of its penalty by them incurred. Howbeit, it was quite beyond their power to anſwer this demand of the law. If then the mediator will have a ſeed brought from the ſtate of death, into a ſtate of life and ſalvation, he muſt buy them from the hand of juſtice, telling down a price for every ſoul of them, 1 Cor. vi. 20. Accordingly, all the ſins of every one of them, from the firſt ſin they ſhould be conceived and born in, to the laſt ſin they ſhould expire with, being foreſeen of God from eternity, were ſummed up as ſo many breaches of the law or covenant of works: and it was made another conditionary article of the covenant, "That Chriſt, as "a public perſon, ſhould ſatisfy fully and completely for "them all:" Iſ. liii. 6. 'The Lord hath laid on him 'the iniquity of us all;' compared with Lev. xvi. 21. 'All the iniquities of the children of Iſrael, and all their 'tranſgreſſions in all their ſins.'

Now, in this article there were three things eſtabliſhed. Firſt, "That Chriſt, as a public perſon, ſhould ſatiſ"fy for them by ſuffering:" Luke xxiv. 26. 'Ought 'not Chriſt to have ſuffered?' Sinners were liable to ſuffer for the ſatiſfaction of juſtice: and nothing but ſuffering could be accepted, as a compenſation of the injury done by ſin, to the honour of God, in the violating of his holy law. *Thouſands of rams*, and *ten thouſands of rivers of oil*, were at the Mediator's command; all the ſilver and gold, and the precious things of the earth and ſeas, were at his diſpoſal: but none of theſe could be of uſe in this bargain; they were all of no value, in a treaty for the redemption of the ſoul, Mic. vi. 6, 7, 8. 1 Pet. i. 18. His own ſuffering could only avail here. That the ſon of God ſhould ſuffer, was indeed an amazing propoſal; but it was neceſſary, in order to ſatisfy for our ſin.

Secondly, "That he ſhould ſuffer the ſame pu"niſhment they ſhould have ſuffered in virtue of the "penalty of the broken covenant of works:" and that was death in its full latitude and extent. This appears from the penalty of that covenant, from which the debt of ſatisfaction was ſtated, 'In the day thou eateſt there'of, thou ſhalt ſurely die, Gen. ii. 17. compared with Chriſt's dying for, that is, in the room and ſtead of ſinners, ſo often mentioned in the ſcriptures, Rom. v. 6. 8. 2 Cor. v. 14. 15. 1 Theſſ. v. 10. And it is confirmed from that the ſcripture teacheth, that the all for whom Chriſt died, died in him, 2 Cor. v. 14. 'If one died 'for all, then were all dead;' or, then the all died, to wit, in him; even as they ſinned, and became liable to death, in Adam. So ſaith the apoſtle, 'I am crucified with 'Chriſt.' Gal. ii. 20.

For clearing of this purpoſe, two things are to be diſtinguiſhed in that death which was the penalty of the covenant of works. 1. What was eſſential to it, wrapt up in the very nature of the thing itſelf called death in the ſtile of that covenant. And that may be compriſed in theſe two; (1.) The curſe, (2.) Infinite execution; the former maketh the death legal, the latter making it real and ſatiſfactory. 2. What was accidental to it, ariſing, not from the nature of the thing in itſelf, but from the nature of the party dying that death. And this is of two ſorts. (1.) There is ſomething ariſing from the nature of the dying party, as he is a mere creature; ſuch as the eternity of the puniſhment, and deſpair of life. (2.) Something ariſing from the nature of the dying party, as he is a ſinful creature, or ſubject of inherent ſin; ſuch as the extinction of the ſaving relation betwixt God and the ſoul, the diveſting it of God's image, and the corruption and diſſolution of the body.

Now, the eſſentials of that death we ſhould have ſuffered in virtue of the penalty of the broken covenant of works, were laid, as part of the condition of the covenant of grace, on Jeſus Chriſt, to be ſuffered by him, for us. For he was 'made a curſe for us', Gal. iii. 13. and 'gave himſelf for us, a ſacrifice for a ſweet-ſmelling 'ſavour,' Eph. v. 2. that is, a ſacrifice equalling the infinite offence ariſing from our ſin; whence he is ſaid, 'by one offering' to have 'perfected for ever them that 'are ſanctified,' Heb. x. 14. But the accidentals of that death were no part of the condition of the covenant laid on him; nor could they at all have place in him; ſince he was neither a ſubject of inherent ſin, nor yet a mere creature. Nevertheleſs, it was ſtill the ſame death that we ſhould have ſuffered; foraſmuch as the eſſentials were the ſame. Thus the bodies of the ſaints, which are now weak and corruptible, ſhall at the reſurrection be powerful and incorruptible, yet ſtill the ſame bodies; ſince theſe qualities are but accidental to a human body. So in the caſe of clearing of debt, though the borrower could not pay it, but in a great quantity of copper-money, and that advanced by little and little for a long time; which would ruin him: yet if his rich cautioner ſhould pay all at once, in a little gold; it is evident, it would be the payment of the ſame debt, providing only that it fully equalled the ſum borrowed. Nay, confining our view to death itſelf, which is the general proper notion of the thing in queſtion, let us put the caſe, that two men, equally guilty of the ſame crime, are laid under one and the ſame ſentence of death; and it is execute on them both; but the one is by a miracle raiſed to life again, the other lies and rots in the grave. It is evident in this caſe, that the death they died, is the ſame death, anſwering the very ſame eſtimate which the law made of the crime; and that therefore the death of the former ſatisfies the law, as well as the death of the latter, ſo that it cannot reach his life again for that crime: howbeit, it is no leſs evident, that there is a huge difference between the death of the one and of the other, in accidentals, particularly in the duration or continuance of it. Wherefore, we conclude, that as Chriſt gave the ſame active obedience to the law which we ſhould have given in virtue of the condition of the covenant of works; ſo he ſuffered the ſame puniſhment of death that we ſhould have ſuffered in virtue of the penalty of that broken covenant: foraſmuch as, whatever difference there was in accidentals, the eſſentials were the ſame; it being laid on him, in the new covenant, to ſuffer death for us, equalling the infinite offence ariſing from our ſins, being fully proportionate to the eſtimate the law and juſtice of God had made of our crime.

And thus, according to what is ſaid, two grand points were eſtabliſhed in the conditionary part of the covenant.

1. “That the curſe of the law due to us for our ſin, ſhould be transferred on him as the ſecond Adam, our repreſentative; whereby he ſhould inſtantly be a man dead in law for his ſeed.” Either he or they behoved to bear the curſe: for it is written, ‘Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the law.’ Since God had annexed the threatening of death to his firſt covenant, ſaying, ‘In the day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die; the truth of God ſecured the curſe its taking place, as ſoon as ſin ſhould enter. Now, they were not able to bear it, without being ruined thereby. But that it might be borne, and they withal ſaved, it was provided, that he ſhould be laid under it, in their room and ſtead; that as he was made ſin for them, ſo he ſhould alſo in conſequence thereof, be made a curſe for them, Gal. iii. 13.

The curſe is the ſentence of the broken law paſſed upon a perſon, binding him over to the revenging wrath of God, to the full ſatisfaction of juſtice. So that awful and tremenduous myſtery lies here. Chriſt muſt ſtand before the tribunal of the holy law, as a ſinner; anſwerable for all the ſins of all the elect, by virtue of his bond of ſuretiſhip, regiſtrate in the records of heaven: and ſentence muſt paſs upon him, adjudging and binding him over to ſuffer all that revenging wrath which theſe ſins deſerved. The Lamb of God ſaid, *Lo, I come*: ſo it was done, he was *made a curſe for us*. In token hereof, being convened before the Jewiſh ſanhedrim, he was judged a blaſphemer, and worthy of death; and compearing before Pilate the Roman governour, he was by him ſentenced to die, and that upon the croſs.

Behold the ſtupendous reſult of this awful tranſaction, the transfering of the curſe on Chriſt the ſecond Adam! 1. Hereby he was made the ſeparated one of the elect ſociety, ſeparated unto evil, as the immediate effect of the curſe is deſcribed, Deut. xxix. 21. He was made the devoted head, devoted to pay for all the reſt. He was ſet up as the mark againſt which all the arrows of revenging wrath ſhould be aimed. He was appointed to be the common receptacle of all the floods of vengeance, iſſuing from incenſed juſtice towards the whole body of the elect, to ſwallow them up: here the current of all theſe was turned, that they ſhould together flow in upon him. Hence he cries, Pſal. lxix. 2. ‘I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.’ 2. Hereby he became the reſting-place of revenging juſtice, where it was to prey, till it ſhould be ſatisfied to the full: Iſ. liii. 10. ‘Thou ſhalt make his ſoul an offering for ſin.’ In token hereof, when the officers came to apprehend him, he ſaid, *If ye ſeek me, let theſe go their way.* Juſtice leaves the chaſe of the rebel multitude, ſeeks him, and him only; ſince he was made a curſe for them. Thus was he deſigned to be the ſacrifice for all his ſeed, which the fire of revenging wrath ſhould burn up, till it ſent forth a ſweet ſmelling ſavour, a ſavour of reſt to the incenſed juſtice of an offended God.

2. Another grand point eſtabliſhed here, was, “That the curſe transferred on him, ſhould be infinitely execute upon him as the ſecond Adam, our repreſentative; whereby he ſhould die really for his ſeed, to the full compenſation of all the injuries done to the honour of an infinite God, by all their ſins.” Vain is that curſe which takes not effect: but as the curſe of the holy law was not cauſeleſs, ſo it could not miſs of coming on, in its infinite weight, for the ſatisfaction of juſtice. Now, had it come ſo on them, they would have been eternally ſatisfying, but could never have ended their ſatisfaction. But, coming on him, *the church of God* was *purchaſed with his own blood*, Acts xx. 28. and *the blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son cleanſeth us from all ſin*, 1 John i. 7. the infinite dignity of the perſon dying, making the execution of the curſe on him unto death to be infinite in value, fully compenſating the infinite wrong, according to the eſtimate made of it by law and juſtice.

And here it was ſettled and agreed, “That the curſe ſhould be execute on the whole man;” that being their due: and therefore that he ſhould become poor, and not have where to lay his head; that he ſhould ſuffer hunger, for want of meat; thirſt for want of drink: that his name and reputation ſhould be ſunk, loaded with vile reproaches and ſlanders; his very friends going about to lay hands on him as a mad-man; that he ſhould be accounted a *worm* and *no man; a reproach of men, and deſpiſed of the people*: his whole lot in the world afflicted, perſecuted, and exceeding low: and that in the end, being ſtripped of his garments, he ſhould be hung up naked before the ſun, between two malefactors, as if the worſt of the three.

More particularly, here it was ſtipulate, and agreed to,

1ſt, “That the curſe ſhould be execute on his bleſſed body;” foraſmuch as their bodies were liable to it, as being inſtruments of ſin and diſhonour to God: that it ſhould be hanged on a tree, that all the world might therein read the anger of God againſt the breaking of the firſt covenant, by eating of the forbidden tree; and his being made a curſe for us, ſince it is written, ‘Curſed is every one that hangeth on a tree,’ that the curſe ſhould go over, and death paſs through, every part of that bleſſed body: that his head ſhould be diſgracefully wounded with a crown of thorns put upon it; his viſage marred more than any man; his back given to the ſmiters; his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; his face not hid from ſhame and ſpitting; his tongue made to cleave to his jaws; his hands and feet pierced and nailed to a croſs; all his bones drawn out of joint; his heart, like wax, melted in the midſt of his bowels; his blood ſhed; his ſtrength dried up; and that in the end it ſhould expire and die, be ſeparated from his ſoul, pierced with a ſpear, and laid in the duſt of death.

2dly, “That it ſhould be execute on his holy ſoul, in a ſpecial manner;” forasmuch as their ſouls were the principal actors in ſin: that he ſhould undergo the wrath of God in it, being all along his life a man of ſorrows, and acquainted with grief: and that towards the latter end, there ſhould be an hour and power of darkneſs, wherein the malice of men, the power and rage of devils, ſhould be jointly engaged againſt him, making their utmoſt efforts on him; and then the full floods of heaven's revenging wrath ſhould come rolling in upon his ſoul: that they ſhould ſo overflow it, as to ſtrike him with ſore amazement, fill him with trouble, load him with heavineſs, and overwhelm him with exceeding ſorrow: that there ſhould be ſuch a preſſure of divine wrath on his holy ſoul, as ſhould put him into an agony, even to his ſweating great drops of blood; and ſhould bring over it a total eclipſe of comfort, and as it were melt it within him; that ſo, while he was dying a bodily death on the croſs, he might alſo die a ſpiritual death, ſuch as a moſt pure and holy ſoul was capable of.

Here was the death determined in the covenant, for the ſecond Adam our repreſentative; a death in virtue of the curſe transferred on him, *long-laſting* and *exquiſite*, for the full ſatisfaction of revenging juſtice. (1.) It was a *long-laſting* death. He was a dying, in the ſtyle of the covenant of works, not only upon the croſs, but all along the time of his life; the death that was the penalty of the covenant, working in him from the womb, till it laid him in the grave. Wherefore he behoved to be conceived of a woman of low eſtate; and born in the ſtable of an inn, no room for him in the inn itſelf; laid in a manger, no cradle to receive him; his infant-blood ſhed in his circumciſion, as if he had been a ſinner; yea, his infant-life ſought by a cruel perſecutor, and his mother obliged to run her country with him, and go to Egypt. Returning, he behoved to live an obſcure life in an obſcure place, from which nothing great nor good was expected, John i. 46. and coming out of his obſcurity, to be ſet up as the object of the world's ill-will and ſpite, obloquy and maltreatment, till by the hands of Jew and Gentile he was put to death on the croſs. (2.) It was an *exquiſite* death. No pity, no ſparing in it: but the curſe carried it to the higheſt pitch. No ſparing from an angry God, Rom. viii. 32. No ſparing from wicked men let looſe on him, puſhing him like bulls, roaring on him and devouring him like lions, and renting him like dogs, when once their hour and power of darkneſs was come, Pſalm. xxii. 12. 13. 16. Not a good word ſpoken to him in the midſt of his torments, by thoſe that ſtood by: but he cruelly mocked and inſulted in them. Much leſs a good deed done him. Not a drink of water allowed him, but vinegar offered him, in his thirſt cauſed through the fire of divine wrath drinking up his ſpirits and moiſture. Nay, the very face of the heavens was lowring on him: the ſun muſt not give its light, but wrap up itſelf from him in darkneſs; becauſe 'light is ſweet, and it is a pleaſant thing to behold 'the ſun.'

Laſtly, In this article it was eſtabliſhed, "That he "ſhould ſuffer all this voluntarily, ſubmiſſively, and re"ſignedly, out of regard to the wronged honour of God." Accordingly, ſpeaking of his life, he ſaith, 'No man 'taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myſelf,' John x. 18. compare Pſal. xl. 6. 7. 8. This the law demanded of them whom he ſuffered for, condemning all murmuring and impatience, and binding them to obedience and ſuffering conjunctly. But how could they have ſo borne the load of revenging wrath, who cannot bear a ſharp fit of the gout or gravel, without ſome degree of impatience in the eye of the holy law? Wherefore it was provided, that Chriſt, as their repreſentative, ſhould bear their puniſhment voluntarily, and with perfect patience and reſignation: that he ſhould go as a lamb to the ſlaughter, quietly reſigning his human will to the divine will; and make his obedience in his ſufferings, as conſpicuous as his ſufferings themſelves: that, in midſt of the extremity of his torments, he ſhould not entertain the leaſt unbecoming thought of God, but acknowledge him holy in them all, Pſal. xxii. 3.; nor yet the leaſt grudge againſt his murderers; in token of which, he prayed for them while he was on the croſs, ſaying, *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do*, Luke xxiii. 34.

Thus far of the conditionary articles.

INFERENCES *from the conditionary part of the covenant.*

Thus, as we have ſhown, ſtood the important condition of the covenant of grace; and from thence the following inferences are fairly deducible.

Infer. 1. The redemption of the ſoul is precious. Is it not? Look to the price of the purchaſe, the ranſom of ſouls, as ſtated in the covenant: the holy birth, righteous life, and ſatisfactory death of the Son of God; and ye muſt conclude it to be a coſtly redemption. Turn hither your eyes, (1.) Ye who value not your own ſouls. See here the worth of thoſe ſouls ye ſell for a thing of nought, for ſatisfying a corrupt paſſion, a pang of luſt of one ſort or another. Coſtly was the gathering of what ye thus throw away. Ye let them go at a very low price; but Chriſt could not have one of them at the hand of juſtice, but at the price of his precious blood. Ye cannot forego the vanities of a preſent world for them, nor ſpend a ſerious day or hour about them; but he, after a lifetime of ſorrows, underwent a moſt bitter death for them. What think ye? Was he inconſiderate and too liberal in his making ſuch a bargain for the redemption of ſouls? He was infinitely juſt, who propoſed the condition; and he was infinitely wiſe, who went into it. He was a Father that exacted this ranſom for ſouls; and he was his own Son that paid it. Be aſhamed and bluſh, to make ſo low an eſtimate of thoſe ſouls, which Heaven ſet ſuch a high price on. (2.) Ye who have cheap thoughts of the pardon of ſin, and of ſalvation, correct your miſtake here. You fearleſsly run on in ſin, thinking all may ſoon be ſet to rights again, with a *God forgive me, have mercy on my ſoul*; ſo as you may leap out of Delilah's lap into Abraham's boſom. O fearful infatuation! Is the mean and low birth, the ſorrowful life, and the bitter death of Jeſus the Son of God, not ſufficient to give men a juſt and honourable notion of the pardon of ſin? Look into the condition of the covenant for pardon, written in the blood of the Lamb of God, and learn the value a juſt God puts upon his pardons and ſalvation. See, O ſinner, that it is not words, but deeds; not promiſes and reſolves to do better, but perfection of holineſs and obedience; not drawing of ſighs and ſhedding of tears, but ſhedding of blood; and not thy blood neither, but blood of infinite value, that could procure the pardon of ſin, and ſalvation. And if thou have not upon thee by faith all that righteouſneſs Chriſt fulfilled, to be preſented unto God for a pardon, thou ſhalt never obtain it. Particularly, ye are apt to think light of the ſin ye were born in, and the corruption cleaving to your nature; but know, that God does not think light of theſe. It behoved to be an article of the covenant, that Chriſt ſhould be born holy, and retain the holineſs of human nature in him to the end; elſe the unholy birth and corrupt nature we derived from Adam, would have ſtaked us all down eternally under the curſe. (3.) Ye that have mean thoughts of the holy law, rectify your dangerous miſtake by the help of this glaſs. Ye make no bonds of tranſgreſſing its commands; ye neglect and deſpiſe its curſe: as it is a law, ye ſhew not ſo much regard to it as to the laws of men; and as it is a covenant, ye look upon it as out of date, being in no concern how it may be ſatisfied for you. And ſhall the honour of the holy law lie in the duſt, in your caſe? Rather than it ſhould ſo lie in the caſe of Sodom and Gomorrah, God would have them laid in aſhes with fire and brimſtone. Yea, for vindicating the honour of the law, this whole world ſhall be burnt to aſhes, and all the unholy caſt out from the preſence of the Lord for ever. And in the caſe of them that are ſaved, God would have the curſe of the law executed upon his own Son as their Surety, and the commands of it perfectly obeyed in all points by him in their name. Sure, if you are poſſeſſed of any ſhare herein, it will be great and honourable in your ſight, as it is in the ſight of God.

Infer. 2. The law is no loſer, in that life and ſalvation are beſtowed on believers in Chriſt. It is ſo far from being made void through faith, that it is eſtabliſhed thereby, as the apoſtle witneſſeth, Rom. iii. 31. God would never diſpenſe his pardons at the expence of the honour of his law; nor declare one righteous, without the righteouſneſs of the law being fulfilled, either by him, or in him by another, Rom. viii. 4. Wherefore, life and ſalvation being deſigned for the elect, the law's whole accounts of all it had to charge on them for life, were taken in; and an infallible method was laid down for clearing them, the burden of the payment being transferred on Chriſt their Surety. By this exchange of perſons the law had no loſs. Nay, it was more for the honour of the law, that he was made under it, and ſatisfied it, in virtue of the claim it had upon him by the ſecond covenant, than if they, being mere creatures, had ſatisfied it in all points. But the truth is, they being ſinners, could never by any means have fully ſatisfied it; though it had eternally purſued them, and exacted of them, it would never have had enough from them; whereas now, by Chriſt's taking their debt on him, it was paid to the utmoſt farthing.

Inf. 3. Faith hath a broad and firm bottom to ſtand on before the Lord. The believer hath a ſtrong plea for life and ſalvation, which cannot miſcarry; namely, the condition of the covenant fulfilled by Jeſus Chriſt, even all righteouſneſs; ‘ Having therefore, brethren, boldneſs to enter into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus; let us draw near with a true heart, in full aſſurance of the faith,’ Heb. x. 19—22. The broken boards of uncovenanted mercy, and mens own works, which preſumption fixeth upon, cannot but fail, ſince the law admits no life for a ſinner on theſe grounds. But foraſmuch as there is a gift of Chriſt and his righteouſneſs proclaimed in the goſpel by the authority of heaven, he who by faith receiveth that gift, and makes the ſame his only plea before the Lord, cannot miſs of ſalvation: Rom. v. 17. ‘ They which receive (Gr. *the*) abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteouſneſs, ſhall reign in life by one, Jeſus Chriſt;’ where the abundance mentioned, relates not to different degrees of the grace or gift, but to the offence, as appears from ver. 20.; As if he had ſaid, “ Who receive the grace and gift of righteouſneſs which abound beyond Adam's offence, ſaving them out of the gulph of ruin it plunged them into”. Faith uniting a ſinner to Chriſt the head of the ſecond covenant, makes him partaker of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, as really as ever his covenant-relation to Adam made him partaker of his guilt. So having all that Chriſt was, did, or ſuffered, for fulfilling the condition of the ſecond covenant, to plead for life and ſalvation; it is not poſſible the claim can miſcarry, juſtice as well as mercy befriending the plea of faith, as a righteous thing with God, 2 Theſſ. i. 6. 7.

Infer. 4. Laſtly, All who are in Chriſt the head of the covenant of grace, and ſo brought into it perſonally, are inherently righteous, or holy. For likeas though Adam alone did perſonally break the firſt covenant by the all-ruining offence, yet they to whom his guilt is imputed, do thereupon become inherently ſinful, through the corruption of nature conveyed to them from him; ſo, howbeit Chriſt alone did perform the condition of the ſecond covenant, yet thoſe to whom his righteouſneſs is imputed, do thereupon become inherently righteous, through inherent grace communicate to them from him by the Spirit. So teacheth the apoſtle in the forecited paſſage, Rom. v. 17. ‘ For if by one man's offence, death reigned by one; much more they which receive the abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteouſneſs, ſhall reign in life by one, Jeſus Chriſt.” How did death reign by Adam's offence? Not only in point of guilt, whereby his poſterity were bound over to deſtruction; but alſo in point of their being dead to all good, dead in treſpaſſes and ſins: therefore the receivers of the gift of righteouſneſs muſt thereby be brought to reign in life, not only legally in juſtification, but alſo morally in ſanctification, begun here, and perfected hereafter.

Accordingly, anſwerable to the three parts of the condition of the covenant of grace, undertaken and performed by the ſecond Adam, to wit, *holineſs of nature*, *righteouſneſs of life*, and *ſatisfaction for ſin*; there are three characters to be found in all capable ſubjects, who being perſonally brought into the covenant, have the righteouſneſs of Chriſt upon them, and imputed to them.

Char. 1. They are all born again, and ſo made partakers of a new and holy nature: 2 Cor. v. 17. ‘ Therefore,’ (namely, ſince he died for all, verſe 15.) ‘ if any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature.’ Chriſt's being born holy, ſecured a holy new birth to them in him: ſo they are all new creatures, ‘ created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works,’ Eph. ii. 10. new made in Chriſt, as ſure as they were marred in Adam. And how can it be otherwiſe? Can a man be ingrafted in the true vine, and not partake of the ſap and juice of the ſtock, that is, the Spirit and grace of Chriſt? No, ſure; ‘ If any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his,” Rom. viii. 9. Or, can the Spirit and grace of Chriſt be in any, and yet no change made on their nature, but it ſtill remain unrenewed? No, indeed: ‘ If Chriſt be in you, the body is dead, becauſe of ſin: but the ſpirit is life, becauſe of righteouſneſs,’ verſ. 10. Conſider this, ye who pretend to rely on the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, but are very eaſy in this point, whether ye are born again, or not; whether there is a holy nature derived from Chriſt to you, or not. Believe it, Sirs, if it be not ſo, ye have no ſaving intereſt, part, nor lot in Chriſt's righteouſneſs. Ye may on as good grounds pretend, that howbeit the guilt of Adam's ſin was imputed to you, yet there was no corrupt nature derived from him to you; as pretend, that Chriſt's righteouſneſs is imputed to you, while ye are not born again, your nature is not changed, by the communication of ſanctifying grace from Chriſt, unto you. Deceive not yourſelves; ye muſt be regenerate, elſe ye will periſh: for ‘ except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God,’ 1 John iii. 3.

Char. 2. They are all righteous and holy in their lives: Iſ. lx. 21. ‘ Thy people alſo ſhall be all righteous.’ Chap. lxii. 12. ‘ And they ſhall call them the holy people.’ How did ungodlineſs, unrighteouſneſs, and profanity, enter into the world, the which are now overflowing all banks? Was it not by one man, by Adam's ſin, which is imputed to all mankind? Rom. v. 12. Then be ſure, if the ſecond Adam's righteouſneſs be imputed to you, holineſs of life will come along with it: 1 Cor. vi. 11. ‘ But ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified.’ Does ſanctification then go before juſtification? No: but it hath a neceſſary dependance on juſtification, and evidenceth it to the world, and to one's own conſcience. Unjuſtified, unſanctified; and unſanctified, unjuſtified. Did our bleſſed Saviour come into the world, and in our nature lead a holy righteous life, that men might live as they liſt? Nay, quite the contrary; even ‘ that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might ſerve him without fear, in holineſs and righteouſneſs before him, all the days of our life,’ Luke i. 74. 75. If then Chriſt lived for you, aſſuredly ye ſhall live for him. Conſider this, ye who are far from righteouſneſs of life, living in the neglect of the duties either of the firſt or ſecond table, or both. Your ungodly and unrighteous life declares you to be yet in your ſins, under the curſe, and far from righteouſneſs imputed. There is indeed a righteouſneſs of Chriſt; but alas it is not upon you: ye are naked for all it, and ſtand expoſed to revenging wrath.

Char. 3. The old man is crucified in them all: Gal. v. 24. ‘ They that are Chriſt's, have crucified the fleſh, with the affections and luſts.’ Therefore I ſay to you in the words of the apoſtle, Rom. viii. 13. ‘ If ye live after the fleſh, ye ſhall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live.’ When our Saviour hung on the croſs, he hung there as repreſentative of all that are his, with all their ſins on him by imputation, that the body of ſin might be deſtroyed in his ſufferings for it, Rom. vi. 6. He hung there as the efficient meritorious cauſe of their mortification, that by his death he might deſtroy the power of death in them;

which appears not in any thing more, than in living luſts preying on their ſouls: Hoſ. xiii. 14. 'I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues.' See Tit. ii. 14. Rom. vi. 6. 7. Eph. v. 25. 26. And he hung there as the exemplary cauſe of their mortification; ſo that all who are his, and have ſinned after the *ſimilitude of Adam's tranſgreſſion,* are likewiſe crucified, and die to ſin, after his crucifixion and death; being *crucified with him,* Gal. ii. 20. *planted together* (with him) *in the likeneſs of his death,* Rom. vi. 5. the *fellowſhip of his ſufferings* making them *conformable unto his death,* Philip. iii. 10. Will ye then live after the fleſh, not wreſtling againſt, but fulfilling the luſts thereof; living in ſin and to ſin, inſtead of being mortified to it; and yet pretend that the ſatisfaction of Chriſt is imputed to you for righteouſneſs? Truly you may on as good grounds ſay, that the blood of Chriſt ſhed for you hath proven ineffectual; and that he hath ſo far miſſed of his aim and deſign in ſuffering for you: or that he died for you, that you might live in your ſin without danger. Theſe would make a blaſphemous profeſſion. Accordingly, your preſumptuous ſinful life and practice, is a courſe of practical blaſphemy againſt the Son of God, making him the miniſter of ſin; and evidenceth your pretenſions to the imputation of his ſatisfaction to be altogether vain. Nay of a truth, if ye have any ſaving intereſt in the death of Chriſt, your old man is crucified with him, Rom. vi. 6. and ye are dead with him, verſ. 8. dead with him to ſin, to the world and to the law.

(1.) If ye have a ſaving intereſt in Chriſt's death, ye are dead with him to ſin: Rom. vi. 10. 'In that he died, he died unto ſin once.' Verſe 11. 'Likewiſe reckon ye alſo yourſelves to be dead indeed unto ſin.' While our Lord Jeſus lived in the world, the ſins of all the elect, as to the guilt of them, hung about him, and made him a man of ſorrows all along; when he was upon the croſs, they wrought upon him moſt furiouſly, ſtinging him to the very ſoul, till they killed him, and got him laid in the grave. Then they had done their utmoſt againſt him, they could do no more. So dying for ſin, he died unto it, he was delivered from it; and in his reſurrection he ſhook them all off, as Paul ſhook the viper off his hand into the fire, and felt no harm; riſing out of the grave, even as he will appear the ſecond time, without ſin. Wherefore, if ye do indeed know the fellowſhip of his ſufferings, if you really have fellowſhip with him in them, death will have made its way from Chriſt the head unto you as his members; his death unto ſin cannot miſs to work your death unto it alſo. If you are dead indeed with Chriſt, as ingrafted into him, ſin hath got its death's wounds in you; the bond that knit your hearts and your luſts together, is looſed; and ye will be ſhaking off the viperous brood of them into the fire, in the daily practice of mortification. But if ye are not dead, but ſtill living unto ſin, it is an infallible evidence ye are none of the members of Chriſt: Rom. vi. 2. 'How ſhall we that are dead to ſin, live any longer therein?' Ver. 3. 'Know ye not, that ſo many of us as were baptized into Jeſus Chriſt, were baptized into his death?'

(2.) If ye have a ſaving intereſt in Chriſt's death, ye are dead with him to the world: Col. iii. 1. 'If ye then be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things which are above.'. Verſ. 3. 'For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Chriſt in God.' The world hated him, and uſed him very unkindly while he was in it; and when he died he parted with it for good and all, John xvii. 11. 'Now I am no more in the world—I come to thee.' The quieteſt lodging that ever the world allowed him in it, was a grave: and coming out from thence, he never ſlept another night in it. He tarried indeed forty days in it after that: as many days as the Iſraelites years in the wilderneſs: the former an exemplar, the latter a type of the Chriſtian life, from converſion till the removal into the other world; nevertheleſs he was dead to the world ſtill: he converſed now and then with his own, but no more with the world. Now, if ye are his, ye are dead with him unto the world too, in virtue of his death; being crucified unto it, Gal. vi. 14. Union with Chriſt by faith lays ſinners down in death, in Chriſt's grave; and ſo ſeparates between them and the world for ever: and withal, it raiſeth them up again with Chriſt into a quite new manner of life; no more that manner of life which they lived before their union with him, than that which Chriſt lived after his reſurrection, was the manner of life he lived before his death: Rom. vi. 4. 'We are buried with him by baptiſm unto death: that like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life.' If your title to heaven is indeed ſettled, by your receiving the atonement, now is your forty days before your aſcenſion into it; now are ye no more of the world, although ye be in it: your treaſure and heart are no more there. Ye are no more indwellers in it, as natives: but travellers through it, as *ſtrangers, coming up from the wilderneſs, leaning on the beloved,* Cant. iii. 5.

(3.) If ye have a ſaving intereſt in Chriſt's death, ye are dead with him to the law alſo: Gal. ii. 19. 'I through the law am dead to the law.' Verſ. 20. 'I am crucified with Chriſt.' Our Lord Jeſus took on our nature to ſatisfy the law therein: the whole courſe of his life was a courſe of his obedience to it, for life and ſalvation to us; and he ſuffered to ſatisfy it in what of that kind it had to demand, for that effect: in a word, he was born to the law, he lived to the law, and he died to the law: namely, for to clear accounts with it, to ſatisfy it fully, and get life and ſalvation for us with its good leave. *He was made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law,* Gal. iv. 4. 5. And when once it fell upon him, it never left exacting of him, till it had got the utmoſt farthing, and he was quite free with it, as *dead* to it, Rom. vii. 4. In token whereof he got up the bond, blotted it out, yea, rent it in pieces, nailing it to his croſs, Col. ii. 14.

Now, Chriſt became dead to it, dying to it in his death on the croſs; ſo that the holineſs and righteouſneſs of the man Chriſt did thereafter no more run in the channel in which it had run before, namely, from the womb to his grave; that is to ſay, it was no more, and ſhall be no more for ever, obedience performed to the law for life and ſalvation; theſe having been completely gained and ſecured by the obedience he gave it from the womb to the grave. Wherefore, my brethren, if ye are his, ye alſo are become dead to the law by the body of Chriſt, which became dead to it on the croſs, Rom. vii. 4. As ye will not be libertines in your life and practice, being dead to ſin and the world with Chriſt; ſo ye will not be legaliſts in your life and practice neither, being alſo dead with him to the law as a covenant of works. Your obedience will run in another channel than it did before your union with Chriſt, even in the channel of the goſpel. Ye will ſerve in newneſs of ſpirit, in faith and love. The frowns of a merciful Father will be a terror to you to fright you from ſin; love and gratitude will prompt you to obedience. The grieving of the Spirit of a Saviour will be a ſpring of ſorrow to you; and his atoning blood and perfect righteouſneſs will be the ſpring-head of all your comfort before the Lord; your good works but ſtreams thereof, as they evidence your ſaving intereſt in theſe, are accepted through them, and glorify God your Saviour. Ye will not continue to ſerve in the oldneſs of the letter, as before; at what time the law was the ſpring of all the obedience ye performed; fear of the puniſhment of hell for your ſins, and hope of the reward of heaven's happineſs for your duties; being the weights that made you go, tho' for them you often ſtopped: your ſorrows ſpringing from your ill works, under the influence of the law allenarly; and your comforts from your good works under the ſame influence; ye being alive to the law, and dead to Chriſt, Rom. vii. 6. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we ſhould ſerve in newneſs of ſpirit, and not in the oldneſs of the latter. If by faith you wholly rely on Chriſt's righteouſneſs, the holineſs of his nature, the righteouſneſs of his life, and his ſatisfaction for ſin; how is it poſſible but ye muſt be dead to the law? for the law is not of faith, Gal. iii. 12. But if you perform your obedience for life and ſalvation, looking for acceptance with God on the account of your works, you go in a way directly oppoſite to the way of faith, and either altogether reject Chriſt's ſatisfying of the law, or elſe impute imperfection unto his payment of the bond. 'And Chriſt is become of no effect unto you, whoſoever of 'of you are juſtified by the law; ye are fallen from grace,' Gal. v. 4.

Thus far of the firſt part of the covenant, namely, the conditionary part.

The Second Part of the Covenant, namely, the PROMISSORY *Part.*

IN every covenant, whether it be a proper, or improper covenant, there is a promiſe. And in a proper covenant, the promiſſory part anſwers to the conditionary part, being an obligation which the party-covenanter to whom the condition is performed, comes under, for ſome benefit to be beſtowed in view of the performance of the condition. This is the promiſe of a proper covenant, binding on him who makes it, providing the party contracting with him do his part. In every ſuch caſe, where the thing is lawful and poſſible, it binds in point of truth and faithfulneſs, by virtue of the compact: in ſome caſes it binds alſo, in point of remunerative juſtice: to wit, where the condition performed is properly equivalent to the benefit promiſed.

The covenant of grace, made between God and Chriſt as the head and repreſentative of his ſpiritual ſeed, is a proper covenant. And in it there is a promiſſory part, anſwering to the conditionary part already explained: and it is God's part of the covenant, as the other was the Mediator's. Thereby God hath obliged himſelf, to make the benefits therein condeſcended on forthcoming, upon the conſideration of the performing of the condition. And forasmuch as the condition performed by Chriſt, was ſtrictly meritorious of the benefit promiſed; the promiſes are binding and firm, not only in reſpect of the truth and faithfulneſs, but alſo in reſpect of the juſtice of God.

Of what weight and importance the promiſſory part of the covenant is, will appear by the following conſiderations.

1. The covenant hath its name from this part of it, being called the *covenants of promiſe*, Eph. ii. 12. *Covenants*, becauſe, though ſtill in itſelf but one covenant, yet from its firſt promulgation in paradiſe, it was often renewed, as to Abraham, Jacob, the Iſraelites in the wilderneſs, and to David; and as oft as it was renewed, it was renewed in a promiſe. The firſt covenant had a promiſe of life; yet it is not called a covenant of promiſe: on the contrary, the law, or that covenant, is oppoſed to the promiſe: though not in its uſe, yet in its nature, Gal. iii. 18. 'If the inheritance be of the law, 'it is no more of promiſe.' For the law's promiſe of life was ſuſpended on the condition of works, to be performed by men themſelves; whereas in the ſecond covenant, life and ſalvation are promiſed to ſinners freely, for Chriſt's ſake, without reſpect to any work of theirs as the condition thereof.'

2. The covenant is deſcribed to us, by the Holy Ghoſt, as a cluſter of free promiſes of grace and glory to poor ſinners, in which no mention is made of any condition: Heb. viii. 10. 'This is the covenant--I will 'put my laws into their mind, and write them in their 'hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they ſhall 'be to me a people.' Verſe 11. 'And they ſhall not 'teach every man his neighbour, and every man his 'brother, ſaying, Know the Lord; for all ſhall know 'me, from the leaſt to the greateſt.' Verſe 12. 'For I 'will be merciful to their unrighteouſneſs, and their ſins 'and their iniquities will I remember no more.' Theſe promiſes with their condition, having been propoſed to, and accepted by Chriſt as ſecond Adam, and the condition performed by him; the covenant comes natively, in the goſpel, to be ſet before us in them, to be by us received and embraced in and through Chriſt, by faith. Thus the promiſes are *the covenant*, by way of eminency; even God's covenant, wherein he hath bound himſelf to perform his part, as the Mediator hath already performed his. And in this ſenſe, indeed, the covenant of grace is not conditional, but conſiſts of abſolute promiſes; that is, promiſes become abſolute, through the condition thereof actually performed already; but being conſidered in its full latitude, and in reſpect of Chriſt the covenant, and all the promiſes thereof, are properly and ſtrictly conditional.

3. The promiſes of the covenant are the purchaſe of the blood of Chriſt; the fruit of his fulfilling all righteouſneſs, in his birth, life, and death. As the curſe came by the demerit of Adam's ſin; ſo the promiſes are owing to the merit of Chriſt's righteouſneſs; they are the new teſtament in his blood, 1 Cor. xi. 25. From the promiſe of the bread and water, (Iſa. xxxiii. 16.) to the promiſe of a ſeat with him on his throne, (Rev. iii. 21.) they are all the purchaſe of his meritorious obedience to the death. Juſtly are they called exceeding precious promiſes, 2 Pet. i. 4. as being the price of his blood. Of what unſpeakable weight and importance muſt they be, that coſt ſuch a price, between the Father and his own Son!

4. The great deſign and end of the covenant is accompliſhed in the performing of the promiſſory part thereof; and that is, the glory of God, and the ſalvation of ſinners. The great glory to God, and grace to ſinners, ſpringing up from the whole of the covenant, meet together here, namely, in the accompliſhment of the promiſes, as all the rivers meet together in the ſea. The promiſes were the great thing the parties-contractors had in view, when they entered into the covenant: it was room for them the Father ſought by his propoſal of the covenant; and that was what the Son intended to purchaſe, by his fulfilling the condition. The condition of the covenant is the foundation of the promiſes; the promiſes the glorious ſuperſtructure reared upon that coſtly foundation. The adminiſtration of the covenant, is ſubſervient to the accompliſhment of the promiſes. The condition of the covenant was performed on earth, in the ſpace of about thirty-three years; the promiſes have been a-performing more than five thouſand years on earth, and will be a performing in heaven, through the ages of eternity.

5. The happineſs and comfort of all the elect, for time and eternity, depends upon the promiſes of the covenant. What keeps unconverted elect perſons from dying in that ſtate, and ſo dropping down to hell, but the promiſe of the covenant? What makes grace overtake them, when they are fleeing from it, but the promiſe? What preſerves grace in them, like a ſpark of fire in an ocean, that it is not extinguiſhed, but the promiſe? And what is their ſecurity and comfort in the face of death, but the ſame promiſe? 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

6. The glory of the man Chriſt, as Mediator, depends on the promiſe of the covenant. This was the ſecurity in the faith of which he lived on earth, about the ſpace of thirty-three years, in a very low condition; and in the end died an ignominious death: Pſal. xxii. 4. 'Our 'fathers truſted in thee: they truſted, and thou didſt de'liver them.' He paid the price of the redemption of ſinners, while as yet many of the redeemed were not born, nay nor as yet are: and ſeveral of them embrewed their hands in his blood: but he reſted on the promiſe of the covenant. He pleaded it when he was juſt entering into the ſwelling waves of death, where he was like Jonah, to be ſwallowed up. John xvii. 5. *Now, O Father, glorify me with thyſelf.* And in the faith of the accompliſhment of the promiſe, he completed his per-

formance of the condition: *for the joy that was yet before him* in the promiſe, he *endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame*, Heb xii. 2.

7. Laſtly, God hath ſworn the promiſe of the covenant; 'I have made a covenant with my choſen: I have ſworn unto David my ſervant.' The apoſtle tells us, that 'God willing more abundantly to ſhew unto the heirs of promiſe the immutability of his counſel, confirmed it by an oath,' Heb. vi. 17. A tender man will not ſwear a promiſe, but in a matter of weight. Of what unſpeakable weight and importance then muſt the promiſe of the covenant be, which the God of truth hath confirmed with his oath.

Now, for clearing of this part of the covenant, we ſhall, 1. Conſider the promiſes in general; and, 2. Take a more particular view of them.

Of the promiſes in general.

AS to the promiſes in general, two things are to be inquired into: 1. What are the general kinds of them? and, 2. To whom they are made?

I. As to the general kinds of the promiſes; conſidering the parties on whom the promiſes of the covenant of grace have their direct and immediate effect, they appear to be of two general kinds.

1. Some of them have their direct and immediate effect on Chriſt himſelf, the head of the covenant; ſuch as the promiſe of aſſiſtance in his work, and the promiſe of a name above every name. So in the firſt covenant, there were promiſes which were to have their direct and immediate effect on Adam himſelf, and looked not, but mediately and indirectly, to his poſterity; ſuch of them, at leaſt, as ſhould have lived after the complete fulfilling of the condition of that covenant; namely, the promiſes of natural life continued in vigour and comfort, and of ſpiritual life continued in favour and fellowſhip with God, during the courſe of his probationary obedience.

2. Others of them have their direct and immediate effect on Chriſt's ſpiritual ſeed, comprehended with him in the covenant; ſuch as the promiſes of regeneration, of the new heart, and cleanſing from the defilement of ſin. So in the firſt Adam's covenant, the promiſe of life contained a promiſe of the holy conception and birth of his natural ſeed: in reſpect of which, the promiſe would have had its direct and immediate effect, not on Adam himſelf, but on his poſterity.

II. The next thing to be conſidered is, To whom they were made? And we may take up this point in two things.

Firſt, The promiſes of the firſt ſort, namely, thoſe having their direct and immediate effect on the perſon of Chriſt, were made to Chriſt himſelf. Of this no doubt can be moved. And they were made to him as the head of the covenant, the ſecond Adam, the repreſentative of his ſeed. This appears from our text, wherein he is called the *Choſen*, the head-elect, and repreſentative of the election, David, God's ſervant; in which capacity the covenant was cut off or made, to him, by the Father. It is evident, that all the promiſes of aſſiſtance in his work, and of his ſubſequent reward, were made to him in view of his performance of the condition; and therefore, ſince he performed the condition, as head of the covenant, ſecond Adam, and repreſentative of his ſeed, theſe promiſes were made to him in that capacity.

The promiſes of this kind then were made to Chriſt only. And that was the peculiar honour put upon the head of the covenant, in the promiſſory part; as it was his peculiar burden to fulfil the conditionary part. So he hath the *name which is above every name*, and is *anointed with the oil of gladneſs above his fellows.* In the election, whereof he is the head, he ſhines above the reſt, as the ſun in his meridian brightneſs, above the twinkling ſtars. He is the Benjamin at God's table with his brethren, whoſe meſs of promiſes in the covenant is *five times ſo much as any of theirs*; the Joſeph who was ſeparate from his brethren, in fulfilling the condition of the covenant, and hath a double portion in the promiſed land made over to him, as the firſt born amongſt many brethren.

Nevertheleſs, as the honour and proſperity of the head redound to the members, their intereſt, in reſpect of their union and communion, being a joint intereſt; ſo the glory and honour ſettled on Chriſt by promiſe, are a ſpring of grace and glory to his members, an enriching treaſure, their glory and crown. He is that head of gold, which puts a glory on the body: and the ointment poured upon the head, cannot miſs to go down to the ſkirts of his garments. And hence is, (1.) The continual cry of prayer by the whole company of the faithful, for the accompliſhing of the promiſes made to the Mediator, Pſal. lxxii. 15. 'Prayer alſo ſhall be made for him continually.' It is evident that Pſalm concerns the Meſſias. But prayer made continually for Chriſt! how can that be? Why, till the world's end, that cry in prayer ſhall never ceaſe among the faithful, *Thy kingdom come*, Matth. vi. 10. It began with Adam's embracing the promiſe by faith, was carried on all along the time of the Old Teſtament: and now it hath been ſounding in the New Teſtament church more than ſixteen hundred years, and ſhall not ceaſe until the conſummation of all things. (2.) Hence alſo the joyful acclamations of praiſe, by the ſame company, for the accompliſhment of promiſes to the Mediator. Whenſoever there appears any ſuch accompliſhment made, it is matter of joy to the church; and the more there appears of it, the joy is the more increaſed. Thus the church hath a ſong upon the fulfilling of the promiſe of the gathering of the nations unto him, Iſa. xii. 1.; of his victory over Antichriſt, Rev. xix. 1.; of the calling of the Jews, verſe 6. And when, the end being come, all the promiſes made to him ſhall be accompliſhed, that will afford them an everlaſting ſong of praiſe.

Secondly, The promiſes of the other ſort, namely, thoſe having their direct immediate effect on the elect, are made to Chriſt primarily, and then to them ſecondarily: firſt, to the head; then, to the members, through him.

1. The promiſes having their immediate effect on the elect, are made to Chriſt immediately, primarily, and chiefly. God hath in the covenant promiſed grace and glory, all that pertains to life and godlineſs, unto a ſelect company of mankind: but the promiſe of all theſe was firſt and chiefly made to Chriſt their head; ſo that he hath not only an intereſt in theſe promiſes, but the chief intereſt in them. This appears by ſeveral documents from the word of God.

1ſt, The Apoſtle teſtifies, that *the promiſes were made to the ſeed, which is Chriſt*, Gal. iii. 16. And the promiſes he ſpeaks of, are the promiſe of the bleſſing, of the Spirit, ver. 14.; of the inheritance, ver. 18.; the promiſes received through faith, ver. 14. Even theſe are made to Chriſt the head of the body. This is confirmed by thoſe paſſages which ſhew God's covenant to be made with Chriſt, and in the mean time explain it by a promiſe of the happineſs of his ſeed, Pſal. lxxxix. 3. with 4. ver. 28. and 29. ver. 35. and 36. And what is more natural, than to make a promiſe to a father in favour of his children?

2dly, Our Lord Jeſus is conſtitute the heir of all things, (Heb. i. 2.) in virtue of the promiſe of the covenant, 'I will make him my firſt-born,' Pſal. lxxxix. 27. Now, if Chriſt, as the ſecond Adam be heir of all things, by his Father's promiſe, the promiſes of all things are made to him; and, conſequently, the promiſe of eternal life, comprehending all happineſs to his people, is made to him in the firſt place. So Chriſt is the firſt and chief heir; and they are ſecondary heirs in and through him. Hence, in view of the great promiſe of the covenant, 'I

‘ will be their God,’ our Saviour hath that endearing expreſſion, “ I aſcend unto my Father and your Father, ‘ and to my God and your God,’ John xx. 17. Compare Rom. viii. 17. ‘ And if children, then heirs; heirs ‘ of God, and joint-heirs with Chriſt.’

3dly, As in the covenant of works, God promiſed life to Adam's natural ſeed, upon condition of his perfect obedience; which is evident from death's coming on them by his diſobedience: ſo in the covenant of grace, he hath promiſed life to Chriſt's ſpiritual ſeed, upon condition of his obedience; for ‘ as in Adam all die, even ſo in ‘ Chriſt ſhall all be made alive,’ 1 Cor. xv. 22. But that promiſe of life for Adam's natural ſeed, was primarily made to Adam himſelf, while as yet none of them were in being; and they were to partake of it only through him, to whom it was made as their repreſentative. Therefore the promiſe of life to Chriſt's ſpiritual ſeed, was made chiefly to Chriſt himſelf; and to them only in and through him. Accordingly we are told, that promiſe of eternal life, upon which the hope of believers is built, was made before the world began, Tit. i. 2. And to whom could it be then made immediately and primarily, but to Chriſt the head of the covenant?

Laſtly, Theſe promiſes contain a part of the reward made over in the covenant to Jeſus Chriſt, ‘ who for the ‘ joy that was ſet before him, endured the croſs, Heb. xii. 2. A great part of which joy lay here; ‘ He ſhall ‘ ſee his ſeed—the travel of his ſoul,’ Iſa. liii. 10. 11. All of theſe promiſes were the price of his blood to him, the purchaſe of his obedience and death: therefore called *the new teſtament in his blood.* To whom could the reward be chiefly promiſed, but to him who performed the condition, wrought the work? Unto him therefore it was of debt, namely, in virtue of the promiſe, which made it due to him upon his performing of the condition. The bleſſings of the covenant which came on the elect, are certainly to be conſidered as a reward to Chriſt, as well as a free gift to them. And conſidering them in the firſt of theſe views, there is no more abſurdity in the promiſe of the new hearts being made to Chriſt, than in a phyſician's making a promiſe to a father to cure his lame child, when he hath given him ſecurity for his fees; in which caſe the child cannot look on the promiſes made to himſelf at all, but ſecondarily through his father, who was the party-contractor.

This is a point of conſiderable weight, and ſerves both to inform our mind, and direct our practice; for the following inferences from it are native.

(1.) The promiſes of the covenant are not made to the believer's good works; but to Chriſt's works, and to the working believer in him. Unto the believer they are abſolutely free, and not of debt; and therefore are not made to his works; for ‘ to him that worketh is the ‘ reward not reckoned of grace but of debt, Rom. vi. 4. There is indeed a comely order of the promiſes, whereby the promiſes of purity of heart to the elect, goes before the promiſe of their ſeeing God in heaven; the promiſe of humiliation, before that of lifting up: whereupon it is declared in the adminiſtration of the covenant, that, *the pure in heart ſhall ſee God:* that they who *humble themſelves, ſhall be lifted up:* and thus *godlineſs hath promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come,* 1 Tim. iv. 8. But the foundation of all theſe promiſes, whether of things that are our duty, or our privilege, what they all depend upon as their proper condition, is the obedience of Chriſt allenarly; they being all made to him in the firſt place, the latter as well as the former.

(2.) The firſt grace whereby the dead elect are quickened, and made to believe and unite with Chriſt, is conveyed to them in the channel of a promiſe, as well as the grace following faith; Ezek. xxxvi. 27. ‘ I will put ‘ my ſpirit within you.’ For although in their natural eſtate they are not capable of a believing pleading of the promiſe; nor have they, at that time, a perſonal ſaving intereſt in the promiſes: yet *the Lord Jeſus knoweth them that are his,* and for whom the promiſes were made to him: and having the adminiſtration of the covenant in his own hand, he cannot fail of ſeeing to the accompliſhing of them, in the appointed time. Howbeit they, being dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, cannot conſult their own intereſt; yet he having the chief intereſt in the promiſes, will not neglect his own cauſe, but will ſee them exactly accompliſhed.

(3.) The way to be perſonally and ſavingly intereſted in the promiſes, for time and eternity, is to unite with Chriſt by faith; ‘ for all the promiſes of God in him are ‘ yea, and in him amen,’ 2 Cor. i. 20. Would ye fain know how the great and precious promiſes may become yours? Why, they are all his; they are all made to him. Take him, and they are yours: even as he who marries the heireſs, hath a right to her portion, and all the bills and bonds wherein any of it is contained.

(4.) When through deadneſs and darkneſs of ſpirit, whether ariſing from ſome conſcience-waſting guilt, or otherwiſe, your faith of the promiſe is failed, and you cannot again faſten your gripe upon it, becauſe you can ſee no good in you; embrace Chriſt again, and the promiſe in him, notwithſtanding of your ſeen and felt ſinfulneſs and utter unworthineſs; and by no means ſtand off from the promiſe untill you be in better caſe; but ſay with the Pſalmiſt, ‘ Iniquities prevail againſt me: ‘ as for our tranſgreſſions, thou ſhalt purge them away,’ Pſal. lxv. 3. For as the goodneſs in you was not the ground of the promiſe; ſo the evil in you doth not overturn it, and make it of none effect. The foundation of the promiſe ſtands ſure in Chriſt, whatever alterations the frame and caſe of a believer's ſpirit do undergo. It is eſtabliſhed as the moon, (Pſal. lxxxix. 37.) which is ſtill the ſame in itſelf, notwithſtanding of the variety of its appearances to our ſight, one while waxing, at another time waning.

(5.) The true way to plead the promiſes, is to come to God in the name of Chriſt, and plead the fulfilling of them to us for his ſake: John xvi. 23. ‘ Whatſoever ‘ ye ſhall aſk the Father in my name, he will give it you.’ Matth. xxi. 22. ‘ Believing, ye ſhall receive.’ Dan. ix. 17. ‘ O our God, cauſe thy face to ſhine upon thy ſanctuary that is deſolate, for the Lord's ſake.’ To aſk in Chriſt's name, believing, is to preſent one's ſelf before the Lord, as a member of Chriſt, joined and cleaving to him offered to us in the goſpel; and for the ſake of the head, to implore the free favour of the promiſe, relying on his merit for obtaining it. This is the import of that paſſage, Gen. xii. 3. as it relates to Chriſt, ‘ In ‘ thee ſhall all families of the earth’ (to wit, that ſhall be bleſſed) ‘ be bleſſed;’ or rather, as the original word properly ſignifies, be made to kneel, namely, to receive the bleſſing; all that are bleſſed, being bleſſed *in* Chriſt, Eph. i. 3. compare Phil. ii. 10. This is the method in which God diſpenſeth the favours of his promiſe: 2 Sam. vii. 21. ‘ For thy word's ſake, and according to ‘ thine own heart, haſt thou done all theſe great things.’ Compare 1 Chron. xvii. 19. ‘ For thy ſervant's ſake, and ‘ according to thine own heart, haſt thou done all this ‘ greatneſs;’ i. e. for the ſake of the Word, thy Servant, the Meſſias: for as both theſe paſſages are a narration of the very ſame thing, there is no manner of difference at all between them in the original, ſave that where the one hath *thy word,* the other hath *thy ſervant.*

(6.) Believers may hereby ſtrengthen their faith of the accompliſhment of the promiſes to them. Whatever eaſy work ſome have, in maintaining their preſumptuous hopes of the mercy of God to eternal life; while, not ſeeing the heinous nature of their ſin, they build their hopes on ſomething in themſelves, rather than upon the free promiſe of the covenant in Chriſt Jeſus; yet unto the ſerious godly, no ſmall difficulty in believing doth ariſe, from the joint view of the greatneſs and preciouſneſs of the promiſes, and the greatneſs of their ſins and of their unworthineſs. Hence they are ready to ſay, Can ever ſuch promiſes be made out to ſuch an one as I am? And truly there is nothing in them that can furniſh an anſwer to this grave caſe. But here is a ſatisfying anſwer to it: The promiſes are all of them made to Chriſt chiefly, even to him who purchaſed them with his blood; and juſtice requires that they be performed to him; and being performed to him, they muſt needs have their effect on all his members, for whom, becauſe in themſelves unworthy, he merited them. So the ſoul may ſay, However unworthy I am, yet he is worthy for whom God ſhould do this.

2. The promiſes having their immediate effect on the elect, are made to themſelves ſecondarily, in and through Chriſt. As he hath the fundamental and chief intereſt in them, ſo they have a derived intereſt in them through him. There was from eternity a legal union between Chriſt and them in the covenant; whereby their debt became his, and the promiſes made to him became theirs. As upon the one hand, 'the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all,' Iſa. liii. 6.; ſo, on the other hand, 'grace was given us in Chriſt Jeſus, before the world began,' 2 Tim. i. 9. In time there is a real myſtical union made between him and them, upon his taking poſſeſſion of them by his Spirit, and dwelling in them by faith. The former conſtituted a right for them unto the promiſes, in Chriſt the head; the latter veſts them with a right thereto, in their own perſons, through him; as being actual members of his body. In reſpect of the one, eternal life is ſaid to be promiſed, and grace ſaid to be given us, before the world began, Tit. i. 2. 2 Tim. i. 9.; in reſpect of the other, believers are called the heirs of promiſe, Heb. vi. 17.; partakers of his promiſe in Chriſt, Eph. iii. 6.; and the promiſe is given to them that believe, Gal. iii. 22.

Thus it appears, that theſe promiſes are made to Chriſt's ſpiritual ſeed, as well as to himſelf; though primarily to him as the repreſentative, on whom the fulfilling of the condition was laid; and but ſecondarily to them as the repreſented, who were to receive the benefit. And hence ariſeth another difference, namely, that, properly and ſtrictly ſpeaking, the promiſes were conditional to Chriſt, but they are abſolute and free to us: even as the promiſe of life in the firſt covenant, which was conditional to Adam, would have been abſolute to his natural ſeed, the condition once being fulfilled. Thus Chriſt's merit, and the free grace of God, meet together in the covenant: juſtice is fully ſatisfied, and grace runs freely, in that channel; the promiſes being all purchaſed at the full rate, but no part of the price advanced by us. Hence we *obtain precious faith*, with all other ſaving benefits, *through the righteouſneſs of God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, (or rather, *the righteouſneſs of our God and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*,) as the proper condition of them all, 2 Pet. i. 1. And in the mean time, God *blotteth out our tranſgreſſions for his own ſake*, Iſa. xliii. 25.; and *all things that pertain unto life and godlineſs*, are *given* (or *gifted*) *unto us*, 2 Pet. i. 3.

Of the promiſes peculiar to Chriſt.

Having ſpoken of the promiſes in general, we come now to take a more particular view of them; and firſt, of the promiſes peculiar to Chriſt himſelf. Theſe are many, but may all be reduced to three heads; to wit, the promiſe of aſſiſtance, of acceptance, and of reward of his work.

Firſt, Our Lord Jeſus had a promiſe of aſſiſtance in his work: Pſal. lxxxix. 21. 'Mine arm ſhall ſtrengthen 'him.' Having undertaken the work of our redemption, he had his Father's promiſe, that when it came to the ſetting to, he would ſtrengthen and uphold him in going through with it, Iſa. xlii. 1.—4. And in the faith of this covenanted aſſiſtance, he went through the hardeſt pieces thereof: chap. l. 6. 'I gave my back to 'the ſmiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the 'hair: I hid not my face from ſhame and ſpitting.' Ver. 7. 'For the Lord God will help me.' Accordingly, in his heavineſs in the garden, 'there appeared an angel 'unto him from heaven, ſtrengthening him,' Luke xxii. 43. And this promiſed aſſiſtance was the token of his Father's good pleaſure in, and liking of the work, while it was a-doing.

Secondly, He had a promiſe of acceptance of his work when once done; of the acceptance thereof as a full diſcharge and performance of the condition of the covenant, entitling him to the promiſed reward. Hence, in view of the ſure performance of his work, the acceptance thereof was, at his baptiſm, proclaimed by *a voice from heaven, ſaying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed*, Matth. iii. 17. And it was renewed at his transfiguration, a little before his paſſion, Chap. xvii. 5. Unto this promiſe of acceptance thereof belongs the promiſe of his reſurrection, and of his juſtification.

1. The promiſe of his reſurrection from the dead: Pſal. xvi. 10. 'Thou wilt not leave my ſoul in hell; neither wilt thou ſuffer thine holy One to ſee corruption', which is expounded of the reſurrection of Chriſt, Acts ii. 31. God, by raiſing Chriſt from the dead, did in effect declare his acceptance of the work by him performed. It evidenced the debt to be fully cleared, that he who laid him up in the priſon of the grave, did bring him out of it again: ſending his angel to roll away the ſtone from the door of it, and ſo to diſmiſs him legally. For thus it was agreed in the covenant, that as Chriſt ſhould give himſelf to the death, for the ſatisfaction of juſtice; ſo the Father ſhould bring him again from the dead, in reſpect of that ſatisfaction made by his blood, Heb. xiii. 20.

2. The promiſe of his juſtification: Iſa. l. 8. He is near that juſtifieth me. The accompliſhment of which is obſerved by the apoſtle, 1 Tim. iii. 16. God manifeſted in the fleſh, juſtified in the Spirit. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt having no perſonal ſins to be pardoned, needed no perſonal juſtification: but as he was ſurety of the elect, and had the iniquities of them all laid on him, it was provided in the covenant as juſt, that the work he had undertaken being performed, he ſhould have an official juſtification. Having paid the debt, he had by promiſe a full and ample diſcharge thereof, under the hand and ſeal of Heaven. And here lies the great ſecurity of his people againſt the law's demand of ſatisfaction from them.

Laſtly, He had a promiſe of a glorious reward to be conferred on him, as the proper merit of his work done. There was a joy ſet before him in the promiſe, for which he endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, Heb. xii. 2. Never was there ſuch a work wrought: and never was there ſuch a reward promiſed. Unto it there belongs a fivefold promiſe.

1. The promiſe of a new kind of intereſt in God, as his God and Father, Pſal. lxxxix. 26. *He ſhall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God.* Our Lord Jeſus had God to his father, by eternal birth-right; but there was a new relation conſtituted between God and Chriſt, as the ſecond Adam, head of the covenant, founded on his undertaking and fulfilling the covenant-condition; whereby he became heir of God as his heritage, according to that of the apoſtle, Rom. viii. 17. *Heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt;* namely, with Chriſt as the primary heir. For by his obedience unto death, he purchaſed the enjoyment of God, as a God and Father. I do not ſay, he purchaſed it for himſelf; the man Chriſt needed not to do that, foraſmuch as he had it, in virtue of the perſonal union of the two natures; but he purchaſed it for ſinners, who had loſt all ſaving intereſt in God, but could not be happy without it.

2. The promiſe of a glorious exaltation, to be the Father's honorary ſervant, prime Miniſter of heaven, as great adminiſtrator of the covenant: Iſa. lii. 13. 'Behold my ſervant ſhall deal prudently, he ſhall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.' Chap. xlix. 8. 'I will give thee for a covenant of the people.' In fulfilling the condition of the covenant, he took upon him

the form of a bond-ſervant, and humbled himſelf even unto the death of the croſs; wherefore God alſo, according to the promiſe of the covenant, hath highly exalted him to the prime miniſtry of heaven, and given him a name as great adminiſtrator of the covenant, which is above every name; that at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, Philip ii. 7. 8. 9. 10. The nature, vaſt extent, and importance of this promiſe, will afterwards be unfolded, when we come to treat of the adminiſtration of the covenant, in virtue thereof, put in the Mediator's hand.

3. The promiſe of a ſeed and offspring, numerous as the ſtars of heaven; Iſa. liii. 10. 'He ſhall ſee his ſeed.' Gen. xv. 5. 'So ſhall thy ſeed be, (namely,) as the ſtars 'of the ſky in multitude,' Heb. xi. 12. even the whole multitude of the elect, all of them to live by his death, and to bear his image, as a child doth that of his father. He conſented to ſuffer the pangs of death: but they were travailing pains, to iſſue in a numerous birth. He was as a corn of wheat to fall into the ground, and die; but the promiſe ſecured to him, on that condition, his bringing forth much fruit, John xii. 24. It is in purſuance of the accompliſhment of this promiſe the goſpel continues to be preached from age to age; foraſmuch as, in virtue thereof, *as many as are ordained to eternal life*, ſhall *believe*.

4. The promiſe of his inheriting all things, as primary heir; Pſalm lxxxix. 27. 'I will make him my firſt born.' So the apoſtle ſays, God hath appointed him heir of all things, Heb. i. 2. And Chriſt himſelf declares his being put in poſſeſſion accordingly, Matth. xi. 27. *All things are delivered unto me of my Father*. Thus he hath, by promiſe, ſuitable treaſures for the ſupporting of the dignity conferred on him. But of this alſo more afterwards.

5. Laſtly, The promiſe of victory and dominion over all his and his people's enemies: Pſalm lxxxix. 23. 'I 'will beat down his foes before his face.' He was to encounter with Satan, ſin, and death, in the quarrel of the deſigned heirs of glory; and no ſooner was he engaged againſt them, but the world of men begun a war with him too; but he had his Father's promiſe for victory and dominion over them all; that, howbeit he ſhould get the firſt fall, and die in the battle, yet his death ſhould be the deſtruction of Satan's dominion, ſin's power, and death's bands over his people; and that whoſoever ſhould go about to ſupport that tottering intereſt, ſhould fall under him; Pſalm. cx. 1. 'The Lord 'ſaid unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I 'make thine enemies thy footſtool.'

And thus far of the threefold promiſe peculiar to Chriſt himſelf, in the covenant.

Of the Promiſe of eternal life to the elect, conſidered in three Periods.

THE promiſes common to the elect, made in and through Chriſt unto them in the covenant, are alſo many. A particular enumeration of them I intend not, though every one of them is more precious than the gold of Ophir: but it would be profitable for ſerious Chriſtians, as they read through the Old and New Teſtament, to mark them in their Bibles, for their ſpiritual treaſure, ſtored with ſuch variety, as affords what is ſuitable for every caſe they can be in. They are all comprehended in, and may be reduced unto this one, to wit, the promiſe of eternal life: for which the two following texts may be viewed.

Tit. i. 2. *In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promiſed before the world began.*
1 John ii. 25. *And this is the promiſe that he hath promiſed us, even eternal life.*

In which words, three things for our purpoſe offer themſelves to be obſerved. 1. The great and comprehenſive promiſe of the covenant of grace, the ſum of all the promiſes therein, to ſinners; namely, the promiſe of life eternal: that is the order of the words in the original. The covenant is a covenant of life, deſigned for reſtoring dead ſinners to life: and ſo the promiſe of it is a promiſe of life. And that life is eternal. 2. The date of this promiſe, *Before the world began*. While as yet time was not, and the foundation of the world was not laid, it was made, and eternal life thereby ſecured to the elect. 3. The parties concerned in it. The maker of the promiſe was God that cannot lie; whoſe promiſe therefore muſt needs take effect. And, by ſpecial appropriation, it was the Father: it was he that made it: ver. 24. 'Ye alſo ſhall continue in the Son, and in 'the Father.' Ver. 25. 'And this is the promiſe that 'he hath promiſed us,' &c. The party it was made to, is, (1.) and chiefly, Jeſus Chriſt, the ſecond Adam, head of the covenant: for there is no neceſſity to recede from the proper ſignification of the word here uſed, which is promiſing, to a catachreſtical one, to wit, purpoſing; ſince the promiſes were made to Chriſt, Gal. iii. 16. And he really was before the world began, and conſequently capable of having a promiſe made to him. (2.) The elect in him. He hath promiſed us, namely, us legally in him before the world began; that is, the elect who apply and plead the promiſe when they believe.

And hence ariſeth this truth, *viz. The great and comprehenſive promiſe to Chriſt's ſpiritual ſeed, in the covenant, is the promiſe of life eternal, made from eternity to Chriſt, and then to them in him.*

For opening of this promiſe of the covenant, we ſhall view it, (1.) More generally, (2.) More particularly.

I. In the general it ſpeaks two things, to wit, all true happineſs, and the everlaſtingneſs of that happineſs.

Firſt, It comprehends, as the matter thereof, all true happineſs. For life is uſed for happineſs in the holy language, 1 Sam. xxv. 6. So John iv. 50. And it is ſo uſed in the ſtile of both covenants: Rom. x. 5. 'The 'man which doth thoſe things, ſhall *live*' (i. e. *be happy*) 'by them.' Hab. ii. 4. 'The juſt ſhall live' (i. e. be 'happy) by his faith.' The damned have a life in hell that will laſte for ever: but, in the ſtile of the Holy Ghoſt, they never ſee life, they are deprived of eternal life; becauſe their life is not a happy life, but a miſerable one. It is evident from the writings of the prophets and apoſtles, that the death threatened in the covenant of works, comprehended all miſery in this world, and in the world to come; and, conſequently, that the life therein promiſed, comprehended all happineſs in time and eternity. Foraſmuch then as the life promiſed in the covenant of grace, was deſigned for retrieving the loſs ſinners ſuſtained by the fall; it muſt needs, in its comprehenſion, go as wide as the death which thereby they became liable unto. From all which we conclude, that God, in promiſing life to the elect in Chriſt, hath promiſed them all happineſs; which accordingly goes under the name of life ſimply in the ſcripture, 1 John v. 12. 'He that 'hath the Son, hath life.' And thus the covenant-life extends to all wolfare of the whole man, and to all the means by which it is compaſſed.

1. The covenant life extends to all welfare of the whole man, ſoul and body; the latter, as well as the former. And therefore from the covenant our Lord proves the reſurrection of the body againſt the Sadducees, Matth xxii. 31. 32. Though the ſoul is the principal part, it is not the only part, therein provided for. In virtue of the covenant, the body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body: as well as the ſoul is for him, and he for it, 1 Cor. vi. 13. As the body had its ſhare in the death threatened in the firſt covenant, ſo it hath, and ſhall have its ſhare in the life promiſed in the ſecond. Since the price of the Redeemer's blood was paid for the bodies of his people, in his fulfilling the condition of the covenant: the life ſecured in the promiſe, muſt extend to them, as well as to their ſouls.

2. It extends to all the means by which that welfare is to be compaſſed, begun, advanced, and perfected, 'Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, 'or life, or death, or things preſent, or things to come; 'all are yours,' 1 Cor. iii. 22. For the ſecuring of the benefit itſelf by promiſe, ſecures all the means by which it is to be brought about. Hence the covenant deſcends even to the bread and the water, neceſſary for the ſupport of natural life, Iſa. xxxiii. 16.

Secondly, The promiſe comprehends the everlaſtingneſs of that happineſs. It is not only life that is promiſed, but life eternal, life for evermore, Pſalm cxxxiii. 3. which, from the moment it is given, ſhall never be extinguiſhed, through the ages of time and eternity. In the ſtyle of the ſcripture, eternal life is not reſtricted to the ſtate of glory in heaven. But the life communicated to a ſinner, in the firſt moment of his union with Chriſt, is eternal: it is the eternal life promiſed in the covenant, according to the ſcripture, John iii. 36. 'He 'that believeth on the Son, hath everlaſting life,' 1 John v. 11. 12. 13. Hence, from the promiſe of the covenant, The juſt ſhall live by faith, the apoſtle proves the perſeverance of the ſaints, Heb. x. 38. A plain evidence, that perſeverance in grace, in this our ſtate of imperfection, is a part of the eternal life promiſed in the covenant, as well as heaven's happineſs. And thus the covenant-life extends to that which now is, and that which is to come, 1 Tim. iv. 8.

1. It extends to the life that now is in this world. And this is that eternal life begun in the ſeveral parts thereof, with reſpect both to ſoul and body. If men meaſure happineſs by the ſmiles and frowns of common providence, no man indeed can be counted happy before death. But the ſacred oracles teach us to take our meaſures of it another way, to wit, by a perſonal ſaving intereſt in the covenant; and do pronounce them happy whoſe God is the Lord, whatever be between them and the grave, Pſal. cxliv. 15. So there is promiſed in the covenant, happineſs begun in this life, both as to ſoul and body: the happineſs of the way to the kingdom: ſalvation happily begun, and infallibly to be carried on.

2. It extends to the life that is to come in the other world. And that is the ſame eternal life conſummated and perfected, in reſpect both of ſoul and body, in heaven. There the promiſe of the covenant is to receive its full accompliſhment; of which believers now have the earneſt, which is not only a part of the things promiſed, but an aſſurance of the whole.

II. For a more particular view of the promiſe of eternal life to the elect, it may be conſidered in three periods: (1.) Before their union with Chriſt: (2.) From their union with Chriſt, untill death; and (3) From death, through eternity. Of the operation of the promiſes, in the firſt and laſt of theſe periods, we know but little; and indeed not much of it, in the middle period. For it is like a river iſſuing from a hidden ſpring, and running far under ground; then riſing above ground, and running on, till it go forth into the ocean. The hidden ſpring from whence the promiſe of eternal life to the elect iſſueth forth, is God's free grace, which was given us in Chriſt Jeſus, before the world began, 2 Tim. i. 9. It runs under ground, undiſcernible even to the parties themſelves, till the moment of their union with Chriſt in effectual calling; then riſing, it runs on, as it were, above ground, in viſible ſtreams, untill death; and thereafter, it runs full and perſpicuous through the ages of eternity. We ſhall take a view of the great lines of the promiſe, in theſe its ſeveral periods.

PERIOD I.

Before union with Chriſt.

IF we conſider the promiſe of eternal life to the elect, as ſtanding in the covenant, and as accompliſhed to them, and having its effect on them, before their union with Chriſt, we may perceive two great lines in it; namely, a promiſe of their preſervation, and a promiſe of the Spirit. Of which in order.

I. *The promiſe of* PRESERVATION.

The promiſe of eternal life to the elect, in the covenant, comprehends a promiſe of their preſervation, till the happy moment of their ſpiritual marriage with Jeſus Chriſt, wherein they ſhall be ſettled in a ſtate of grace; Ezek. xvi. 6. 'And when I paſſed by thee, and ſaw thee 'polluted in thine own blood, I ſaid unto thee when 'thou waſt in thy blood, Live.' Heb. I ſaid to thee, live in thy blood; as ſeveral approven verſions do read it. In this illuſtrious paſſage of ſcripture is ſhewed, under the ſimilitude of an expoſed or outcaſt infant, the natural ſtate and wretched condition in which God found Iſrael, and finds all the elect; the former being a type of the latter. There is a twofold paſſing by this wretched outcaſt, and theſe at two very diſtant times, intimated by the Holy Ghoſt. The firſt, on the day ſhe was born and caſt out, ver. 4. 5. 6. The ſecond, after ſhe was grown, and become marriageable; at what time ſhe was actually married, ver. 7. 8. The former refers to the time of the elect's coming into the world in their natural ſtate, not only as born into it, but as beginning to act in it as rational creatures; the latter, to the time prefixed in the eternal purpoſe, when, by means of the law in the hands of the Spirit of bondage, their breaſts, as it were, are faſhioned, in the work of conviction; upon which enſues their ſpiritual marriage with Chriſt. But how is the out-caſt preſerved in the interval, that ſhe periſheth not in her wretched condition? Why, though no hand was laid upon her, yet a word was ſpoken, which ſecured her life in a caſe naturally deadly. At the firſt paſſing by her, in the day ſhe was born and caſt out, God ſaid to her, Live in thy blood: that is, "Notwithſtanding "that thou art lying in the open field, in thy blood, thy "navel not dreſſed, ſo that, according to the courſe of "nature, thy blood and ſpirits muſt quickly fail, and this "thy birth-day muſt be thy dying-day: yet I ſay unto "thee, Live; thou ſhalt not die in that condition, but "grow up in it, being preſerved till the happy moment of "the deſigned marriage." And this is the promiſe of the elect's preſervation in their natural ſtate. And it hath two great branches; one reſpecting their natural life; another reſpecting their ſpiritual death. The

Firſt is a promiſe of the continuation of their natural life, till ſuch time as they be made partakers of life in Chriſt Jeſus. God has ſaid it; they ſhall live, though in the blood of their natural ſtate. So it is not poſſible they ſhould die before that time, whatever dangers they are brought into; even though a thouſand ſhould fall at their ſide, and ten thouſand at their right hand; for, by the promiſe of the covenant, there is an unſeen guard about them, to defend them. It is in virtue hereof, that all along during the time they are in that ſtate, they are preſerved, whether in the womb, or coming out of it, or in all dangers of infancy, childhood, youth, or whatſoever age they arrive at therein. This is it that, ſo long as they are unconverted, doth ſo often bring them back from the gates of death; returning them into ſafety, when either by diſeaſes, or other accidents, they are paſt hope in their own eyes, and in the eyes of friends and phyſicians. Though the elect thief was, in his natural ſtate, nailed to the croſs; yet death had no power to come at him, ſo as to ſeparate his ſoul from his body, till ſuch time as he was once united to Chriſt by faith, and made partaker of a new life in him. The

Second is a promiſe of keeping the grave-ſtone from off them in their ſpiritual death. The grave-ſtone is the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, the unpardonable ſin; which on whomſoever it is laid, makes their caſe, from that moment, irrecoverable, that henceforth they can never riſe from ſpiritual death to life: Mark iii. 29. *He that ſhall blaſpheme againſt the Holy Ghoſt, hath* NEVER *forgiveneſs.* But although the elect in their natural ſtate, being dead in ſin as well as others, may, through the activity of reigning and raging luſts, ſo rot in their graves, as to be moſt abominable in the eyes of God and all good men; yet becauſe of the promiſe of the covenant, it is not poſſible that that grave-ſtone ſhould be laid on them. There is an inviſible guard ſet on their ſouls, as well as on their bodies: and ſo it is infallibly prevented, as may be learned from that expreſſion of our Saviour, Matth xxiv. 24. ‘ Inſomuch that (if it were poſſible) they ſhall deceive the very elect.’ While they are Satan's captives, he may drive them to a prodigious pitch of wickedneſs. So did he with Manaſſeh, and Paul: but, as far as he had carried them, he could not carry them forward that ſtep.

This promiſe of the elect's preſervation, as it is with the reſt founded on the obedience and death of Chriſt; whereby eternal life was purchaſed for them, and conſequently theſe benefits in particular, failing which they will be ruined for ever: ſo it is akin to, and ſeems to be grafted upon the promiſe of aſſiſtance made to Chriſt in the covenant; by which a divine ſupport was inſured to him, during all the time the ſins of the elect, and the wrath of God for them, ſhould lie upon him. And at this rate, the caſe of the Head, and of the members, was jointly provided for in the covenant.

II. *The promiſe of the* SPIRIT.

The promiſe of eternal life to the elect, comprehends alſo a promiſe of the Spirit of life to be communicated to them, and each one of them, at the nick of time prefixed in their caſes reſpectively, in the eternal council; that is, the time appointed to be the time of love, the dawning of the day of grace to them, however long and dark their night may be. This promiſe is found, Iſ. xliv. 3. *I will pour my Spirit upon thy ſeed.* Ezek. xxxvi. 27. *I will put my Spirit within you.* The elect of God being even as the reſt of mankind, dead in ſin, through the breach of the firſt covenant, could not be recovered, but through a communication of the ſpirit of life to them; but that ſpirit they could not have from an un-atoned God. Wherefore, in the covenant, Chriſt undertook to fulfil all righteouſneſs in their name, thereby to purchaſe the Spirit for them; upon which was made the promiſe of the Spirit, the leading fruit of Chriſt's purchaſe; called therefore the Father's promiſe by way of eminency, Luke xxiv. 49. In token hereof the great outpouring of the Spirit was at Chriſt's aſcenſion; when he, as our great High Prieſt, carried in the blood of his ſacrifice into the moſt holy place not made with hands. Acts ii. For as the fire which was ſet to the incenſe on the golden altar, the altar of incenſe, was brought from off the brazen altar, the altar of burnt-offering, in the court of the temple; ſo the Spirit which cauſed dead ſinners to live, iſſueth from the croſs of Chriſt, who ſuffered without the gate.

Now, of the promiſe of the Spirit there are two chief branches; namely, the promiſe of ſpiritual moral life, and the promiſe of faith.

1. The promiſe of ſpiritual moral life, in virtue whereof the ſoul morally dead in ſin, is raiſed to life again, through the Spirit of life communicated unto it from heaven. This is the beginning, the very firſt of the eternal life itſelf promiſed in the covenant. It is the lighting of the ſacred lamp of ſpiritual life in the ſoul, which can never be extinguiſhed again, but burns for evermore thereafter. This promiſe we have, Iſa. xxvi. 19. ‘ Thy dead men ſhall live.’ And it belongs to the promiſe of the Spirit; as appears from Ezek. xxxvii. 14. ‘ And I ſhall put my Spirit in you, and ye ſhall live.’

The effect of it is the quickening of the dead ſoul, by the Spirit of Chriſt paſſively received: Eph. ii. 5. ‘ When we were dead in ſins (God, ver. 4.) hath quickened us.’ This is the ſame with the renewing in effectual calling, whereby we are enabled to embrace Jeſus Chriſt, mentioned in our Shorter Catechiſm on that queſtion. And it is fitly called by ſome divines, the firſt regeneration, agreeable to the ſtyle of the holy ſcripture: John i. 12. ‘ But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the ſons of God, even to them that believe on his name:’ ver. 13. ‘ Which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of God.’ Sinners in their natural ſtate lie dead, lifeleſs, and moveleſs; they can no more believe in Chriſt, nor repent, than a dead man can ſpeak or walk: but, in virtue of the promiſe, the Spirit of life from Chriſt Jeſus, at the time appointed, enters into the dead ſoul, and quickens it; ſo that it is no more morally dead, but alive, having new ſpiritual powers put into it, that were loſt by Adam's fall.

2. The other chief branch of the promiſe of the Spirit, is the promiſe of faith; to wit, that Chriſt's ſpiritual ſeed ſhall believe in him, come unto him, and receive him, by faith: Pſal. cx. 3. ‘ Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power;’ and Pſal. xxii. 31. ‘ They ſhall come.’ God hath promiſed, that, upon the ſhedding of the blood of his Son, for the ſatisfaction of juſtice, there ſhall ſpring up in the earth, after that coſtly watering, a plentiful ſeed, to the ſatisfying of his ſoul, Iſ. liii. 10. And therefore, whoever they be that believe not, all thoſe who were repreſented in the covenant, ſhall infallibly be brought to believe, as our Lord himſelf, upon the credit of his promiſe, doth declare, John vi. 37. ‘ All that the Father giveth me, ſhall come to me.’ Now, this alſo belongs to the promiſe of the Spirit; who is therefore called the Spirit of faith, 2 Cor. iv. 13. as being the principal efficient cauſe thereof, Zech. xii. 10.

The effect of this promiſe is actual believing, produced by the quickening ſpirit in the ſoul, immediately out of the ſpiritual life given to it by the communication of himſelf thereto; John v. 25. ‘ The dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God:’ compared with chap. i. 12, 13. 2 Cor. iv. 13. As receiving Chriſt paſſively, the ſinner that was ſpiritually dead, is quickened; ſo being quickened, he receives Chriſt actively. Chriſt comes into the dead ſoul by his ſpirit: and ſo he is paſſively received; even as one, having a power to raiſe the dead, coming into a houſe, where there is none but a dead man; none to open the door to him, none to deſire him to come in, nor to welcome him. But Chriſt being thus received, or come in, the dead ſoul is quickened, and by faith embraceth him; even as the reſtorer of the dead man to life, would immediately be embraced by him, and receive a thouſand welcomes from him, who had heard his voice, and lived. When Chriſt in the womb of his mother, entered into the houſe of Zacharias, and ſhe ſaluted Eliſabeth the mother of John the Baptiſt, he the babe in Eliſabeth's womb, leaped as at the entrance of life; ſo doth the ſoul, in actual believing, at Chriſt's coming into it by his ſpirit. As God breathed into the firſt man the breath of life, and he became a living ſoul, who was before but a lifeleſs piece of fair earth; that is, God put a ſpirit, a ſoul, into his body, which immediately ſhewed itſelf in the man's breathing at his noſtrils; ſo Jeſus Chriſt, in the time of love, puts his ſpirit into the dead ſoul, which immediately ſhews itſelf alive, by believing, receiving, and embracing him, known and diſcerned in his tranſcendent glory. And thus the union betwixt Chriſt and the ſoul is completed; Chriſt firſt apprehending the ſoul by his ſpirit; and then the ſoul thus apprehended and quickened, apprehending him again in the promiſe of the goſpel by faith.

Now, the promiſe of the Spirit, in both branches thereof, is grafted upon the promiſe of a reſurrection from the dead, made to Chriſt; and it is ſo interwoven therewith, that there is no ſeparating of them. The promiſe of his reſurrection, like the oil on Aaron's head, runs down to the ſkirts of his garments, in the promiſe of quickening his members too. Herein the ſcripture is very plain, Iſa. xxvi. 19. 'Thy dead men ſhall live, together with my dead body ſhall they ariſe.' Eph. ii. 5. 'Even when we were dead in ſins, hath quickened us ' together with Chriſt. Our Lord Jeſus, in the eternal covenant, became the head of a dead body, to wit, of the body of elect ſinners dead in ſin; and that to the end he might reſtore them to life. And being legally united with that body, that ſo death might have acceſs to ſpread itſelf from it unto him in due time, he had the promiſe of a reſurrection, both for himſelf and his members, made unto him. The appointed time being come, death drew together its whole forces, and made an attack upon the head of the body, which alone remained alive. It ſtung him to the heart upon the croſs, and laid him too in the duſt of death: and ſo it had them all dead together, head and members. Thus the condition of the covenant was fulfilled. Now, the promiſe comes next, in its turn, to be fulfilled; particularly, the promiſe of a reſurrection; namely, that, death having exhauſted all its force and vigour on the head, he ſhould be raiſed from the dead; and that as death had ſpread itſelf from the members into the head, ſo life in its turn ſhould ſpread itſelf from the head into the members, they, together with his dead body, ariſing. It was in virtue hereof, that the ſpirit or ſoul that animated Chriſt's body, and which he yielded up upon the croſs, (Matth. xxvii. 50.) ſhewed by his breathing out his laſt there, (Luke xxiii. 56. Gr.) was returned again into his bleſſed body; it is in virtue of the ſame, that the Spirit of life returns into the dead ſouls of the elect again; upon which they live and believe. The time of the return of the Spirit, both into the head, and into the members, was prefixed in the covenant, reſpectively; ſo that as it was not poſſible Chriſt ſhould be held in the grave after three days; even ſo it is not poſſible, that his elect ſhould be held in the bonds of ſpiritual death, after the time prefixed for their delivery: Hoſ. vi. 2. 'After two days ' will he revive us, in the third day he will raiſe us up, ' and we ſhall live in his ſight.'

And thus the promiſe of eternal life to the elect works in this dark period of their days; which dark period ends here. It appears now, and runs above ground ever after.

PERIOD II.

From union with Chriſt, untill death.

CONſidering the promiſe of eternal life to the elect, as it is accompliſhed to, and hath its effect on them, from their union with Chriſt, untill death; the great lines to be perceived therein, are the *promiſes*, 1. Of *juſtification*: 2. Of a new and ſaving *covenant-relation to God*: 3. Of *ſanctification*; 4. Of *perſeverance*; and 5. Of *temporal benefits*. Of the which in order.

I. *The promiſe of* JUSTIFICATION.

The promiſe of eternal life to the elect, comprehends the promiſe of juſtification, to be conferred on them, and each one of them, being united to Chriſt through the Spirit. This is found, Iſ. liii. 11. 'By his knowledge ' ſhall my righteous ſervant juſtify many.' Chap. xlv. 25. 'In the Lord ſhall all the ſeed of Iſrael be juſtified.' It is the leading promiſe of this period: and the effect of the accompliſhment thereof, is, that the ſoul legally dead under the ſentence of the law, or curſe of the broken covenant of works, is cauſed to live again accordingly: as it is written, 'The juſt ſhall live by faith,' Rom. i. 17. And this is the beginning of that life which is received from Chriſt by faith, and is mentioned, John v. 40. 'Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.' Chap. vi. 47. 'He that eateth me, even he ſhall live by ' me.' There is a life received from Chriſt before faith, whereby one is enabled to believe; of which we have already ſpoken: and there is a life received from Chriſt through faith, according to John xx. 31. 'That believing ' ye might have life through his name.' And this laſt is, according to the ſcripture, eternal life too: chap. v. 24. 'He that heareth my word, and believeth on him ' that ſent me, hath everlaſting life, and ſhall not come ' into condemnation; but is paſſed from death unto ' life.'

The elect of God, lying under the breach of the firſt covenant, were dead in law, as being under the curſe. They could not be reſtored to life in the eye of the law, but upon the fulfilling of the righteouſneſs of the law; the which they not being able to do for themſelves, Chriſt in the covenant undertook to do it for them; and thereupon was made the promiſe of their juſtification. This promiſe taking effect upon their believing, the curſe is removed, and they are actually and perſonally juſtified. Thus they are reſtored to life in the eye of the law; which kind of life, received by faith, is everlaſting; foraſmuch as, according to the covenant, the curſe can never return upon them, for ſhorter or longer time: Iſa. liv. 9. 'As I have ſworn that the waters of Noah ſhould ' no more go over the earth; ſo have I ſworn that I ' would not be wroth with thee.'

Of the promiſe of juſtification there are two branches; namely, the promiſe of pardon, and of acceptance.

1. The promiſe of pardon of ſin, whereby the guilt of eternal wrath is done away: Heb. viii. 12. 'Their ' ſins and their iniquities will I remember no more.' The ſins of the elect being, in the eternal covenant, imputed to, and laid on Chriſt; who becoming legally one with them, transferred their debt on himſelf, and undertook to pay the ſame; a promiſe was thereupon made of pardon to them, and each one of them. Now, as ſoon as they are myſtically and really united to him by faith, by means of that union they have communion with him in his righteouſneſs; whereupon his perfect ſatisfaction is imputed to them; and, upon the account of it alone, and not any deed of theirs whatſoever, the free promiſe is accompliſhed, and the pardon actually beſtowed on them, according to the eternal agreement: Eph. i. 7. 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the ' forgiveneſs of ſins, according to the riches of his grace.'

Here is life from the dead; a pardon put into the hand of the condemned man, diſarming the law of its condemning power, and death of its ſting, as to him; cauſing him to lift up his head from off the block, and go away with acclamations of praiſe of the King's mercy, and his Son's merit. And it is eternal life; for all his ſins paſt, preſent, and to come, are pardoned, as to the guilt of eternal wrath; a formal remiſſion of theſe of the two former kinds being granted, and a not-imputing of theſe of the latter ſort, as to that guilt, being ſecured; as the apoſtle teacheth, Rom. iv. 7. 'Bleſſed are they whoſe ' iniquities are forgiven, and whoſe ſins are covered.' Ver. 8. 'Bleſſed is the man to whom the Lord will not ' impute ſin.' And God will never revoke his pardons, chap. xi. 29. 'For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.'

2. The other branch of the promiſe of juſtification, is the promiſe of acceptance of their perſons as righteous in the ſight of God; according to that, Iſa. xlii. 21. 'The Lord is well pleaſed for his righteouſneſs ſake.' Compared with Matth. iii. 17. 'This is my beloved Son, ' in whom I am well pleaſed;' and Eph. i. 6. 'He hath ' made us accepted in the beloved.' A holy righteous God, whoſe judgment is according to truth, cannot accept ſinners as righteous, without a righteouſneſs, even a perfect righteouſneſs. They that are not truly righteous in law, can never paſs for righteous, but for unrighteous ones, in the view of his piercing eye: 'For in thy ' ſight,' ſays the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. cxliii. 2. 'ſhall no man ' living be juſtified;' to wit, by the deeds of the law, or inherent righteouſneſs, which is imperfect, as the apoſtle

expounds it, Rom. iii. 20. But our Lord Jeſus having in the covenant undertaken to fulfill all righteouſneſs for them, who of themſelves could fulfill no righteouſneſs; a promiſe was thereupon made, to accept them as righteous upon the account of his ſurety-righteouſneſs, which becomes truly theirs through faith, and that by a double right. (1.) By right of free gift received: inaſmuch as Chriſt's righteouſneſs being made over, in the goſpel, as heaven's free gift to ſinners, the gift is by faith actually claimed and received; whence it is called the gift of righteouſneſs, (Rom. v. 17.) revealed unto faith, (chap. i. 17.) namely, to be believed on, and ſo received. (2.) By right of communion with Chriſt: inaſmuch as ſinners being united with him by faith, have thereby communion, or a common intereſt with him in his righteouſneſs, Philip. iii. 9. ‘And be ſound in him, not having mine own righteouſneſs, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Chriſt.’ Upon theſe grounds, the holineſs of Chriſt's nature, the righteouſneſs of his life, and the ſatisfaction made by his death and ſufferings, being the conſtituent parts of that righteouſneſs, are according to truth, imputed to the believer, or legally reckoned his; and, upon the account thereof preciſely, he is accepted of God as righteous, being made the righteouſneſs of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 21.; the righteouſneſs of God being upon all them that believe, Rom. iii. 22.

Here is life to the ſoul, righteouſneſs unto juſtification of life, chap. v. 18.; an everlaſting righteouſneſs, Dan. ix. 24.; a garment that never waxeth old, is never rent, nay nor ſullied; but always continues in its original luſtre, from the moment that it is put on. Wherefore the life muſt needs be eternal, grace muſt needs reign through that righteouſneſs unto eternal life, Rom. v. 21.; for being once put on, it is never put off again for one moment, in time nor eternity.

Now, the promiſe of juſtification, in both branches thereof, is grafted upon the promiſe of juſtification made to Chriſt. The condition of the covenant being fulfilled, the head is juſtified, according to the promiſe; and then the members in him. Firſt, the Mediator gets up his diſcharge for the whole debt; and then they pleading it by faith for their own behoof, are diſcharged in their own perſons.

II. *The promiſe of a new and ſaving Covenant-relation to God.*

The promiſe of eternal life to the elect, doth alſo comprehend the promiſe of a new and ſaving covenant-relation to God, which they, and each one of them, being juſtified, ſhall be brought into: Hoſ. ii. 23. ‘I will ſay to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they ſhall ſay, Thou art my God.’ Dying both morally and legally, through the breach of the firſt covenant, they fell under a relative death too; whereby the bleſſed relation between God and them was diſſolved: and it could not be conſtituted again, while they lay under the condemnatory ſentence of the law. But upon Chriſt's undertaking, in the covenant, to bring in an everlaſting righteouſneſs, the price of the redemption of all ſaving benefits, this promiſe was made. Wherefore they being come to Chriſt by faith, united with him, and juſtified through his righteouſneſs, which they partake of in him; God meets them there, even in Chriſt the appointed meeting-place; and there, with the ſafety of of his honour, he takes them by the hand and joins them again in a ſaving relation. Thus they have a relative life, according to that, Pſal. xxx. 5. *In his favour is life.* The which life is eternal: foraſmuch as the relation is for ever indiſſoluble; the bond of the ſecond covenant being ſo much ſurer than the bond of the firſt, as the ſecond Adam's undertaking was ſurer than the firſt Adam's.

Now, of this promiſe there are three chief branches; namely, the promiſe of reconciliation, of adoption, and of God's being their God.

1. The promiſe of reconciliation between God and them: Ezek. xxxvii. 26. ‘I will make a covenant of peace with them, it ſhall be an everlaſting covenant.’ They were by ſin in a ſtate of enmity with God; on their part, there was a real enmity againſt God; on God's part, a legal enmity againſt them, ſuch as a judge hath againſt a malefactor, whom notwithſtanding he may dearly love. But Jeſus Chriſt having undertaken, in the covenant, to expiate their guilt, by the ſacrifice of himſelf, the Father made a promiſe of peace and reconciliation with them thereupon. Hence we are ſaid to be reconciled to God by the death of his Son, Rom. v. 10.; inaſmuch as by his death and ſufferings he purchaſed our reconciliation, which was promiſed on theſe terms.

Now, this promiſe is accompliſhed to the juſtified ſinner: being pardoned, he is brought into a ſtate of peace with God, as ſaith the apoſtle, Rom. v. 1. ‘Being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God.’ God lays down his legal enmity againſt him, never to be taken up again. And more than that, he takes him into a bond of friendſhip; ſo that he is not only at peace with God, but is the friend of God; Jam. ii. 23. ‘Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteouſneſs; and he was called the friend of God.’

This promiſe is grafted upon the promiſe of acceptance and juſtification made to Chriſt. For his ſacrifice being accepted as well pleaſing to God, and he diſcharged of the debt he became ſurety for; the reconciliation, as well as the pardon, of thoſe united to him by faith, natively follows thereupon: 2 Cor. v. 19. ‘God was in Chriſt, reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them.’ Eph. i. 6. ‘He hath made us accepted in the beloved.’ Verſe 7. ‘In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins.’

2. Another branch of this promiſe, is the promiſe of their adoption into the family of God: Hoſ. i. 10. ‘It ſhall be ſaid unto them, Ye are the ſons of the living God.’ And this is more than the former; as it is more to be one's ſon, than to be his friend. We have before declared, how all mankind was, by the firſt covenant, conſtituted God's hired ſervants; and by the breach of that covenant, bond ſervants under the curſe; and how Chriſt transferred that ſtate of ſervitude of his ſpiritual ſeed on himſelf. Now, upon conſideration of his taking on him the form of a bond ſervant for them, the promiſe of their adoption into the family of God was made. He was ‘made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of ſons,’ Gal. iv. 4, 5.

And being juſtified by faith, and reconciled to God, it is accompliſhed to them: foraſmuch as then Chriſt's ſervice is imputed to them, and a way is opened withal for their admiſſion into the family of God, through their actual reconciliation to him: Rom. v. 1. ‘Being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,’ Ver. 2. ‘By whom alſo we have acceſs by faith into this grace wherein we ſtand.’ John i. 12. ‘As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the ſons of God.’ Then are they taken as children into the family of heaven: God becomes their father in Chriſt; and they his ſons and daughters, to abide for ever in his houſe, John viii. 35. And ſo they have a right to all the privileges of that high relation.

Now, this promiſe is grafted upon the promiſe made to Chriſt of a new kind of intereſt in God as his Father: according to that, John xxi. 17. ‘I aſcend unto my Father, and your father.’ For by the Spirit of adoption we call God our Father, in the right of Jeſus Chriſt our elder brother, ſpiritual huſband and head.

3. The laſt branch is the promiſe of God's being their God: Heb. viii. 10. *I will be their God.* This is more than reconciliation and adoption: it is the height of the relation to God, which a ſinful creature could be advanc-

ed unto. They were by nature *without God*, Eph. ii. 12. but foraſmuch as the Son of God did, in the covenant, undertake to give himſelf for them, in their nature perfectly to ſatisfy the law, in his holy birth, righteous life, and exquiſite death; a ranſom of infinite value, quite beyond all created things whatſoever, graces pardons, heavens; there was made upon that conſideration, a promiſe of God's giving himſelf to them, as the adequate reward of that ſervice; which being performed by the Mediator, this reward was purchaſed for them. Hence God ſaid to Abraham, Gen. xv. 1. 'I am thy exceeding great reward.'

Now, to the believer being juſtified, reconciled, and adopted, into the family of God, this heritage falls, in accompliſhment of this promiſe, Rom. viii. 17. 'And if children, then heirs; heirs of God.' Gal. iv. 7. 'And if a ſon, then an heir of God through Chriſt;' God himſelf being the heritage. He becomes their God; they have a right to him, and are poſſeſſed of him, as their own property; a property which the thoughts of men and angels cannot fully reach the contents of. Not only are all the works and creatures of God in the heavens, earth, and ſeas, theirs, 1 Cor. iii. 22. *All are yours*: but himſelf is theirs; which is more than all that, as the bridegroom is more than all his marriage-robes, or his large poſſeſſions. All his attributes are theirs; his infinite wiſdom to direct them, his power to afford them protection, his juſtice to make all the benefits purchaſed by Chriſt for them forthcoming to them, his holineſs to transform them into the ſame image, his mercy to pity and ſuccour them, his grace to deal bountifully with them, his faithfulneſs to fulfil all the promiſes to them in their time, and his all-ſufficiency to render them completely happy. He is theirs in all his relations; their Shepherd, Proviſor, Protector, King, Huſband, Head, and whatſoever may contribute to their happineſs. All the perſons of the glorious Trinity are theirs; The Father is theirs, the Son is theirs, and the holy Spirit is theirs: Iſa. liv. 5. 'For thy Maker is thine huſband, (the Lord of hoſts is his name) Heb. Thy Makers are thy huſbands: Jehovah Sabaoth is his name.'

This rich promiſe is grafted upon the promiſe made to Chriſt of a new kind of intereſt in God as his God: John xx. 17. *I aſcend to my God and your God.* God being the Mediator's God by purchaſe, he becomes our God in him. Chriſt having performed the condition of the covenannt, falls heir to the great heritage; and we fall to it alſo in him, being *heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Chriſt*, Rom. viii. 17.

III. *The promiſe of* SANCTIFICATION.

In the promiſe of eternal life to the elect, is comprehended in like manner the promiſe of their ſanctification; Ezek. xi. 19. 'I will take the ſtony heart out of their fleſh, and will give them an heart of fleſh:' verſ. 20. 'That they may walk in my ſtatutes. See Joel iii. 17. 21. Heb. viii. 10. Through the breach of the firſt covenant, they loſt the image of God: their whole faculties were ſo depraved, that they could neither do, ſpeak, nor think any thing truly good, and acceptable to God: they were by nature altogether unholy; unclean, lothſome, and abominable, in their nature, heart and life. And it was quite beyond their power to make themſelves holy again; for mending of their nature could not effect it; it behoved to be renewed, Eph. iv. 23. And the curſe of the law lying upon them, extinguiſhed all ſaving relation between God and them; and ſo blocked up all ſaving communication with heaven; for it barred in point of juſtice, all ſanctifying influences from thence; theſe being the greateſt benefit they were capable of, as aſſimilating the creature unto God himſelf, or rendering it like him. The curſe fixed a gulph betwixt God and them, ſo that ſanctifying influences could not paſs from him unto them; more than their unholy deſires and prayers could paſs from them unto him. So the fallen angels always were, and the damned now are, beyond all poſſibility of ſanctification, or of receiving ſanctifying influences from heaven; there being no remedy to remove the curſe, neither from the one nor from the other. And in this caſe all Adam's poſterity had lain for ever, had not Jeſus Chriſt, as the head of the elect, undertaken in the ſecond covenant, to remove that bar, to fill up the gulph, and to found a new ſaving relation between God and them, thro' his own obedience and death. But upon that undertaking of the Mediator, the Father did by promiſe inſure their ſanctification; that Chriſt's *people ſhould be willing in the day of his power, in the beauties of holineſs*, Pſal. cx. 3. and that *a ſeed ſhall ſerve him*, Pſal. xxii. 30.

And this promiſe, the promiſe of ſanctification, is indeed the chief promiſe of the covenant made to Chriſt for them: among the reſt of that kind, it ſhines like the moon among the leſſer ſtars. Sanctification is the very chief ſubordinate end of the covenant of grace, ſtanding therein next to the glory of God, which is the chief and ultimate end thereof. The promiſe of it is the centre of all the reſt of theſe promiſes. All the foregoing promiſes, the promiſe of preſervation, the Spirit, the firſt regeneration or quickening of the dead ſoul, faith, juſtification, the new ſaving relation to God, reconciliation, adoption, and enjoyment of God as our God, do tend unto it as their common centre, and ſtand related to it, as means to their end. They are all accompliſhed to ſinners, on deſign to make them holy. And all the ſubſequent promiſes, even the promiſe of glorification itſelf, are but the ſame promiſe of ſanctification enlarged and extended: they are but as ſo many rays and beams of light, ſhooting forth from it as the centre of them all.

This appears from the ſcriptural deſcriptions of the covenant, in the promiſſory part thereof reſpecting the elect: Luke i. 73. 'The oath which he ſware to our father Abraham,' ver. 74. 'That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might ſerve him without fear,' ver. 75. 'In holineſs and righteouſneſs before him all the days of our life.' Here is the oath, or covenant ſworn to Abraham as a type of Chriſt; wherein his ſeed's ſerving the Lord in holineſs, is held forth as the chief thing ſworn unto the Mediator by the Father; and their deliverance from their enemies, as the means for that end. See Heb. viii. 10. 11. 12. where God's writing his law in their hearts, is ſet on the front, as the firſt thing in the divine intention, though the laſt in execution, as appears by comparing the 10th and 12th verſes. This matter is alſo evident from the nature of the thing. For the great thing Satan aimed at in ſeducing our firſt parents, was the ruin of the image of God in them, that ſo mankind might be no more like God, but like himſelf: and the myſtery of God, for the recovery of ſinners, is then finiſhed, when holineſs is brought in them to perfection in heaven, and not till then.

From all which, one may plainly perceive, that the ſanctification of all that ſhall ſee heaven, is ſecured in the covenant, upon infallible grounds, beyond all poſſibility of failure: and that the unholy have no ſaving part nor lot in the covenant; and that the leſs holy any man is, the leſs is the covenant-promiſe accompliſhed to him. For the ſanctification of ſinners is the great deſign of that contrivance: it is that which the Father and the Son, looking therein to them, had chiefly in their view: and the promiſe thereof is the capital promiſe of the covenant, reſpecting them; being as it were written in great letters.

Now, at the time appointed for every one in the eternal council, this promiſe is accompliſhed. The ſinner being juſtified by faith, and taken into a ſaving relation to God, being reconciled, adopted, and made an heir of God through Chriſt, is ſanctified. The bar being removed, the gulph filled up as to him, his ſaving intereſt in, and relation to a holy God being eſtabliſhed; the communication between heaven and the ſinner is opened, and ſanctifying influences flow amain, to the ſanctifying of him throughout.

This is, by ſome divines, called the ſecond regeneration, agreeable to the ſcripture; Tit. iii. 5. 'He ſaved 'us by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of 'the Holy Ghoſt;' compared with Eph. v. 26. 'That 'he might ſanctify and cleanſe it with the waſhing of 'water.' 2 Cor. v. 17. 'If any man be in Chriſt, he is 'a new creature;' namely, being 'created in Chriſt 'Jeſus unto good works,' as the apoſtle himſelf explains it, Eph. ii. 10. And as in regeneration, taken ſtrictly for the quickening of the dead ſoul, and called the firſt regeneration, new vital powers are given; ſo in regeneration taken largely for the forming of the new creature in all its parts and diſtinct members, which is called the ſecond regeneration, there are new qualities and habits of grace infuſed; and it is the ſame with the ſecond renewing, mentioned in our Shorter Catechiſm, on the head of ſanctification, *whereby we are renewed in the whole man, after the image of God.*

The matter lies here. The ſinner being by faith united to Chriſt, through the communication of the quickening Spirit from Chriſt unto him, and thereupon juſtified, reconciled, adopted, and made an heir of God; there is a meaſure of every grace, even the ſeeds of all ſaving graces, derived from, and communicated out of the all-fulneſs of grace in the man Chriſt the head, unto the ſinner as a member of his, by the ſame Spirit dwelling in the head and members. Hereby the man is not only a ſpiritually living creature, but an all-new creature, ſanctified wholly or throughout, renewed in the whole man, after the image of God. For the immediate effect of that communication of grace from Chriſt, muſt be the ſealing of the perſon with the image of Chriſt; foraſmuch as he receives grace for grace in Chriſt, as the wax doth point for point in the ſeal. So that the reſtored image of God is expreſſed on us immediately from Chriſt the ſecond Adam, who is the image of the inviſible God; even as Eve was made after God's image, being made after Adam's, according to Gen. ii. 18. *I will make him an help meet for him*; marg. *as before him*, that is, in his own likeneſs, as if he ſat for the picture. Compare 1 Cor. xi. 7. 'He,' (to wit, the man) 'is the image and glory of God: but the 'woman is the glory of the man.' Verſe 8. 'For the 'man is not of the woman: but the woman of the 'man.' And 2 Cor. viii. 23. 'Our brethren are the 'meſſengers of the churches, and the glory of Chriſt.' And thus our uniting with Chriſt, through the Spirit, by faith, iſſues in our becoming one ſpirit, that is, of the ſame ſpiritual holy nature with him; as really as Eve was one fleſh with Adam, being formed of him, of his fleſh and of his bones, Gen. ii. 23. to which the apoſtle alludes, in the matter of the myſtical union between Chriſt and believers, Eph. v. 30. 'For we are members 'of his body, of his fleſh, and of his bones.'

This is the ſcripture account of the matter; according to which, the ſanctification of a ſinner hath a ſpecial relation to Jeſus Chriſt and his Spirit; depends withal on our relative ſtate in the divine favour; and ſo is no leſs a myſtery than our juſtification. As the depravation of human nature hath always been ſo manifeſt, that it could not eſcape obſervation in the world: ſo in all ages, men have been aiming to diſcover and compaſs the cure thereof, in a right uſe they apprehend they could make of their rational faculties. The iſſue whereof hath always been, at beſt, but an outward ſhew and ſemblance of ſanctification, going under the name of moral virtue, having no ſpecial relation to Jeſus Chriſt, and his indwelling Spirit; but ſuch as it is, made the foundation of mens relative ſtate in the favour of God. And ſince the world by their wiſdom knew not God; it is not at all ſtrange, the produce of their wiſdom, in the matter of ſanctification, or aſſimilation to his image, lies ſo wide of the true ſanctification acceptable to him, diſcovered in his word. Truly it is there only we can learn the myſtery of the ſanctification of a ſinner. And there it is revealed, that that great work is wrought by the Spirit, on the ſouls of men in a ſtate of union with Jeſus Chriſt, and after believing, Eph. i. 13. 'In whom alſo '*after* that ye believed, ye were ſealed with that holy '*Spirit* of promiſe.' It neceſſarily depends on our union with Chriſt, in that we are ſanctified in Chriſt Jeſus as members of his body, 1 Cor. i. 2. created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works. And faith is the inſtrumental cauſe of our ſanctification, being we are ſanctified by faith, Acts xxvi. 18.: for thereby it is, that of his fulneſs we receive grace for grace, (John i. 16.) the which is communicated to us by his Spirit, who glorifies him, by reforming us after his image, by means of that communication of grace from Chriſt unto us. John xvi. 14. 'He ſhall glorify me: for he ſhall receive of mine, and 'ſhall ſhew it unto you.' So 'beholding as in a glaſs the 'glory of the Lord *(Chriſt,)* we are changed into the 'ſame image, from glory, to glory, even as by the Spirit 'of the Lord,' 2 Cor. iii. 18. Thus one being in Chriſt is made a new creature; foraſmuch as he is ſuch a ſtock as changes the graft into its own nature; 'Therefore if 'any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature,' chap. v. 17. 'For as many of you as have been baptized into 'Chriſt, have put on Chriſt,' Gal. iii. 27. It dependeth alſo upon our juſtification, and reconciliation with God; inaſmuch as the blood of Chriſt, with which we are ſanctified, according to the ſcripture, Rev. i. 5. 1 Pet. i. 2. 1 John i. 7. is effective of our ſanctification, as it is the meritorious cauſe thereof: and ſo the ſanctifying virtue of that precious blood, proceeds from its atoning virtue; it ſanctifies us, becauſe it juſtifies and reconciles us to God: Heb. ix. 14. 'How much more 'ſhall the blood of Chriſt, who, through the eternal 'Spirit, offered himſelf without ſpot to God, purge your 'conſcience from dead works to ſerve the living God?' Wherefore, ſaith the apoſtle, 1 Theſſ. v. 23. 'And the 'very God of *Peace* ſanctify you.' In like manner, it preſuppoſeth our adoption; inaſmuch as it is upon our being adopted into the family of God, that we receive the Spirit of his Son, conforming us to his image as our elder brother, which is the very thing wherein our ſanctification doth conſiſt: 'For whom he did foreknow, 'he alſo did predeſtinate to be conformed to the image 'of his Son, that he might be the firſt-born among many 'brethren.' Rom. viii. 29. 'And becauſe ye are ſons, 'God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your 'hearts, crying, Abba, Father,' Gal. iv. 6. 'We are 'changed into the ſame image, even as by the Spirit of 'the Lord,' 2 Cor. iii. 18. And it ſtands in the ſame relation to God's becoming our God, Ezek. xvi. 8. 'I 'ſware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with 'thee, ſaith the Lord God, and thou becameſt mine.' Ver 9. 'Then waſhed I thee with water: yea, I throughly waſhed away thy blood from thee, and anointed 'thee with oil.'

But although in this work of ſanctification, there is communicated out of the all-fulneſs of grace in Chriſt, a meaſure, and that a predominant meaſure of every grace; yet it is not a full meaſure of any grace. Hence it comes to paſs, that howbeit we are thereby renewed in the whole man, yet we are ſtill unrenewed in the whole man too; to wit, in reſpect of two general parts, thence called the renewed part, and the unrenewed part. For this communication of grace, being of grace for grace in Chriſt, we are thereby renewed in every particular part indeed: but the meaſure of none of theſe graces being full in any ſoul while here, we are not wholly renewed in any ſuch part, but there are remains of corruption ſtill indwelling in every ſuch part, in the mind, will and affections, and in the body, by way of communication with the unrenewed part. Thus, two contrary principles, to wit, grace and corruption, are in the ſanctified; being together in ſuch ſort, that in every particular part where the one is, the other is there alſo by it: even as in the twilight, light and darkneſs are in every part of the hemiſphere. All which the ſcripture doth abundantly declare. For what we have of this gracious work upon us, while here, is but in part; it is not perfect, 1 Cor. xiii. 9. 10. Though there is a *new man put on*, there is an *old man* to be *put off*, Eph. iv. 22. 24. There is fleſh as well as ſpirit in the beſt, Gal. v. 17. who therefore do look forth but as the morning, Cant. vi. 10. or, as the word properly ſignifies, as the dawning; yet as the dawning differs from dark night, they differ thereby from the unſanctified, in whom there is no light, Iſ. viii. 20. Heb. no dawning. See Rom. vii. 14.——24. Philip iii. 21.

Howbeit, foraſmuch as it is a predominant meaſure of every grace that is thus communicated; this work of ſanctification doth iſſue, in a ſtate of death unto ſin, and a ſtate of life unto righteouſneſs.

1. It iſſueth in a ſtate of death unto ſin, or in mortification. For by means of that communication of grace from Chriſt the head, though it is not full, the old man of ſin gets his deadly wound. The reigning power of the whole body of ſins is deſtroyed: inaſmuch as a reigning principle of grace is thereby ſet up in the believer; and that *his ſeed remaineth in him; and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God*, 1 John iii. 9. ‘ Sin ſhall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.’ And the total pollution, or defilement, through ſin, is by the ſame means purged off; inaſmuch as the reſtored image of God makes one really and perſonally pure and clean in the ſight of God, as far as it goes: Tit. iii. 5. ‘ He ſaved us by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt.’ Compare Col. iii. 10. ‘ And have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him.’ And thus one is put into a ſtate of death, in reſpect of his unrenewed part, Col. iii. 3. *For ye are dead*; Rom. vi. 11. *dead indeed unto ſin*. The which ſtate of death is ſuch as a crucified man is in, who being nailed to the croſs, ſhall never come down till he have breathed out his laſt: Gal. vi. 14. ‘ The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world, Rom. vi. 6. ‘ Our old man is crucified with him.’

2. It iſſueth alſo in a ſtate of life unto righteouſneſs, or in vivification. For by means of the ſame communication of grace from Chriſt the head, one is endued with infuſed habits of grace, the immediate principles of gracious actions: the law is written in his heart; and his heart is circumciſed to love the Lord. And thus he is put into a ſtate of life unto righteouſneſs, in reſpect of his renewed part; being *dead indeed unto ſin, but alive unto God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*, Rom. vi. 11. So ſaith the apoſtle of himſelf, Gal. ii. 20. *I am crucified with Chriſt: Neverthele ſs I live*. And this ſtate of life is ſuch, as a man is in for the common actions of life, who is not only quickened, but riſen and come forth of the grave: Col. ii. 12. ‘ Ye are riſen with him through the faith of the operation of God.’ Rom. vi. 4. ‘ That like as Chriſt was raiſed up by the glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life.’ And it is an eternal life; for the grace communicated from Chriſt to the believer, for that effect, ſhall be in him a well of water ſpringing up into everlaſting life, John iv. 14.

Now, this death unto ſin, and life unto righteouſneſs, ſpring from our communion with Chriſt in his death and reſurrection. Theſe laſt have in them a power and virtue to render his myſtical members conformable to him in them. They have a power and virtue, to cauſe in them a dying unto ſin, as Chriſt died for ſin, a violent death, lingering and painful, yet voluntary; and a riſing from ſin to a new manner of life, continued during their abode in this world, and perfected in glory; even as he roſe from the dead to a new manner of life, continued till his aſcenſion: Philip. iii. 10. ‘ That I may know him, and the power of his reſurrection, and the fellowſhip of his ſufferings, being made conformable unto his death.’ Rom. vi. 4. ‘ Therefore we are buried with him by baptiſm into death: that like as Chriſt was raiſed up by the glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life.’ Ver. 5. ‘ For if we have been planted together in the likeneſs of his death; we ſhall be alſo in the likeneſs of his reſurrection.’ Since there is in Adam's ſin and death, a malignant virtue, conforming his natural offſpring unto him therein, to their defilement; why ſhould it be thought ſtrange, that there ſhould be ſuch a benign virtue in the death and reſurrection of Chriſt the ſecond Adam, conforming his myſtical members unto him therein, to their ſanctification? for ‘ as in Adam all die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive,’ 1 Cor. xv. 22. The death and reſurrection of Chriſt have this virtue, inaſmuch as he died and roſe again as a public perſon, and merited this conformation of his myſtical members to his image, Rom. vi. 4.——12. Eph. ii. 5. 6. And they have this effect, as they are applied to us by the Spirit. For the caſe of our juſtification and ſanctification, is much like that of the delivering one who is a priſoner for debt. When the ſurety's payment of the debt is legally applied to the priſoner, by the judge ſuſtaining it as clearing his debt; in the moment of that application, the priſoner is legally free; he is no more a priſoner in point of right, though ſtill in the priſon, until that one ſent by the judge, apply it to him really by opening the priſon-doors to him, and ſetting him at liberty. Even ſo the death of Chriſt, and his reſurrection, conſidered as the evidence of his complete ſatisfaction, being legally applied by God the Judge, to a ſinner, upon his believing; they have an immediate effect on him, conſtituting him in a happy relative ſtate, in juſtification, and new relation to God as his Friend, Father, and God: ſo that he is thereby freed, even from the dominion and pollution of ſin, in point of right, as well as he is in fact freed from the guilt of it: he is by that application legally dead unto ſin, and alive unto God: Rom. vi. 10. ‘ For in that he (to wit, Chriſt) died, he died unto ſin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.’ Ver. 11. ‘ Likewiſe reckon ye alſo yourſelves to be dead indeed unto ſin: but alive unto God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.’ Now, the curſe which ſtood as a legal bar, to ſanctifying influences, in reſpect whereof the ſtrength of ſin is the law, 1 Cor. xv. 56. being thus quite removed, by the legal application of the death and reſurrection of Chriſt to the believer; the Spirit doth really apply the ſame death and reſurrection to him, conforming him perſonally thereto, through the communication of grace to him, out of the fulneſs of grace in Chriſt the head; without which there cannot be any ſuch conformation, according to the ſtated method of grace revealed in the ſcripture. And thus they have a mediate effect on him, conſtituting him really and perſonally holy, in ſanctification: Rom. viii. 2. ‘ For the law of the Spirit of life, in Chriſt Jeſus, hath made me free from the law of ſin and death.’ Col. ii. 12. ‘ Buried with him in baptiſm, wherein alſo ye are riſen with him.’ 1 Cor. xii. 13. ‘ For by one Spirit are we all baptiſed into one body.’ John xv. 4. ‘ As the branch cannot bear fruit of itſelf, except it abide in the vine: no more can ye, except ye abide in me.’ There was a double ſprinkling of the blood of the ſacrifices, called the blood of the covenant, Exod. xxiv. Firſt, it was ſprinkled on the altar, for atonement and reconciliation with God for Iſrael, ver. 6. And next, it was ſprinkled on the people, for their purification, ver. 8.; its purifying virtue flowing from its atoning virtue. Accordingly there is a double application or ſprinkling of the blood of Chriſt, thereby ſignified: one, for our juſtification and reconciliation with God; mentioned Heb. xii. 22. ‘ Ye are come’——ver. 24.——‘ to the blood of ſprinkling, that ſpeaketh better things than that of Abel,’ namely, in that it ſpeaks for mercy and pardon, whereas Abel's ſpoke for vengeance; and then another, for our ſanctification; mentioned 1 Pet. i. 2. ‘ Through ſanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt.' And this is the only true ſanctification of a ſinner, having a ſpecial relation to Jeſus Chriſt and his Spirit.

Now the branches of the promiſe of ſanctification are manifold; for it ſpreads as wide as the commandments of the holy law, which in the ſtation it hath in the goſpel covenant, are all turned into promiſes. Thus whereas the command is, 'Know the Lord;' the promiſe is, 'They ſhall all know me, ſaith the Lord,' Jer. xxxi. 34. The command is, 'Come unto me,' Matth. xi. 28. and it is promiſed, 'They ſhall come,' Pſal. xxii. 31. The command is, 'Love the Lord,' Pſal. xxxi. 23. it is promiſed, 'The Lord will circumciſe thine heart to love the Lord,' Deut. xxx. 6. It is the command, 'Fear God,' 1 Pet. ii. 17. and it is promiſed, 'I will put my fear in their hearts,' Jer. xxxii. 40. We are commanded to be meek, humble, and lowly, Matth. xi. 29. and it is promiſed, Iſ. xi. 6. 'The wolf ſhall dwell with the lamb,——and a little child ſhall lead them.' And thus it is in all other caſes, the whole commandments of the law in this ſtation being inlaid with the goſpel promiſes, as appears from Heb. viii. 10. 'I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they ſhall be to me a people.'

But the chief branches are theſe two; to wit, the promiſe of repentance, and the promiſe of actual grace and ſtrength for all holy obedience.

1. One chief branch of the promiſe of ſanctification, is the promiſe of repentance. Not that legal repentance, which goes before ſaving faith, being common to the elect and reprobate; but that evangelical repentance, which is deſcribed in our catechiſms, the ſeeds of which are ſaid in the larger catechiſm, to be put into the heart in ſanctification; and ſo follows ſaving faith and juſtification, in the order of nature: Ezek. xxxvi. 31. 'Then ſhall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and ſhall lothe yourſelves in your own ſight, for your iniquities.' Pſal. xxii. 27. 'All the ends of the world ſhall remember and turn unto the Lord.' Zech. xii. 10. 'They ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they ſhall mourn for him.' The whole ſpiritual ſeed were, by means of the breach of the firſt covenant, loſt ſheep, even as others. Adam left them as ſo many waifs and ſtrays, wandering on the mountains of vanity, ready to become a prey to the roaring lion, who goes about there, ſeeking whom he may devour: Iſ. liii. 6. 'All we like ſheep have gone aſtray; we have turned every one to his own way.' All of them had loſt the way, and none of them could find it again. They had gone away from God, and could not return. They had turned to him the back, and not the face, and had become ſo inflexible, they could not turn about to him, and to their duty. They had loſt their eyes, and could not diſcern the way to return: 'to do good they had no knowledge,' Jer. iv. 22. They had loſt the power of their limbs, and could no more return, though they had known the way, than 'the Ethiopian can change his ſkin, or the leopard his ſpots,' chap. xiii. 23. And they had withal loſt heart to return: God being to them an unatoned God, his face ſet againſt them, they could not bear to approach him. So they never would have turned, although they had been able; but each of them would have ſaid, 'There is no hope. No, for I have loved ſtrangers, and after them will I go,' Jer. ii. 25. Wherefore had not the Mediator interpoſed, they had wandered endleſsly: had not Jeſus Chriſt taken the deſperate caſe in hand, there had never been a returning ſinner of Adam's family, a true penitent, a heart kindly ſoftened in ſorrow for ſin, nor turned in hatred againſt ſin as ſin, more than there is among the fallen angels. But upon conſideration of the ſecond Adam's walking with God, the whole way of obedience to the law, which they went off from; having withal laid on him the iniquities of them all; there was made a promiſe of giving them repentance, that 'he ſhould gather together in one, the children of God that were ſcattered abroad,' John xi. 52. In performance of which promiſe, after his aſcenſion into heaven, it was found, that 'God had alſo to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life,' Acts xi. 18.

Now when one is juſtified by faith, and new-related to God, as his Friend, Father, and God, he is ſanctified and brought to true evangelical repentance, according to this promiſe. Being come to Chriſt by faith, he comes back unto God by him in repentance, Heb. vii. 25. Whence it is called repentance toward God, which is the end whereunto faith toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the means, Acts xx. 21. Then, and not till then, it is, that the heart is ſet a-going in true goſpel repentance, pleaſing to God, and acceptable in his ſight; according to the ſcripture: Ezek xvi. 62. 'And I will eſtabliſh my covenant with thee:' verſ. 63. 'That thou mayeſt remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more becauſe of thy ſhame, when I am pacified toward thee.' Chap. xx. 42. 'And ye ſhall know that I am the Lord, when I ſhall bring you into the land of Iſrael.' verſe. 43. 'And there ſhall ye remember your ways,—and ye ſhall lothe yourſelves.' Chap. xxxvi. 25. 'Then will I ſprinkle clean water upon you, and ye ſhall be clean.'——Verſ. 26. 'A new heart alſo will I give you.'——Verſ. 28. 'And ye ſhall be my people, and I will be your God.' Verſ. 31. 'Then ſhall ye remember your own evil ways,—and ſhall lothe yourſelves.' For then it is, that the love of God to the ſoul, which lay hid before, doth ſhine forth more or leſs clear; and being diſcerned by faith accordingly, warms the heart of the ſinner with love to God again, according to that, 1 John iv. 19. 'We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us.' And that love melts it into repentance for ſin, as in the woman, who, being forgiven much, loved much; and ſhewed her love, by waſhing our Saviour's feet with tears, Luke vii. 37. 38. 47. The hard heart is then laid on the ſoft bed of the love and free grace of God in Chriſt; and the word of the law inlaid with the goſpel, falls on it, ſaying, 'Break, for the Lord is gracious,' Joel ii. 13. 'Rent your heart,——and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful,—and of great kindneſs.' And this, like a hammer, breaketh the rock in pieces. The party being, as is before declared, renewed in the whole man, put into a ſtate of death unto ſin, and life unto righteouſneſs, the new nature vents itſelf in an ingenuous and thorough turning from ſin unto God, in heart and life. By believing the ſinner returns unto God as a portion, wherein to reſt: in repenting he returns unto God, as a Lord and Maſter, whom he is to obey. He turns from ſin unto God, coming back as a runaway ſervant to his maſter, returning to his place and duty in the family. And he returns with bluſhing and tears. He is filled with ſorrow and ſhame for offending a good and gracious God. His heart is turned againſt ſin, in hatred of it; he hates it not only as a hurtful thing, that would ruin him: but as a filthy and lothſome thing, that defiles him. He lothes it, as the abominable thing that God hates: as the deformity of the ſoul, the very reverſe of the glorious holineſs of God expreſſed in his law. He lothes himſelf for it; calls himſelf fool and beaſt, for his entertaining it; ſmites on his breaſt, as if he would bruiſe that breaſt it was bred in; and ſmites on his thigh, as if he would break the legs that carried him in the way of it, Luke xv. 20. 21. and xviii. 13. Jer. xxxvi. 18. 19. And he returns with full purpoſe of, and endeavour after new obedience; with a heart inclined to keep God's ſtatutes always, even unto the end, Pſal. cxix. 33. and filled with carefulneſs in that point, vehement deſire of it, and zeal for it, 2 Cor. vii. 11.

2. The other chief branch of the promiſe of ſanctification, is the promiſe of actual grace and ſtrength for all holy obedience; whereby one may be enabled accepta-

bly to perform obedience, in all and every act of mortification or dying unto ſin, and of living unto righteouſneſs; to do every duty that is required of him, and to bear whatſoever affliction is laid upon him, Pſalm xxii. 30. ‘A ſeed ſhall ſerve him.’ Zech. x. 12. ‘And I ‘will ſtrengthen them in the Lord, and they ſhall walk ‘up and down in his name.’ Hoſ. xiv. 9. ‘The ways ‘of the Lord are right, and the juſt ſhall walk in them.’ Ezek. xxxvi. 27. ‘And I will cauſe you to walk in my ‘ſtatutes, and ye ſhall keep my judgements and ‘do them.’ And Deut. xxx. the root promiſe of ſanctification, in *circumciſing of the heart to love the Lord,* is in the firſt place propoſed, ver. 6.; and then follow both the branches thereof together, to wit, the promiſe of repentance, and of actual grace for new obedience, ver. 6.; *And thou ſhalt return and obey the voice of the Lord, and do all his commandments.* God planted Adam a noble vine, made him as a green tree full of ſap, for bringing forth all fruits of holineſs: but breaking the firſt covenant, he and all mankind in him withered and died, under the curſe; upon which enſued an abſolute barrenneſs, that no fruit of holineſs could be expected from them more. But the ſecond Adam having engaged to ſatisfy the law, by bearing the curſe; there was thereupon made a promiſe of raiſing them up again to walk in newneſs of life. And it is performed in their habitual ſanctification, wrought in them immediately upon their union with Chriſt: for though ſanctification doth in the order of nature follow juſtification, and the new relation to God as a Friend, Father, and God: yet in reſpect of time, it is together and at once with them: in the ſame moment that a ſinner is juſtified, he is alſo ſanctified. But even when we are habitually ſanctified, through the habits of grace infuſed into us by the Spirit; we are not of ourſelves, that is to ſay, merely upon that ſtock, without new communications of actual grace by the ſame Spirit, able to bring forth any fruit of holineſs; even of our gracious ſelves we can do nothing, as our Saviour teacheth, John xv. 4. 5. And the apoſtle profeſſeth, in his own name, and in the name of all other gracious perſons, 2 Cor. iii. 4. *And ſuch truſt have we through Chriſt to God-ward,* ver. 5. ‘Not that we are ‘ſufficient of ourſelves to think any thing as of ourſelves; ‘but our ſufficiency is of God.’ *For* (ſaith he, Philip. ii. 13.) *it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do.* And this is no more ſtrange in the diſpenſation of grace, than that, in nature, freſh ſeed ſown in good ground, yet cannot ſpring up, and bring forth fruit, without warming and moiſtening influences from the heavens; or, that we have a power of natural motion, and yet cannot actually move a finger, without a common providential influence of the Spirit of God, in (or by) whom we live, and move, Acts xvii. 28. Wherefore the promiſe is extended, as we have ſaid, unto actual grace and ſtrength for the acts of holy obedience; and is ſo made forthcoming to believers in their actual and progreſſive ſanctification.

And thus ſuch a ſufficient proviſion and allowance of grace is made in the covenant for believers, as that it is poſſible for them, even in this life, to perform obedience to the law of Chriſt, the ten commandments, the eternal rule of righteouſneſs, in all the parts thereof, acceptably: ſo that there is no corruption ſo ſtrong, but one may get it acceptably mortified; nor does the Lord require any duty ſo difficult, but one may get it acceptably done; nor is there any trial or affliction ſo heavy, but one may get it acceptably borne. If it had not been ſo, our Lord would not have made doing whatſoever he commands, the diſtinguiſhing mark of his friends, John xv. 14. The apoſtle doth indeed deny, that we are ſufficient of ourſelves; but withal he teacheth, that there is a ſufficiency for us of God, 2 Cor. iii. 5. So the Lord himſelf taught him, in his own caſe, chap. xii. 9. *My grace is ſufficient for thee.* Without it were ſo, Chriſt's yoke could not be eaſy, nor his burden light, Matth. xi. 30. Nay, they would be like the yoke and burden of the law as a covenant of works, grievous to be born, chap. xxiii. 4. But *his commandments are not grievous,* 1 John v. 3. It was no vain boaſting the Apoſtle uſed, when he ſaid, *I can do all things through Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth me,* Philip. iv. 13. Nor was Epaphras out, in ſuppoſing that the Coloſſian believers might *ſtand complete in all the will of God,* Col. iv. 12. David had God's own teſtimony, as to fact in that matter, Acts xiii. 22. *I have found David, a man after mine own heart, which ſhall fulfill all my will.*

This bears no prejudice to the doctrine of the imperfection of the obedience of the ſaints in this life, maintained by orthodox divines againſt the papiſts and other perfectioniſts; which, as it is abundantly evident from the holy ſcriptures, hath alſo a concurring teſtimony to the truth thereof, in the breaſts of all the ſerious godly, to whom it is given by the Spirit to diſcern the holineſs of God, the ſpirituality of the law, and the corruption of their own nature. But I am perſuaded, that through the ſleight of Satan, that doctrine is, as ſeveral other precious truths are, a ſtone of ſtumbling to many, through their not adverting to the proviſion and allowance of grace made in this promiſe of the covenant, and that by this means many a poor ſinner is ſnared and ruined; and the hands of many ſaints weakened in the practice of holineſs; to the great diſadvantage of the cauſe of holineſs in the world.

To break that ſnare, and ſet this matter in a clear light, there are three things carefully to be diſtinguiſhed.

1. Diſtinguiſh between performing obedience, in all the parts thereof, and in all degrees of theſe parts. The latter indeed no man can, at any rate, do in this life, James iii. 2. Eccleſ. vii. 20. But the former every true believer may do, yea, and actually doth; ſo far as theſe parts are known to him: as appears from the text above alledged. In confounding of theſe there lies a ſnare. “The beſt of men,” ſay crafty ſinners, “do in many “things come ſhort of the obedience required of them: “and but ſo do we.” Now, that the ſaints do come ſhort of the degrees of every part of obedience required of them, is very true: but that they come ſhort of any of the parts themſelves known to them, which is the caſe of the crafty ſinner ſeeking ſhelter for his ſin here, is falſe. And herein the former do really diſtinguiſh themſelves from the latter; as David ſhewed himſelf of another make than Saul, by his fulfilling all God's will, in the ſeveral parts thereof, which Saul did not, Acts xiii. 22. It is here as in the caſe of a family, conſiſting of pliable children, and refractory ſervants. The maſter of the family preſcribes ſeveral pieces of work to be done by them all: and his grown children, who have perfect ſkill of their buſineſs, do them all exactly according to his mind; and thus glorified ſaints obey: the younger children, who are but learning to work, do out of regard to their father's command, indeed put hand to every one of them, but they can do none of them exactly; even ſo it is with the ſaints on earth: but refractory ſervants put hand to ſome of them, but quite neglect others of them; and this is the manner of the wicked and ſlothful ſervant, who ſeeks ſhelter here for his ſloth, and his partiality in obedience.

2. Diſtinguiſh between performing obedience perfectly, and performing it acceptably. No man can perform obedience perfectly in this life, Philip. iii. 12. but every true believer performs obedience acceptably, Acts x. 35. *He that feareth him, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted with him.* In confounding of theſe there is a ſnare. The crafty ſinner ſaith, “There is none that “performs obedience perfectly: and I am ſure I do “many things, though indeed not all.” Now, that true believers do not perform obedience perfectly, is very true; but that they do not perform it acceptably, which is the caſe of the crafty ſinner, as not univerſal, and therefore not ſincere, in his obedience, is altogether falſe. They who are maſters, know very well how to make this diſtinction in their domeſtic affairs. If a child, or pliable

ſervant, ſhew a real good-will to obey their orders, they will accept of their work, though it is not done, in every point, as they would have it; ſo, *if there be firſt a willing mind,* diſcovered in ſincere endeavours, *it is accepted* of God for the ſake of Chriſt, *according to that a man hath,* 2 Cor. viii. 12. But if a ſervant ſhall quite neglect to put hand to a thing which he is peremptorily ordered to do, becauſe he cannot do it every way ſo as the maſter would have it done; this is conſtrued to be a contempt of the maſter's authority. And what other account can men imagine will be made in heaven of their conduct, in inſtances of plain and unqueſtionable duty, which they quite neglect; and of ſin, that they indulge themſelves in?

3. Diſtinguiſh between ability in ourſelves for performing obedience in all the parts thereof acceptably, and ability for it in Chriſt to be fetched in by faith. Neither ſaints nor ſinners have the former, 2 Cor. iii. 5. but all true believers have the latter: they have ſuch ability in Chriſt their head, Col. 2. 10. *Ye are compleat in him.* Philip iv. 13. *I can do all things through Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth me.* And it is in the goſpel offered to all, ſo that whoſoever will may have it; Matth. xi. 28. *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt.* Verſe 29. *Take my yoke upon you.* If a diſcreet maſter command his ſervant to go and do a particular piece of work, it will not excuſe the ſervant's neglect thereof, that he wanted inſtruments neceſſary for it; becauſe he will reckon, that his bidding him do the work, did ſuppoſe his allowing him inſtruments, without which it could not be done; and that the ſervant ought to have called for them. But here lies a ruining ſnare to many. "We can do nothing of ourſelves," ſay they: and hereupon the ſluggard puts his hand in his boſom, and does nothing; but, having laid his head on his ſoft pillow, he ſleeps to death on the bed of ſloth and carnal eaſe. O that men would open their eyes and ſee through this piece of ruining deceit! No man ſhall be able to excuſe himſelf hereby, for the performance of holy obedience in all the parts thereof. Nay, this his conduct will bring him under a double guilt; one, of neglecting what it was his duty to do; another, of deſpiſing the grace offered him, to enable him thereto: and ſo he will be condemned, not becauſe he could not obey, but becauſe he would not. God hath never been a hard maſter to mankind, *reaping where he did not ſow;* but hath always made ſuitable allowance of grace and ſtrength to them for his work.

In the covenant of works, only perfect obedience could be accepted at the hands of the covenant people; and there was an allowance of grace and ſtrength conform, made to them in it. God made man upright, able to obey the law in perfection. And the law juſtly inſiſts for perfection of obedience ſtill, upon the ground of that proviſion which was made for it, though it is now loſt; being that it was loſt by man's own fault. In the covenant of grace, which is adapted to our fallen ſtate, ſincere obedience may be accepted, notwithſtanding of imperfections attending it. And accordingly, in it there is made a proviſion and allowance of ſuch a ſufficiency of grace and ſtrength, as thereby every piece of obedience required of the covenant people, may be done, even in this life; though not as it ſhould be done, yet ſo as it may be accepted: accepted, I ſay, not for its own ſake indeed, nor for the worker's ſake neither; but for Chriſt's ſake, in whoſe name it is required to be done and offered to God as a *ſpiritual ſacrifice, acceptable to God by Jeſus Chriſt,* 1 Pet. ii. 5. This is evident from the forecited paſſages, 2 Cor. iii. 5. and xii. 9. Philip. iv. 13. But withal, this ſufficiency of grace and ſtrength for that effect, is not lodged in the covenant people themſelves; but in Chriſt their head, in whom they have it, as the branches have a ſufficiency of ſap and juice in the vine, for their bringing forth fruit in the ſeaſon: Iſa. xlv. 24. 'Surely, ſhall one ſay, in the Lord 'have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength.' 2 Tim. ii. 1. 'Thou 'therefore, my ſon, be ſtrong in the grace that is in 'Chriſt Jeſus.' And it is fetched into the ſoul by faith, believing the promiſe; Jer. xvii. 5. *Bleſſed is the man that truſteth in the Lord.* Verſe 8. *For he ſhall be as a tree planted by the waters,* Pſal. xxviii. 7. *My heart truſted in him, and I am helped.* And ſo every command of Chriſt, in this covenant, ſuppoſeth an allowance of grace and ſtrength, ſufficient for the performing of it in an acceptable manner. Accordingly, the declaration of grace ſtands on the front of the ten commandments, Exod. xx. 2. *I am the Lord thy God,* verſe 3. *Thou ſhalt have no other Gods before me,* &c. If the law came to us without the goſpel, we might have ſome excuſe for not doing what we are commanded; yet not ſo ſtrong, but that it would be overthrown, as in the caſe of Pagans, Rom. ii. 12. But ſince, with the commands of the law requiring obedience, the goſpel alſo comes to us, ſhewing how we may be enabled to obey them acceptably, and offering us that ability in Chriſt Jeſus; we are inexcuſable in that matter: the plea of the wicked and ſlothful ſervant is rejected; and he is condemned, not only for not giving obedience, but for refuſing grace and ſtrength offered him, to enable him thereto.

Wherefore, let us firmly believe this promiſe of the goſpel-covenant, that we may give obedience to the commands of the law: for where there is no hope of performing acceptably what is required, there can be no ſuitable endeavours after it. If the heart is hopeleſs in that matter, the hands will certainly hang down: and the iſſue muſt needs be, either a ceaſing from the duty altogether, or elſe a very faint performance thereof, unacceptable to God. But the faith of this promiſe will remove the cover of ſloth, animate to every good work, and bring in grace and ſtrength for all holy obedience; *Having therefore theſe promiſes, dearly beloved, let us cleanſe ourſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God,* 2 Cor. vii. 1.

Since God hath not given to the church the command of ſanctification to be obeyed, without the promiſe of ſanctification to be believed; but he that hath ſaid, *Waſh ye, make you clean,* hath ſaid alſo, *I will ſprinkle clean water upon you, and ye ſhall be clean;* no man hath ground to imagine, that he doth ſo much as endeavour to comply with the true deſign of the command of ſanctification, who doth not firſt believe and embrace the promiſe of ſanctification; but falls to work with the nitre and ſoap of his own faithleſs endeavours, to waſh himſelf clean. Such a one miſtakes the true intent and import of the command of ſanctification as it ſtands in his Bible; and that as far as the command of a diſcreet maſter would be miſtaken by a fooliſh ſervant, who being bid to go and dig a parcel of ground, ſhould thereupon fall a digging it with his nails, never looking after a ſpade, mattock, or any other inſtrument proper to dig with.

Now, the promiſe of ſanctification, with its ſeveral branches, is grafted upon the promiſe of a reſurrection made to Chriſt. For the condition of the covenant being fulfilled, he, as the head, was according to the promiſe, *brought again from the dead,* and *lives unto God, death having no more dominion over him:* and in virtue hereof again, his members are brought to repentance from dead works, and unto newneſs of life. Hence we are ſaid to be, 'begotten again, by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt 'from the dead,' 1 Pet. i. 3.; foraſmuch as we are raiſed with him, (Col. iii. 1.) unto newneſs of life (Rom. iv. 4, 5.) according to the promiſe, Iſa. xxvi. 19. 'Thy 'dead men ſhall live, together with my dead body ſhall 'they ariſe.—The earth ſhall caſt out the dead;' namely, in the firſt place, the head Chriſt Jeſus, *the firſt born from the dead,* Col. i. 18. and then his myſtical members after him in their order. Compare Hoſ. vi. 2. 'In 'the third day he will raiſe us up, and we ſhall live in 'his ſight.'

Thus far of the promiſe of ſanctification. Follows,

IV. *The Promiſe of* PERSEVERANCE *in Grace.*

The promiſe of eternal life doth, in like manner, comprehend the promiſe of perſeverance in grace, to be conferred on all the covenant people, being juſtified, new related to God, and ſanctified; ſo that, being once brought into the ſtate of grace, they ſhall never fall away from it totally nor finally. This promiſe we have, Jer. xxxii. 40. 'And I will make an everlaſting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they ſhall not depart from me.' Here they are ſecured on both ſides; that God will never caſt them off, and that they ſhall never deſert him. And that this benefit is included in the promiſe of eternal life, is clear from the apoſtle's adducing this laſt to prove it, Heb. x. 38. *Now the juſt ſhall live by faith.* Such is the malice of Satan, and the advantage he hath againſt the ſaints in this life; ſo manifold are the ſnares for them in the preſent evil world; ſuch a tender bud of heaven is the implanted grace of God in them; and ſo corrupt, fickle, and inconſtant are the hearts of the beſt, while here; that, if their perſeverance had not been ſecured by promiſe in the covenant, but made the condition of the covenant, and left to the management of their own free-will, they would have had but a ſorry reſtoration of it into the ſtate of grace; much as if they had got a ſpark of fire to keep alive in the midſt of the ocean. At that rate they might have all periſhed; and Jeſus Chriſt, notwithſtanding of the ſhedding of his blood for them, might have eternally remained a head without members, a king without ſubjects. But the glory of Chriſt, and the ſalvation of his redeemed, were not left at ſuch uncertainty. That perſeverance which the firſt Adam failed of, and was made the condition of the ſecond covenant, the ſecond Adam did undertake in their name: and thereupon was made the promiſe of their perſeverance. And he having accordingly perſevered unto the end, in obedience to the law for them, being *obedient even to the death*, it was purchaſed for them. Thus Chriſt's perſeverance in obedience to the law, till the condition of the covenant was perfectly fulfilled, is the ground in law upon which the perſeverance of the ſaints is infallibly ſecured, in virtue of the faithfulneſs of God in the promiſe.

Now, this promiſe begins to be performed to them, as ſoon as they are united unto Chriſt; and it goes on all along, untill their death, that they enter into glory: yea, ſtrictly ſpeaking, death is not the laſt, but a middle term of their perſeverance; after which it proceeds far more illuſtriouſly than before. Upon their union with the ſecond Adam, being ſavingly intereſted in his obedience which he perſevered in unto the end, they are confirmed, that they can no more fall away: even as the firſt Adam's natural ſeed would have been confirmed, upon his having completed the courſe of his probationary obedience, and fulfilling the condition of the covenant of works. The myſtical members of Chriſt do then obtain the former, as the reward of his continued obedience; as in the other ſuppoſed event, Adam's natural ſeed would have obtained the latter, as the reward of his continued obedience.

The promiſe of the perſeverance of the ſaints, ſeems to be grafted upon the promiſe of aſſiſtance made to Chriſt in his work. The Father promiſed to him, that he would uphold him, ſo as he ſhould not fail, Iſa. xliii. 1. 4. The which promiſe being made to him as a public perſon, carries along with it the preſervation and ſupport of his members, in all their temptations, trials, and dangers of periſhing; enſuring the ſafe conduct, as of the head, ſo of the myſtical members, through this world, till they be out of the reach of danger.

Now, of the promiſe of perſeverance, there are two chief branches.

1. A promiſe of continued influences of grace, to be from time to time conferred on them, being once brought into a ſtate of grace: Iſa. xxvii. 3. *I will water it every moment.* Their ſtock of inherent grace would ſoon fail if they were left to live upon it, without ſupply coming in from another hand; of itſelf it would wither away and die out, if it were not fed, Luke xxii. 32. John xv. 6. Innocent Adam had a larger ſtock of inherent grace than any one of the ſaints in this life, and yet he loſt it. But the grace of God in believers cannot be ſo loſt: for in virtue of the promiſe, there are continued influences ſecured for them; namely, preſerving influences, whereby grace given is kept from dying out, that as they are *ſanctified in God the Father*, ſo they are *preſerved in Jeſus Chriſt*, Jude 1. exciting influences, whereby the grace preſerved beginning to languiſh, or being brought low by the prevailing of corruption and temptation, is ſtirred up and put in exerciſe again; and ſtrengthening influences, whereby the grace excited is increaſed, and gathers more ſtrength, to the overtopping of corruption, and repelling of temptation, Hoſ. xiv. 7. 'They ſhall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine.' Accordingly, their faith is never ſuffered to fail totally, but is preſerved, excited, and ſtrengthened; and all the other graces with it, and by it. And this is brought to paſs, through the communication of new ſupplies of grace to them, by the Spirit, from Chriſt their head, *from which all the Body having nouriſhment miniſtered*, (namely through the ſupply of the Spirit, Philip i. 19.) *increaſeth with the increaſe of God*, Col. ii. 19.

2. The other chief branch of this promiſe, is a promiſe of pardon, continued pardon for the ſins of their daily walk; whereby emergent differences betwixt God and them, come to be done away from time to time, ſo that a total rupture is prevented: Jer. xxxiii. 8. 'I will pardon all their iniquities.' Howbeit the juſtified have as to their ſtate, no need of a new formal pardon, but only of a manifeſtation of their former pardon: ſince the pardon given in juſtification, is never revoked, though by means of their after-ſins they may looſe ſight of it; yet as to their daily walk, they have great need of a formal pardon; foraſmuch as they are daily contracting new guilt: John xiii. 10. 'He that is waſhed, needeth not, ſave to waſh his feet.' For howbeit no ſins of the juſtified can bring them any more under the guilt of eternal wrath; nevertheleſs they do bring them under the guilt of fatherly anger, Pſalm lxxxix. 30. 31. 32. And therefore they need to pray every day, *Our Father, forgive us our debts.*

This pardon is given them, upon their renewed actings of faith in Jeſus Chriſt, and of repentance towards God; yet not for their believing and repenting, but for Chriſt's ſake, even as the firſt pardon is given, 1 John ii. 1, 2. and i. 7. Applying the blood of Chriſt afreſh to their ſouls, they are anew moved to repentance, turning from their ſins with hatred of them, ſorrow, ſhame, and ſelf-lothing for them. Looking by faith on him whom they have pierced, they mourn in renewed repentance: and ſo receive this pardon. For although repentance doth not go before, but follows after the pardon of ſin in juſtification; yet not only faith, but repentance alſo, goes before the pardons given to thoſe already juſtified; 1 John i. 7. 'If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowſhip one with another, and the blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son cleanſeth us from all ſin.' Ver. 9. 'If we confeſs our ſins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins, and to cleanſe us.' Therefore we are ordered to pray thus, 'Our Father, forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,' Matth. vi. 9. 12.; to teach all the children of God, that if they would have their Father's forgiveneſs, they muſt in the firſt place forgive others: which is yet more clearly intimated, Luke xi. 4. 'And forgive us our ſins; for we alſo forgive every one that is indebted to us.' But the matter is not ſo ſtated, with reſpect to the pardon of ſin in juſtification; but that pardon is the ſpring of our forgiving others, Matth. xviii. 32. 33. For our hearty and acceptable forgiving of o-them, proceeds from true Chriſtian love to our neighbour; and that it flows from love to God; the which is kindled in our hearts by God's pardoning grace to us, Luke vii. 47. Eph. iv. 32. The reaſon of the difference lies here. The unjuſtified ſinner is under the guilt of revenging wrath, which ſeeks not the amendment, but the deſtruction of the guilty: wherefore till once it is removed, there can be no true evangelical repentance, no acceptable amendment, in the ſinner; theſe being really a reſtoration of him to life, incompatible with a legal deſtination of him to deſtruction. But the juſtified ſaint is only under the guilt of fatherly anger, which ſeeks not the deſtruction, but the recovery and amendment of the guilty; and therefore it is not removed untill he repent, turning from his ſin unto God in an acceptable manner; and that is the very amendment God ſeeketh in ſhewing his anger againſt him, as in the caſe of David, and of Peter.

And thus are the ſaints cauſed to perſevere in grace, both real and relative. The promiſe of continued influences ſecures not only the preſervation, but the renewed exerciſe of their grace, particularly of their faith and repentance; and the promiſe of continued pardon to them believing and repenting, ſecures the removal of the guilt of fatherly anger. The Spirit of Chriſt ever dwells in them and ſo continues an inviolable bond of their union with him: and dwelling in them, he recovers them when they are fallen, ſtirs up the holy fire of grace lying hid with aſhes of corruption. Then the withered hand of faith is again ſtretched out; and the man believes the promiſe of the pardon of guilt of eternal wrath, as to all his ſins: this melts his heart in kindly repentance; and ſo he believes the promiſe of continued pardon, as to fatherly anger, with reſpect to the ſins, the cauſes of God's preſent controverſy with him, and obtains pardon accordingly. By theſe means, matters are always kept from coming to a total rupture.

V. *The promiſe of* TEMPORAL BENEFITS.

In the fifth and laſt place, the promiſe of eternal life to the elect, conſidered in this period, comprehends a promiſe of temporal benefits to be conferred on them, and every one of them, being united to Chriſt; and that in ſuch meaſure, as God ſees meet for his own glory and their good. This promiſe ſtands embodied with the ſpiritual promiſes in the covenant, Ezek. xxxvi. 29. 'I will alſo ſave you from all your uncleanneſſes, and I 'will call for the corn, and will increaſe it.' Hoſ. ii. 22. 'The earth ſhall hear the corn, and the wine, and the 'oil, and they ſhall hear Jezreel.' Indeed this is not the principal thing contained in the promiſſory part of the covenant: but it is a neceſſary addition thereto; as the preſent ſtate of the ſaints, while in this world, doth require, Matth. vi. 33. And thus godlineſs, as the apoſtle obſerves, 1 Tim. iv. 8. hath promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

When God took man into the firſt covenant, he made proviſion in it for his temporal as well as for his ſpiritual and eternal welfare. He gave him a right to, and dominion over the creatures in the earth, ſea, and air; giving and granting unto him full power, ſoberly to uſe them, and to diſpoſe of them, for God's glory and his own comfort; and this lordſhip to be holden of him as ſovereign lord of all, firm and irreverſible, by the tenor of that covenant, as long as he ſhould continue in his obedience; but to be forfeited to all intents and purpoſes, in caſe he ſhould by tranſgreſſion break the covenant, Gen. i. 28. and ii. 16. 17. But man continued not in this honour: he brake God's covenant, and ſo fell from that his right to, and dominion over the creatures. By his tranſgreſſion he forfeited life itſelf; and conſequently loſt his covenant-right to all the means and comforts of life. And in this condition are all natural men, with reſpect to theſe things. They have no covenant-right to the means and comforts of life, whatever portion of them they are poſſeſſed of. All the right that they have to them, is a mere providential, precarious right; ſuch as a condemned man hath to his food, during the time his execution is delayed at the pleaſure of the prince. This is a moſt uncertain and uncomfortable holding: nevertheleſs it ſo far avails, that they are not, properly ſpeaking, violent poſſeſſors of temporal benefits; having juſt the ſame right to them, as to their forfeited life, while it is left them by the diſpoſal of providence. Wherefore the worſt of men may lawfully eat and drink, and take the benefit of other neceſſaries of life, whatever Satan may ſuggeſt to the contrary in the hour of temptation; yea, they ought to do it, and they ſin againſt God egregiouſly if they do it not; becauſe he hath ſaid, *Thou ſhalt not kill.*

But the ſecond Adam having undertaken to bear the curſe, and to give perfect obedience to the law, in the name of his ſpiritual ſeed; there was thereupon made a promiſe of reſtoring to them the forfeited life, with all the means thereof: and particularly, a promiſe of the good things requiſite for the ſupport and comfort of their temporal life in this world, till at death they be carried home to heaven. And the performance of this promiſe to them is begun immediately upon their uniting with Chriſt: then their covenant relation to the firſt Adam is found to be lawfully diſſolved; the forfeiture is taken off; and a new covenant-right to the creatures is given them: 1 Cor. iii. 22. 23. *All are yours, and ye are Chriſt's.* And it goes on all along till death; ſo much of this their ſtock being from time to time put into their hands, as the great Adminiſtrator ſees needful for them. And whether that be little or much, they do from that moment poſſeſs it by a new title: it is theirs by covenant.

Now, this promiſe is grafted upon the promiſe made to Chriſt of his inheriting all things. For they that are his, are joint-heirs with him, Rom. viii. 17. to inherit all things too, through him, Rev. xxi. 7. The eſtate and honour which the firſt Adam loſt for himſelf and family, by his diſobedience in breaking of the firſt covenant, was, in the ſecond covenant, made over by promiſe to Chriſt the ſecond Adam, for him and his, upon the condition of his obedience. The which obedience being performed, the whole ancient eſtate of the family was recovered, together with the honours thereunto belonging. The ancient dominion was reſtored, in the perſon of Chriſt as ſecond Adam: and all his myſtical members partake thereof in him. This the Pſalmiſt teacheth, Pſalm. viii. 4. 'What is man, that thou art 'mindful of him? and the ſon of man, that thou viſiteſt 'him?' Ver. 5. 'For thou haſt made him a little 'lower than the angels, and haſt crowned him with glo'ry and honour.' Ver. 6. 'Thou madeſt him to have 'dominion over the works of thy hands: thou haſt put 'all things under his feet;' Ver. 7. 'All ſheep and 'oxen, yea, and the beaſts of the field. Ver. 8. 'The 'fowl of the air, and the fiſh of the ſea, and whatſoever 'paſſeth through the paths of the ſeas.' Though there is here a manifeſt view to the firſt Adam, and all mankind in him, as they were happily and honourably ſtated at their creation; yet we are infallibly aſſured by the apoſtle, that this paſſage is meant of Chriſt the ſecond Adam, Heb. ii. 6. 7. 8. 9. and his myſtical members in him, ver. 6. Accordingly, Abraham had the promiſe, that he ſhould be heir of the world, and he had it through the righteouſneſs of faith, i. e. the righteouſneſs which faith apprehends, Rom. iv. 13. Now, Abraham was a type of Chriſt, and the father of the faithful, who are all bleſſed as he was. Therefore this promiſe was primarily to Chriſt, through the righteouſneſs by him wrought; ſecondarily to his members, through the ſame righteouſneſs apprehended by faith.

This promiſe of temporal benefits, carries believers poſſeſſion of the ſame, as far as their need in that kind doth go, Philip. iv. 19. Of which need, not they themſelves, but the Father is the fit judge, Matth. vi. 32. Accordingly, there are two chief branches of the promiſe, namely, a promiſe of proviſion, and a promiſe of protection.

1. A promiſe of proviſion of good things neceſſary for this life; upon which they may confidently truſt God for them, whatever ſtraits they are at any time reduced to: Pſal. xxxiv. 10. *The young lions do lack, and ſuffer hunger: but they that ſeek the Lord, ſhall not want any good thing.* Their meat and drink are ſecured for them in the covenant: the which being perceived by faith, cannot miſs to give them a peculiar reliſh, however mean their fare be, as to quantity or quality: Iſa. xxxiii. 16. ‘ Bread ſhall be given him, his water ſhall be ſure.’ They ſhall be fed, though they be not feaſted: Pſalm xxxvii. 3. ‘ Verily thou ſhalt be fed.’ They ſhall have enough, they ſhall be ſatisfied, Joel ii. 26. And even days of famine ſhall not mar that their ſatisfaction: Pſalm xxxvii. 19. ‘ In the days of famine they ſhall be ‘ ſatisfied.’ And as ſleep for their refreſhment is neceſſary too, the promiſe bears it alſo: Prov. iii. 24. ‘ Thou ſhalt ly down, and thy ſleep ſhall be ſweet.’ They need cloathing, and proviſion is made as to it; Matth. vi. 30. ‘ If God ſo clothe the graſs of the field, ‘ ſhall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little ‘ faith?’ Having made them, by covenant, a new grant of life and of a body, which is more than meat and cloathing, he will not refuſe them theſe leſſer things neceſſary for the ſupport of the greater: Verſe 25. ‘ Is ‘ not the life more than meat, and the body than rai‘ ment?’ Thus our fallen firſt parents, having believed and embraced the promiſe of life, had, with the new grant of life, food and raiment provided for them, as is particularly taken notice of, Gen. iii. 15. 18. 21. A bleſſing alſo on their labours is promiſed, and ſucceſs in their lawful callings and affairs, Iſa. lxv. 21, 22, 23. In a word, the covenant bears, that God *will withhold no good thing from them that live uprightly*, Pſalm lxxxiv. 11.

2. There is alſo a promiſe of protection from the evil things that concern this life: Pſalm xci. 10. ‘ There ‘ ſhall no evil befal thee,’ Ver. 11. ‘ For he ſhall give ‘ his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ‘ ways.’ Together with the bread and the water provided by the covenant for them to live on, the munitions of rocks are ſecured to them for a place of defence, where they may ſafely enjoy them, Iſa. xxxiii. 16. The ſame Lord who is a ſun to nouriſh them, will be a ſhield to protect them, Pſalm lxxxiv. 11. He will be *a wall of fire round about* them, to cheriſh them, and to keep off, ſeare, and fright away their enemies, Zech. ii. 5. The covenant yields a broad covert for the ſafety of believers: Pſalm xci. 4. *He ſhall cover thee with his feathers.* The covert of the covenant is ſtretched out over their bodies; over their health, to preſerve it, while it is neceſſary for God's honour and their own good, Prov. iii. 7. ‘ Fear the Lord, and depart from evil.’ verſe 8. ‘ It ‘ ſhall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.’ over their lives, as long as God has any ſervice for them in this world; ſo in ſickneſs they are carefully ſeen to, Pſal. xli. 3. 4. *Thou wilt make all his bed in his ſickneſs:* their diſeaſes healed, and they recovered, Pſal. ciii. 3. 4. And they are delivered from enemies that ſeek their life, Pſal. xli. 2. Yea, when death rides in triumph, having made havock on all ſides of them, as by ſword and peſtilence, they are found ſafe under the covert of the covenant, Pſal. xci. 6. 7. This covert is ſtretched over their names, credit, and reputation; Job v. 21. *Thou ſhalt be hid from the ſcourge of the tongue:* either the tongues of virulent men ſhall not reach them; or they ſhall not be able to make the dirt ſtick on them; or elſe if they ſhall be permitted to make it ſtick for a while, the covert of the covenant ſhall wipe all off at length, and their righteouſneſs ſhall be brought forth as the light, and their judgment as the noon-day, Pſal. xxxvii. 6. It is ſtretched over their houſes and dwelling places; Pſal. xci. 10. *Neither ſhall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.* It goes round about their ſubſtance, making a *hedge about all that they have*, Job i. 10. Yea, and there is a lap of it to caſt over their widows and children, when they are dead and gone: Jer. xlix. 11. ‘ Leave thy fatherleſs children, I will preſerve them a‘ live, and let the widows truſt in me.’

Thus far of the promiſe of eternal life, conſidered in the ſecond period, to wit, from union with Chriſt, untill death.

PERIOD III.

From death through eternity.

IT remains that we conſider the promiſe of eternal life to the elect, as it is accompliſhed to, and hath its effect upon them, from their death, all along through eternity. And ſo the great lines of it are two; to wit, a promiſe of victory over death, and a promiſe of everlaſting life in heaven. And theſe things I ſhall touch more briefly, having handled them at large elſewhere.

I. *The promiſe of Victory over death.*

The promiſe of eternal life comprehends a promiſe of victory over death, to be conferred on all and every one of the ſpiritual ſeed, in the encounter with the laſt enemy: Iſ. xxv. 8. ‘ He will ſwallow up death in victory, ‘ and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all ‘ faces.’ After the wearisome march, and the reiterated fights of faith they have in their paſſage through the wilderneſs of this world, they have to paſs the Jordan of death, and to fight the laſt battle with that enemy. But the victory is ſecured on their ſide by promiſe; of which there are two chief branches, to wit, a promiſe of diſarming death, and a promiſe of deſtroying it.

1. There is a promiſe of diſarming death to the dying believer; ſo that it ſhall at no rate be able to reach him a ruinating ſtroke: Hoſ. xiii. 14. *O death, I will be thy plagues;* namely, by taking the ſting quite away, 1 Cor. xv. 55. When ſin entered into the world, death followed; and ſin furniſhed death with an envenomed ſting, wherewith to kill the ſinner, both ſoul and body at once; the holy law, with its curſe, fixed this ſting in death's hand; having firſt ſo pointed it, that it could not miſs of doing execution. But Chriſt, the ſecond Adam, having undertaken to bear the curſe, and to die in the room and ſtead of his people; there was thereupon made a promiſe of diſarming death to them: ſince the ſurety ſuffering the pains of death armed with its ſting, the principal behoved to be liberate from ſuffering the ſame over again. And thus the covenant ſecures believers from death's harm. Yea, it ſo alters the nature thereof, that it makes it a quite new thing to them from what it was originally. Hence death is found in the inventory of the ſaints treaſure, 1 Cor. iii. 22. ‘ Whether life, ‘ or death, or things preſent, or things to come; all is ‘ yours.’ Not only is life theirs by the covenant, but death is theirs too by the ſame tenor. And indeed as it is new-framed by the covenant, it is of excellent uſe to them, bringing them into a ſtate of perfection, and everlaſting reſt, Heb. xii. 23. Rev. xiv. 13.

This promiſe is grafted upon the promiſe of victory made to Chriſt, as appears from the forecited Iſa. xxv. 8. He encountered death armed with its ſting, on purpoſe to diſarm it to his people: he received the ſting thereof into his own ſoul and body, that they might be delivered from it. Wherefore the promiſe of victory over death made to him, ſecures the diſarming of it to them. And as the promiſe makes them ſafe, in the encounter with that laſt enemy; ſo the lively faith of it may deliver from fear in the caſe.

2. There is a promiſe of deſtroying death to the dead believer, by a glorious reſurrection at the laſt day: Hoſ. xiii. 14. *O grave, I will be thy deſtruction.* When death entered into the world by ſin, then came the grave, as death's attendant, to keep faſt his priſoners for him,

till the general judgment: and thus the grave ſerves death, in the caſe of all who die in a ſtate of enmity with God. But Chriſt, the ſecond Adam, having in the ſecond covenant engaged to go, in the room and ſtead of his people, death's priſoner, into the grave, and there to lie till their debt ſhould be fully paid; there was made thereupon a promiſe of a glorious reſurrection to his members, whereby they ſhall be put out of the reach of death for good and all, at the laſt day: for then ſhall be brought to paſs the ſaying that is written, *Death is ſwallowed up in victory*, 1 Cor. xv. 45; and then ſhall they triumphantly ſing, 'O death, where is thy ſting? 'O grave, where is thy victory?' ver. 55. And thus the covenant ſecures the forming anew of their diſſolved bodies, the return of their departed ſouls into them, and their coming forth of their graves glorious, immortal, and incorruptible. In the faith of which, the ſaints may with comfort conſider the grave as but a retiring place, from whence after a while they ſhall come forth with unſpeakable joy.

This promiſe is grafted upon the promiſe of a reſurrection made to Chriſt, Iſa. xxvi. 19. 'Thy dead men 'ſhall live, together with my dead body ſhall they ariſe.' The promiſe of a reſurrection being made to him as a public perſon, it muſt take place alſo in his myſtical members, whoſe federal head he was. Hence the Pſalmiſt ſays, his *fleſh ſhould reſt in hope*, namely, in the grave, in hope of a glorious reſurrection, becauſe *the holy one* Jeſus was *not to ſee corruption*, Pſal. xvi. 9. 10. with Acts xiii. 35.; thereby teaching, that Chriſt's reſurrection would inſure his glorious reſurrection, as a member of the myſtical body, by faith. And indeed there is ſuch a connection between Chriſt's reſurrection and the happy reſurrection of the ſaints, that they ſtand and fall together: 1 Cor. xv. 16. 'For if the dead riſe 'not, then is not Chriſt raiſed.'

II. *The promiſe of everlaſting Life in Heaven.*

The promiſe of eternal life doth, in the laſt place, comprehend a promiſe of everlaſting life in heaven, to be conferred on all and every one of the ſpiritual ſeed after death: Dan. xii. 2. 'And many of them that ſleep in 'the duſt of the earth ſhall awake, ſome to everlaſting life.' This was more ſparingly revealed under the Old Teſtament than under the New, 2 Tim. i. 10. yet was it, even then, ſo clearly revealed, that all the holy patriarchs lived and died in the faith of it, Heb. xi. 13.—16. The fathers before Abraham ſaw it in the promiſe of the ſeed of the woman, which was to bruiſe the ſerpent's head: and from Abraham they ſaw it in the promiſe of Canaan. But now by the goſpel, this life and immortality are ſet in a full light. By the breach of the firſt covenant that life was forfeited, the heavenly paradiſe loſt to Adam and all mankind: in token whereof he was turned out of the earthly paradiſe. But the ſecond Adam having, in the ſecond covenant, undertaken the redemption of the forfeited inheritance, there was a new promiſe of it made in favour of his ſeed; and they are inveſted with an indefeaſible right thereto, in the firſt moment of their union with Chriſt by faith; howbeit they are not inſtantly put in poſſeſſion thereof. And when they do come to the poſſeſſion, it is not given them all at once; but at two different periods, in different meaſures; according to the two chief branches of the promiſe thereof, namely, a promiſe of tranſporting their ſouls into heaven at death, and a promiſe of tranſporting them ſoul and body thither at the laſt day.

1. There is a promiſe of tranſporting their ſouls, ſeparate from their bodies, into heaven, and there to behold and enjoy the face of God. And it is accompliſhed to them immediately after their death. It was moſt plainly declared and applied by our Saviour to the penitent thief on the croſs, Luke xxiii. 43. *To day ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe.* But it was in the faith of it, that the covenant was to David, even in the face of death, all his ſalvation, and all his deſire, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. and that Paul had a deſire to depart, knowing that he was to be with Chriſt upon his departure, Philip. i. 23. it is in the faith of the ſame, that the whole church militant doth *groan earneſtly, deſiring to be clothed upon with the houſe which is from heaven*, that is the heavenly glory, 2 Cor. v. 2. Indeed the curſe of the firſt covenant did, upon the breaking of that covenant, fall to their lot, as well as to the reſt of mankind: and that curſe would natively have iſſued in cutting them aſunder as covenant breakers, and appointing them their portion with the hypocrites; but that being executed to the full on Chriſt their head, to the parting aſunder of his holy ſoul and body, it can operate no more on them. Wherefore, howbeit others die in virtue of the curſe, ſeparating their ſouls and bodies, the one to the place of torment, the other to the grave, till the laſt day; yet they do not ſo die. *Being redeemed from the curſe*, Gal. iii. 13. they ſhall never ſee ſuch death, John viii. 51. But they die in conformity to Chriſt their head, being *predeſtinate to be conformed to his image*, (Rom. viii. 29.) who is *the firſt born from the dead*, Col. i. 18. and *the firſt fruits of them that ſleep*, which every man is to follow in his own order, 1 Cor. xv. 20. 23. That as in the caſe of the head, ſo in the caſe of the members, as death came on by ſin, ſin may go off by death. In virtue of their communion with Chriſt in his death, the union betwixt their ſouls and mortal bodies is diſſolved: their ſouls diſmiſſed in peace into the heavenly glory, there to remain till ſuch time as their bodies, laid down in the grave, come, in virtue of their communion with Chriſt in his reſurrection, to put on incorruption and immortality.

This promiſe is grafted upon the promiſe of acceptance made to Chriſt, when he ſhould make his ſoul an offering for ſin. In confidence of which acceptance, dying on the croſs he commended his ſpirit, or ſoul, into the hands of his Father, Luke xxiii. 46. and told the penitent thief, he was to be that very day in paradiſe, though then it was towards the evening of it, ver. 43. The words in which he commended his ſoul to his Father, were David's, Pſal. xxx. 5. 'Into thine hand I 'commit my ſpirit'; thereby intimating, that the reception of the ſouls of his dying people into the hands of the Father, depends on the reception of his ſoul into them. For his ſoul was, in virtue of the covenant, ſo received, as a public ſoul, repreſenting the ſouls of his whole ſeed: whence David, ſpeaking of Chriſt, ſaith, Thou wilt not leave my ſoul in hell, Pſal. xvi. 10. with Acts ii. 31. Wherefore in the promiſe of receiving Chriſt's ſoul, was comprehended a promiſe of receiving the ſouls of all his myſtical members.

2. There is a promiſe of tranſporting them, ſoul and body, into heaven, there to be ever with the Lord; which is to be accompliſhed unto them at the laſt day: Dan. xii. 2. 'And many of them that ſleep in the duſt of the 'earth ſhall awake, ſome to everlaſting life, and ſome to 'ſhame and everlaſting contempt.' Ver. 3. 'And they 'that be wiſe, ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteouſneſs,' (or, rather *they that do righteouſly, of the many*,) 'as 'the ſtars for ever and ever.' Whereas the many mentioned, ver. 2. and comprehending all, are there divided into two ſorts, in reſpect of their future ſtate, in the event of the reſurrection; the happy part, being the firſt ſort of them, is deſigned, ver. 3. from their preſent ſtate in this life, the wiſe, and they that do righteouſly; that is, in New Teſtament language, the righteous, Matth. xiii. 43. and they that have done good, John v. 29. in oppoſition to the fooliſh, and they that have done evil. Thoſe having come forth, unto the reſurrection of life, John v. 29. ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament, and as the ſtars for ever and ever: yea, they ſhall ſhine forth as the ſun, in the kingdom of their Father, Matth. xiii. 43. This is the higheſt pinnacle of the ſaints hope; wherein they, in their whole man, ſhall

have the whole of eternal life in its perfection. Man had a conditional promiſe hereof, in the covenant of works; but the condition being broken, the benefit promiſed was loſt: heaven's gates were ſhut againſt Adam, and all his natural ſeed. Howbeit Chriſt the ſecond Adam, having undertaken to fulfill the condition of the ſecond covenant, which was ſtated from an exact conſideration of the demands that the broken firſt covenant had on his ſpiritual ſeed; there was a new promiſe of it made in their favour; and it is abſolute. And to his fulfilling of that condition, both the making and performing of this promiſe are owing allenarly. None other's works but his could ever have availed to reduce the forfeiture, and purchaſe a new right: and his works do it ſo effectually, that they ſecure the putting all his ſeed in actual poſſeſſion of the purchaſed inheritance; ſo that they *ſhall reign in life by one, Jeſus Chriſt*, Rom. v. 17.

This is the promiſe of the covenant, which is the laſt of all in performing; as being the conſummation of all the reſt, not to be accompliſhed until the myſtery of God be finiſhed. The Old Teſtament ſaints died in the faith of it; and it is not as yet performed to them: nay, the New Teſtament ſaints have died, and ſtill muſt die, in the faith of it; not having it performed to them neither, till it be all at once accompliſhed to the whole ſeed together, at the end of the world. Thus this promiſe remains to be an unſeen object of faith to the church militant; and to the church triumphant too, whoſe fleſh muſt reſt in hope till that day, Pſal. xvi. 9. But becauſe the term prefixed for performing thereof, is, in the depth of ſovereign wiſdom, for reaſons becoming the divine perfections, ſet at ſuch a diſtance; there have been ſome ſignal pledges given of it, to confirm the churches faith in the caſe. Such was the tranſlating of Enoch, ſoul and body into heaven, in the patriarchal period; Elias, in the time of the law; and our bleſſed Saviour in the time of the goſpel.

This promiſe is grafted upon the promiſe of a glorious exaltation made to Chriſt; by which was ſecured to him his aſcenſion, in ſoul and body, into heaven, and entering into his glory: Luke xxiv. 26. 'Ought not 'Chriſt to have ſuffered theſe things, and to enter 'into his glory?' Both theſe were neceſſary in reſpect of the covenant: his ſuffering was neceſſary, in reſpect of the condition thereof, which behoved to be fulfilled by him; and his entering into his glory was neceſſary, in reſpect of the promiſe thereof, which behoved to be fulfilled unto him. Now, Chriſt aſcended and entered into glory, as a public perſon, as a forerunner entering for us, Heb. vi. 20. And therefore the promiſe, in virtue of which he aſcended and entered into it, comprehends the aſcenſion and glory of all his myſtical members, who are therefore ſaid to ſit together in heavenly places, in Chriſt Jeſus, Eph. ii. 6. And then, and not till then, will the promiſe be perfectly fulfilled to him, when all the myſtical members are perſonally there, together with their head; when the whole ſeed perfectly recovered from death, ſhall reign there, together with him, in life, for evermore.

And this ſhall ſuffice to have been ſaid here of the promiſe of eternal life, in the laſt period thereof.

INFERENCE *from the promiſe of eternal life.*

Thus we have opened the promiſe of eternal life to the elect, with the effects thereof on them, in its ſeveral periods; to wit, before their union with Chriſt; and then, from their union with Chriſt untill death; and finally, from their death, through eternity: the whole ſpringing out of the promiſes peculiar to Chriſt himſelf. For as theſe laſt were fulfilled, in preſerving the root of Jeſſe, notwithſtanding of the various changes that family did undergo, in which it was often in hazard of extinction, until ſuch time as Chriſt ſprang out of it, as a root out of a dry ground, Iſa. xi. 1. 10. and liii. 2.; and then, in carrying him up, and carrying him through in his work, notwithſtanding of the load of imputed ſin that lay upon him, and the oppoſition he met with in the world, and the powers of hell, engaged againſt him, Iſa. xlix. 8. and l. 7. 8. 9.; and finally, in raiſing him from the dead, taking him up into heaven, and glorifying him there for ever and ever, 1 Tim. iii. 16. Even ſo the promiſe of eternal life to the elect, included therein, is fulfilled, in preſerving of them in their unconverted ſtate, till ſuch time as they are united to Chriſt by faith: and then, in carrying them up, and carrying them through, in favour and communion with God, during the whole time of their continuance in this world, notwithſtanding of all the oppoſition from the devil, the world and the fleſh: and laſtly, in raiſing them up at the laſt day, and receiving them, ſoul and body, into heaven, there to be ever with the Lord.

And now, from the whole of what hath been ſaid on that point, we deduce the following inference, to wit, "That all the benefits of the covenant of grace beſtow-"ed, or to be beſtowed on ſinners, are the ſure mer-"cies of David," Iſa. lv. 3. This may be taken up in theſe three things following.

1. They are all of them mercies, pure mercies, without reſpect to any worthineſs in the receivers. They are all free-grace gifts; for the covenant is to us a covenant of grace, from the firſt to the laſt; Eph. ii. 7. 'That in the ages to come, he might ſhew the exceeding 'riches of his grace, in his kindneſs towards us, through 'Chriſt Jeſus.' Ver. 8. 'For by his grace ye are ſaved 'through faith; and that not of yourſelves: it is the 'gift of God.' The receiving of believers into glory is, after all their working, as much of free grace, as the quickening of them, when being dead in ſin, they could do no good work at all. They have their faith and their works, their grace and their glory, their temporal and their eternal good things; all of them equally of free grace; for they are all ſecured to them in, and flow from the promiſe of the covenant made before the world began; and are founded on a ground which they had no manner of hand in the laying of.

2. They all are the mercies of David, that is, of Jeſus Chriſt the Son of David. His obedience and death are the alone channel wherein the free grace of the covenant runs, bringing along with it all thoſe mercies, Eph. ii. 7. It is to the holineſs of his nature, the righteouſneſs of his life, and the ſatisfaction made by his death, they are all owing: for upon theſe alone, and upon nothing in us, whether before or after converſion, is the promiſe of eternal life founded. Our believing through grace, while others continue in unbelief; our ſeeing God in glory, while others are caſt into utter darkneſs; the bread we eat, and the water we drink, in this life, together with the hidden manna we ſhall eat of, and the rivers of pleaſures we ſhall drink of, in heaven; are equally the purchaſe of our Redeemer's blood.

3. Laſtly, They are all of them ſure mercies. What of them the ſaints have already got, they could not have miſſed of; and what of them they have not as yet received, is as ſure as if they had it in hand, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. *David perceived that the Lord had confirmed him king over Iſrael*; and that upon this ground, *for his kingdom was lift up on high*, 1 Chron. xiv. 2. Now, Saul's kingdom was lift up on high too: and yet he loſt it. But David had his kingdom by the covenant; Saul, not ſo; hence the former ſeeing the promiſe begin to be accompliſhed, rightly concluded, that it ſhould hold on till it was fully performed: notwithſtanding that the latter fell off from his excellency. Uncovenanted mercies are tottering mercies; but the covenant mercies are ſure. The former may flow plentifully for a while, and yet at length be quite dried up for ever; but the ſpring of the latter being once opened, will flow for evermore, without interruption. The promiſe is infallibly ſure, and cannot miſcarry; it is ſure from the nature of God who made it; even from his infallible truth, and from his juſtice too in reſpect of Chriſt, 2 Theſſ. i, 6,

Thus far of the ſecond part of the covenant, namely, the promiſſory part.

No proper Penalty of the Covenant of Grace.

A penalty is no eſſential part of a proper covenant. It is but accidental only, ariſing not from the nature of a covenant, but from the nature of the covenanters, who being fallible, may break either the condition or the promiſe; in which caſe a penalty is annexed, to ſecure the performance of the condition on the one ſide, and of the promiſe on the other. Wherefore ſince the party-contracting on man's ſide, on whom it lay to perform the condition of this covenant, was infallible; as was the party-contracting on heaven's ſide, on whom it lay to perform the promiſe of it: there was no place at all for a penalty thereof, properly ſo called; as there was none in the firſt covenant, but upon one ſide. In the ſecond covenant, the Father and the Son abſolutely truſted each the other. Upon the credit of the Son, the Father received all the Old Teſtament ſaints into heaven, before the price of their redemption was paid; and upon the credit of the Father, the Son, near ſeventeen hundred years ago, paid the full price of the redemption of the elect, while vaſt multitudes of them were not as yet born into the world, and many of them are not even to this day.

It is true, the parties contracted for, are fallible: but then the performing of the condition of this covenant, as ſuch, doth in no caſe ly upon them; Chriſt having taken it intirely on himſelf, and accordingly performed it already. While they continue in their natural ſtate, without Chriſt, they are perſonally in the covenant of works, not in the covenant of grace. And being once become believers in Chriſt, the promiſe of the covenant of grace ſtands always entire to them, notwithſtanding of all their failures; and muſt needs ſtand ſo, in virtue of the condition of the covenant already performed, and judicially ſuſtained, as performed by Jeſus Chriſt for them. And though they are fallible in reſpect of their actions, as long as they are in this world; yet from the moment of their union with Chriſt by faith, they are not fallible in reſpect of their ſtate: they can no more fall out of their ſtate of grace, than the ſaints in heaven can. Even in their caſe, there is no place for the curſe, or eternal wrath, the only penalty by which they ſhould loſe their right to the promiſe of the covenant. They are indeed liable to God's fatherly anger and chaſtiſements for their ſins; but foraſmuch as by theſe there is no interciſion of their right to the promiſe; and that they are not vindictive, but medicinal; they cannot be accounted a proper penalty of the covenant of grace, however they may be improperly ſo called; but do really belong to the promiſſory part, and adminiſtration of the covenant, Pſalm lxxxix. 30, 31, 32, 33. Heb. xii. 5, 6, 7. Where the condition of a covenant is fully performed, and legally ſuſtained as ſuch, in favour of the party who is to receive the benefit promiſed, it is evident there can be no more place for a proper penalty of the covenant on that ſide; and ſo it is here, in the caſe of believers.

And thus we have diſpatched the third head, namely, *The parts of the covenant.*

H E A D IV.

The ADMINISTRATION *of the Covenant of Grace.*

IT remains now to conſider the *adminiſtration* of the covenant. And ſince the ſalvation of ſinners doth entirely depend on this covenant; and that all the diſpenſations of God toward them, for carrying on and completing that gracious deſign, are regulated according to it: and ſince withal it is in itſelf a deepeſt ſecret, being a compact entered into betwixt the Father and the Son, before the world began: it is altogether neceſſary, that there be an adminiſtration of it, whereby it may be rendered effectual to the end for which it was made. And hereof we will have a view, by conſidering, 1. The party on whom the adminiſtration of the covenant is devolved; 2. The object of the adminiſtration; 3. The ends of it; and, 4. The nature of it. Of all which in order.

I. *Chriſt the Adminiſtrator of the covenant.*

SUCH is the nature of the thing, the weight and importance of this adminiſtration, that none who was not fit to be a party-contractor in the covenant, could be meet to be intruſted therewith. Wherefore the adminiſtration of the covenant was devolved upon no mere man nor angel, but on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the ſecond Adam: and he hath it by the covenant itſelf, as a reward of his work. It was therein made over to him by promiſe; particularly, by the promiſe of a glorious exaltation, to be the Father's honorary ſervant, prime miniſter of heaven, mentioned before, and now to be more fully and diſtinctly unfolded. It was for this cauſe the laſt Adam was made a quickening ſpirit, as ſaith the text, 1 Cor. xv. 45. with which we ſhall compare the promiſe.

Iſa. xlix. 8. *I will——give thee for a covenant of the people.*

Theſe are the Father's words to Chriſt the ſecond Adam, the great ſurety-ſervant, choſen to make reparation of the injury done to the honour of God by the ſpiritual Iſrael, ver. 3.; the light of the Gentiles, ver. 6. which is none other but he, Luke ii. 32. Acts xiii. 47; whoſe appearing in the world made the acceptable time, the day of ſalvation, as in the preceding part of this 8th verſe, compared with 2 Cor. vi. 2. And they are a promiſe made to him of a reward of his work, in fulfilling the condition of the covenant by his obedience and death: for they are immediately ſubjoined to the promiſe of aſſiſtance therein; I will preſerve thee, (namely, in the courſe of thy obedience, doing, and dying, ſo that thou ſhalt not be utterly ſwallowed up of death, but ſwim through theſe deepeſt waters ſafe aſhore,) and give thee for a covenant of the people; or ſimply, of people. Not that Chriſt was never given for a covenant of the people till he aroſe from the dead; nay, he was ſo given immediately after the fall, Gen. iii. 15.: but that it was always upon the view, and in conſideration of his obedience and death he was ſo given; and that he was at his reſurrection and aſcenſion ſolemnly inveſted with that office.

This giving, according to the ſcripture-phraſeology, imports a divine conſtitution or ſettlement. So it is ſaid, ver. 6. 'I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that 'thou mayeſt be my ſalvation unto the end of the earth;' i. e. I will conſtitute or ſet thee for a light: even as God ſet (Heb. *gave*) the ſun and moon in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth, Gen. i. 17. Thus the people making or appointing a captain, are ſaid to give a head or captain, Numb. xiv. 4. Neh. ix. 17. Wherefore, to give Chriſt for a covenant of the people, is to conſtitute or make him the covenant; whereby the people, any people, Jews or Gentiles, may become God's people, and receive all the benefits of that covenant-relation to God. This then ſpeaks Jeſus Chriſt to be the ordinance of God for the reconciliation of ſinners to God, and their partaking of all the benefits of the covenant: even as the ſun is the ordinance of heaven for light to the world, unto whoſe light all have free acceſs; though in the mean time it doth not enlighten the blind, nor thoſe who will needs live in darkneſs, becauſe they hate the light. This honour was ſecured to him in the promiſſory part of the covenant, in conſideration of his fulfilling the conditionary part thereof.

Now, that Chriſt is by the authority of heaven conſtituted and made the covenant, imports theſe two things. (1.) He is conſtitute adminiſtrator of the covenant: as he had the burden of purchaſing the promiſed benefits, ſo he hath the honour of diſtributing and conferring them on ſinners. This meaning of the phraſe appears from the following words, declaring the end of this conſtitution, 'to eſtabliſh the earth, to cauſe to inherit the 'deſolate heritages;' ver. 9. 'That thou mayeſt ſay to 'the priſoners, Go forth.' See chap. xlii. 6. 7. (2.) The whole of the covenant is in him: ſo that he that hath Chriſt, hath the covenant, the whole of the covenant; he that hath not Chriſt, hath no ſaving part nor lot in it. This is the native import of this unuſual phraſe, occurring only here, and chap. xlii. 6. and is confirmed by the following words, *to eſtabliſh the earth.* A covenant is an eſtabliſhing thing. When the firſt covenant was broken, the foundations of the earth were, ſo to ſpeak, looſened, that it could no more ſtand firm, until Chriſt was given for a covenant to eſtabliſh it again: he bore up the pillars thereof, in virtue of the new covenant in himſelf. And if his adminiſtration of the covenant were once at an end on the earth, the earth will ſtand no longer, but be reduced to aſhes. The ſaying concerning the ſacramental cup, 'This cup is the New Teſtament 'in my blood,' 1 Cor. xi. 25. is ſomewhat a-kin to the expreſſion in the text, and ſerves to confirm the ſenſe given of it. For it ſurely bears, (1.) That the ſacramental cup is the miniſtration of the New Teſtament to believing receivers, ſo that receiving the one in faith, they receive the other too. (2.) That the New Teſtament is in Chriſt's blood; ſo that their communion of the benefits of the teſtament, is by their communion of the blood of Chriſt, 1 Cor. x. 16.

Now, from theſe texts compared, it appears, That the adminiſtration of the covenant of grace is devolved on Jeſus Chriſt the Second Adam, for that end made a quickening ſpirit, having the whole of the covenant in him.

This conſtitution, lodging the adminiſtration of the covenant in the perſon of the Mediator Chriſt Jeſus, is at once ſuited to the glory of God, the caſe of ſinners, and the honour of Chriſt himſelf.

1. It is ſuited to the glory of God the offended party. In the face of Jeſus the adminiſtrator, ſhines forth the glory of the God of the covenant, 2 Cor. iv. 7. His ſpotleſs holineſs, and tremenduous juſtice, appear there; together with his matchleſs love, freeſt grace and tendereſt mercy. God is in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf, with the ſafety of his glory, giving forth his peace and pardons freely, without any merit of the receivers, and yet not without ſufficient ſatisfaction to his juſtice, and compenſation of his injured honour: as from a throne of grace, eſtabliſhed upon juſtice ſatisfied, and judgment fully executed, the firm baſes thereof.

2. It is ſuited to the caſe of ſinners, the offending party. In Chriſt the adminiſtrator of the covenant, they have to do with a God, whoſe rays of majeſty, that the guilty are not able to behold, are vailed with the robe of a ſpotleſs humanity. An inviting ſweetneſs appears in the face of the adminiſtrator, *full of grace and truth,* John i. 14. In him they may ſee their ſalvation ſo dear to the God that made them, that he himſelf would put on their nature, to eſtabliſh by his own blood a covenant of peace between Heaven and them. He is true man of the ſame family of Adam with themſelves; unto whom therefore they may confidently draw near, joining themſelves to him as the head of the covenant: and withal, he is the true God, undoubtedly able to make the covenant effectual for their ſalvation, notwithſtanding all their unworthineſs.

3. It is ſuited to the honour of Chriſt himſelf, the peace maker, who hath it as the reward of his work. Joſeph being ſold for a bond-ſervant, behaved himſelf with all meekneſs, patience, and faithfulneſs in that low character; the which was afterwards by all-ruling Providence, abundantly rewarded with honour, in his being advanced to be the prime miniſter of the kingdom of Egypt, having the adminiſtration of the whole kingdom committed to him, Pſal. cv. 17.—22. Herein he was a type of Chriſt. The Lord Jeſus did voluntarily ſubmit himſelf to the loweſt ſtep of reproach and diſgrace, taking upon him the form of a bond ſervant, and humbling himſelf in that form, *even unto the death of the croſs;* and that to perform the condition of the covenant, for the glory of God and the ſalvation of his people: and therefore he was exalted to the higheſt pinnacle of honour, being advanced to the prime miniſtry of heaven, having the adminiſtration of the covenant put into his hand, ruling over all under his Father; whereby is given him a name, which is above every name, whether of men or angels, *all things being under his feet,* Phil. ii. 7. 8. 9. Eph. i. 20. 21. 22. 23. In reſpect hereof, he is often called the Father's ſervant, namely, his honorary ſervant: and his honour in that character is often promiſed to be made very great, Iſa. xlix. 6. and lii. 13. 14. 15. Zech. iii. 8. with vi. 12. 13.

And foraſmuch as the everlaſting covenant will continue to be the ground and rule of God's diſpenſation towards his people for evermore; by the conſtitution lodging the adminiſtration of the covenant in the perſon of Chriſt, he is to enjoy that honour and dignity for ever and ever. For *unto the Son he ſaith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever,* Heb. i. 8. Even of his kingdom which is given him, that is, his mediatory kingdom and adminiſtration, there ſhall be no end, Luke i. 32. 33. The time comes indeed, wherein he will deliver up the kingdom to God even the Father: preſenting to him at the laſt day, the whole church, and every member thereof, brought by his adminiſtration, according to his commiſſion, into a ſtate of perfection. *And then cometh the end,* 1 Cor. xv. 24. namely, the end of the world, but not the end of his adminiſtration; for being conſtitute adminiſtrator of the covenant, there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom; and his dominion is an everlaſting dominion, which ſhall not paſs away (as the world ſhall, 1. Cor. vii. 31.) and his kingdom that which ſhall not be deſtroyed, (as all the four monarchies have been,) Dan. vii. 14.

And thus we have ſeen Chriſt to be the party on whom the adminiſtration of the covenant is devolved.

II. *Sinners of mankind the Object of the adminiſtration of the Covenant.*

The object of the adminiſtration of the covenant, is ſinners of mankind, indefinitely: that is to ſay, Chriſt is impowered by commiſſion from his Father, to adminiſtrate the covenant of grace to any of all mankind, the ſinners of the family of Adam without exception; he is authoriſed to receive them into the covenant, and to confer on them all the benefits thereof to their eternal ſalvation; according to the ſettled order of the covenant. The election of particular perſons is a ſecret, not to be diſcovered in the adminiſtration of the covenant, according to the eſtabliſhed order thereof, till ſuch time as the ſinner have received the covenant, by coming perſonally into it. And the extent of the adminiſtration is not founded on election, but on the ſufficiency of Chriſt's obedience and death for the ſalvation of all; neither is it regulated thereby, but by the fulneſs of power in heaven and earth given to Jeſus Chriſt, as a reward of his becoming obedient even unto death.

For confirming of this truth, let the following things be conſidered.

1. The grant which the Father hath made of Chriſt crucified, as his ordinance for the ſalvation of loſt ſinners of mankind. In the caſe of the Iſraelites in the wilderneſs, bitten by fiery ſerpents, God inſtituted an ordinance for their cure, namely a brazen ſerpent lifted up upon a pole; and made a grant thereof to whoſoever would uſe it for that purpoſe, by looking to it. No body whatſoever that needed healing was excepted: the grant was conceived in the moſt ample terms, Num. xxi. 8. ‘It ſhall come to paſs, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, ſhall live.’ So all mankind being bitten by the old ſerpent, the devil, and ſin, as his deadly poiſon, left in them; God hath appointed Jeſus Chriſt the ordinance of heaven for their ſalvation. There is a word of divine appointment paſſed upon a crucified Chriſt, making and conſtituting him the ordinance of God for ſalvation of ſinners; and God hath made a grant of him as ſuch, to whoſoever of Adam's loſt race will make uſe of him for that purpoſe, by believing on him; in the which grant none of the world of mankind is excepted. All this is clear from John iii. 14, 15, 16. ‘And as Moſes lifted up the ſerpent in the wilderneſs, even ſo muſt the Son of man be lifted up; that whoſoever believeth on him, ſhould not periſh, but have eternal life. For God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.’ Now, the adminiſtration of the covenant being ſettled, in purſuance of this grant therein made, for a reward of the Mediator's obedience, the object of the former can be no leſs extenſive than that of the latter.

2. The Mediator's commiſſion for the adminiſtration, is conceived in the moſt ample terms; and he is clothed with moſt ample powers, with relation to that buſineſs. It carries his adminiſtering the covenant, not only to the meek, the poor, the broken hearted; but to the captives, blind, bruiſed, priſoners, bondmen and broken men, who have ſold their inheritance and themſelves, and can have no hope of relief but by a jubilee, Luke iv. 18, 19. with Iſa. lxi. 1, 2. What ſort of ſinners of mankind can one imagine, that will not fall under ſome of theſe denominations? Chriſt indeed is given for a covenant of the people; not of this or that people, but of people indefinitely. *All power is given* him *in heaven and in earth*, Matth. xxviii. 18. So there are none on earth excepted from his adminiſtering the covenant to them. He is impowered to ſave the guilty law condemned world, by adminiſtering it to them; ‘For God ſent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be ſaved,’ John iii. 17. forasmuch as he is the ordinance of God for taking away the ſin of the world, chap. i. 29.; though many to whom he offers the covenant, do refuſe it, and ſo are not ſaved eventually. Accordingly, from this fulneſs of power he iſſues forth the general offer of the goſpel; wherein all without exception are declared welcome to come and ſuck of the full breaſts of the divine conſolations in the covenant: Matth. xi. 27. ‘All things are delivered unto me of my Father.’ Ver. 28. ‘Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt.’ Chap. xxviii. 18. ‘All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.’ Ver. 19. ‘Go ye therefore, and teach all nations.’ Mark xvi. 15. ‘Go, and preach the goſpel to every creature.’

3. He executes his commiſſion in an unhampered manner, adminiſtering the covenant to any ſinner of mankind: Prov. viii. 4. *Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the ſons of men.* The object of his adminiſtration is not this or that party of mankind, under this or the other denomination; but men, any men, ſons of men indefinitely. So the goſpel, in which he adminiſters the covenant, is good tidings to all people, Luke ii. 10. a feaſt made unto all people, Iſa. xxv. 6. though many, not reliſhing the tidings, never taſte of the feaſt. Accordingly, he commiſſioned his apoſtles for that effect, in terms than which none can imagine more extenſive, Mark xvi. 15. *Go ye into all the world, and preach the goſpel to every creature.* The Jews called man the creature, as being God's creature by way of eminence: ſo by every creature is meant every man. There are in the world ſome men, who, by reaſon of their monſtrous wickedneſs, are like devils; there are other men, who, by reaſon of their ſavageneſs, ſeem to differ but little from brutes: but our Lord ſaith here in effect, “Be what they will, if ye can but know them to be men, aſk no queſtions about them on this head, what ſort of men they are: being men, preach the goſpel to them, offer them the covenant; and if they receive it, give them the ſeals thereof: my Father made them, I will ſave them.”

4. If we enquire, who they are to whom Chriſt ſtands related as a Saviour? or, whoſe Saviour he is, according to the ſcripture? we find, that conſidered as an actual Saviour, ſaving actually and eventually, he is indeed only Saviour of the body, Eph. v. 23.; but conſidered as an official Saviour, a Saviour by office, he is the Saviour of the world, 1 John iv. 14. John iv. 42. Thus one having a commiſſion to be the phyſician of a ſociety, is the phyſician of the whole ſociety, by office; and ſo ſtands related to every man of them, as their phyſician: howbeit, he is not actually a healer to any of them, but ſuch as employ him. Though ſome of that ſociety ſhould not employ him at all, but on every occaſion call another phyſician; yet he is ſtill their phyſician by office: though they ſhould die of their diſeaſe, being averſe from calling him; yet ſtill it is true, that he was their phyſician, they might have called him, and had his remedies; and it was purely their own fault, that they were not healed by him. Even ſo our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath heaven's patent, conſtituting him the Saviour of the world; by the authority of his Father he is inveſted with that office: and whereſoever the goſpel comes, his patent for that effect is intimate, 1 John iv. 14. ‘And we have ſeen and do teſtify, that the Father ſent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.’ Wherefore, none of us ſhall periſh for want of a Saviour. Jeſus Chriſt is the Saviour of the world; he is your Saviour, and my Saviour, be our caſe what it will; and God, in and by him, is the Saviour of all men, eſpecially of thoſe that believe, 1 Tim. iv. 10. Hence Chriſt's ſalvation is the common ſalvation, Jude 3.; and the goſpel is the grace of God that bringeth ſalvation to all men, Tit. ii. 11. marg. Chriſt then ſtands related as a Saviour by office to the world of mankind; he is their Saviour: and he is ſo related to every one of them, as ſinners, loſt ſinners, of that ſociety, 1 Tim. i. 15. ‘Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners.’ Luke xix. 10. ‘The Son of man is come to ſeek and to ſave that which is loſt.’ Let no man ſay, “Alas! I have nothing to do with Chriſt, nor he with me; for I am a ſinner, a loſt ſinner.” Nay, upon that very ground there is a relation between him and you. Since you are a ſinner of mankind, Chriſt is your Saviour: for he is by office Saviour of the family whereof you are a branch. If you will employ another than him, or pine away in your diſeaſe, rather than put yourſelf in his hand, ye do it upon your peril: but know aſſuredly, that you have a Saviour of your own, choſen of God for you, whether you employ him or not. He is by his Father's appointment the phyſician of ſouls: ye are the ſick; and the leſs ſenſible ye are, the more dangerouſly ſick: there is a valuable relation

then betwixt Chriſt and you, as ſuch, Matth. ix. 11. 12. He is the great burden-bearer, that gives reſt to them that labour and are heavy laden, Matth. xi. 28. Pſal. li. 22. Ye labour, ſpending your labour for that which ſatisfieth not: and are laden with iniquity, even heavy laden; and nothing the leſs ſo, that ye are not duly ſenſible thereof: there is a relation then betwixt Chriſt and you, on that very ſcore. Now, if Chriſt ſtands related to the world of mankind-ſinners, as their Saviour, then they are the object of his adminiſtration of the covenant.

5. Laſtly, if it were not ſo, then there would be ſome excepted perſons in the world of mankind ſinners, for whom there is no warrant, more than for devils, to take hold of the covenant, by believing in Chriſt: contrary to the conſtant voice of the goſpel, John iii. 16. Mark xvi. 15. For ſurely they have no warrant to take hold of the covenant, to whom the adminiſtrator is not impowered to give it. Which of the world of mankind ſinners can theſe excepted perſons be? Not Pagans, and other infidels, who hear not the goſpel: for howbeit, in the depth of ſovereign wiſdom, that warrant is not intimated to them; yet it doth really extend to them as included under that general term, *whoſoever*, John iii. 16. And if it did not extend to them, the covenant could not lawfully be preached and offered to them by miniſters of the goſpel more than a crier could lawfully go and proclaim and offer the king's indemnity to thoſe who have no concern in it, but are excepted out of it. The miniſterial goſpel offer is undoubtedly null and void as far as it exceeds the bounds of the object of Chriſt's adminiſtration of the covenant; as being, in ſo far, from one or more having no power to make it. Neither are any who hear the goſpel excepted; for the not taking hold of the covenant by faith in Chriſt, is the great ſin and condemnation of all who, having the goſpel, do ſo entertain it, Prov. viii. 36. John iii. 19. Mark xvi. 16. But it could not be the ſin of ſuch perſons; becauſe it can never be one's ſin, not to do a thing which he hath no warrant from God to do. Much leſs are the non-elect excepted: for at that rate, not only ſhould their unbelief be none of their ſin; but the elect themſelves could never believe, till ſuch time as their election were in the firſt place, revealed to them, which is contrary to the ſtated method of grace: for none can believe in Chriſt, till once they ſee their warrant; foraſmuch as that warrant is the ground of faith.

Wherefore we conclude, that ſinners of mankind indefinitely are the object of Chriſt's adminiſtration of the covenant; that he is impowered to adminiſter it to you, and every one of you, whatever you are or have been; and that you muſt either take hold of the covenant for life and ſalvation, or periſh as deſpiſers of it, ſince ye have heard the goſpel.

III. *The Ends of the Adminiſtration of the Covenant.*

The ends of the adminiſtration of the covenant, which make the buſineſs of the adminiſtrator as ſuch, are theſe three; to wit, (1.) the bringing of ſinners into the covenant; (2.) the management of them therein, according to it, in this world; and (3.) the completing of their happineſs, according to it, in the other world.

1. The bringing of ſinners perſonally and ſavingly into the covenant, Iſa. xlix. 5. 'And now, ſaith the Lord 'that formed me in the womb to be his ſervant, to bring 'Jacob again to him, though Iſrael be not gathered, yet 'ſhall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord.' Though the covenant was concluded from eternity, when we could neither conſent nor diſſent; yet, by the conſtitution thereof, it is provided, that, even to the end of time any ſinner of the race of Adam, who ſhall believe, his receiving and embracing the covenant by faith, ſhall be as good and valid to enter him into it, as if he had perſonally ſubſcribed it at the making thereof, John iii. 16. Thus it is left open to mankind-ſinners, that they may come into it, taking place therein under Chriſt the head; and ſo become perſonally confederate with Heaven, to their eternal ſalvation. And there is room enough within the compaſs of the infinite name of the ſecond Adam, for all of us to ſubſcribe our little names. Wherefore, notwithſtanding of all that have already ſubſcribed, in that name, ſaying, I am the Lord's, i. e. the Lord Chriſt's, Iſa. xliv. 5. ſince Eve firſt ſet down her name there, by believing the promiſe firſt, whereby ſhe then commenced, and actually was the mother of all living, Gen. iii. 20. yet the voice of the goſpel ſtill is, and will be even to the end, *And yet there is room*, Luke xiv. 22. For typifying of which, Noah's ark was, by the appointment of Heaven, made all little rooms, Gen. vi. 17. called in the margin there, *neſts*. Now, the Mediator is authoriſed to treat with ſinners, rebels to God, and ſubjects of Satan's kingdom, to bring them over to Heaven's ſide again; and for that effect, to adminiſter the covenant unto them, to propoſe it to them, and gather them into the bond thereof. Wherefore, having gone forth on that errand, he teſtifies his earneſtneſs in the work, Matth. xxiii. 37. How often would I have gathered thy children! and declares himſelf the door of the ſheep, John x. 7. 9.

2. The management of them in the covenant, according to it, during their continuance in this world. When ſinners are, by the Mediator's adminiſtration, brought within the bond of the covenant, they are not thenceforth truſted with the management of themſelves and their ſtock; but their ſtock being lodged with him, they are put under his hand as their ſolemn manager, the chief Shepherd and Biſhop of ſouls, unto whoſe overſight the ſtrays once returned are committed, 1 Pet. ii. 25. Whatever they need, they muſt receive from him; he is to diſpenſe all the benefits of the covenant, of whatever kind, unto them. Are they to be juſtified? he is to paſs the ſentence, *Thy ſins be forgiven thee*, Matth. ix. 2. 6. Are they to be brought into a new ſaving relation to God? he is to give them *power to become the ſons of God*, John i. 12. Are they to be ſanctified? he is to waſh, ſanctify, and cleanſe them, John xiii. 8. Eph. v. 26.; and to give them repentance, as well as forgiveneſs of ſins, Acts v. 31. Are they to be cauſed to perſevere? he is to keep them, and to account for each one of them to his Father, John xvii. 12. Are they to be ſeen to in all their temporal concerns? the care of them all lies upon him, 1 Pet. v. 7. He is our Joſeph, who hath all the ſtores of the covenant in his hand; and of him God hath ſaid, as Pharaoh ſaid to his famiſhing people, crying unto him for bread, *Go to Joſeph*, Gen. xli. 55. Moreover, they muſt receive all their orders from him, touching their duty in all points. They muſt receive the law at his mouth; ſince it is by him God ſpeaks unto them, according to the conſtitution of the covenant: for which cauſe God hath given a ſolemn charge to all the covenant people, ſaying, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed: hear ye him*, Matth. xvii. 5.

3. and laſtly, The completing of their happineſs, according to the covenant, in the other world: Eph. v. 27. 'That he might preſent it to himſelf a glorious 'church, not having ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing.' It is the comfort of believers, that Jeſus Chriſt adminiſters the covenant in this world; ſo that whatever part thereof they may be driven to, they can never be driven to any part unto which his adminiſtration doth not extend. Howbeit, the moſt glorious part of his adminiſtration takes its place in the other world: for it is in heaven, that the promiſes of the covenant have their perfect accompliſhment: the which makes heaven home to believers. "O! but the paſſage betwixt the two worlds is "a dark, dangerous and gloomy one! Who can without horror think of the Jordan of death, and the dark"ſome region of the grave!" But withal, God's covenant-people ſhould remember, that their Lord hath buſineſs in that paſſage, as well as on either ſide of it. The

line of the covenant is drawn through it, making a path by which the redeemed ſafely paſs. So there alſo is the ſcene of Chriſt's adminiſtration of the covenant; he hath *the keys of hell and of death*, Rev. i. 18. It is great weakneſs, to think that he doth only, as it were, ſtand on the other ſide of the river, directing the believer in his paſſage, and ready to receive him when come aſhore: nay, it lies on him, as adminiſtrator of the covenant, even to go into the water with the paſſenger, to take him by the arm, and going between him and the ſtream, to break the force thereof unto him, and to bring him ſafe aſhore: Pſal. xxiii. 4. *Though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me.* In the Iſraelites paſſing over to Canaan, the ark went firſt into Jordan, and was laſt in coming out, being there till all the people were paſſed clean over, Joſh. chap. iii. iv. The ark being a type of Chriſt, as Canaan was of heaven, this teacheth us, that our Lord Jeſus will have buſineſs in the paſſage between the two worlds, as long as there is one of his people to paſs that way; and that his adminiſtration there will never be at an end, until the laſt man within the bond of the covenant is ſafely landed on the other ſide. This is done, he is to adminiſter the covenant to them there alſo, completing their happineſs by a perfect accompliſhment of all the promiſes thereof unto them. As Jeſus is the author, ſo he is the finiſher of our faith, Heb. xii. 2. In which texts there is an alluſion to the races famous among the ancient Greeks, wherein there was one that opened the race, ran it, and went on the head of all the reſt; another who was ſet on a throne at the end of the race, and gave the prize to ſuch as won it. In the ſpiritual race, Chriſt acts both theſe parts. As performer of the condition of the covenant, in the courſe of his obedience, wherein he endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, he is the author of our faith, or the chief leader, expreſly called the forerunner, chap. vi. 20. in bringing many ſons unto glory, going on their head as captain or chief leader, chap. ii. 10. Then, as adminiſtrator of the covenant, he is the finiſher of our faith, or the perfecter that gives the crown to the runners, and is ſet down at the right hand of the throne of God. And thus it is his buſineſs to put the crown of glory on the heads of thoſe whom by his grace he hath made conquerors. From his hand Paul expected it, 2 Tim. iv. 8. 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord the righteous judge, (to wit, Chriſt the judge of of the world) ſhall give me at that day.' To him it belongs to grant the overcomers to ſit him with in his throne, Rev. iii. 21. And therefore I cannot help thinking, that the text, Matth. xx. 23. may ſafely be read without the ſupplement, 'To ſit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but for whom it is prepared of my Father.' So the particle *but* is uſed exceptively, 2 Cor. ii. 5. for *ſave*, Mark ix. 8. The fulneſs of power given to the Mediator, comprehends all power in heaven, as well as in earth: accordingly he prepares the place for his ſeveral people in his Father's houſe, having the whole at his diſpoſal as adminiſtrator of the covenant. And he is to adminiſter the covenant to them, not only at their firſt entrance into the regions of bliſs, but all along through the ages of eternity, being to remain the eternal bond of union and mean of communication between God and the ſaints for ever, Heb. vii. 15. Rev. vi. 17.

And theſe are the ends of the adminiſtration of the covenant. Follows,

IV. *The nature of the adminiſtration of the covenant.*

The nature of this adminiſtration offers itſelf to our view, in the relations Chriſt hath to the covenant as he is adminiſtrator thereof. We have already ſeen, how that Chriſt became the mediator of the covenant, both ſubſtantial and official; and have obſerved that his official mediation runs through the whole of the covenant: and we have taken notice of a threefold relation of his unto it, namely, his being, 1. The Kinſman-redeemer in it; 2. The ſurety of it; and 3. The Prieſt, the ſacrificing prieſt of it; the which parts of his mediation, reſpecting the condition of the covenant, do belong to the making of it. We ſhall now conſider his other relations thereto, bearing thoſe parts of his mediation, which reſpecting the promiſes of the covenant do belong to the adminiſtration of it. And they are theſe five. 1. He is the truſtee of the covenant; 2. The Teſtator of the covenant; 3. The Prophet of the covenant; 4. The King of the covenant; and, 5. The Interceſſor of the covenant; each of them which is a ſyllable of the name above every name, given him of the Father, as the reward of his work. And in viewing of theſe in order, the nature of the adminiſtration of the covenant will plainly appear.

I. *Chriſt the Truſtee of the Covenant.*

Our Lord Jeſus as adminiſtrator, is, in the firſt place, the Truſtee of the covenant; having the covenant, and all the benefits thereof, committed to his truſt: Col. i. 19. 'For it pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell.' This greateſt of all truſts, too great for any mere man or angel, our bleſſed Redeemer was perfectly qualified for; and ſo was ſet over the houſe of God, the moſt precious things thereof being put under his hand. What is ſealed up from the higheſt angel he hath acceſs to; he is truſted to looſe the ſeals, for he is worthy, Rev. v. 2.—5. A holy jealous God *put no truſt in his ſervants, and his angels he chargeth with folly*: for they were fallible: there was a poſſibility of their betraying their truſt, Job iv. 18. But it pleaſed him to truſt the bleſſed Jeſus, that in him, as an infallible adminiſtrator, *all fulneſs ſhould dwell.*

This high truſt was a neceſſary prerequiſite of the adminiſtration; and therefore, upon his engagement to fulfil the condition of the covenant, reputed in heaven as ſure as if it had been actually performed, all the benefits of the covenant were not only made over to him in point of right, but were delivered over into his hand in actual poſſeſſion, that he might diſpenſe them to ſinners, according to the method therein ſtated and agreed upon. John iii. 35. 'The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.' Matth. xi. 27. 'All things are delivered unto me of my Father.' Verſe 28. 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt.' Hence it was that he entered upon the adminiſtration of the covenant, long before his incarnation; even as ſoon as there was any place for the adminiſtering thereof, which was in Paradiſe after the fall: though the ſolemnity of his inveſtiture, and taking poſſeſſion, was reſerved unto his aſcenſion into heaven, when the man Chriſt was ſet at God's right hand, Gen. iii. 8. 15. with Pſalm lxviii. 18. Eph. i. 20. 21. 22.

Thus the fulneſs of the covenant is in him: and this truſt makes the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, not to be particularly inventoried by us, ſince they are unſearchable. But, agreeable to what hath been ſaid before, we ſhall, for opening thereof, make the following things.

1. The unſeen guard of the covenant is under his hand. There is given unto him all power over natural and ſpiritual things, to manage the ſame for the preſervation, protection, and reſtraint of thoſe ſometime to be brought into the covenant; while yet they are ſtrangers from it, and neither perceive the guard about them, nor the commander thereof: John v. 22. *The Father—hath commited all judgment unto the Son.* Hoſ. xi. 3. *I taught Ephraim alſo to go, taking them by their arms, but they knew not that I healed them.* Sometimes they are during their ſtate of blindneſs, in eminent hazard of their lives, and narrowly eſcape, before the ſtream of ſtrong temptations threatning to carry them quite away; and yet the force of theſe is broken one way or other,

and they brought back from the very brink of ruin; and they never truly know whoſe debtors they are for theſe things, nor ſee the love-deſign in them, untill converting grace has reached them; and then they hear the Captain of that guard ſaying to them, as he ſaid to Cyrus, Iſa. xlv. 5. ‘I girded thee, though thou haſt not ‘known me.’ So the mountain was full of horſes and chariots of fire, for the defence of Eliſha and his ſervant; while yet the ſervant ſaw none for them, but againſt them, untill the Lord opened his eyes, 2 Kings vi. 17.

2. The quickening Spirit of the covenant is in him, whereby to quicken dead ſinners, and cauſe them to live. The Spirit of life behoved to be purchaſed for ſinners, otherwiſe there was no life for them. Now, the fulneſs thereof is purchaſed, and actually lodged in the Mediator, according to the covenant. Hence Chriſt propoſeth himſelf to dead Sardis, as *having the ſeven ſpirits of God*, Rev. iii. 1. and ſaith to the Jews, John v. 25. ‘The dead ſhall hear the voice of the ſon of God;’ that is, dead ſouls ſhall be quickened; and being quickened, ſhall believe. The firſt Adam being made a living ſoul, was capable to communicate natural life, but not being made a quickening ſpirit, he could not reſtore life once loſt: but the laſt Adam was made a quickening ſpirit, to reſtore ſpiritual life to ſinners dead in treſpaſſes and ſins. So, in Chriſt as the truſtee of the covenant, is the fountain of life. Adam's ſin put out the lights of the whole world; and his natural offspring were all left by him as ſo many blind candles; but the ſecond Adam is made, and ſet up, a flaming lamp to lighten them again; and as many of them as it toucheth, do inſtantly flame too: and could they all but touch it, and none are forbidden, they ſhould all be lighted again, and ſhine with the light of ſpiritual life, partaking of the ſpirit of life in Jeſus Chriſt.

3. The righteouſneſs of the covenant is in him, whereby to juſtify the ungodly that have no righteouſneſs of their own. Hence his name is, *The Lord our righteouſneſs*, Jer. xxiii. 6. Righteouſneſs of man before the Lord was quite worn out: there was nothing of that kind left upon any of Adam's children, ‘as it is written, ‘There is none righteous, no not one,’ Rom. iii. 10. But Jeſus Chriſt having, in his birth, life, and death, wrought out the righteouſneſs of the new covenant, brought it in, and preſented it unto his Father, Dan. ix. 24. with Lev. xvi. 15. And it was ſuſtained and accepted as the new-covenant righteouſneſs, for juſtifying all that believe; and was lodged with the worker thereof, intruſted with it as Adminiſtrator of the covenant. Hence he is ſaid to be made unto us righteouſneſs, 1 Cor. i. 30. namely, by a divine conſtitution, even as he was made the covenant. And intimation hereof is made unto ſinners, in the goſpel, for a ground of faith, Iſa. xlv. 24. ‘Surely, ſhall one ſay, in the Lord have I righteouſ‘neſs,’ Heb. Only in the Lord, (concerning me he hath ſaid) is righteouſneſs. They are the words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, narrating the divine conſtitution concerning himſelf. Compare ver. 23. with Rom. xiv. 10. 11. Wherefore, the goſpel is called the miniſtration of righteouſneſs, 2 Cor. iii. 9.; and his miniſters, miniſters of righteouſneſs, chap. xi. 15.; he being intruſted with the new-covenant righteouſneſs, for to adminiſter it to ſinners, unto juſtification of life, as the phraſe is, Rom. v. 18.

4. The new-covenant right to God is in his perſon as Mediator: and he is actually poſſeſſed of the fulneſs of the Godhead, as he is adminiſtrator of the covenant, to communicate of that fulneſs to all that ſhall believe, Col. ii. 9. ‘For in him dwelleth all the fulneſs of the ‘Godhead bodily.’ Verſe 10. ‘And ye are complete ‘in him, which is the head.’ Our Lord Jeſus, as the eternal Son of God, had a natural indefeaſible right to the fulneſs of the Godhead: but as the ſecond Adam, he took out a new right thereto, purchaſing the ſame by his obedience and death; and as ſuch, it is now lodged with him, to be communicated by him. And thus the peace of the covenant, peace with God, is in him, Eph. ii. 14. the ſonſhip of the covenant, the adoption into the family of God, is in him as the firſt born among many brethren, Pſal. lxxxix. 27. with John i. 12. the covenant intereſt in God as one's own God, is in him, John xx. 17. And to obtain all theſe in one, let the ſinner but receive Chriſt by faith, and he hath them; for they are all under his hand as truſtee of the covenant, yea in him as the ſtorehouſe of the covenant.

5. The covenant fulneſs of the Spirit of ſanctification is in him, whereby to make ſinners holy; Col. i. 19. ‘It pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſs ‘dwell.’ John i. 16. ‘And of his fulneſs have all we ‘received, and grace for grace.’ Having purchaſed the ſame with his own blood, it is lodged in him as Adminiſtrator of the covenant, in reſpect of which he is ſaid to be made unto us ſanctification, 1 Cor. i. 30. Therefore out of his pierced ſide came forth blood and water; blood to remove the guilt of ſin, water to waſh away the defilement thereof. So he is the *fountain opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs*: not a veſſel of that water of purification, which, how full ſoever, would lack as much as it ſhould communicate; but a fountain, a living ſpring of it, to ſupply the needs of the unclean, without any lack in itſelf; *For God giveth not the Spirit by meaſure unto him*, John iii. 34. wherefore there is in him ſuch a fulneſs of the Spirit of holineſs, as is, by the infinite efficacy thereof, ſufficient to ſanctify the whole family of Adam, and even the worſt of them. There is a fulneſs of all grace in him, to be communicated for the repairing of the loſt image of God in us. There is grace enough in him to melt the hardeſt heart into evangelical repentance, Acts v. 31. to mortify the ſtrongeſt luſts, Gal. v. 24. and to quicken, and to ſtrengthen unto holy obedience, 2 Tim. ii. 1.

6. The eſtabliſhing grace of the covenant is in him, whereby to cauſe the moſt fickle and inconſtant, once in him, to perſevere unto the end: Jude ver. 1. ‘Them ‘that are ſanctified by God the Father, and preſerved ‘in Jeſus Chriſt.’ He is conſtituted the head of influences for all his myſtical members, which are to have their nouriſhment miniſtered from him, Col. ii. 19. The giving out of continued pardons, neceſſary for them in this their ſtate of imperfection, is alſo in his hand, as the Truſtee of the covenant, ‘exalted to be a Prince ‘and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Iſrael, and ‘forgiveneſs of ſins,’ Acts v. 31. Thus he is fully furniſhed for preſerving of them in a ſtate of grace, having a fulneſs of grace in himſelf to communicate unto them, ſuitable to all their exigencies, whether in reſpect of the power, or of the guilt of their ſin.

7. The temporal things of the covenant are all in his hand, whereby to provide for, and afford protection to his people, during their continuance in this world. In the covenant there was made to him a promiſe of his inheriting all things, as the firſt-born of the family of heaven: and in his perſon as the laſt Adam, the ancient dominion over the creatures was reſtored, as we heard before. Now, as he is the Truſtee of the covenant, the heritage of the world, and all things therein, is actually delivered over into his hand: ſo that he is not only Lord of the world in point of right, but in fact; having the power of all therein, from the ſmalleſt rag for covering of nakedneſs, even to the crowns and ſceptres. This he himſelf witneſſeth, Matth. xxviii. 18. ‘All power is ‘given unto me in heaven and in earth.’ chap. xi. 27. ‘All things are delivered unto me of my Father.’ Hence to encourge his impoveriſhed people in their building of the ſecond temple, he ſaith, Hag. ii. 8. ‘The ſilver ‘is mine, and the gold is mine,’ namely, to give them to whom I will. And that theſe are Chriſt's words appears from ver. 6. compared with Heb. xii. 26. Accordingly, from Pſal. xxiv. 1. ‘The earth is the Lord's, ‘and the fulneſs thereof,’ the apoſtle clears believers right to the creatures, 1 Cor. x. 25. 26. And thus he

is fully furniſhed for affording all manner of proviſion to his people, in temporal things: and all protection from whatever dangers they can be in while here. The ſun, moon, and ſtars, the earth, ſea, and air, with all that in them is, are under his hand as the Truſtee of the covenant; and he can diſpoſe of them all for the ends of the covenant, as the glory of God and the welfare of his people do require.

8. The covenant-fulneſs of power over death and the grave is in his hand, whereby to diſarm death of its ſting, and bring about a glorious reſurrection. 'I,' ſaith he, 'have the keys of hell and of death,' Rev. i. 18. Death goes through the world as a mighty conqueror, whom none is able to reſiſt; the grave follows, and none can keep back its prey, nor cauſe it to give it up again. But the Mediator hath an effectual check upon them both. They are not abſolute potentates, as mighty as they are: there is one above them, to whoſe orders they muſt preciſely ſtick. Death may indeed enter in within the boundaries of the covenant, and carry off the covenant-people as well as others: but at the border it muſt drop its ſting, and enter without it; for the power of death is now in Chriſt's hand, and he will not ſuffer it to enter there with it. And the time cometh wherein he will ſay to the grave, Give up: and then the bars thereof will be broken aſunder, the gates thereof fly open, and it will deliver up to him its lodgers; for he is intruſted as Adminiſtrator of the covenant, with full power over death and the grave.

9. Laſtly, The eternal conſummate happineſs of the covenant is in his hand, whereby to render the ſouls of his people happy immediately after death, and then ſoul and body together happy at the laſt day: for all power in heaven is given him. The Father hath made him the great repoſitory of eternal life, the fountain from whence it ſhall ſtream forth to all the heirs of life: and the diſpenſing of it is intruſted to him: 1 John v. 11. 'God hath given to us eternal life: and this life is in his Son.' John xvii. 2. 'As thou haſt given him power over all fleſh, that he ſhould give eternal life to as many as thou haſt given him.' Wherefore his dying people do in faith commit their ſouls to him, as Stephen, Acts vii. 59. *Saying, Lord Jeſus, receive my Spirit.* And at the laſt day he pronounceth the ſentence, and ſolemnly receives them into the kingdom of heaven, Matth. xxv. 34.

And thus Chriſt is the Truſtee of the Covenant.

II. *Chriſt the Teſtator of the covenant.*

In the next place, our Lord Jeſus is the Teſtator of the covenant, as the apoſtle teacheth, Heb. ix. 15. 16, 17. By the conditionary part of the covenant, God had a compenſation of the wrong done to his glory, by ſinners: and by the promiſſory part, Chriſt had unſearchable riches to communicate to them, whereby they might be made happy; and being to die in the cauſe according to his covenant, he timely made his teſtament, as a deed of conveyance thereof unto them; turning the promiſſory part of the covenant, reſpecting loſt ſinners, into a teſtament in their favour, 1 Cor. xi. 25. *This cup is the new teſtament in my blood.*

Hence it appears, that this belongs to the adminiſtration of the covenant, committed to him, for making ſinners partakers of the covenant-benefits; yea, and that it is the firſt and fundamental act of that his adminiſtration laid as a foundation of all the other acts thereof, which are but ſo many means of executing the teſtament. Upon the Mediator's undertaking to fulfil the condition of the covenant, the Father made to him a diſpoſition of the covenant-benefits contained in the promiſſory part: and the benefits ſo diſponed, were actually delivered over into his hand, as the appointed Truſtee of the covenant, as we have already ſeen. Now he having them all thus in his hand, hath made a diſpoſition of them to poor ſinners, by way of Teſtament, Luke xxii. 29. 'And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me.' Or, 'And I diſpone unto you, as my Father diſponed unto me, a kingdom.' The word here uſed, ſignifies to *diſpoſe*; and hath it in the notion of a federal or covenant diſpoſition, and a teſtamentary diſpoſition too. Of the former ſort was the diſpoſition made by the father to Chriſt, namely a federal diſpoſition; as being made on a moſt onerous cauſe, a condition properly ſo called, to wit, his making his ſoul an offering for ſin; and it can by no means be a teſtamentary diſpoſition, ſince *where a teſtament is, there muſt alſo of neceſſity be the death of the teſtator*, Heb. ix. 16. the which it is evident, could have no place in the caſe of the Father. Of the latter ſort is the diſpoſition made by Jeſus Chriſt to ſinners, namely, a teſtamentary diſpoſition, which, of its own nature, is a deed or conveyance of grace and liberality without conditions properly ſo called: and foraſmuch as ſinners were under an utter diſability to perform conditions properly ſo called; it was therefore neceſſary for their behoof, to make a teſtamentary diſpoſition or teſtament.

For clearing of the nature of this teſtament, which is of ſo great importance for all to know, who have any concern for their ſalvation, we ſhall conſider, 1. The making thereof; 2. The legatee; 3. The executor; and, 4. The legacies.

Firſt, As to the *making* of Chriſt's teſtament, it is firſt of all to be obſerved, that though the covenant was indeed from eternity, the teſtament was not ſo. For Chriſt made his teſtament as adminiſtrator of the covenant; which adminiſtration he did not enter upon but in time. He was from eternity the truſtee of the covenant, which grand truſt was a neceſſary prerequiſite of his adminiſtration; yet foraſmuch as his commencing teſtator of the covenant, was an act of his adminiſtration thereof, there could be no place for it until there was place for adminiſtering the covenant, which there was not, till once the covenant of works was broken. And hereto beſt agreeth the nature of a teſtament, which is not ſimply a will, but a will declared, teſtified, and ſignified by word or writ, or ſome one or other external ſign, pleadable by the legatees, in order to their obtaining of the legacies bequeathed.

Chriſt's teſtament, which for ſubſtance is but one, is yet twofold, in reſpect of different circumſtances wherewith it hath been veſted; namely, the old or firſt teſtament, and the new teſtament, 2 Cor. iii. 14.

Chriſt's old teſtament is the declaration of the laſt will of our dying Saviour, touching his unſearchable riches, confirmed by ſlain ſacrifices of divine inſtitution, ſealed with the ſeals of circumciſion and the paſſover, and enduring in the church till the fulneſs of time, and the manifeſtation of himſelf to Iſrael in the fleſh, Heb. ix. 20. Rom. iv. 11. 1 Cor. v. 7. Luke xvi. 16. This his teſtament was originally made by word of mouth, which kind of teſtament is called a nuncupative teſtament: but it was afterwards committed to writing; ſo that there was not only a word of the teſtament to be heard, but a book of the teſtament to be read, by the legatees, Heb. ix. 19. 20. And ſo we have it a written teſtament, in that part of the holy ſcripture called by the name of the Old Teſtament.

Chriſt's new teſtament is the declaration of the ſame laſt will of our dying Saviour, touching his unſearchable riches, confirmed by his own death on the croſs, ſealed with the ſeals of baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper, and to continue for evermore, 1 Cor. xi. 23, 24, 25. Matth. xxviii. 19. Heb. vii. 12. 16. 17. This alſo was originally made by word of mouth, in the time of his public miniſtry, wherein he declared his will anent the great ſalvation, which, as the apoſtle obſerves, *at firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord*, Heb. ii. 3. And it was in like manner afterwards committed to writing: and we have it too a written teſtament, in that part of the holy ſcripture called by the name of the New Teſtament.

If we look for the original date of Chriſt's old or firſt teſtament, we find his teſtament to be of a date as early as the nature of the thing could bear; being made in paradiſe, on the day of Adam's fall, *in the cool of the day*, Gen. iii. 8. otherwiſe called the time between the two evenings, Exod. xii. 6. that is, between three and ſix o'clock in the afternoon. At the which time, our Lord Jeſus did, in the promiſe of the *ſeed of the woman to bruiſe the head of the ſerpent*, which ſhould *bruiſe his heel*, Gen. iii. 15. ſignify his death, and declare his will for the benefits of his purchaſe their accruing to ſinners thereby. And that I judge to have been the ſixth day of the creation, the ſame day wherein man was created; reckoned that the ſcripture teacheth, that Adam lodged not one night in honour, as ſome do, agreeable to the original, read Pſalm xlix. 12. They who cannot think that the events recorded from Gen. ii. 7. to the end of the third chapter, were crouded within the compaſs of one day, may weigh therewith the events relating to the death of Chriſt, which are recorded Luke xxii. 66. to the end. Chap. xxiii. 1.—33. John xix. 1. Math. xxvii. 27. 28. John xix. 2, 5. 9.—15. Math. xxvii. 34. All which things were done in the ſpace of half a day; for Chriſt was crucified about twelve of the clock, Luke xxiii. 44, 46.

Some, through an unwillingneſs to think of their death, do put off the making of their teſtament unto a death-bed; but ſo very willing was Chriſt, the ſecond Adam, to die for us, that he ſet his houſe in order, and ſo prepared himſelf for death, that very day wherein the firſt Adam fell. The buſineſs of the great King, and the buſineſs of the ruined world of mankind, required haſte. The whole fabric of the world was by Adam's fall ſo unhinged, that it was haſtening to a total diſſolution, and mankind about to periſh in the ruins; till the ſecond Adam went in, and bore up the pillars thereof, in virtue of his death to eſtabliſh the earth again, Iſa. xlix. 8. Wherefore in paradiſe he made his teſtament in a few words, containing a diſpoſition of the benefits of the covenant, in favour of poor ſinners, Gen. iii. 15. and typically went in under that weight of wrath, which was preſſing down all; and ſo he eſtabliſhed the earth again. In this form it was that they of the firſt ages of the world had the teſtament. But it was repeated and renewed to Abraham, to whom the promiſes were made, Gal. iii. 16. comprehended under the name of the covenants or teſtaments of promiſe, Eph. ii. 12. As alſo to Iſrael in the wilderneſs, whom Moſes ſprinkled with blood, *ſaying, This is the blood of the teſtament*, Heb. ix. 19, 20. And this was Chriſt's old teſtament, upon which all that believed, from Adam to Chriſt, built their faith, and hope of obtaining the legacies left therein; though it was upwards of four thouſand years, from the firſt making of the teſtament, unto the death of the Teſtator, by which the new teſtament was confirmed.

Now, the apoſtle ſaith, that *a teſtament is of force after men are dead: otherwiſe it is of no ſtrength at all whilſt the teſtator liveth*, Heb. ix. 17. Was Chriſt's teſtament then of no force all that time? Yea, it was of force; and that by means of a pre-confirmation, being confirmed before, Gal. iii. 17. The confirmation of a teſtament, in the ſenſe of the holy ſcripture, is by the death of the teſtator; as the apoſtle, in the forecited text, teacheth the Hebrews. And in ſcripture-reckoning, there was a twofold death of the Teſtator here: one typical, another real. In reſpect of the former of theſe, Chriſt was the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of world, Rev. xiii. 8. having died typically in the ſacrifices then offered, Gen. iii. 21. and thereafter all along under the Old Teſtament. And by that death of the Teſtator was the pre-confirmation of the teſtament; ſo that from the day it was firſt made, it was of force, for the legatees obtaining the legacies therein bequeathed; foraſmuch as it was then alſo confirmed. Wherefore the apoſtle obſerves, that, in full conſiſtency with that known maxim ancient teſtaments, Heb. ix. 17. above cited, 'Neither 'the firſt teſtament was dedicated without blood,' ver. 18. What the apoſtle means by the dedication of the teſtament, will be plain, if it is conſidered, that what our verſion of the Bible calls dedication, is, in the ſcripture uſe of words ſo rendered therein, nothing elſe but an entering on, or a firſt, or new uſing of a perſon or thing, to what they were deſigned for: inſomuch that the very dedication of the temple was no more but that, as appears by comparing 2 Chron. v. 13. chap. vi. and chap. vii. 1. with 4, 5. Wherefore, by the dedication of the teſtament, muſt be meant the legatees beginning to claim and obtain their legacies, upon the teſtament. And this, the apoſtle ſaith, was not done without the teſtament's being confirmed by blood, or death: the which, though really the blood or death of beaſts ſacrificed; yet, according to the apoſtle's reaſoning, were reckoned the blood or death of the Teſtator, they being ſacrificed as types of him.

And hence it appears, that whatever have been the different circumſtances wherewith the teſtament in different periods hath been veſted; the Old and New Teſtament, nuncupative and written, are for ſubſtance but the One teſtament of Jeſus Chriſt, the ſame yeſterday, and to-day, and for ever, Heb. xiii. 8. having the ſame force and effect for full remiſſion of ſin and eternal ſalvation, legacies claimed and obtained by faith, in virtue of the teſtament, Acts xv. 11. Rom. iv. 13.; only, what was firſt declared by word of mouth, the ſame was thereafter written. The legacies at firſt bequeathed in general comprehenſive terms, were afterward particularly nominated: and in the New Teſtament they are more clearly expreſſed than in the Old. The former was a copy of the teſtament, fitted for the times before the Teſtator really died: the latter, fitted for all times thereafter, to the end of the world; and therefore no other copy is to be accepted after it.

Secondly, It is to be inquired, *Who are the legatees*, the parties in whoſe favour the teſtament was made, and who may, in the method of the teſtament, claim and obtain the legacies therein bequeathed? Chriſt's making his teſtament being the fundamental act of his adminiſtration of the covenant, as we have already ſeen; the legatees in the teſtament muſt needs be the ſame as the objects of his adminiſtration of the covenant, that is to ſay, ſinners of mankind indefinitely: for if Chriſt is authoriſed by the Father to adminiſter the covenant to mankind ſinners indefinitely; and hath accordingly made his teſtament for that effect, ſurely none can be excepted out of the teſtament, that are not excepted out of his adminiſtration. Therefore the apoſtle lays down for the foundation of faith to thoſe who had even imbrued their hands in the blood of the Lord of glory, their intereſt in the promiſe, Acts ii. 39. 'For the promiſe is unto you 'and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even 'as many as the Lord our God ſhall call.' To whomſoever then the goſpel comes, we may warrantably ſay, the promiſe is to you, and to you, and to every one of you; even the promiſe of the teſtament: and ye have acceſs to claim it by faith, as your own legacy, your own mercy, Jonas ii. 8. And all the argument adduced on the head of the object of Chriſt's adminiſtration, which need not to be repeated here, do prove this.

And it is moſt agreeable to the nature of the thing. In Chriſt's teſtament, the legatees are not expreſſed by their names, as in teſtaments where the teſtator hath his children and friends about him, to whom he leaves his legacies: but it is here as in the caſe, wherein ſome of the children or friends of the teſtator are not come into the world at the time of the making of the teſtament; who muſt therefore have their legacies left to them under ſome general deſignation. Multitudes, multitudes of Chriſt's legatees were not born when he died; and multitudes of them have not to this day ſeen the ſun: nay, when Chriſt firſt made his teſtament, there were but two perſons in the world. Therefore the legatees have been expreſſed in it under a general deſignation, as thoſe of ſuch a family. Now, this general deſignation of the legatees in Chriſt's teſtament, is not actual believers, that is, ſuch as have already believed; for actual believing is the legatees claiming of the legacies left them, whereby they are put in poſſeſſion thereof; the which claim muſt of neceſſity have a foundation in the teſtament prior unto it. And indeed the teſtament is the ground of faith. Therefore it was made before there was one actual believer in the world, being made in paradiſe, and there recited in the hearing of our guilty firſt parents, who, upon the hearing of it, Gen. iii. 15. believed, and ſo were put in poſſeſſion of their legacies. And thus it will be to the end of time: faith will come by hearing of the teſtament, Rom. x. 17. Gal. iii. 2. Neither is it the elect: for howbeit in them only is the teſtament effectual, yet it is not to them only the legacies are left; they are not the only perſons in whoſe favour the teſtament was made. For election being a ſecret not known by us, until once we believe, cannot be the ground and warrant of believing, or embracing the teſtament, and claiming the legacies. Beſides, at that rate unbelievers continuing ſo to the end, could not be juſtly reckoned refuſers and ſlighters of Chriſt's teſtament, as having no portion nor concern in it, more than fallen angels. But the general deſignation of the legatees in Chriſt's teſtament, is mankind-ſinners indefinitely: to thoſe of the family of Adam are legacies left, to be claimed and poſſeſſed of them by faith: Prov. viii. 4. 'Unto 'you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the ſons of men.' Rev. xxii. 17. 'Whoſoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.' John vi. 37. 'Him that cometh to 'me, I will in no wiſe caſt out.'

Put the caſe, that a rich man ſhould, for the love and favour he bears to a particular family, leave his ſubſtance to them by teſtament, to be divided among them: in this caſe it is evident, that however numerous that family be; all and every one of them are this man's legatees, howbeit their names are not particularly expreſſed in the teſtament; and they need no more to clear their claim, each to his ſhare of the legacy, but that they are of that family. And upon the executors making lawful intimation to that family, that, ſuch a teſtament being made in favour of them, they come, claim, and get their legacies, in the method of the teſtament: it is manifeſt, that all of them, who accordingly come and make their claim, as members of that family, will obtain a ſhare of the legacy: but in caſe there may be any of them, who will not come and make any claim thereto, they will juſtly loſe the benefit thereof, and may die of want for all the legacy that was left them in that teſtament. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt has made ſuch a teſtament: the loſt family of Adam, is the family conſtitute his legatees: and the goſpel is the lawful intimation made to them, to come to the executor, and receive their legacies. All that believe get the legacy: all unbelievers loſe it, and periſh under the want thereof; and they periſh without all excuſe. They cannot pretend, that there was nothing left them by the Teſtator; which is the caſe of the fallen angels: nor yet, that it was not intimate unto them; which is the caſe of thoſe who never heard the goſpel. But they periſh, becauſe, howbeit there was a rich legacy left them, yet they undervalued the Teſtator's kindneſs, and would never come and claim it by faith. Hence the benefits of the covenant of grace, even in reſpect of unbelievers, are called their own, namely, in virtue of the right they have to them by the tenor of Chriſt's teſtament: Jon. ii. 8. 'They that obſerve lying 'vanities, forſake their own mercy.' Accordingly, to the elder brother in the parable, Luke xv. the father ſaith, ver. 31. 'Son, all that I have is thine.' So chap. xvi. 12. 'If ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who ſhall give you that which is your 'own?' that is, 'the true riches,' ver. 11. And their ruin is lodged at the door of their unbelief, in not coming to Chriſt to receive them, John v. 40. 'And ye 'will not come to me, that ye might have life.' Chriſt's promiſes in his teſtament are to mankind-ſinners, as the promiſe of Canaan was to the Iſraelites in Egypt, indefinitely, thoſe not excepted whoſe carcaſes fell in the wilderneſs, Exod. vi. 6. 'Say unto the children of Iſ'rael, I am the Lord.'—Ver. 8. 'And I will bring you 'in unto the land concerning the which I did ſwear.' Thus was there a promiſe left them of entering into the reſt of Canaan: and thoſe who believed it, got the poſſeſſion accordingly; thoſe who believed not, did loſe it. And they fell ſhort of it, not becauſe it was not left to them; but becauſe, though it was left to them, as well as to thoſe that entered, yet they believed it not. So ſays the apoſtle, 'They could not enter in becauſe of 'unbelief,' Heb. iii. 19. And this was no imputation on the faithfulneſs of God: for even in promiſes, as well as in covenants, there is a neceſſity of a mutual conſent unto the ſame thing; the party to whom the promiſe is made, his acceptance thereof being neceſſary to complete the obligation on the promiſer to make it effectual: becauſe none making a promiſe of a benefit to another, can in reaſon be thought either to bind himſelf thereby to obtrude his benefit on the other againſt his will; or yet to give up with it, as a thing to be abandoned by him at any rate. Now, to this very purpoſe the apoſtle makes uſe of that caſe of the Iſraelites having the promiſe of Canaan left them, and yet coming ſhort of it through unbelief, Heb. iv. 1. 'Let us therefore fear, 'leſt a promiſe being left us of entering into his reſt, 'any of you ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of it.' Ver. 2. 'For unto us was the goſpel preached, as well as unto 'them: but the word preached did not profit them, not 'being mixed with faith in them that heard it.' Compare Exod. vi. 9. 'And Moſes ſpake ſo unto the children of Iſrael: but they hearkened not.'

Thirdly, It is to be inquired, *Who is the executor* of the covenant? In teſtaments among men, the teſtator and executor are always different perſons; and it muſt needs be ſo, becauſe the teſtator dying, cannot live again to ſee his will execute; therefore one or more, who live when he is gone, muſt be nominated for that purpoſe. But here that reaſon ceaſeth. Jeſus Chriſt could well be the executor of his own teſtament, and needed not to appoint any other to ſee to that matter. He was the Lord of life and death, and it was *not poſſible he ſhould be holden of death*, Acts ii. 24. Though he was really to die, to confirm his teſtament: yet he was quickly to riſe again, for the effectual execution thereof: accordingly the apoſtle obſerves, that he *was delivered for our offences, and was raiſed again for our juſtification*, Rom. iv. 25. *And he lives for evermore.* Even when he was in the grave, he was capable of executing his teſtament, being God as well as man, having a life which could not be loſt, no not for a moment; namely the divine life. And the executing of it then, when the human nature was in the ſtate of death, was much the ſame as his executing of it before he had actually aſſumed the human nature at all.

And that Jeſus Chriſt really is the executor of his own teſtament, appears from his being conſtitute by the Father Adminiſtrator of the covenant, to diſpenſe the benefits thereof as great Steward of the houſe of Heaven: and from the acts of that his adminiſtration, both in this life, and in that which is to come: for he it is that hath in his hand the conferring of grace, both real and relative, on ſinners; and the conferring of glory on ſaints; the which are the executing of his teſtament, as well as the adminiſtering of the covenant; the former being ſubordinated to the latter. Mean while it cannot be refuſed, that he executes it by his Spirit, and employs goſpel miniſters in the matter. Wherefore, whoſoever would have any ſaving benefit by Chriſt's teſtament, or would partake of the legacies therein bequeathed, muſt come to himſelf to receive them; ſince he is the executor of his own teſtament. And therefore the conſtant call of the goſpel to periſhing ſinners, is, to come to Chriſt for life and ſalvation; and the complaint on thoſe who forſake their own mercy, is, that they will not come to him, John v. 40. And the whole life of believers muſt be a coming to him, 1 Pet. ii. 4. that is, a living by faith in him, Gal. ii. 20. whereby they may be daily receiving of the legacies, according to their exigencies.

Fourthly, In the laſt place it is to be enquired, *What are the legacies* left in Chriſt's teſtament, to poor ſinners of mankind, his only legatees? In the general, there is left to them therein what is ſufficient to make them happy for time and eternity; even all the benefits of the covenant to be received by faith. Theſe are Chriſt himſelf, and all things in and with him, Rom. viii. 32. And the general clauſe of the teſtament is, 'According 'to your faith be it unto you,' Matth. ix. 29. It being beyond our reach fully to reckon up the particulars, it ſhall ſuffice to point at a few things, as the comprehenſive legacies, left by Jeſus Chriſt in his teſtament, to ſinners of mankind indefinitely.

Legacy 1. His own complete righteouſneſs, to cover us before the Lord; hence called *the gift of righteouſneſs*, Rom. v. 17. as being made over to us in his teſtament, to be received by faith; in which ſenſe it is ſaid to be revealed unto faith, that is, to be believed or truſted on, and ſo received and put on, chap. i. 17. Dying perſons are wont to leave ſuits of mourning to their poor friends; but our dying Saviour left to all his legatees, *The garments of ſalvation, the robe of righteouſneſs*, Iſa. lxi. 10. beautiful garments, chap. lii. 1. white raiment, Rev. iii. 18. as a ſuit of rejoicing; for that, though he was dead, he is alive, and lives for evermore. Our father Adam left us naked, to our ſhame; yet need we not go naked, nor our ſhame be ſeen. For by the ſecond Adam's teſtament, ſufficient cloathing is left to our father's broken family; even the robe of his own righteouſneſs: and nothing remains, but that we receive it as his legacy to us, and put it on. A holy God cannot admit us into his preſence in our ſpiritual nakedneſs: the law requires us to appear before him in unſpotted holineſs of nature, and perfect righteouſneſs of life, as the condition of life; and withal, with a ſatisfaction to juſtice, by ſuffering, becauſe we have ſinned. But how can we make ſuch an appearance before him? We can by no means put ourſelves in ſuch a condition, by any thing we can do or ſuffer. Yet is not our caſe hopeleſs. We have a good friend, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath left us by teſtament, the holineſs of his nature, wherewith he was born; the righteouſneſs of his life, even all the good works he wrought in obedience to the ten commandments, during his life on earth; and the ſatisfaction made by his death, and ſufferings from the womb to the grave: he hath made all theſe one undivided gift of righteouſneſs, and bequeathed the ſame to us in his teſtament to be received by faith. By means hereof, the moſt wretched ſinner of us all may be beautified in the ſight of a holy God, have wherewith to anſwer all the demands of the law for life, and obtain a full pardon and acceptance with God, as righteous in his ſight. How ſhall we eſcape, if, never claiming this legacy, we trample on the Teſtator's kindneſs!

Legacy 2. His new covenant-intereſt in God, whereby to render us happy, Heb. viii. 10. I will be to them a God. Our father Adam left his whole family without God in the world, Eph. ii. 12. This was an unſpeakable loſs, a ruining loſs: all miſery in time and eternity was wrapt up in it. It was a loſs that could never have been compenſed; and to us it was irrecoverable. But Jeſus Chriſt hath recovered for us the loſt covenant-intereſt in God, and bequeathed it to us in his teſtament. This is a legacy full beyond our comprehenſion. Who can conceive fully what is in that, *I will be your God?* Surely all bleſſedneſs is in it, for time and eternity: Pſalm cxliv. 15. *Happy is the people whoſe God is the Lord.* Herein is left you peace, and reconciliation with God, John xiv. 27. adoption into the family of God, 2 Cor. vi. 16. 17. 18. yea, that ye ſhall have God for your own God, your own heritage, in jointheirſhip with Chriſt, Rom. viii. 17. all the perſons of the Godhead to be yours; the Father to be your Father, the Son your Saviour, the Holy Ghoſt your Sanctifier: and all the attributes of God to be employed for your happineſs. Nothing on Chriſt's part, nothing on God's part, ſtands between you and all this: nothing can make you come ſhort of it but unbelief. That new covenant intereſt in God is purchaſed by the blood of the everlaſting covenant; it is even given over unto Jeſus as Adminiſtrator of the covenant: and he again hath made it over to you by teſtament. And what remains, but that ye come to the Executor and receive your legacy, by faith? Alas! that any ſhould be found who have no heart to it.

Legacy 3. His Spirit of grace we ſo much need. Hear the words of the teſtament, Prov. i. 23. 'Turn 'you at my reproof; behold I will pour out my Spirit 'unto you.' Chriſt hath the ſeven Spirits of God, even a fulneſs of the Spirit in himſelf, to communicate; and hath made over the ſame, by his teſtament, to ſinners of Adam's race: withal, as executor of the teſtament he hath made intimation thereof, declaring himſelf ready to give the Spirit unto all that come to him accordingly; John vii. 37. 'Jeſus ſtood and cried, ſaying, If 'any man thirſt, let him come unto me, and drink.' Ver. 38. 'He that believeth on me, as the Scripture 'hath ſaid, out of his belly ſhall flow rivers of living 'water.' Ver. 39. 'But this ſpake he of the Spirit, 'which they that believe on him ſhould receive.' O ſuitable legacy for Adam's children! Here is life for us, life for our dead ſouls; for his Spirit is the Spirit of life, looſing the bands of ſin and death, Rom. viii. 2. How ſhall dead ſouls live? Our Lord himſelf anſwers that queſtion at large, John vi. ſhewing himſelf to be the life giving bread, that *giveth life unto the world*, verſe 33. that it is by eating this bread ſouls ſhall live, verſe 57. that the quickening Spirit is in it, verſe 63. and that it is to be eaten by faith, ver. 35, 63, 64. Whether then ſhould the ſoul go for life, but to Chriſt as executor of his own teſtament? verſe 68. For as we derived death from the firſt Adam, ſo we muſt derive life from the ſecond Adam, elſe we cannot have it, ver. 53. Here is regenerating and ſanctifying grace for us, whereby our natures may be changed, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. the image of God repaired in us, through grace received, anſwering to the grace in the man Chriſt, as the wax to the ſeal, John i. 16. for all this worketh the Spirit of Chriſt in thoſe who believe, Eph. i. 13. Here is made over to us grace whereby we may be enabled to true evangelical repentance, Zech. xii. 20. Ezek. xxxvi. 31. to walk in newneſs of life, ver. 27. and to mortify the deeds of the body, Rom. viii. 13. Here is bequeathed unto us enlightening grace, whereby we may diſcern our duty: for the Spirit is the Spirit of light and direction, John xvi. 13. exciting and ſtrengthening grace, which comes by the ſupply of the Spirit, Philip. i. 19. Eph. iii. 16. comforting grace in all trials and afflictions, for he is the comforter abiding for ever where once he comes, John xiv. 16. and eſtabliſhing grace, whereby the ſinner once in Chriſt, is forever kept from falling away, either totally or finally, ver. 17. 1 John ii. 27. In a word, Chriſt having left us the Spirit of grace in his teſtament, all grace ſuitable to our need lies open to us. Wherefore none that hear the goſpel remain deſtitute of grace, but becauſe they will not come to Chriſt for it.

Legacy 4. A ſuitable portion of the good things of this life, as infinite wiſdom ſees needful: Pſal. xxxvii. 3. 'Thou ſhalt dwell in the land, and verily thou ſhalt be 'fed.' Chriſt in his teſtament, has diſponed to ſinners a kingdom, even the kingdom of God, and added thoſe things thereunto, Matth. vi. 33. His teſtament is ſuited to all our need, even in temporal things; he hath ſeen to our proviſion and protection, according to the promiſes made thereanent in the covenant. Theſe promiſes primarily made to himſelf in the eternal covenant, he hath by his teſtament, as it were, indorſed to us, to be made forthcoming to all who by faith embrace it, and claim them upon it. Wherefore believers may go to Chriſt for their daily bread, as well as for ſpiritual benefits: pleading the teſtament for the one, as for the other. And to receive the bread and the water in virtue of Chriſt's teſtament, will be more ſatisfying to a Chriſtian in the exerciſe of faith, than all the fulneſs of worldly men can be; foraſmuch as at that rate they have them as the purchaſe of the precious blood of the Teſtator and his Father's bleſſing therewith.

Legacy 5. An unſtinged death: John viii. 51. ‘If ‘a man keep my ſaying, he ſhall never ſee death.’ Men in their teſtaments make proviſion for the comfortable life of their legatees; but they can leave them nothing to make death ſafe and comfortable to them. But in Chriſt's teſtament there is a ſpecial proviſion for his legatees in death, as well as in life: and in the faith thereof, the ſaints have welcomed the grim meſſenger, dying comfortably in the faith of the ſealed teſtament, Heb. xi. 13. Our Lord Jeſus being to encounter death armed with its ſting, and that in its full ſtrength given it by the broken law, was perfectly ſure of the victory: ſo making his teſtament, he left it as a part of his laſt will, that ſinners of Adam's race ſhould be free from the ſting of death, through faith in him. A precious legacy, which he could well bequeath, becauſe purchaſed by his own death: and which he can and will make effectual, ſince the fulneſs of power over death and the grave is in his hand, and he is executor of his own teſtament. How lamentable is it, that men, knowing they muſt die, ſhould ſlight the teſtament, and the kindneſs of their beſt friend, appearing here where none elſe are capable to help.

Legacy 6. and laſt. Everlaſting life on the other ſide of death: John vi. 58. ‘He that eateth of this bread, ‘ſhall live for ever.’ Chriſt's teſtament looks not only to this, but the other world; in it is proviſion made not only for time, but for eternity: he hath diſponed in it a kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, as an everlaſting inheritance for the legatees, Luke xxii. 29. This comprehends the happineſs of the ſoul in its ſeparate ſtate; the glorious reſurrection of the body at the laſt day; and the complete happineſs of ſoul and body together, from thenceforth, and for evermore. The importance thereof who can expreſs! But whatever is in it, it is in the teſtament made over to ſinners of mankind: and whoſoever of them come to Chriſt for it, ſhall, upon the ground of his faithfulneſs, without all peradventure, obtain it.

Theſe are the comprehenſive legacies of Chriſt's teſtament. To enter more particularly into the detail of them, there would be no end. Ye have the book of the teſtament, both old and new, among your hands: read it diligently; and that as Chriſt's teſtament, as indeed it is: and in every page ye will perceive of the unſearchable riches. Withal remember, that it nearly concerns you, and every one of you, as parties legatees in whoſe favour it was made: ſince ye are men, ſons of men, Prov. viii. 4. The teſtament is lawfully intimate to you, both by the preaching of the word, and by putting a copy of it, a Bible in your hands. And ye are called to come to Chriſt, as Executor of it, by faith in him, to receive your legacies. Happy will you be, if ye anſwer the call. But if ye do not, it will be *more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you:* for it will aggravate your condemnation, that not only were all theſe legacies left you in Chriſt's teſtament, but the ſame was intimate unto you, and ye were called to come to the Executor to receive them, but ye believed not, ye would not.

Thus far of Chriſt the Teſtator of the covenant.

III. *Chriſt the Prophet of the covenant.*

The covenant being an eternal tranſaction, which no creature had acceſs to be witneſs unto; the being thereof was an abſolute ſecret to the whole creation: and, in that it was a myſtery of the manifold wiſdom of God, Eph. iii. 10. no creature was ſufficient to unfold the nature thereof. Upon the which accounts, the apoſtle calls it the wiſdom of God in a myſtery, even the hidden wiſdom, which God ordained before the world, 1 Cor. ii. 7. And thence appears a neceſſity of conſtituting a Prophet of this covenant: and that none but a divine perſon was fit to be the original Prophet thereof; and this ſo much the more, that, by reaſon of the ſpiritual blindneſs of the parties unto whom it was to be revealed, a mere objective revelation could not be ſufficient in the caſe: for ‘the natural man receiveth not the things of ‘the Spirit of God; for they are fooliſhneſs to him: ‘neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritual‘ly diſcerned,’ ver. 15. Wherefore Jeſus Chriſt was, as Adminiſtrator of the covenant, conſtitute the Prophet thereof; being he of whom, by the apoſtle's teſtimony, ‘Moſes truly ſaid unto the fathers, A Prophet ſhall the ‘Lord your God raiſe up unto you, of your brethren, ‘like unto me,’ Acts iii. 22. And whoever elſe were at any time prophets thereof, he alone was the original Prophet of it, John i. 18. ‘No man hath ſeen God at ‘any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bo‘ſom of the Father, he hath declared him.’

And in this character Chriſt was conſtitute, (1.) The *Meſſenger*, (2.) The *Witneſs*, and (3.) The *Interpreter* of the covenant.

1. In the capacity of Prophet, he was conſtitute the *meſſenger* of the covenant, Mal. iii. 1. to bring the good tidings of that treaty of peace into the world: and not only ſo, but by the authority of Heaven, to proclaim the treaty to ſinners, to offer them the benefit thereof, and to deal with them to accept, by coming into it perſonally. A covenant ſurely of unparalleled weight and importance, that had ſuch a meſſenger thereof.

2. In the ſame capacity he was conſtitute the *witneſs* of the covenant, Iſa. lv. 4. *Behold! I have given him for a witneſs to the people.* God knew the world to be a guilty world, whoſe conſciences witneſſed their demerit of death; and that therefore they would be very ſlow to believe the good news from heaven, touching the covenant of peace: and for this cauſe he would give them one competent to witneſs the truth thereof; and pitched upon Jeſus Chriſt for that effect. He was a ſon of Adam: ſo the more fit to atteſt it unto men: he was the eternal Son of God; and therefore not liable to error or miſtake in his teſtimony: he was an eye witneſs to the eternal tranſaction, and ſo he could ſpeak in the matter *that which he had ſeen with the Father*, John viii. 38. He came down from heaven, where the covenant was made, unto the earth, in favour of which it was made: wherefore he could witneſs in earth, what he had ſeen in heaven about it, chap. iii. 31. ‘He that cometh from ‘heaven is above all.’ Verſe 32. ‘And what he hath ‘ſeen and heard, that he teſtifieth.’ In him we have a twofold witneſs, which is full evidence in law. He is *the Amen, the faithful and true witneſs*, Rev. iii. 14. In him we have the witneſs of man; in reſpect whereof he is the faithful witneſs: and the witneſs of God; in reſpect whereof he is the true witneſs, even truth itſelf. Compare John viii. 18. ‘I am one that bear wit‘neſs of myſelf.’ Where Chriſt as a divine witneſs, in reſpect of his Godhead, is ſaid to bear witneſs of himſelf, as a man appearing in the world, revealing the covenant. And in reſpect of both theſe, he is the Amen, whoſe witneſs confirms and determines the truth of the matter in law.

3. He is in the ſame capacity conſtitute the *interpreter* of the covenant, Job xxxiii. 23. to teach it unto men. We are not only ſlow to believe the covenant, but it is hard for us to underſtand it. It lies ſo far beyond the reach of our natural underſtanding, that we cannot underſtand it in a ſaving manner, unleſs the Son of God hath given us an underſtanding (a ſupernatural one) that

we may know him that is true, 1 John v. 20. And whoſoever ſhall ſo underſtand it, muſt be all taught of God, John vi. 45. that is, of Jeſus Chriſt, ver. 46. So he is by the Father conſtitute interpreter, and great teacher of the myſtery of the covenant; and all the children of the covenant muſt be his diſciples, and learn of him.

Now, Chriſt's adminiſtration of the covenant, as the Prophet thereof, may be taken up in theſe three things following.

1. His intimating and offering the covenant to ſinners by his word, for bringing them perſonally into it. This he did from the time of Adam's fall, is now doing, and will do even unto the end of time, that the myſtery of God ſhall be finiſhed. He began the old Teſtament diſpenſation thereof, in Perſon. Appearing in human ſhape, with his own mouth he gave the firſt notice of the covenant that ever there was in the world, and made the firſt offer of it in paradiſe, Gen. iii. 8, 15. He carried it on by prophets and ordinary teachers, whom he commiſſionated for that effect, and furniſhed with gifts for the work. The former of theſe he employed to write in his name, as well as to ſpeak therein, in that matter; and by both he ſpoke to ſinners, intimating and offering the covenant unto them, by their means; whether through the word written or ſpoken. And thus he managed that work, to the ſalvation of thoſe who believed in the patriarchal ages, before and after the flood; and all along the time of the Jewiſh church, from Moſes to the end of that diſpenſation. Then he alſo began the New Teſtament diſpenſation in his own perſon. Having by his incarnation become man, he applied himſelf to this work. Though he was born king of the Jews, Matth. ii. 2. and many of them would have had him to have mounted their throne, John vi. 15. yet he chuſed rather to appear in the character of a prophet, and betake himſelf unto the work of the miniſtry, for to preach the goſpel, and intimate and offer the covenant to periſhing ſinners; and ſo he was a miniſter of the circumciſion, Rom. xv. 8. Of him in this capacity particularly, Solomon, that king-preacher, was a type, Eccl. i. 1. And this alſo he did, and ſtill doth carry on mediately and by proxy, eſpecially after his aſcenſion into heaven; and that partly by his apoſtles and other extraordinary officers, whom he employed to write, as well as to ſpeak, in his name; and partly by ordinary miniſters of the goſpel, to be continued in the church to the end of the world, Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13. Thus he is now adminiſtering the covenant unto us, by putting his written word of the Old and New Teſtament in our hands, and ſending men in his name to preach the goſpel unto us. By theſe means he ſpeaks to ſinners, intimating and offering them the covenant; and ſo he carries on the work, to the ſalvation of thoſe that believe, and rendering unbelievers inexcuſable, 2 Cor. v. 20. Rev. iii. 22. Luke x. 16. Wherefore the offer of the covenant made to us in the goſpel, is his offer; and though the word is ſent to us by men, they are but his voice in the matter, he is the ſpeaker. Then *ſee that ye refuſe him not that ſpeaketh,* Heb. xii. 25.

2. His making the intimation and offer of the covenant effectual to the elect, by the Spirit, 1 Pet. i. 12. 'By them that have preached the goſpel unto you, with 'the Holy Ghoſt ſent down from heaven.' The great Prophet of the covenant can effectually teach the moſt unteachable ſinners of mankind; cauſing light not only to break forth in a dark world, by his word, but in dark hearts, by his Spirit: for the fulneſs of the Spirit is light in him, and he hath eye-ſalve for the ſpiritually blind, Rev. iii. 18. He knoweth who are his, in whoſe name he contracted with the Father, and received the promiſe of the Spirit: and, ſooner or later, he ſo enlightens them, that he reſcues them from under the power of their ſpiritual darkneſs, and renders the adminiſtration of the covenant effectual to them, however ineffectual it be to others, Col. i. 13. And this he doth, by bringing his word to them with power, through the efficacy of his Spirit opening their eyes. In the firſt place, by his Spirit acting upon them, as a Spirit of bondage, he ſets home on their conſciences, the holy law in the commands and curſe thereof, as of divine authority, and binding on them in particular. Hereby they are convinced of their ſin and miſery, ſeeing their ſin as heinous in the ſight of God, and his wrath due to them for their ſin: they are filled with remorſe, terror, and anxiety: are made to pant for relief, feel an abſolute need of Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, and deſpair of relief by any other way, Acts ii. 37. and xvi. 29. 30. And then, by the ſame Spirit acting within them as a Spirit of life, and communicated unto them from himſelf, in the word of the goſpel, he ſets home on their hearts and conſciences, the glorious goſpel in its free promiſe of life and ſalvation to ſinners through Jeſus Chriſt, as it ſtands in the holy ſcriptures; clearing and demonſtrating the ſame unto them, to be the infallible word of the eternal God, and his word to them in particular: 1 Theſſ. ii. 13. 'Ye 'received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in 'truth) the word of God.' chap. i. 5. 'For our goſpel 'came not unto you in word only, but alſo in power, 'and in the Holy Ghoſt, and in much aſſurance.' This demonſtration of the Spirit is that which immediately cleareth to them the ground of their believing in particular; as ſaith the apoſtle, 1 Cor. ii. 4. 5. 'My preaching was—in demonſtration of the Spirit, and of power: 'that your faith ſhould not ſtand in the wiſdom of men, 'but in the power of God.' And it is an internal atteſtation of the word of the goſpel unto them, diſtinct from the cleareſt external and miniſterial atteſtation of it; according to the ſaying of our Saviour, John xv. 26. 'The 'Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he 'ſhall teſtify of me.' Ver. 27. 'And ye alſo ſhall bear 'witneſs.' By the power hereof, getting, by way of ſpiritual ſight, John vi. 40. a knowledge of Chriſt in his tranſcendent glory and excellency, exhibited to them in the free promiſe of the goſpel, they are infallibly brought to believe. The Spirit thus applying the word of the goſpel to them, they greedily embrace it, and apply it to themſelves by faith; as may be ſeen in theſe converts, Acts ii. 38. 'Then Peter ſaid unto them, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name 'of Jeſus Chriſt, for the remiſſion of ſins.' Ver. 39. 'For the promiſe is unto you.' Ver. 41. 'Then they 'that gladly received his word, were baptized.'

3. Laſtly, His teaching and inſtructing them by his word and Spirit, from thenceforth, as children of the covenant, his own diſciples. The whole plan of ſalvation is laid down in the covenant, being a myſtery of the manifold wiſdom of God, whereof there is ſtill more and more to be learned: and Chriſt is the great prophet to teach it. And *the ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will ſhew them his covenant*, Pſal. xxv. 14. The ſaints, by reaſon of the remains of darkneſs in their minds while here, are apt to loſe ſight of the parties in the covenant: but the great prophet is to ſhew them the Father, and to manifeſt himſelf unto them, by the Spirit. The condition of the covenant, the Mediator's own righteouſneſs, the ſole ground of all their hopes, cannot be kept in view, but by means of the light of life from himſelf. And in his light only can they have a believing view of the promiſes and privileges of the covenant. The duties of the covenant, whereof the exceeding broad law of the ten commands is the rule, are many; and though they be clear in themſelves, yet they are often ſo dark and perplexed to us, that we cannot diſtinguiſh between ſin and duty: but the children of the covenant have an infallible teacher, whom they may conſult in all caſes, and of whom they may learn how to ſteer their courſe in every point; and *the meek will he guide in judgment, the meek will he teach his way*, Pſal. xxv. 9.

The darkneſs brought on mankind by ſin, nothing but the grace of the new covenant can effectually diſpel, The true light is a benefit of that covenant, purchaſed by the blood of Chriſt; and lodged with him among the reſt of the benefits of his great truſt; and he hath the diſpenſing of it, as the great Prophet of the covenant. To him then muſt we have our recourſe for light in all caſes, whether we be under the midnight darkneſs of a natural ſtate, or under the twilight-darkneſs of the preſent imperfection of a ſtate of grace; yea, in the mid-day light of glory, the Lamb is the light of the heavenly city, Rev. xxi. 23.

And thus Chriſt is the prophet of his covenant.

IV. *Chriſt the King of the Covenant.*

The Covenant of grace is a matter of ſo vaſt importance, both to the honour of God, and the good of ſouls; and of ſuch a diffuſive and general concern to mankind, that the adminiſtration thereof required one inveſted with kingly power and authority for that effect. And the diſpoſition of the parties, objects of the adminiſtration, together with the nature of the thing itſelf, which concerns the inner man chiefly, and the diſpoſal of the choiceſt of Heaven's favours at once laid aſide the greateſt of men, and the higheſt of angels, as no more fit to bear that office, than to produce another world out of nothing. Wherefore the Father's choice in that matter natively fell on his own Son, the ſecond Adam: and he was made King of the covenant.

God as Creator of the world, is King of the ſame, by an original, underived right; and ſo he hath the ſupreme power over it, of which he can no more diveſt himſelf, than of his being. This is the eſſential kingdom, common to the three Perſons in the glorious Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt.

But the kingdom of the covenant, whereof we ſpeak, is a derived, delegated one, which the Mediator Chriſt holds of his Father by the tenor of the covenant, for the adminiſtration thereof; as is declared, Pſal. ii. 6. *yet have I ſet my king upon my holy hill of Zion.* Now, the great deſign of that adminiſtration, is, to gather together ſinners of mankind into one body, under the bond of the covenant; and to make them happy, in the enjoyment of the privileges thereof, in grace and glory: the which body, the church, is the kingdom of the covenant, a kingdom that was to be won, and raiſed out of the rebel world of mankind, lying in wickedneſs; and whereof Chriſt was by his Father conſtitute the alone King and Head.

In ſubſerviency to this kingdom, the kingdom of providence throughout the world was alſo committed to him, being made *the head over all things to the church, which is his body,* Eph. i. 22. 23. he was appointed to rule, not only over his willing ſubjects, but in the midſt of his enemies, Pſal. cx. 2. The management of the wheel of providence, throughout the whole world, was put into the hands of Zion's King. Into the ſame hand that the Father hath committed the government of the church, he hath alſo committed the government of the world; for there is no exception. 'The Father hath 'committed all judgment to the Son,' John v. 22. 'All power in heaven and in earth,' Matth. xxviii. 18. So he is Lord of lords and King of kings. Rev. xvii. 14. and 'by him kings reign—princes rule, and nobles, 'even all the Judges of the earth,' Prov. viii. 15. 16. This headſhip over the world was neceſſary to his adminiſtration of the covenant, as Head of the church; neceſſary for compaſſing the ends thereof. Being veſted therewith, he ſets up and pulls down, in the world, as he ſees meet for the great purpoſes of the covenant; and of what uſe this is, in the adminiſtration thereof, may be learned from Iſa. xliii. 14. 'For your ſake' (namely, for the ſake of the church) 'I have ſent to 'Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and 'the Chaldeans.' Verſe 15. 'I am your King.' Thus the King and Head of the church manageth all things by his providence, as well without as within the church; though in a very different manner, becauſe in a very different relation, as to his own people, and to ſtrangers. The which was typified in David, who for the benefit of his own kingdom, the kingdom of Iſrael, was made *the head of the Heathen,* Pſalm. xviii. 43. *For David ſmote the Philiſtines, and ſubdued them,* 2 Sam. viii. 1. and the Moabites, verſe 2. and the Syrians, verſe 6. *And all they of Edom became David's ſervants,* ver. 14. *And David reigned over all Iſrael, and David executed judgment and juſtice unto all his people,* verſe 15.

Now, the chief acts of Chriſt's adminiſtration of the covenant, as he is King thereof, are theſe.

1. His appointing ordinances of his kingdom, both for bringing of ſinners perſonally into the covenant, and for confirming and ſtrengthening the covenanted; as alſo officers of his kingdom, to adminiſter theſe ordinances in his name and authority. Both the one and the other were different, under the Old Teſtament, and under the New; which hath made two different forms of external adminiſtration of the covenant; the old, which is paſſed away, and the new, that will continue to the end of the world; but both were from the ſame authority, and for compaſſing the ſame great deſigns of the covenant, agreeable to the different times for which they were appointed, and all of them to be found in the ſcriptures of the Old and New Teſtament, the book of the manner of the kingdom. It was the ſame Lord Jeſus, the angel of the covenant, which ſpake to Moſes in the mount Sinai, Acts vii. 38. who inſtituted the new teſtament church and ordinances, and *gave ſome apoſtles, and ſome prophets, and ſome evangeliſts, and ſome paſtors and teachers; for the perfecting of the ſaints, for the work of the miniſtry,* Eph. iv. 11. 12. The Saviour, King, and Lawgiver of the church, are one, Iſa. xxxiii. 22. 'The Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, 'he will ſave us.'

2. Emitting his royal proclamations into the world, by the hand of his meſſengers, in the goſpel; bearing, that whoſoever will come unto him, and unite with him as the head of the covenant, by faith, ſhall be readily received into it, and have a right to all the privileges thereof, in him: Mark xvi. 15. 'Go ye into all the world, 'and preach the goſpel to every creature.' Ver. 16. 'He that believeth and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved.' Therein the covenant is publiſhed, and offered in his name to every ſinner of mankind unto whoſe ears this voice reacheth: and they are called, commanded, and charged to come into it, and ſubmit to his royal ſceptre. His call and offer is their warrant to come: his command obligeth them, that they cannot refuſe, but in rebellion and diſobedience againſt his royal authority. The promiſes are ſet before them indefinitely, that whoſoever will, may, by believing, apply them to themſelves. The king's proclamation meddles not with the ſecrets of the eternal election, to reveal them. But the promiſes of the covenant, infallibly to be accompliſhed in ſome, are, in Chriſt's teſtament, as indorſed to ſinners of mankind indefinitely, to be fulfilled unto all and every one who ſhall by faith embrace them: and the proclamation makes lawful intimation of the teſtament. This intimation is the appointed means of begetting faith, and of bringing ſinners into the covenant thereby; for faith cometh by hearing, Rom. x. 17. And it is made effectual to ſome, by the Spirit, through the grace of the covenant ſecured by promiſe for them.

And hence it is, that, the covenant being thus adminiſtered to all promiſcuouſly, there is an uſe of conditional phraſes in the adminiſtration thereof; though in the covenant itſelf there are no conditions, properly ſo called, but what were fulfilled by Jeſus Chriſt in his own perſon. The word of the covenant coming with a like warrant to the elect and the non-elect; to them who certainly will believe, and to them who will continue in their unbelief; the adminiſtering of it equally to both in the goſpel-proclamation, muſt needs be by propoſing the promiſes indefinitely as to perſons; the which muſt at length be reſolved into conditional phraſes. So it is proclaimed into the ears of all, *I will betroth thee unto me*, and *I will be to them a God*. And one believes and applies the ſame; and he is thereupon united to Chriſt, and inſtated in the covenant to all ſaving purpoſes; another, who hath as good a revealed warrant to believe as the former, yet believes not; and ſo comes ſhort of the promiſe. Now, to ſpeak alike to thoſe who will thus differently entertain the words of the covenant, it follows of courſe to reſolve them into ſuch expreſſions as theſe, 'Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou 'ſhalt be ſaved;' and, 'He that believeth ſhall be ſaved, he that believeth not ſhall be damned.' Mean while the covenant itſelf is a different thing from the form of the external adminiſtration of it.

3. Effectually ſubduing the elect to himſelf, through the power of his Spirit ſo managing the word, that it operates on them like a ſword, piercing their ſouls, conquering their natural averſion and obſtinacy, and making them willing to yield, and embrace the covenant. Rev. i. 16. 'Out of his mouth went a ſharp two-edged 'ſword.' What that ſword is, and by what a ſtrong arm it is wielded, in this caſe, may be learned from the apoſtle, calling it the ſword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, Eph. vi. 17.; and what the effect of it is, being managed by that arm of the Lord revealed, is declared by the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. cx. 3. 'Thy people ſhall 'be willing in the day of thy power;' and by the prophet, Iſa. xliv. 3. 'I will pour my Spirit upon thy ſeed:' Ver. 4. 'And they ſhall ſpring up.'——Ver. 5. 'One 'ſhall ſay, I am the Lord's.' Chriſt communicates to them, and every one of them, at the time appointed in the eternal counſel, the Spirit and grace in the covenant, therein ſecured for them by promiſe: and thereby they are quickened, enabled, and determined to believe. And whereas he finds them priſoners, though priſoners of hope, he opens the houſe of their bondage, breaking the yoke of ſin, death, and the devil, from off their necks, by his Spirit applying to them his ſatisfaction. The which has that mighty effect, inaſmuch as then the law hath full ſatisfaction as to them; and the law being ſatisfied, the ſtrength of ſin is broken; and the ſtrength of ſin being broken, the ſting of death is taken away; and the ſting of death being taken away, the devil loſeth his power over them; and Satan's power over them being loſt, the preſent evil world, which is his kingdom, can hold them no longer. Thus they are ſeparated from the world lying in wickedneſs, and conſtituted members of the kingdom of Chriſt; delivered from the power of darkneſs, and tranſlated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, Col. i. 13. And from thenceforth, though they be in the world, yet they are no more of it; but ſtrangers and pilgrims in it, true and lively members of the inviſible kingdom of Chriſt; a ſociety to which the world is an implacable enemy, John xv. 19. 'Ye are not 'of the world, but I have choſen you out of the world, 'therefore the world hateth you.' And herein Chriſt doth, in a ſpecial manner, ſhew himſelf a King mighty in battle, by the power of his grace overcoming the moſt perverſe and rebellious to a cordial ſubmiſſion, and reſcuing them from the bondage and dominion of their enemies.

4. Gathering them and others with them together into a viſible church ſtate, Gen. xlix. 10. 'Unto him 'ſhall the gathering of the people be.' Thus is erected the viſible church or kingdom of Chriſt in the world; a ſociety ſeparate from the viſible kingdom of the devil, and profeſſing faith in, and obedience to Chriſt, outwardly bearing his badge, and the ſigns of his covenant. Among them is the ordinary ſeat of the adminiſtration of the covenant, the ordinary means of ſalvation, and offers of grace. In their land the voice of the turtle is heard, and the ſinging of birds in the preaching of the glorious goſpel; while there is a laſting winter over all the world beſides. They have the Bible, and ſabbaths, the miniſtry of the word, and the holy ſacraments. Among them is to be found the communion of ſaints, and a church government, inſtituted for controlling the unruly, ſuppreſſing of ſin and wickedneſs, and encouraging an orderly walk. And they have the privilege of heaven's protection; inſomuch that the church ſhall be defended, and her enemies ſo reſtrained and conquered by her King, that ſhe ſhall continue while the world ſtands, maugre all oppoſition that hell can make againſt her; Matth. xxviii. 20. *Lo, I am with you alway even to the end of the world.*

5. Laſtly, Ruling and governing his true and kindly ſubjects agreeably unto the covenant, by which his royal prerogative is ſtated, and their privileges are ſecured, Iſa. ix. 6. *The government ſhall be upon his ſhoulder.* Of this his government there are ſeveral acts, the chief of which are theſe following.

1ſt, He gives them the laws of the covenant; not only intimating the ſame unto them externally by his word; but teaching them internally by his Spirit, writing them upon the tables of their hearts, and leaving an indelible copy of them affixed there; Heb. viii. 10. 'I will put 'my laws into their minds, and write them in their 'hearts.' Theſe laws of the covenant are no other but the laws of the ten commandments, originally given to Adam in his creation, and at his tranſportation into paradiſe and ſettlement there, veſted with the form of the covenant of works; and now, unto believers in Chriſt, ſtanding without that form, in the covenant of grace, as the eternal rule of righteouſneſs, whereunto they are to be conformed by the grace of the covenant; the effectuating of which is committed by the Father to Jeſus Chriſt as adminiſtrator thereof. And accordingly, he carries it on, by his word and Spirit, in a ſuitableneſs to their nature as rational agents, and to their ſtate; making theſe laws known to them, as the rule of life, unto which they ſtand bound by the ſovereign authority, and matchleſs love of God their Creator and Redeemer; and withal inclining their hearts unto the obedience of the ſame.

2dly, He gives them the rewards of the covenant in the courſe of their obedience: Pſal. xix. 11. *In keeping of them there is a great reward.* He puts his people indeed to work and labour; but not to labour in the fire, and for vanity, as the ſervants of ſin do; they are to work and labour, like the ox treading out the corn, which was not to be muzzled, but to have acceſs at once to work and to eat. The ſervice now done to Zion's king, hath a reward in this life, as well as a reward in the life to come. By the order of the covenant, there is a privilege eſtabliſhed to follow duty, as the reward thereof; the which order is obſerved by the king, in his adminiſtration. Accordingly, he propoſeth the privilege of comfort, to excite to the duty of mourning, Matth. v. 4. 'Bleſſed are they that mourn; for they 'ſhall be comforted:' the ſpecial tokens of heaven's favour, to excite unto a holy tender walk, John xiv. 21. 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, 'ſhall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and 'will manifeſt myſelf to him.' In like manner, to excite to the ſame holy obedience, he propoſeth the full reward in the life to come, 1 Cor. ix. 24. 'So run that 'ye may obtain.' Rev. iii. 21. 'To him that overcometh will I grant to ſit with me in my throne.' And ſo certainly doth he accompliſh the promiſe of the reward of both kinds, that his people may be aſſured their labour is not in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. xv. 58. for faithfulneſs is the girdle of his loins; and in diſpenſing of the privileges to his people upon the back of their duty, he doth but obſerve the ſtated order of the covenant. Not that the order of the covenant is, in every particular, firſt duty, then privilege: nay, it is firſt firſt privilege, next duty; then privilege again; and ſo forward, till privilege and duty come both to perfection in heaven, not to be diſtinguiſhed more. Wo to us if it were otherwiſe! truly if it were otherwiſe, we could neither be brought into the covenant, nor kept within it in life; for how ſhall one at firſt believe, till once he is privileged with the quickening Spirit? And how ſhall a fallen ſaint renew his faith and repentance, till once he is privileged with new influences of grace? John xv. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing.* But here lies the matter, the leading privilege bringing in duty, there follows further privilege on the back of duty, according to the order of the covenant; and theſe further privileges are the rewards we ſpeak of. And the ſcripture calls them reward, even in reſpect of the ſaints; becauſe they are given to a working ſaint, on the back of his work. Howbeit they are as far from the nature of a reward, ſtrictly and properly ſo called, the which on the account of one's work is of debt to him, as the leading privileges are, that produce the working; but both the one and the other are equally the reward of Chriſt's work, in the moſt ſtrict and proper notion of a reward.

3dly, He miniſters unto them the diſcipline of the covenant, in the caſe of their diſobedience. The diſcipline of the covenant is fatherly chaſtiſement, which their eſtate of imperfection in this life makes neceſſary to their welfare; and therefore it is ſecured for them in the covenant, Pſalm lxxxix. 30. *If his children forſake my law;*—verſe 32. *Then will I viſit their tranſgreſſions with the rod,*—verſe 33. *Nevertheleſs*—verſe 34. *My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.* It belongs to the promiſſory part of the covenant, and particularly to the promiſe of ſanctification; foraſmuch as it is not vindictive, but medicinal; being an appointed means of advancing holineſs in them. 'He chaſtens for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holineſs,' Heb. xii. 10. And thus it ſerves to purge iniquity, and to take away ſin, Iſa. xxvii. 9. namely, in that as a fire melting down the paint and varniſh of the defiling objects in the world in our ſight, and as a looking-glaſs ſhewing us our pollution, it occaſions and excites us unto waſhing in the only laver of the blood of Chriſt, by faith. Now the adminiſtering of the diſcipline of the covenant is committed unto Zion's King, John v. 22. 'The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son,' Rev. iii. 19. 'As many as I love, I rebuke and chaſten.' And, as to the nature of it, it comprehends all manner of ſtrokes upon their worldly ſubſtance, name, employments, and relations; all manner of bodily afflictions, diſeaſes and pains incident to ſinful fleſh; even natural death itſelf, 1 Cor. xi. 30. 32. and generally, all outward ſtrokes which any of the children of men are liable to, Eccleſ. ix. 2. 'All things come alike to all.' Moreover, it comprehends alſo ſpiritual ſtrokes, ſuch as deſertion, God's hiding his face from them, withdrawing the light of his countenance, their loſing ſome meaſure of their graces and comforts, woundings of ſpirit, horrors of conſcience, whereby they may be brought to the very brink of deſpair; ſo that, howbeit the caſting of them into hell is not within the compaſs of the diſcipline of the covenant, yet the caſting of a kind of hell into them, making them to roar by reaſon of diſquietneſs of heart, Pſalm xxxviii. 8. is within the compaſs of it. And what is worſe than any of all theſe, it comprehends their being haraſſed with horrid temptations, and ſet up as marks for Satan's fiery darts, Eph. vi. 16. the hardning of their hearts, Iſa. lxiii. 17. their being ſuffered to fall into one ſin, and that a groſs ſin too, for the puniſhment of another, as in the caſe of David and Peter. All theſe things are within the compaſs of the diſcipline of the covenant; and believers are particularly and directly threatned with them, in the caſe of their diſobedience to move them to beware of it; yea, and they are often inflicted by Zion's King on his beloved ſubjects, that, by theſe marks of his diſpleaſure againſt their ſin, he may correct them, make ſin bitter to them, and ſtir them up to repentance and watchfulneſs. And the worſt of them all, even the very hardening of their hearts, and the puniſhing of one ſin with another, are, by the ſovereign grace of the covenant, made effectual for theſe holy ends; the which grace opening the heart in renewed repentance, godly ſorrow for ſin breaks forth the more forcibly, as waters do which have been long dammed up. Thus theſe bitter waters, running in the channel of the covenant, become healing waters; theſe ſharp ſwords are, by the covenant, beaten into plough-ſhares; and theſe piercing ſpears, into pruning hooks. Of this diſcipline of the covenant, all the ſubjects of Chriſt in this world do partake; and they muſt be under it, till they arrive at perfection in the other world, Heb. xii. 6. 7. 8.

4thly, He gives them the pardons of the covenant; the pardoning of crimes committed againſt the laws of God, being one of the royal prerogatives of Zion's King, whom 'God hath exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Iſrael, and forgiveneſs of ſins,' Acts v. 31. He gives them the firſt pardon, removing the guilt of revenging wrath, in their juſtification; and he gives them alſo the ſubſequent pardons, removing the guilt of fatherly anger, upon their renewing the actings of faith and repentance, as was obſerved before. The Father having committed all judgement unto the Son, he hath the diſpenſing of heaven's favours, according to the method and order of the covenant; and they are not only conferred for his ſake, but by his hand.

5thly, He affords them the defence of the covenant, while in this life they are amongſt their enemies, Pſal. lxxxix. 18. 'For the Lord is our defence; and the holy One of Iſrael is our king.' Satan is their enemy, a malicious ſubtile, and powerful enemy: but Chriſt is their friend, and takes them under his protection. He loves them dearly, as the purchaſe of his own blood, the members of his own myſtical body, and bearing his Father's image: he is infinitely wiſe, and can outſhoot the devil in his own bow: and he is the ſtronger man, who can bind the ſtrong man. The world joins iſſue with Satan in oppoſing them; but ſhall not prevail to ruin them, neither by force nor fraud: for greater is he, than the god of this world and all his dominion, 1 John iv. 4. "Ye are of God, and have overcome them: becauſe greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." Their worſt enemies are within them, namely, the remains of corruption, which, in the depth of ſovereign wiſdom, are not expelled during this life: but left for their exerciſe and trial, and for the diſcovery of the power of the grace of their King. And he manifeſts his power, in keeping alive in them the ſpunk of holy fire, in the midſt of an ocean of corruption; and cauſing it to make head againſt the ſame, untill it quite dry it up: Rom. vii. 24. 'O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death!' Ver. 25. 'I thank God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.' He has all their enemies in chains, that they can act no further againſt them than he ſees meet to permit: and at his pleaſure he reſtrains them, bounding them by his power, as to the kind, degree, and continuance of their attacks, Pſal. lxxvi. 10. 'The remainder of wrath ſhalt thou reſtrain.'

Laſtly, He authoritatively completes the happineſs of the covenant in them: he purchaſed it for them as a Prieſt; reveals it to them as a Prophet: but as a King, he doth in the way of authority, put them in full poſſeſſion thereof, Matth. xxv. 34. 'Then ſhall the King ſay unto them on his right hand, Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' And by the ſame authority he will paſs ſentence againſt his and their enemies, having fully conquered them, verſe 41. And ſo he will complete for ever the peace of his covenant-ſubjects.

Thus far of Chriſt's adminiſtration of the covenant, as he is King thereof.

V. *Chriſt the Interceſſor of the Covenant.*

As for performing the condition of the covenant, Jeſus Chriſt became the Prieſt, namely, the ſacrificing prieſt of it, as hath been ſaid in the due place: ſo for the adminiſtration of the covenant, he became the interoffice, namely, the interceeding prieſt of it. Chriſt's interceſſion did not take its place in the making of the covenant. The love and grace of God made the motion for a new covenant freely; and the breach betwixt God and ſinners was of another nature, than to be made up by a ſimple interceſſion: the which might have moved mercy, but could not have ſatisfied juſtice, that requiring a ſacrifice for ſin, could not be ſatisfied by pleading, but by paying a ranſom; Heb. ix. 22. *Without ſhedding of blood is no remiſſion.* Neither doth Chriſt's ſacrificing take its place in the adminiſtration of the covenant; there is no need of any new ſacrificing there; 'For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them 'that are ſanctified,' chap. x. 14. But his ſacrificing properly took its place in the making of the covenant, and fulfilling the condition thereof; and his interceſſion, in the adminiſtration of the covenant, and fulfilling the promiſes of it. Accordingly, for the adminiſtration of the covenant, he is the Interceſſor thereof: Rom. viii. 34. 'It is Chriſt that died, yea rather that is riſen again, 'who is even at the right hand of God, who alſo mak-'eth interceſſion for us.'

And indeed there was need of an interceſſor for that effect: ſince an infinitely holy God, and ſinful creatures, could neither come together into a ſtate of peace, nor continue in it, with the ſafety of God's honour, without an interceſſor. Wherefore Jeſus Chriſt being appointed thereto, is, in that character, 'entered into heaven it-'ſelf, now to appear in the preſence of God for us,' Heb. ix. 24. to manage the buſineſs of the covenant for our behoof; willing the merit of his ſacrifice to be applied to all thoſe in whoſe room and ſtead he died, and that for all the intents and purpoſes of the covenant in their favours, according to the method laid down and ſtated therein. And this his interceſſion is always effectual, as he himſelf teſtifieth, ſaying unto his Father, John xi. 42. 'I knew that thou heareſt me always.' Whence it appears, that the object of it is not of equal latitude with the object of the adminiſtration of the covenant, and of his acting in the other relations belonging to that adminiſtration; but that it is reſtricted unto thoſe whom he, as ſecond Adam, repreſented in the eternal tranſaction. And this is very agreeable to the nature of the divine contrivance for the ſalvation of ſinners; in which the eternal purpoſe hath made a difference of perſons, according to ſovereign will and pleaſure: this being as it were, one clauſe in the conſtitution of the adminiſtration, peculiarly in favour of the objects of electing love. So the Interceſſor himſelf teacheth us, John xvii. 9. 'I 'pray not for the world, but for them which thou haſt 'given me:' ver. 20. 'For them which ſhall believe 'on me.' ver. 24. 'Father, I will that they alſo whom 'thou haſt given me, be with me where I am.'

Now, Chriſt adminiſters the covenant as Interceſſor thereof, theſe following ways chiefly.

1. Effectually procuring, by his intereſt in heaven, the actual inbringing of his elect, at the time appointed, into a covenant-ſtate of union, communion, peace, and favour with God: John xvii. 20. 'Neither pray I for 'theſe alone, but for them alſo which ſhall believe on 'me through their word;' ver. 21. 'That they all may 'be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that 'they alſo may be one in us.' They are by nature in a ſtate of enmity with God, even as others; but through Chriſt's interceſſion the peace is made between heaven and them. He purchaſed it for them by the blood of his ſacrifice; it was promiſed to him in the covenant on that ſcore; and by his interceſſion he actually obtains it unto them. His interceſſion is the ſpring that puts all the wheels in motion, that are ſet a-going, in the time of loves, for bringing one out of the ſtate of nature, into a ſtate of grace. Providence manageth favourably towards the converſion of the man; the word powerfully affects him, while on others it falls like rain on a rock, running off as faſt as it comes on; the buſineſs of eternal ſalvation is cloſely laid to heart with him; the law doth its office upon him, and ſo doth the goſpel alſo in its turn; and theſe things ceaſe not, until he is brought into a new ſtate, and he is become a new creature. Whence did all this take its riſe? Why, the man had an unknown friend in the court of heaven, who ſpoke for him to the King; and all this is the fruit of that interceſſion made for him.

2. Appearing for them, and in their name taking poſſeſſion of heaven, and all the other benefits of the covenant, which they have a right to, in virtue of their new covenant ſtate: Eph. ii. 6. 'And hath raiſed us up to-'gether, and made us ſit together in heavenly places in 'Chriſt Jeſus.' Heb. vi. 20. 'Whither the forerunner is 'for us entered.' That moment wherein a ſinner enters into the covenant by believing, he hath a right to all; for *if children then heirs*, Rom. viii. 17. Howbeit, in the caſe of moſt of the children of God, the poſſeſſion ſeems to be delayed long after that time. But it is to be conſidered, that poſſeſſion may not only be taken by a man in his own perſon, but alſo in the perſon of another; thus one may by his attorney take poſſeſſion of an eſtate which he never ſaw; and a minor, by his repreſentative, may be poſſeſſed of what is not as yet meet to give him into his own hand. So, howbeit the believer's poſſeſſion of all in his own perſon is indeed delayed; yet in this reſpect it is not delayed one moment after believing in Jeſus Chriſt: for his Interceſſor acts for him in the matter. What ſhould hinder this manner of poſſeſſion one moment after believing? For the covenant of promiſe is an undoubted right; the ſinner though on earth, doth by faith plead it before God in heaven; and Chriſt is there, as his repreſentative and interceſſor, to take poſſeſſion in his name. Wherefore every believer ſhall juſtly reckon himſelf, though *having nothing, yet poſſeſſing all things*, 2 Cor. vi. 10. and *complete in him*, Col. ii. 10.

3. Maintaining the peace between God and them while they are here in this world. Having purchaſed their peace with Heaven by the ſacrifice of himſelf, and by his interceſſion brought them into a ſtate of peace, he doth not leave it to themſelves to maintain it. If it were ſo, it would ſoon be at an end. There are ſo many failures on their part, while they are compaſſed with the body of ſin, that their own conſciences have wherewith to accuſe them every day; and the devil is an inceſſant *accuſer of the brethren*: but Chriſt intercedes for them, to the preventing always a total rupture betwixt Heaven and them; however they may for their ſins fall under God's fatherly diſpleaſure? upon the ground of his ſatisfaction for them, he anſwereth all accuſations againſt them, and makes up all the emerging differences between them and their covenanted God: 1 John ii. 1. 'If any man ſin, we have an advocate with the Father, 'Jeſus Chriſt the righteous:' verſe 2. 'And he is the 'propitiation for our ſins.' Hereupon the apoſtle triumphs over all their accuſers, Rom. viii. 33. 'Who 'ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It 'is God that juſtifieth:' verſe 34. 'Who is he that 'condemneth? It is Chriſt that died,——who alſo 'maketh interceſſion for us.' Wherefore their ſtate of peace with God is inviolably maintained; though for their correction, they may indeed loſe the ſight and ſenſe of it for a time. Having once become their friend in Chriſt, he may indeed ſeverely chaſtiſe them for their faults, but he never becomes their enemy again, even in the way of legal enmity, far leſs in the way of real enmity, Rom. viii. 1. Iſ. liv. 9.

4. Procuring them acceſs to God, and acceptance with him, notwithſtanding of their imperfections, while in this life. Saints on earth never want buſineſs in the court of heaven. Yet being ſinful, they are in themſelves unfit to come into the preſence of the King. But the Interceſſor of the covenant introduceth them, procuring them acceſs by his intereſt in the court: *For through him we have an acceſs by one Spirit unto the Father*, Eph. ii. 18. And by his means they are allowed acceſs with

boldneſs, chap. iii. 12. He makes their perſons accepted, notwithſtanding of the ſinfulneſs cleaving to them: they are accepted in the beloved, chap. i. 6. And in him they have an altar that ſanctifies their gifts, Heb. xiii. 13. So that their ſpiritual ſacrifices, howbeit they want not their blemiſhes, yet are acceptable to God by Jeſus Chriſt, 1 Pet. ii. 5. Their prayers made in faith, though ſmelling rank of the remains of the corruption of nature, yet being perfumed by the Interceſſor with the incenſe of his merit, are accepted in heaven, and have gracious returns made them, Rev. viii. 3. Their doing ſervices, and their ſuffering ſervices, which howſoever coſtly, could not be accepted for their own worth, becauſe imperfect, are through his interceſſion accepted, as being waſhed, and made white in the blood of the Lamb, chap. vii. 14.

5. Laſtly, Obtaining their admittance into heaven, in the due time; and continuing their ſtate of perfect happineſs there for ever and ever: John xvii. 24. 'Father, I will that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am.' Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt was by his Father, conſtituted a Prieſt for ever, Pſal. cx. 4. Nevertheleſs, after his having once offered up himſelf a ſacrifice on the croſs, he offereth no more ſacrifice. Therefore he muſt be, not a ſacrificing Prieſt for ever, but an interceeding Prieſt, as the apoſtle explains it, Heb. vii. 25. 'He ever liveth to make interceſſion for them.' Now, the ſpirits of juſt men being made perfect immediately after death, there is no more imperfection about their ſouls morally conſidered, Heb. xii. 23.; and after the reſurrection, there will be no more imperfection about their bodies neither, 1 Cor. xv. 53. The effect then of Chriſt's interceſſion for ever, muſt be the everlaſting continuation of their happy ſtate; their Interceſſor eternally willing the continuance of the ſame, on the ground of the eternal redemption obtained for them, by the ſacrifice of himſelf. The infinite merit of his ſacrifice will be eternally preſented before God in the holy place, while he ſhall appear there in our nature continually: and this will be the everlaſting ſecurity for the continuation of the ſaints happineſs. The which happineſs iſſuing from the merit of his ſacrifice as their Prieſt, will be communicated unto them by him as their Prophet and their King: for theſe his offices will never be laid aſide. As he is a Prieſt for ever, ſo of his kingdom there ſhall be no end, Luke i. 33. and the Lamb will be the light of the heavenly city, Rev. xxi. 23.; the ſaints communion with God there, being ſtill in and through the Mediator, in a manner agreeable to their ſtate of perfection, chap. vii. 17.

And theſe are the chief acts of his adminiſtration of the covenant, as Interceſſor thereof.

Thus far of the fourth head, namely, the adminiſtration of the covenant.

HEAD V.

The TRIAL *of a ſaving perſonal inbeing in the covenant of grace.*

WE have now opened the doctrine of the covenant of grace, in treating of the parties in it, the making of it, the parts of it, and the adminiſtration thereof: it remains to make ſome practical improvement of the whole, in this and the following head.

If one ſeriouſly conſiders the covenant of grace, as that on which the ſalvation of our ſouls depends, he can hardly miſs to put the queſtion to himſelf, *What intereſt have I in that covenant?* There is no queſtion but you have a common intereſt in it, by which you are ſufficiently warranted to come into it: but that you may have, and yet periſh; for even 'children of the kingdom ſhall be caſt out into utter darkneſs,' Matth. vii, 12. But the queſtion is, Whether ye have a ſaving intereſt in it, being actually come into it, or not? The covenant is indeed brought unto you, in the ordinances of the goſpel: but are you brought into the covenant, united with the head thereof, Jeſus Chriſt? It hath been adminiſtered to you: but have you by faith taken hold of it? You have received the ſacrament of baptiſm, the ſeal of the covenant, in the right of your parents: but have you perſonally embraced the covenant in ſincerity? The two covenants, of works, and of grace, divide the whole world between them: every man is under one of the two; and no man can be under both at one and the ſame time, in reſpect of his ſtate before the Lord, Rom. vi. 14. Under the firſt covenant ſtands a numerous party, in the firſt Adam, head of that broken covenant, deriving ſin, death, and the curſe from him: under the ſecond covenant ſtands a party, in the ſecond Adam, head of that fulfilled covenant, deriving life and ſalvation from him. Theſe parties will be judged, each according to the covenant they are under: ſo the former will be condemned, in virtue of the curſe of the covenant in which they are; and the latter will be eternally ſaved, in virtue of the promiſe of life, in the covenant wherein they are. In the mean while, there is acceſs for thoſe of the firſt covenant to leave their party and covenant, and to join the party in the ſecond covenant: but death will block up that acceſs. Wherefore it is the intereſt of the one, as well as of the other, to know which party and covenant they belong to. And for trial hereof, I offer the following marks, ſigns, or characters of thoſe who are ſavingly and perſonally within the covenant of grace.

I. They are ſuch as have fled for refuge from the covenant of works; that have come into the covenant of the ſecond Adam, as refugees from the covenant of the firſt Adam. For that is the character of the heirs of promiſe, Heb. vi. 17. 18. Though time was, when they lived at eaſe within the dominion of the covenant of the law; yet God hath ſet fire to their neſts there, that they have found themſelves unable to dwell any longer within the boundaries of that covenant. Mount Sinai hath been altogether on a ſmoke round about them, and the trumpet of the curſe of the law hath waxed louder and louder, till it made them to hear it on the ſide of their righteouſneſs and beſt works, where they were deafeſt; and it hath cauſed them exceedingly to fear and quake, as a curſe denounced againſt them in particular: Rom. vii. 9. *When the commandment came, ſin revived, and I died.* It hath chaſed them from all the ſtarting holes about that mountain, and left no place within the bounds of that covenant ſafe to them; not only hath it chaſed them out of their profane courſes, but alſo out of all confidence in their good works and duties of whatſoever kind: to flee for their life into the covenant of free grace, as the ſlayer into the city of refuge, *what things were gain to* them *counting theſe loſs for Chriſt*, Philip. iii. 7.

II. They are ſuch as cordially approve of and acquience in the plan of the covenant, as ſuited to the honour of God and to their caſe in particular; looking upon it as well ordered in all things, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Whoſoever duly conſiders the corruption brought into man's nature by the fall, will plainly perceive, that the method of ſalvation laid down in the covenant of grace, is the very reverſe of the inclination of corrupt human nature; ſo that nothing leſs than the powerful efficacy of divine grace can bring a ſoul unto a cordial approbation of it, and acquieſcence in it; wherefore our Lord pronounceth them bleſſed, whoſoever ſhall not be offended in him, Matth. xi. 6. Natural men may indeed ſhape the covenant, in their own apprehenſions, into ſuch a form, as they may have a very good liking of it. They may apprehend it as a covenant deſigned to make men eaſy and happy, while in the mean time it allows them, at leaſt in ſome inſtances, to be unholy; as a covenant wherein, through Chriſt's merits, they may obtain acceptance with God by their good works, notwithſtanding of their ill works. But in all this they are in love with a creature of their own fancy, not with God's covenant of grace. Let the covenant be ſet before them in the light of the holy Scripture, and viewed by them in that light; they will be ſure to diſlike it, and pike holes in it. Let the deſign of the covenant be fairly diſcovered, as being to exalt God's free grace on the ruins of all excellency left with man; to make Chriſt all, and man nothing in his own ſalvation; the proud heart cannot away with that, cannot ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of God, Rom. x. 3. The efficacy of it, in working out ſin, ſeparating between the ſoul and its deareſt luſts, once fairly appearing; natural men flee from it, as if one cried unto them, *There is death in the pot.* Let them ſeriouſly enter into the thought, how it is ſuited to the honour of God, and the divine perfections; and how it is ſuited to their real ſafety before him; and they cannot ſee how it is ſo. To the Jews wiſdom it is a ſtumbling block, a device inconſiſtent with the divine perfection; the Grecian learning pronounceth it fooliſhneſs, a method of ſalvation unſafe to be truſted to: only the eye of faith diſcovers it to be the power of God and the wiſdom of God; ſafe for guilty creatures, and honourable for a holy God, 1 Cor. i. 23. 24.

III. Upon the diſcovery of the covenant to them, as made from eternity between God and the ſecond Adam, and offered to them in the goſpel; they will ſatiſfy themſelves, in their covenanting, with heaven's draught of of it, ſo far as they underſtand it; and they will not go about to add unto it, nor diminiſh from it; but will ſtand to the terms of God and Chriſt's making, Acts ix. 6. Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? They will put a blank in the Lord's hand, for their part; as content of all within the compaſs of the covenant, without putting in their exception, or deſiring amendments and alterations to be made in their favour. They are content of the laws of the covenant, as well as of the privileges of it; of the diſcipline of the covenant, as well as of the rewards of it; of the condition of the covenant as fulfilled by Chriſt alone, as well as the promiſes of it to be fulfilled to them; and of the promiſe of ſanctification, as well as of the promiſe of juſtification and glorification. Hence the covenant, as revealed in the goſpel, is by the Holy Ghoſt called a hearing, Iſa. liii. 1. marg. that is, a thing to be heard and received by faith, as a voice is received and heard by the ear according to that, chap. lv. 3. Hear, and your ſoul ſhall live. It is the natural diſpoſition of mankind to ſpeak rather than to hear; for we are more ready to declare our own will by ſpeaking, than to receive the will of another by hearing. Wherefore the goſpel being the declaration of the will of God for our ſalvation, only to be heard and received by faith, and therefore called the hearing of faith, Gal. iii. 2. there is need of the power of grace, to ſubdue the heart to the hearing thereof, and to ſtop the mouth from making propoſals of our own in that matter.

IV. The love of God in Chriſt is habitually predominant in them: Prov. viii. 17. I love them that love me. Great was the love to them appearing in the covenant. The parties contractors about them acted therein from a principle of free, and yet greateſt love. From thence ſprung the firſt motion for a covenant of life and ſalvation unto them: thence it was the Father was content to give his own Son for them; the Son was well pleaſed to become man, and ſuffer death for them; the Holy Spirit to take them for his habitation, to quicken, ſanctify, and perfect them. The love of God produced the propoſal of the great and precious promiſes in their favour, upon terms conſiſtent with his juſtice: Chriſt as ſecond Adam, out of love to them, accepted of theſe terms. And when the eternal tranſaction was, in the goſpel, by the demonſtration of the Spirit, opened and brought home to their ſouls; this love ſhone forth to them, ſo as they believed it. And that believed love of God in Chriſt kindled in their ſouls a ſuperlative love to him again: 1 John iv. 19. *We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us.* And therefore, although that their love is not always alike vigorous, but hath its waxings and wanings according to the increaſe and decreaſe of their faith; yet, ſince their faith never altogether fails, Luke xxii. 32 it never fails altogether neither, from the moment that it is kindled in their hearts. And it is an active principle in them, conſtraining them to obedience, 2 Cor. v. 14. giving the chief room in their heart and affection to God in Chriſt, that their ſoul ſaith, 'Whom 'have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon 'the earth, that I deſire beſide thee,' Pſalm lxxiii. 25. It makes it to be their greateſt care to pleaſe him, and to be accepted of him, 2 Cor. v. 9. and their greateſt fear, to ſtir him up, or offend him, Cant. iii. 5. It makes duty agreeable to them, as a matter of choice: 1 John v. 3. 'This is the love of God, that we keep 'his commandments: and his commandments are not 'grievous.' And it renders the remains of ſin, *the body of this death,* a heavy burden they long to be delivered from, Rom. vii. 24.

V. Jeſus Chriſt the head of the covenant, is their head with their own conſent. With heart and good-will they have taken him for their head, for all the purpoſes of the covenant; and they ſtand to it, not to alter, if the choice were to make a thouſand times. Thoſe unto whom the Father from eternity choſe to Chriſt for a head, do, in the day of their converſion, by faith approve the choice, making it over again perſonally for themſelves; whence they are ſaid to appoint themſelves one head, Hoſ. i. 11. And as often as they reiterate their acts of faith, which they muſt live by, they do upon the matter reiterate their choice. Being ſenſible of what they ſuffered by the miſcarriage of Adam their firſt head, Chriſt is precious to them as a ſecond Adam. They come into the covenant, and abide alſo in it, under his wings allenarly; expecting no benefit of it, nor by it, but through him. And they have taken him as their head for government, as well as their head for nouriſhment and ſupport. They have delivered up themſelves unto him, to be ruled by him, as well as to be ſaved by him; to be governed by his laws, and not by their own luſts, as well as to be ſaved by his grace, and not by their own works.

VI. The condition of the covenant fulfilled by Jeſus Chriſt, is the alone ground of their confidence before God, as to acceptance with him, or any benefit of the covenant they look to partake of. A crucified Saviour is the foundation laid in Zion, for ſinners to build on: and believing on him is the ſoul's building upon it, 1 Pet. ii. 6. If men build on another foundation, they build on the ſand, and their confidence ſhall be rooted out: If, being driven off from all other foundations, they build not on this neither, they muſt needs periſh as the chaff which the wind driveth away. To believe, or build on Chriſt's righteouſneſs by him fulfilled, can import no leſs than one's truſting on it for his ſalvation. Whether this truſt be ſtrong or weak, it muſt be, elſe faith is not, building on Chriſt is not; but the ſoul is kept in a ſtate of wavering, in oppoſition to the ſtaying of it by faith on Chriſt, Jam. i. 6. Now, he that is within the covenant takes Chriſt's righteouſneſs as his alone ground of confidence before the Lord: for the covenant ſhews not not ſhows any other, nothing ſave Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified, 1 Cor. ii. 2. He hath ſome meaſure of confidence for life and ſalvation, upon that ground; whereby he is diſtinguiſhed from the deſperate, faithleſs, and unbelieving: and what confidence he hath for life and ſalvation, he hath upon that ground alone; whereby he is diſtinguiſhed from the preſumptuous, formaliſts, and hypocrites. And both theſe things are joined in the believers character, Philip. iii. 3. 'And rejoice in 'Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the fleſh.'

VII. The promiſes of the covenant are a ſatisfying portion to their hearts. They are indeed ſenſible they have many wants: but then they ſee as much in the covenant as would ſupply them all; that they need not go to another door for ſupply: they are perſuaded there is as much water in that well as would quench all their thirſt, if they could but get the art of drawing it. Thus the covenant is *all their ſalvation, and all their deſire*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. This diſcovery of the covenant is not owing to nature, but to that grace which ſhews ſo much worth in the one pearl, as makes a man content to ſell all he hath, to gain it, Matth. xiii. 46. But no man will come unto the covenant, untill once he get it; for who will join himſelf to one in a marriage-covenant, or contract of ſervice, with whom he cannot ſee how to live? Faith diſcerns in the covenant not only a refuge, but a portion, Pſal. cxlii. 5. elſe the man would never come into it. And none, who have once got this diſcovery, will remain out of the covenant, Pſal. ix. 10. 'They 'that know thy name, will put their truſt in thee.' See John iv. 10. If the worth of the treaſure hid in the field of the goſpel, be perceived, all will go for the obtaining thereof, Matth. 44. 45. all will be counted loſs and dung for the excellency of it, Philip. iii. 8. Certainly the men of the world do not ſee this in the covenant: it is but an empty hungry thing in their blinded eyes. The covenant is, in the goſpel, held out to them in the breadth and length thereof: but it does not take with them; it is far from being all their deſire: after all as if they had ſeen nothing that could ſatisfy, they ſtill cry, *Who will ſhew us any good?* Pſal. iv. 6. The truth is, the heart of man can never ſee enough in the covenant for to reſt ſatisfied with, till grace give it a new ſet, and contract its endleſs deſires: for that which the unrenewed heart is moſt ſet upon, there is no proviſion in the covenant for, but againſt it.

VIII. The Spirit of the covenant is in them: and that is another ſpirit than what the men of the world are acted by, Numb. xiv. 24. Ezek xxxvi. 27. *I will put my Spirit within you.* The Spirit of Chriſt is the Spirit of the covenant, purchaſed by the blood of the covenant, lodged in the fulneſs thereof in Chriſt the head of the covenant, and communicated in ſome meaſure to all the covenant-people. And that Spirit may be known by theſe three characters thereof.

1. The Spirit of the covenant is a ſpirit of holineſs. The great deſign of the covenant, next to the glory of God, was the ſanctification of ſinners, Luke i. 74, 75. All the lines of the covenant, from the firſt of them unto the laſt, meet in that as their centre. There is a diſplay of exact juſtice, in the condition of the covenant; of rich grace and mercy, in the promiſes of it: of greateſt faithfulneſs and power, in the adminiſtration of it: but holineſs goes through the whole, and every the leaſt part of it. Wherefore it is called the *holy covenant*, Dan. xi. 30. Who then can reaſonably imagine, that the unholy are within this covenant? that the ſervants of ſin whether profane, or formaliſts, ſtrangers to the power of godlineſs, whom no bands of holineſs will hold, can be within the bond of the holy covenant? No, ſure they are not; they have not the Spirit of the covenant. The Spirit of the covenant makes the covenanted initially holy; and to preſs towards the mark, to wreſtle, long, grone, and pant for the perfection of holineſs, Philip. iii. 14. It makes a vein of holineſs run through their whole man; their whole life; their thoughts, their words, their actions; their dealings with God, and their dealings with men. The covenant was erected on purpoſe to *deſtroy the works of the devil*: it was a confederacy entered into by the Father and the Son, for rooting ſin out of the hearts and lives of the children of Adam; for reſtoring the divine image in them; and for bringing them again to a perfect conformity to the moral law of the ten commandments, from which they fell in Adam. For this end was the condition of it performed, the promiſes of it made, and the adminiſtration thereof committed to the holy Jeſus: 1 John iii. 8. 'For this purpoſe the Son of God was manifeſted, that he might 'deſtroy the works of the devil.' Wherefore, whoſoever partake of the Spirit of the covenant, partake of the Spirit of holineſs: Gal. v. 18. 'If ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.' Ver. 16. 'Walk in the 'Spirit and ye ſhall not fulfil the luſts of the fleſh.'

2. The Spirit of the covenant is an ingenuous free ſpirit, Pſal. li. 12. It is the ſpirit of ſons, not of ſlaves; of free men, not of bond men, Rom. viii. 15. There is ſome obedience to the holy law given by unbelievers, the men of the firſt covenant, as well as by believers, the men of the ſecond covenant: and the eyes of the world can perceive no difference between the obedience of ſome of the former ſort, and of thoſe of the latter ſort; howbeit there is a vaſt difference, which is ſeen by the all-ſeeing eye. Are theſe within the covenant praying perſons? So are many, who have no ſaving part nor lot in it, Iſa. lviii. 2. Are they men of temperance and ſobriety, juſtice and honeſty, candor and faithfulneſs, men of blameleſs lives? So are ſeveral others beſides them, for all that any man can ſee, Philip. iii. 16. Thus far they agree. But there is a vaſt difference of the ſpirit they are acted by, which makes a mighty odds in the manner and kind of their obedience. Unbelievers are acted by a ſpirit of bondage, ſuitable to their ſtate of bondage under the covenant of works, Gal iv. 24, 25. A ſlaviſh fear and a ſervile hope are the weights hung upon them by that covenant, cauſing them to go: ſin is avoided, duty performed, not out of love to God and holineſs, but out of love to themſelves. Believers are acted by the Spirit of adoption, ſuitable to their ſtate of adoption, under the covenant of grace, ver. 26. God is their Father; and they ſerve him as ſons, not as ſlaves, Mal. iii. 17. Chriſt is their elder brother, who loved them, and gave himſelf for them; and his love conſtrains them, 2 Cor. v. 14. The holy Spirit dwells in them, hath quickened them, renewed them, making them *partakers of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. So ſin is avoided, as contrary to their new nature, duty purſued as agreeable to it. Their faith of the love of God in Chriſt hath begotten in them love to God again, for a new principle of obedience, 1 Tim. i. 5. By faith they truſt on Chriſt, and on him alone for life and ſalvation: and this at once undermines in them the ſlaviſh fear of hell, and the ſervile hope of heaven; ſo that theſe are ſo far from being their only motives to obedience, that they cannot be their predominant motives; nay, they cannot be at all in them, but as enemies to their faith and love, 2 Tim. i. 7. 1 John iv. 18. Yet withal, it is to be remembered, that it is not ſlaviſh for ſaints to fear God's fatherly anger, and thereby to be ſtirred up to duty, Pſal. cxix. 120. Heb. xi. 7.; nor to hold the way of duty, in hope of the enjoyment of God in that way, and the tokens of his favour, John. xiv. 21. and in the end perfect happineſs in heaven; all through Jeſus Chriſt alone, 1 Cor. xv. 58. Our need of theſe things for incitements to duty, do indeed argue our childiſh ſtate, for there will be no need of theſe fears and hopes in heaven; but by no means a ſlaviſh ſtate. Neither is it at all ſlaviſh, to

have the heart filled with a reverential fear and dread of God, upon the conſideration of his tremenduous juſtice, and wrath in hell, againſt the miſerable objects thereof; and to be ſtirred up to duty thereby, Matth. x. 28. Heb. xii. 28. 29. To look thereunto, and move away towards God in the way of duty, with fear and trembling, is very agreeable to the ſtate of thoſe who have by faith *received a kingdom that cannot be moved;* but are not yet aſcended into heaven; who are indeed drawn up out of the fearful depth; but are not as yet haled up to the top of the rock, though the ſtrong chain of the covenant is ſo about them, that they ſhall never fall down again. For in heaven the awe and reverence of God, on that ſcore, will be perfect, Iſa. xi. 1, 2, 3. But it is ſlaviſh for ſaints, to fear their being caſt into hell for ſin; and ſervile, to hope their obtaining heaven for their good works. And yet that ſlaviſh fear and ſervile hope, may creep in upon the children of the ſecond covenant, and move them to duty: becauſe their faith is weak, much of the old Adam remains in them, and it is not eaſy for them, though dead to the law in point of privilege, to be dead to it in point of practice. But theſe impure mixtures of ſelfiſhneſs in their duties will be humbling unto them: and they will loath themſelves, for that they act not, in their obedience, with more of the free ſpirit and ſon-like diſpoſition. And their will in that caſe is accepted through Chriſt.

3. The Spirit of the covenant is a Spirit of ſympathy, regulated by the covenant. There is a commonneſs of intereſt, and thence a mutual ſympathy, among confederates. And this ſympathy among the confederates of heaven, regards both the head and the people of the covenant.

(1.) They have a native and kindly ſympathy with the God and head of the covenant. It is true, his eſſential glory can never be liable to diminution; nor can his eternal reſt in himſelf be in the leaſt diſturbed, by whatſoever men or angels may do or ſuffer: and the man Chriſt is now beyond the reach of ſuffering. Nevertheleſs, his declarative glory in the world hath its times of ſhining clear, and of being under a cloud. Now, as he hath a ſympathy with them, in all their concerns, their diſtreſſes, and their enlargements, their joys and their griefs, Iſa. lxiii. 9. Luke xv. 5.; which is a very tender ſympathy, inſomuch that the touching of them is the *touching of the apple of his eye,* Zech. ii. 8.: ſo they alſo have a very tender ſympathy with him, in the concerns of his glory. They are glad and rejoice in the proſperity of his kingdom, Acts xi. 23, 24. They pray for it continually, Pſal. lxxiii. 15.; and contribute their endeavours, in their ſtations to advance it, Philip. i. 21. 'For me to live is Chriſt.' They have a feeling of the indignities done to his Majeſty, as done to themſelves, Pſal. lxix. 9. 'The reproaches of them that reproached thee, are fallen upon me.' And they are mourners for the ſins of others, as well as for their own; on the account of the diſhonour they do to God, becauſe they keep not his law, Pſal. cxix. 136. The children of the covenant will neither be oppoſers of the kingdom of Chriſt, nor will they be neuters; but will put their ſhoulders to the work of their Lord, to help it forward, according to their vocation: and without ſuch a public ſpirit, in greater or leſſer meaſure, no man ſhall be able to prove his ſaving intereſt in the covenant: for ſo hath our Lord himſelf determined the matter, Matth. xii. 30. 'He that is not with me, is againſt me; and he that 'gathereth not with me, ſcattereth abroad.'

(2.) They have a native and kindly ſympathy with the people of the covenant; for they are members one of another, Eph. iv. 25. The grace of the covenant diſpoſeth men to be loving, and beneficial to mankind, but in a peculiar manner to holy men; *to do good unto all men, eſpecially unto them who are of the houſhold of faith,* Gal. vi. 10. The common bond of the covenant engageth them in a peculiar love to one another; even as in that bond, they are the common objects of the world's hatred. They bear the ſame image with Chriſt their common head; and that image will recommend all who bear it, unto one that is within the covenant himſelf, ſo far as he can diſcern it. Wherefore their love is a *love to all the ſaints,* Eph. i. 15. And hence ariſeth the ſympathy which every true Chriſtian hath with the church of Chriſt throughout the world, and with the ſeveral members thereof known to them; their joint intereſt in the covenant challengeth it; for by the covenant there is a near relation among them; and from their union under the ſame head, reſults their communion, 1 Cor. xii. 12. 26. Therefore a ſpirit of ſelfiſhneſs, whereby mens concerns are all ſwallowed up in their own things, leaving them no ſympathy with the church and people of God, is a ſhrewd ſign of a graceleſs ſtate. How much more, a ſpirit of reigning enmity againſt religion, and the profeſſors thereof; where religion, and what concerns it, make men the ſpecial objects of their enmity, ſpite, and reſentment? An habitual courſe of this is none of the ſpots of God's people; but it declares men to be of the world, John xv. 19. I have choſen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you, the Spirit of the covenant will carry men quite another way; ſince, taking hold of the covenant, they have embarked in the ſame bottom with thoſe whoſe head Chriſt is, and who have declared war againſt the devil's kingdom. To whom they will ſay, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you, Zech. viii. 23.

IX. In the laſt place, The laws of the covenant are in their hearts, namely, the laws of the ten commandments, the eternal rule of righteouſneſs, Heb. viii. 10. That law, in all its parts, is a copy of the divine nature, which in regeneration is tranſcribed into the heart of of every one brought into the covenant: and the whole of it is written there, tho' every part is not written alike clear, nor any part perfect. As is the image of God reſtored in us, ſo is the law written in our hearts: in ſanctification there is a new man created; which ſpeaks a perfection of parts, though there is not a perfection of degrees in theſe parts, Eph. iv. 24. 2 Cor. v. 17. 1 Cor. xiii. 12. This may be taken up in theſe four things.

1. They approve of the whole law, ſo far as it is known to them: Pſalm cxix. 128. 'I eſteem all thy precepts 'concerning all things to be right.' They love God: and every part of the law is a line of his image: wherefore loving the law as expreſſing the image of his holineſs, they muſt needs love the whole law: ſince there is nothing in it but what is a tranſcript of that holineſs. And as the head of the covenant is in their eyes altogether lovely, Cant. v. 16. the laws of the covenant being like him, muſt be ſo too. Why do not unbelievers love the holy law, but becauſe they do not love a holy God? Rom. viii. 7. But believers loving a holy God in Chriſt, muſt love the law alſo, ſince in it the image of his holineſs is expreſſed. The holy law condemns many things in them; yea, every thing of theirs, ſo far as it is morally imperfect; and ſo they do themſelves, *conſenting to the law that it is good,* chap. vii. 16. It condemns every ſin, every one's moſt beloved ſin, the evil he is moſt eaſily led aſide into: and for that very cauſe the unrenewed heart hates the law. But the grace of the covenant makes a man to leave his complaint on himſelf; to approve the law, and condemn his own luſt contrary thereto: Rom. vii. 12. 'The law is holy, 'and the commandment holy, and juſt, and good,' verſe 14. 'But I am carnal.'

2. They have an inclination of heart towards the whole law, ſo far as they know it: Pſalm cxix. 5. 'O 'that my ways were directed to keep thy ſtatutes?' There is in them a fixed principle, which lies the ſame way with the holy law: bending away from what the law forbids, and towards what the law directs unto. True, there is a contrary principle in them too, which fights againſt it; but ſo do they againſt that contrary principle, breathing, longing, and luſting for the com-

plete victory over it, and for full conformity to the holy law, Gal. v. 17. This is a new ſet of heart given in the new birth; exerting itſelf, not in lazy wiſhes for conformity to the law, but in a reſolute ſtruggle for it, enduring to the end. Hence,

3. They will habitually endeavour to conform in their practice to the whole law, ſo far as they know, Pſalm cxix. 6. 'Then ſhall I not be aſhamed, when I have 'reſpect unto all thy commandments.' If the law is written in one's heart, he will write it out again in his converſation; and a ſanctified heart, will certainly make a holy life: Matth. vi 22. *If thine eye be ſingle, thy whole body ſhall be full of light.* Where is the efficacy of the holy covenant, if men may be within the covenant, and yet live like thoſe that are without it? Nay but to whomſoever the grace of God hath effectually appeared, it will have taught them effectually to *deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world*, Tit. ii. 11. 12. If the grace of the covenant bring you not to the duties of piety towards God, you have no ſaving part in it. If you are brought unto theſe, but withal left at liberty from the duties of righteouſneſs toward your neighbour, that you do not loath, but dare to be unjuſt in ſmaller or greater matters; you are yet *in the gall of bitterneſs, and in the bond of iniquity*. Luke xvi. 11. 'If ye have not been 'faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will com'mit to your truſt the true riches?' If you are brought forward unto both theſe, and yet not ſober, but left ſlaves to your ſenſual appetite and fleſhly affections, you are no better: for *they that are Chriſt's have crucified the fleſh, with the affections and luſts*, Gal. v. 24. But whoſo have fled to the covenant of grace in Chriſt for life and ſalvation, and withal are honeſtly endeavouring conformity to the whole law in their practice, they, howbeit in many things they miſs their mark, do ſhew themſelves to be within the bond of the holy covenant, and ought to take the comfort thereof, as the divine allowance to them: 2 Cor. i. 12. 'Our rejoicing is this, the teſ'timony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly 'ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of 'God, we have had our converſation in the world.'

4. Laſtly, Their ſouls ly open to what of the laws of the covenant they know not. They are content to know them, deſirous to be taught them, that they may conform unto them: Pſalm cxix. 26. *Teach me thy ſtatutes.* There are many ſins of ours hid unto us: becauſe there is much of the laws of the covenant we do not diſcern. And hypocrites do not deſire to know the whole law: they are willingly ignorant of ſome things thereof, becauſe they have no inclination to entertain them. But the ſincere, being content to part with every falſe way, and to take upon them the whole yoke of Chriſt, hating ſin as contrary to God's nature and will, and loving duty as agreeable thereto, do of courſe ly open to further diſcoveries of ſin and duty: they come to the light, John iii. 21. They ſay, 'That which I ſee not, teach thou 'me,' Job xxxiv. 32. 'Search me, O God, and know 'my heart: try me and know my thoughts. And 'ſee if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me 'in the way everlaſting,' Pſalm cxxxix. 23. 24.

And thus much ſhall ſuffice to have ſpoken on the fifth head, namely, *The trial of a ſaving perſonal inbeing in the covenant of grace.*

HEAD VI.

The WAY *of* INSTATING *Sinners perſonally and ſavingly in the Covenant of Grace.*

BY the marks and characters given, it appears, that they are but few who are perſonally and ſavingly inſtated in the covenant of grace, in compariſon of thoſe who are ſtrangers to it; but we are allowed to offer it to ſtrangers; to invite and call them who are without the covenant, to come into it, and ſo to compel them to come in, Luke xiv. 23. Here then are the glad tidings of the goſpel: there is a covenant, which was entered into from eternity between God and Chriſt the ſecond Adam; a covenant of grace, made in favour of ſinners of Adam's race, ruined by the breach of the covenant of works. In it there is full proviſion for your ſalvation; to relieve you from all the ruining effects of the broken firſt covenant, and to render you completely happy. The condition of this covenant is indeed high; being ſcrewed up to a pitch by the demands of the law and juſtice: yet there is nothing on that part to diſcourage you from the covenant; for your inability being foreſeen from eternity, it was laid upon one that is mighty, to perform it; and now it is already performed and fulfilled to your hand by that mighty One Chriſt Jeſus. Only, the promiſes remain to be fulfilled. So the burden of the condition is over without you; and ye are called to the benefit of the promiſes. And that ye may have the more clear acceſs thereto, the adminiſtration of the covenant is put into the hand of the ſame Chriſt Jeſus: and he is intruſted with all the promiſes, to fulfill them to ſinners. He hath begun to fulfill them to all who have taken hold of the covenant; and he is ready to fulfill them to all who yet ſhall take hold thereof. For that end he hath made his teſtament of theſe promiſes, and conſtituted ſinners of mankind his legatees; that whoſoever of them will, may come, claim, and take hold of the water of life freely, Rev. xxii. 17. The whole of the covenant is in him. In him is God, the party-contractor on heaven's ſide, 2 Cor. v. 19. 'God was in Chriſt, reconcil'ing the world unto himſelf.' He himſelf is the party contractor on man's ſide; and in him are believers really, and all the elect legally and repreſentatively. In him is the condition of the covenant, and that as fulfilled: he is *the Lord our righteouſneſs*, Jer. xxiii. 6. In him are *all the promiſes yea, and amen*, 2 Cor. i. 20. all meeting in him, as lines of a circle in their centre; and ſure and ſtedfaſt, no ways liable to miſgive, as did the promiſe of the covenant of works in the firſt Adam. And he as a King hath emitted his royal proclamations, bearing, that whoſoever will come unto him, and unite with him as head of the covenant, ſhall be taken into it, and have a right to all the privileges thereof in him, and through him.

Thus the covenant is brought to you, and ſet before you in the goſpel: ſo that ye muſt needs be either receivers or refuſers of it. Refuſe it not: that is dangerous beyond expreſſion. Take hold of it; for it is your life. Sinners, ye are under the covenant of works, where there is no life, nor ſalvation for you; but the door of the new-covenant is opened unto you: come, enter into it without delay. Flee, and make your eſcape out of the dominion of the law, the covenant of works, ye are born under, and are living under: and that can no ways be done, but by your accepting and embracing this covenant offered to you in the goſpel; to the inſtating of you perſonally in it: to all the purpoſes of life and ſalvation.

Sinners inſtated in the covenant by Faith or believing.

TO clear your way into the covenant, it is neceſſary to ſhew, by what means it is that a ſinner embraceth and is inſtated in it, effectually unto ſalvation. And this, in one word, is by faith or believing on Jeſus Chriſt, Acts xvi. 31. ‘ Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and ‘ thou ſhalt be ſaved.’ The covenant of grace is held forth in the goſpel unto you; God ſaith to every one of you, ‘ I will make an everlaſting covenant with you, ‘ even the ſure mercies of David:’ and to cloſe the bargain with you, and ſtate you perſonally in it, to all the intents and purpoſes of ſalvation, all that is required of you, is to hear, that is, to believe; *Hear, and your ſoul ſhall live*, Iſa. lv. 3. He that believeth is within the covenant of grace perſonally and ſavingly: he that believeth not is ſtill under the covenant of works, where the firſt Adam left him. Faith is the hand whereby one taketh hold of the covenant, ſigns it for himſelf, and cloſeth the bargain for his own ſalvation. It is the mouth whereby ſinners conſent to the covenant, that God becomes their God, and they his people. Altho' while ye are without the covenant, the working of perfect obedience under the pain of the curſe is required of you: and more than that, ſuffering alſo, even to the ſatisfaction of juſtice; and both theſe, in virtue of the broken firſt covenant: and when ye are once brought within the covenant, obedience to all the ten commandments, and ſuffering of the diſcipline of the covenant in caſe of your failures, are required of you, in virtue of the new covenant ye are entered into: yet to enter you into the covenant, and inſtate you in it unto ſalvation, nothing is required of you, but that ye believe on Chriſt. *Only believe*, Mark v. 36. is the conſtant doctrine of the goſpel in this point. Do what you will, and believe not, you remain in a ſtate of damnation: whatever is done, or not done by you, believe, and you are in a ſtate of ſalvation. If you ſhould ſay it with your lips a thouſand times over, that you accept of the covenant, if you ſhould come under the moſt ſolemn and awful bond and engagement to be the Lord's, expreſsly taking the ſame upon you in prayer, or otherways; if you ſhould write your covenant, and ſubſcribe it with your hand; and ſhould take the ſacrament of Chriſt's body and blood upon it, to confirm all: yet if you do not with the heart believe on Jeſus Chriſt, you embrace not the covenant, you miſs the ſaving hold of it, and remain without the ſaving bond of it. And if you ſhould this moment with the heart believe on Chriſt, having no acceſs to ſpeak, pray, write, or communicate: yet the moment you believe, you are perſonally and ſavingly inſtated in the covenant, never to fall out of it through the ages of eternity; God is your God, and all the promiſes of the covenant are yours, though you had miſſed the grip of the covenant ten thouſands times before: in that caſe you have it firm and ſure: Mark xvi. 16. ‘ He that believeth and is ‘ baptized, ſhall be ſaved: he that believeth not, ſhall ‘ be damned.’

And that believing on Chriſt ſhould be the appointed means of entering ſinners into the covenant of grace, is very agreeable to the nature and end of that great tranſaction. The which appears by theſe two conſiderations following.

1. Hereby the grace of the covenant is preſerved entire in the diſpenſation of the covenant: and by that means the promiſe is made *ſure to all the ſeed*, Rom. iv. 16. Faith is contradiſtinguiſhed to works, as grace is to debt, chap. iv. 4. 5. If any work or doing of ours were that upon which we were inſtated in the covenant, and got the right in the promiſes: then the covenant and benefit thereof would be of debt to us, contrary to the declared end and deſign of that method of ſalvation, which is to exalt the free grace of God, and to cut off all boaſting from us, Eph. ii. 8. 9. But the nature of faith's efficacy in the buſineſs is adapted to that end and deſign of the covenant: inaſmuch as it is a grace, not giving, but purely receiving; taking all freely from Chriſt, *without money and without price*, laying the ſtreſs of the ſouls acceptance with God, wholly on what Chriſt hath done and ſuffered: and entirely renouncing all doings and ſuffering of our own in that point. And thus the promiſe is ſure to us; for whereas the plea of any work of ours would be a very uncertain one; faith's plea is ever ſure and ſtedfaſt, as grounded allenarly on what Chriſt hath wrought.

2. Hereby the ſinner's entering into the covenant is by uniting with Chriſt the repreſentative, with whom it was made as party-contractor; which is the ſcripture-account of the matter, John x. 9. ‘ I am the door: by ‘ me if any man enter in, he ſhall be ſaved.’ and ſo the unity of the covenant, and the repreſentation in it, are preſerved. If men entered into the covenant ſome other way, as by their accepting properly called terms to them propoſed, and promiſing for themſelves the performance of them: in that caſe the repreſentation in the covenant is marred; and there would be in effect as many covenants of grace, as there are perſons embracing it at different times; at leaſt, Chriſt's covenant would be one, and ours another diſtinct therefrom; the contrary of which is before evinced from the ſcripture. But the covenant of grace being made with Chriſt as ſecond Adam, in the name of all ſuch as ſhould be his: it plainly follows, that the only way of one's entering perſonally into it, muſt be by becoming his, ſtanding related to the head of the covenant as our head: and it is by faith, and no work, nor conſent of ours differing from faith, that we are united to him, and become members of his body, Eph. iii. 17. How do we all enter perſonally into the covenant of works, ſo as to partake of the curſe in it? Is it not through our becoming, by natural generation, branches of the firſt Adam, the repreſentative in that covenant? Hereby every one of us is perſonally entered, and inſtated in that covenant, before we are capable to approve or diſapprove of the ſame, to conſent to it, or diſſent from it. Even ſo we enter perſonally into the covenant of grace, ſo as to partake of the benefits in it, by our becoming branches of the ſecond Adam, the repreſentative therein: and that is through faith, in ſubjects capable of actual believing. It is by being ingrafted into Chriſt, we come to partake of the covenant benefits thereof. And hence it is, that infants, not capable of actual believing, nor of knowing what the covenant is, yet having the Spirit of faith, are perſonally entered into it, and inſtated in it; foraſmuch as that Spirit of faith is effectual in them, to a real uniting them with Chriſt. Hereunto agrees God's giving Chriſt for a covenant; that in him people may have the covenant and all the benefits thereof. As God, in making of the covenant, took Chriſt for all, for the condition, and for the parties to receive the promiſes; he being a ſecond Adam; ſo ſinners, in accepting and embracing of the covenant, are to take him for all; the whole of the covenant, the parties and parts of it too being in him, foraſmuch as he is a God as well as man, ſecond Adam.

And thus it appears, that uniting with Chriſt the head of the covenant, is a ſinner's formal entering into the covenant; the which uniting with him being by faith on him, it is evident, that it is by believing on Chriſt a ſinner embraceth, enters into, and is inſtated in the covenant unto ſalvation. Wherefore reach Chriſt by faith, and ye reach the covenant: if ye miſs him, ye miſs the covenant, in point of life and ſalvation. But here ariſeth a weighty queſtion, to wit,

Queſt. *What is that believing, by which one unites with Jeſus Chriſt, and ſo enters into the covenant of grace?*

Anſw. The clearing of this point being ſo neceſſary to direct ſinners in their way into the covenant, for their eternal ſalvation; we ſhall, for what now remains, addreſs ourſelves to the conſideration thereof only.

And to begin with the word by which the Holy Ghoſt expreſſeth what we call believing, whether in the Old or New Teſtament: whoſoever ſhall duly conſider the import of it, in the ſcripture-uſe thereof, will find, that it is juſt *truſting*, truſting a word, perſon, or thing. And hence the ſcripture-phraſes of believing to, and believing in, that is, truſting to, and truſting in; the former phraſes, however unuſual with us in converſation, yet ordinary, both in the Old and New Teſtament, according to the originals. It is the truſting a word, as to a report, Iſa. liii. 1. *In his words*, Pſal. cvi. 12. It is the truſting a perſon; ſo, in the ſtyle of the Holy Ghoſt, the *Iſraelites believed in the Lord, and in Moſes his ſervant*, Exod. xiv. 31. *He believed not in his ſervants*, Job iv. 18. that is, as we read it, *He put no truſt in them.* And it is the truſting of a thing too: ſo, in the ſame ſtyle, Job xxxix. 12. *Wilt thou believe in him* (to wit, the unicorn) *that he will bring home thy ſeed?* i. e. Wilt thou truſt in him that he will do it? Deut. xxviii. 66. *Thou ſhalt not believe in thy life*; that is, as we read it, *Thou ſhalt have none aſſurance of thy life*; no truſt in it, becauſe no certainty about it. The phraſeology is the ſame in the New Teſtament, as being brought into it from the Old, only in a different language. And taking the meaning of the Holy Ghoſt in this matter, from the words which he teacheth, as we are directed, 1 Cor. ii. 13. we conclude, That faith or believing, ſo expreſſed by him in the ſcripture, is, in the general, *truſting*, the truſting of a word, and of a perſon, and thing, held forth in that word.

Now, there is a twofold word to be believed or truſted of all thoſe who would enter into the covenant of grace in a ſaving manner; namely, the word of the law, and the word of the goſpel. The believing of the former, is a *faith of the law*; the believing of the latter, a *faith of the goſpel*; of which in order.

A Faith of the law preparatory for the Covenant.

THE faith of the law is not indeed ſaving faith: for the law is the word and adminiſtration of condemnation, and not of righteouſneſs; as ſpeaking nothing of a Saviour, an atonement, or an imputed righteouſneſs, 2 Cor. iii. 9. Nevertheleſs, it is a neceſſary antecedent thereof, according to the ſtated order of the diſpenſation of the covenant. The faith of the law is like the hearing of the ſtrong wind, the feeling of the earthquake, and ſeeing of fire: in which though the Lord was not, yet they ſerved to prepare to hearkening to the ſtill ſmall voice in which he was, 1 Kings xix. 11. 12. Accordingly, the faith of the law is the work of the Spirit of God, as well as the ſaving faith of the goſpel: though wrought in a different manner. The former he works as a ſpirit of bondage, convincing of ſin and miſery, by the law, Rom. viii. 15. with John xvi. 8. The latter he works as a quickening ſpirit, enlightening the ſoul in the knowledge of Chriſt, 2 Cor. iii. 17. 18.

Whoſoever then would enter into the covenant of grace, muſt in the firſt place have a faith of the law; for which cauſe, it is neceſſary, that the law, as well as the goſpel, be preached unto ſinners. And that faith of the law conſiſts in a belief of theſe three things.

1. By it a man believes that he is a ſinner. The holy law pronounceth him guilty: and he believes the report of the law concerning himſelf in particular; his heavy and ſorrowful heart, by this faith, echoing to the voice of the law, *guilty, guilty!* Rom. iii. 19. The which faith reſts not on the teſtimony of man, whether ſpoken or written; but is a divine faith, founded upon the teſtimony of God, in his holy law, demonſtrated by the ſpirit of bondage, to be the voice of the eternal God, and the voice of that God to him in particular. And thus he believes, (1.) That his life and converſation is ſinful, diſpleaſing, and hateful in the ſight of a holy God, according to the divine teſtimony, Rom. iii. 12. 'They 'are all gone out of the way, they are together become 'unprofitable, there is none that doth good, no not one.' He is convinced, that he is gone out of the way of God, and walking in the way of deſtruction; that the number of his errors of omiſſion and commiſſion he cannot underſtand; and that all his righteouſneſſes, as well as his unrighteouſneſſes, *are as filthy rags* before the Lord. (2.) That his heart is full of miſchief and iniquity, according to the divine teſtimony, Jer. xvii. 9. 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately 'wicked.' The law ſhineth into the heart, diſcovers divers luſts there, which he little noticed before; and preſſing the unholy heart, irritates them: and thus ſuch a myſtery of iniquity within his breaſt opens to his view, as he could never before believe to have been there, Rom. vii. 9. 'I was alive without the law once: but 'when the commandment came, ſin revived, and I 'died.' (3.) That his nature is quite corrupted, as one *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*, according to the divine teſtimony, Eph. ii. 1. To the verdict of the law, *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?* Job xiv. 4. his ſoul, by this faith, echoes back, *unclean, unclean!* 'I was ſhapen in iniquity, and in ſin did my mother 'conceive me.' He is conceived, his diſeaſe is hereditary and natural; and that therefore his nature muſt be renewed: that otherwiſe, he not only does no good, but can do no good. In all theſe reſpects, he believes himſelf to be an object loathſome in the ſight of God: loathſome in his nature, heart, and life.

2. By it a man believes, that he is a loſt and undone ſinner, under the curſe of the law; liable to vengeance, according to the divine teſtimony, Gal. iii. 10. 'Curſed is every one, that continueth not in all things writ'ten in the book of the law to do them.' He can no more look upon the curſe as ſome ſtrange thing, belonging only to ſome monſters of wickedneſs, and not to him; for the Spirit of the Lord, as a ſpirit of bondage, applies it cloſely to him: as if he ſaid, *Thou art the man.* And, like one under ſentence of death pronounced againſt him, he groans out his belief of it, under the preſſure thereof, Luke xv. 17. *I periſh.*

3. Laſtly, By it a man believes his utter inability to recover himſelf. He believes that he cannot, by any doings or ſufferings of his remove the curſe of the law from off him; according to the divine teſtimony of our being without ſtrength in that point, Rom. v. 6. nor change his own nature, heart, and life, ſo as to render them acceptable to God; according to the infallible teſtimony, Jer. xiii. 23. 'Can the Ethiopian change 'his ſkin, or the leopard his ſpots? then may ye alſo 'do good that are accuſtomed to do evil.' He is, in his own eyes, as in the ſight of God, a ſpiritually dead man; legally dead, and morally dead, as the apoſtle teſtifies of himſelf in that caſe, Rom. vii. 9.

This is the faith of the law. And the effect of it is a legal repentance, whereby a ſinner is broken and bruiſed with fear and terror of the wrath of God; grieves and ſorroweth for ſin, as a ruining and a deſtructive evil; and therefore really deſires to be freed from it; deſpairs of ſalvation by himſelf, and ſeriouſly looks out for relief another way, Acts ii. 17. and xvi. 29, 30. Thus the *law is our ſchoolmaſter to bring us unto Chriſt*; and the faith of the law makes way for the faith of the goſpel. Not that either this legal faith, or legal repentance, is the condition of our welcome to Chriſt and the covenant of grace: our acceſs to Chriſt and the covenant is proclaimed free, without any conditions or qualifications required in us, to warrant us ſinners of mankind to believe on Jeſus Chriſt, as was ſhown before. But they are neceſſary to move and excite us, to make uſe of our privilege of free acceſs to Chriſt and the covenant, inſomuch that none will come to Chriſt, nor embrace the covenant, without them in greater or leſſer meaſure. Even as if a phyſician ſhould cauſe proclaim, that he will freely cure all the ſick of ſuch a place, that will employ him: in which caſe, it is plain, none will employ him, but ſuch as are ſenſible of ſome malady they labour under; yet that ſenſe of a malady is not the condition of their welcome to that phyſician; nor is it requiſite for his curing them, but for their employing him.

Now, in calling you to embrace the covenant, ye are called indirectly, and by conſequence, to this faith of the law, namely, to believe that ye are ſinners in life, heart, and nature; loſt and undone, under the curſe; and utterly unable to recover yourſelves. Yet it is not ſaving faith, nor doth it inſtate one in the covenant of grace; that is peculiar to another kind of believing: of which in the next place.

The Faith of the Goſpel, inſtating in the covenant.

SAving faith, which unites to Chriſt, is the faith of the goſpel. For the goſpel only is the miniſtration of righteouſneſs, 2 Cor. iii. 9. It is in it that the righteouſneſs of faith is revealed unto faith, revealed to be believed on, Rom. i. 17. It is the alone word which gives ſinners the notice of a Saviour, of the atoning blood, and the new covenant in that blood; and therefore is the only word by which ſaving faith is begotten in the heart of a loſt ſinner. In the word of the goſpel, the Lord and Saviour Chriſt, with all his benefits and covenant, is; and that to be believed on, as appears from Rom. ix. 6, 7, 8, 9. So that, the word of the goſpel, being received by believing, we have Chriſt, and his covenant, with all the benefits thereof; ſaving faith being indeed the echo of the quickened ſoul, to the word of grace that bringeth ſalvation; a truſting of the word of the goſpel, and the perſon, to wit, the Saviour, and the thing, therein held forth to us, to be believed on for ſalvation. Mark i. 15. 'Believe the goſpel.' Iſa. liii. 1. 'Who hath believed our report?' Gal. iii. 2. 'The hearing of faith.' This is that believing, by which we are united to Chriſt, entered into the covenant of grace, and inſtated therein unto ſalvation. The which believing may be explained in four particulars; (1.) The faith of Chriſt's ſufficiency; (2.) The faith of the goſpel-offer; (3.) The faith of our right to Chriſt; and, (4.) The faith of particular truſt for ſalvation. So putting the

Queſtion, *What is that believing, by which I, a loſt ſinner, under the curſe of the law, may unite with Jeſus Chriſt, and ſo enter into, and be inſtated in the covenant of grace, to my eternal ſalvation?* We anſwer thereto directly in theſe four particulars, by way of direction in this momentuous point whereon ſalvation depends.

I. *The faith of Chriſt's Sufficiency.*

In the firſt place, you are to believe, that there is a fulneſs of ſalvation in Chriſt for poor ſinners. This is the conſtant report of the goſpel concerning him, Eph. iii. 8. 'That I ſhould preach among the Gentiles the unſearchable riches of Chriſt.' Heb. vii. 25. 'He is able to ſave them to the uttermoſt, that come unto God, by him.' In the word of the goſpel Chriſt is held forth as an able Saviour; able to ſave men from their ſins, and from the wrath of God. His merit is a ſufficient ſcreen againſt the tempeſt of fiery wrath, which incenſed juſtice is ready to cauſe fly forth againſt tranſgreſſors: Iſa. xxxii. 2. 'A man ſhall be a covert from the tempeſt.' His Spirit is ſufficient to ſanctify the moſt unholy: 1 Cor. vi. 11. 'And ſuch were ſome of you: but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God.' The righteouſneſs he fulfilled as the condition of the covenant, is ſo valuable in itſelf, and in the eyes of his Father, that it is ſufficient to procure juſtification, ſanctification, and all other ſaving benefits to ſinners, who in themſelves deſerve death and damnation: ſo that they are happy who are in him; they ſhall never periſh, but have everlaſting life, being eternally ſecure under the covert of his righteouſneſs, as a ſufficient defence. Believeſt thou this?

This is the general faith of the goſpel, which being without particular application, doth not unite the ſinner to Chriſt, nor enter him into the covenant; and may be found in reprobates and fallen angels, being only an aſſent in general to the truth of the doctrine of the goſpel, Matth xiii. 20. 21. and viii. 29. But, by the nature of the thing, it is neceſſarily prerequiſite to a faith of particular application: for I muſt firſt believe a ſaying to be true in itſelf, before I can truſt to it for my part; I muſt firſt believe a thing to be good in itſelf, before I can believe that it is good for me.

But where the faith of the goſpel is carried forward to uniting with Chriſt, the effect of this general faith is very valuable as well as neceſſary. And that is, an high eſteem of Chriſt and his covenant, an ardent deſire of union and communion with him, a longing for his righteouſneſs, as a hungry man longs for meat, or a thirſty man for drink. The man ſees indeed, that he has no ſpecial intereſt in Chriſt and his righteouſneſs: but he would fain have it: all is ſapleſs to him without it; his ſoul within him cries, "Give me Chriſt, or elſe "I'll die;" and he is content to part with all for him, and to take him for all. This is taught us in the parables of the treaſure hid in the field, and of the pearl of great price, the finding out of which moves to ſell all, and to buy them, Matth. xiii. 44. 45. 46.

Howbeit this eſteem and deſire of Chriſt is different from that which follows upon the ſoul's union with Chriſt, when once faith hath taken poſſeſſion of him and his benefits, and hath got a view of his intrinſic ſupereminent worth and value: the which is mentioned, 1 Pet. ii. 7. Pſalm lxxiii. 25. The true ſpring of all this eſteem and deſire, is the principle of ſelf-preſervation, and the view of Chriſt as ſuited to that end. The merchant man is ſeeking goodly pearls for his own enriching: and ſeeing that the one pearl will anſwer that deſign, he is reſtleſs till he have it. The poor ſinner is hotly purſued by the laws curſe, which is ſtill ringing death and damnation in his ears. In the mean time, he gets a diſtant view of the city of refuge; and therefore he makes forward to it with all ſpeed: but what makes him run, but life, life, precious life, that he may not periſh? Verily, he cannot be expected to act from a more generous principle, before he is united to Chriſt: John xv. 5. 'Without me ye can do nothing.' But let him not fear; he is welcome to Chriſt, even coming to him from no higher principle. The truth is, the Lord Jeſus, by his Spirit, ſets the principle of ſelf-preſervation a ſtir, being a thing in itſelf good; and uſeth it as a mean to haſten ſinners unto him. This is evident from the complaint, John v. 24. 'And ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life.' Can one imagine our Lord will reject a ſinner coming to him for life, when he complains that ſinners will not come to him for that end?

II. *The Faith of the Goſpel offer.*

In the next place, you muſt believe, that Jeſus Chriſt with his righteouſneſs and all his ſalvation is by himſelf offered to ſinners, and to you in particular. This is the plain voice of the goſpel to all unto whom it comes, Iſ. lv. 1. 'Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye unto the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.' Rev. xxii. 17. 'Whoſoever will, let him take the water of life freely.' Prov. viii. 4. 'Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the ſons of men.' But alas! few believe it: yea, none will believe it to purpoſe till the Spirit of the Lord make it plain to them, and perſuade them by an inward illumination. Many ſecure ſinners hear the goſpel, and are glad of the offer, but they diſcern not Chriſt's voice in it. They hear it not, as the word of the Lord Chriſt himſelf to them; but as the word of men: hence it hath no due authority upon their conſciences; ſo they paſs it over lightly. Thus were his offers of himſelf entertained, when made by his own mouth, but he not diſcerned as the eternal Son of God, and Saviour of the world. So, in the congregation of Nazareth, ‘ All ‘ bare him witneſs, and wondered at the gracious words ‘ which proceeded out of his mouth.’ But ‘ they ſaid, ‘ Is not this Joſeph's ſon ?’ Luke iv. 22. And in a little they roſe up and thruſt him out of the city, verſe 29. Again, when the voice of Chriſt is diſcerned in the offer by the convinced ſinner; then the ſinner is ready to conclude, that it is to others, but not to him. Unbelief ſaith, but “ our bones are dried, and our hope “ is loſt, we are cut off for our parts,” Ezek. xxxvii. 11. They cannot believe, that ſo good news from heaven concerns them, or that ſuch a good word is directed unto them. And thus men not believing God in the record given of his Son, that he is with all his ſalvation offered to them, do make him a lyar, 1 John v. 10.

But where ſaving faith is a working, the word of the goſpel offer is, by the holy Spirit, applied to the ſoul in particular with power as the word of the Lord himſelf, and not of men; whereby the man is aſſured, that it is the voice of Chriſt, and to him in particular: whereupon he applies it to himſelf by believing: 1 Theſſ. i. 5. ‘ For our goſpel came not unto you in word only, but ‘ alſo in power, and in the Holy Ghoſt, and in much ‘ aſſurance.’ Chap. ii. 13. ‘ The word of God, which ye ‘ heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but ‘ (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually ‘ worketh alſo in you that believe.’ This is altogether neceſſary; inſomuch that without it there can be no receiving of Chriſt, foraſmuch as otherwiſe the ſoul can ſee no ſolid ground and foundation of faith for itſelf; for it is evident, there can be no receiving aright, where the ſinner doth not believe the offer to be to him in particular. And here begins the application of faith, an application tending to union with Chriſt.

Wherefore, if you would unite with Chriſt, and ſo enter into the covenant of grace, ſiſt yourſelves before the Lord as condemned and curſed ſinners, under the curſe of the law; and hear and believe the word of his goſpel, as directed to you condemned and curſed ſinners in particular. So it will come unto you, as the riſing ſun to one ſitting in darkneſs, and in the ſhadow of death; or as the offer of a pardon, to one under ſentence of death. And let not your heart miſgive you by unbelief; but firmly believe the offer to be made by Chriſt himſelf unto you, as it is in very deed, Iſa. lv. 3. ‘ Hear, ‘ and your ſoul ſhall live, and I will make an everlaſting ‘ covenant with you.

But here it is neceſſary to remove the following objections.

Object. 1. But Chriſt is now in heaven, and I hear no voice from thence: how then can I believe that he himſelf is offering himſelf to me? Anſw. Though Chriſt is in heaven, yet he is ſpeaking from heaven to us; howbeit not by a voice ſounding through the clouds, yet by a voice ſounding in the goſpel: Heb. xii. 25. ‘ See that ye refuſe not him that ſpeaketh——that ſpeaketh from heaven.’ And not only is his voice in the word of the goſpel, but he himſelf by his Spirit is in it, as the apoſtle teacheth, Rom. x. 6. 7. 8. Thence it is, that it is a quickening word to dead ſouls: John vi. 36. ‘ The words that I ſpeak unto you, they are ſpirit, and they are life.’ It is the lively ſeed, whereof the new creature is formed, 1 Pet. i. 23. Jeſus Chriſt did once, by a voice ſounding through the clouds, ſpeak a word of conviction, Acts ix. 4. 5. But even in that caſe, the word of the offer of himſelf was remitted to the preaching of the goſpel by a meſſenger thereto appointed, ver. 6. And the voice of Chriſt ſounding in his written word, is more ſure than a voice ſounding through the clouds, 2 Pet. i. 18. 19. This voice in the word is the ſtated ground of faith, with which faith muſt cloſe for ſalvation: Rom. i. 16. ‘ The goſpel of Chriſt: it is ‘ the power of God unto ſalvation, to every one that believeth.’ Ver. 17. ‘ For therein is the righteouſneſs of ‘ God revealed from faith to faith.’ And there is no true ſaving faith, where it is not received as the very voice of the Lord himſelf, 1 Theſſ. ii. 13. Therefore you muſt receive the word of the goſpel, as the word of Chriſt himſelf, as in very deed it is.

Object. 2. But Chriſt in the word of the goſpel doth not name me; how then can I believe that he offereth himſelf, his righteouſneſs and ſalvation, to me in particular? Anſw. Neither doth he name you in the word of the law, whether in the commands thereof, or in the curſe thereof. How do you come to believe that you are a ſinner? Is it not, that, the commands of the law being directed to all men, you conclude and believe, that, you being of the number of mankind, they are therefore directed to you in particular, as well as to others? And how come you to believe that you in particular are under the curſe of the broken law? Is it not, that, ſince the law denounceth its curſe againſt every one that, being under it, breaks it, Gal. iii. 10. Rom. iii. 19. you do conclude and believe, that it curſeth you, foraſmuch as you are one of theſe breakers thereof? Now, you have as ſufficient ground to believe that the offer of the goſpel is to you in particular; foraſmuch as it is made to all, without exception, unto whom the goſpel comes, Rev. xxii. 17. Iſa. lv. 1. It is ordered to be made to every creature under heaven, Mark xvi. 15.: and how ſinful ſoever you are, you are one of theſe creatures. Chriſt's voice is unto men, ſons of men: and be what you will, you are one of mankind-ſinners: and therefore the offer is to you in particular, Prov. viii. 4. Accordingly, we are warranted to apply the general offer to every one in particular; and every one is warranted to apply it to himſelf: Acts xvi. 31. ‘ Believe on the ‘ Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved.’

Object. 3. But alas! I fear I want the qualifications determinative of thoſe to whom the goſpel-offer is particularly directed. I dread that I have not as yet got a due ſenſe of ſin: and our Lord ſays expreſly, ‘ They that ‘ be whole need not a phyſician, but they that are ſick. ‘ I am not come to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance.’ Matth. xi. 12, 13. The goſpel offer runs in theſe terms, ‘ Ho, every one that thirſteth, come,’ Iſa. lv. 1. ‘ Come unto me, all ye that labour and are ‘ heavy laden,’ Matth. xi. 28. ‘ Whoſoever will, let ‘ him take the water of life freely,’ Rev. xxii. 17. But when I view my own condition, I very much fear I have not as yet reached that thirſt after Chriſt, and that willingneſs to take him, which theſe texts ſpeak of; and that I cannot be accounted one truly labouring and heavy laden: how then can I believe that Chriſt offers himſelf to me in particular? Anſw. It is moſt certain truth, that unleſs you have a due ſenſe of ſin, unleſs you thirſt after Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, unleſs you be heavy laden with the felt burden of ſin, and willing to take Chriſt on any terms, you will never take him by a true faith. Neverthelеſs, whatever qualifications you have, or have not; yet if you are a ſinner of Adam's race, (and I hope you doubt not that,) Chriſt is offered to you, together with his righteouſneſs, and all his ſalvation, Prov. viii. 4. John iii. 16. Mark xvi. 15. For howbeit there are indeed certain qualifications neceſſary to move you to take Chriſt; yet there are none at all to hamper the goſpel-offer: but Chriſt is really offered to you, be in what caſe you will; ſo really, that if you do not believe it, and thereupon receive an offered Saviour, you will be damned for not believing, Mark xvi. 16.

It is undeniable, the leſs that ſinners are ſenſible of their ſins, they are the farther from righteouſneſs; they do the more need Chriſt, and are the more to be called to repentance. This is evident from the whole tenor of the holy ſcripture, and from the very nature of the thing. And therefore it is ſinners in the general, and not ſenſible ſinners only, who are meant, Matth. ix. 12. 13. Even as it is ſick people in general, comprehending even thoſe of them who are ſo delirious, as to think nothing ails them, that need a phyſician; and not thoſe ſick only, who are ſenſible of their ſtate and hazard. This is the plain literal ſenſe of that paſſage, from which there is no neceſſity to depart: and the departing from it is attended with a manifeſt inconvenience.

Neither is the thirſt mentioned, Iſa. lv. 1. to be reſtricted to a gracious thirſt, a thirſt after Chriſt and his righteouſneſs. For ſome at leaſt of the thirſting ones, to whom the offer is there made, are ſpending money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which ſatisfieth not, verſe 1. 2. But it is evident, that ſinners duly ſenſible, who are thirſting after Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, are not ſpending their money and labour at that rate; but on the contrary, for that which alone is bread, and ſatisfieth, namely, Jeſus Chriſt the true bread which came down from heaven. Wherefore the thirſt there meant, muſt needs comprehend, yea, and principally aim at, that thirſt after happineſs and ſatisfaction, which being natural, is common to all mankind. Men pained with this thirſt do naturally run, for quenching thereof, to the empty creation, and their fulſome luſts; and ſo they ſpend money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which ſatisfieth not; finding nothing there that can ſatisfy that their appetite or thirſt. Now, to men in this wretched caſe is the goſepl offer of the water of life made: Chriſt is offered unto them, as bread, fatneſs, and what is good, and will ſatisfy that their painful thirſt, which otherwiſe will never be quenched, *ibid*,

And as little is the ſolemn goſpel offer, Matth. xi. 28. reſtricted to a certain ſet of men endued with ſome laudable qualifications, going under the name of labouring and being heavy laden; the which do indeed denote the reſtleſsneſs natural to the ſoul of man, ſpending its *labour for that which ſatisfieth not*, Iſa. lv. 2. Our father Adam left his whole family with a conſcience full of guilt, and a heart full of unſatisfied deſires. Thus we naturally having a reſtleſs conſcience, and a reſtleſs heart, the ſoul as naturally falls a labouring for reſt to them. And it labours in the barren region of the fiery law, for a reſt to the conſcience; and to the empty creation for a reſt to the heart. But after all, the conſcience is ſtill heavy laden with guilt, whether it has any lively feeling thereof, or not; and the heart is ſtill under a load of unſatisfied deſires. So neither the one, nor the other, can find reſt indeed. This is the natural caſe of all men. And to ſouls thus labouring and laden, Jeſus Chriſt calls, that they may come to him, and he will give them reſt; namely a reſt for their conſcience, under the covert of his blood: and a reſt to their hearts, in the enjoyment of God thro' him. To this interpretation we are led by the ſtile of the ſcripture, the phraſeology of the Holy Ghoſt, both in the Old and New Teſtament, the which may be viewed in the following texts compared, to wit, Eccleſ. x. 15. Hab. ii. 13. Iſa. lv. 2. and i. 3. 4. 2 Tim. iii. 6. 7.

Finally, as for the willingneſs which you are afraid you are defective in, ſurely, in all other caſes, he that ſaith, *Whoſoever will, let him take* ſuch a thing, will according to the common ſenſe and underſtanding among mankind, be reckoned to offer that thing unto all, and to exclude none from it; however it may be an intimation, that it is not to be forced on any. Why then ſhould this manner of ſpeech, Rev. xxii. 17. be thought to limit the goſpel offer to a certain ſet of men?

Wherefore we conclude, that Chriſt lays no bar in the way of any of you: do not ye put bars in your own way, and then complain ye cannot get over them. For according to the holy ſcripture, it is infallible truth, that Chriſt is offered to you, and every one of you, in particular; believe it, elſe ye make God a liar, 1 John v. 10.

III. *The faith of our Right to Chriſt.*

Furthermore, you muſt believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Saviour of the world, and your Saviour in particular, by his Father's appointment, and his own offer; and that, by the ſame appointment and offer, his righteouſneſs, the condition of the covenant, and eternal life, the promiſe of the covenant are yours; yours (I mean not, in poſſeſſion, but) in right thereto; ſo far as that you may lawfully and warrantably take poſſeſſion of the ſame, and uſe them as your own to all intents and purpoſes of ſalvation, John iv. 42. 'We know that this is indeed the 'Chriſt, the Saviour of the world.' 2 Sam. xxiii. 3. and Luke i. 47. my Saviour. Do not think this too much for you: it is no more than what is neceſſary to ſaving faith in Chriſt. If you believe only, in the general, that Chriſt is the Saviour of the world, but believe not that he is your Saviour in particular; what do you believe more than the devils do? They believe him to be Jeſus a Saviour, Mark i. 24. If you would go beyond them, you muſt believe that he is your Saviour; and conſequently, that his righteouſneſs and ſalvation are yours, in the ſenſe before opened: for where Chriſt is given, with him are freely given all things. And pray conſider, how can ye take him or receive him as your Saviour, if he is not yours indeed? A man may fraudulently take poſſeſſion of what he doth not believe to be his by right: but no man can fairly and honeſtly claim and take poſſeſſion of what he doth not believe to be his own. Certainly, God muſt firſt give Chriſt to us, before we can receive him: for 'a man can receive no'thing, except it be given him from heaven,' John iii. 27. Giving on God's part, and receiving on ours, here, are correlates: and the former is the foundation of the latter. Now, God's gift is ſufficient to make a thing ours. Therefore believe firmly, that Chriſt is your Saviour in particular; that his righteouſneſs is yours, and eternal life yours.

Queſt. But how can I, a poor ſinner, by nature under the curſe, believe that Chriſt is *my* Saviour, that his righteouſneſs, and eternal life, are *mine?* Anſw. You may firmly believe it, becauſe you have the word and teſtimony of the eternal God upon it, in his holy goſpel. What is the goſpel, which the apoſtles were ſent, in the name of God, to teſtify? The apoſtle John declares it, 1 John iv. 14. 'We teſtify, that the Father ſent the 'Son to be the Saviour of the world.' Is not Jeſus Chriſt then, by office, whatever he is in the event, Saviour of the world? And if he is ſo, and you are one of that world of mankind, is he not therefore your Saviour? Why then will ye not believe it? God ſet the ſun in the heavens, to be a light to the world: and do not you therefore judge, that you have a right to the light of that ſun, as well as the reſt of mankind; and accordingly uſe it freely, to work or read by it, as your own by God's free gift? Jeſus Chriſt alſo is the *light of the world*, John viii. 12.; *given for a light to the Gentiles*, Iſa. xlix. 6.: and faith appropriates him, ſaying, *The Lord is* MY *light, and* MY *ſalvation*, Pſal. xxvii. 1. Now, you are a member of theſe ſocieties, to wit, the world, and the Gentiles: therefore he is your light, that is, given for a light to you. Will you take Chriſt's own word upon it? You have it, John vi. 32. 'My Father giveth you the 'true bread from heaven.' If your neighbour give you bread, you will reckon his gift thereof ſufficient to make it yours; and ſo eat of it freely as your own. If your prince ſhall give you a houſe or land, which he hath an unqueſtionable right to diſpoſe of, you would reckon them truly yours by his gift; and would freely go and dwell in that houſe, and poſſeſs that land, as your own. How is it then, that when the Father gives you his Chriſt, yet you will not believe that he is yours, nor take poſſeſſion of him as your own? Why, the truth of the matter lies here: you believe your neighbour, you believe your prince; but you believe not your God, in his holy goſpel, but *make him a liar, not believing the record that God gave of his Son*, 1 John v. 10. But, whether you will believe it or not, it is a truth, that Chriſt is your Saviour: and if you will not believe it now, to your ſalvation, you will undoubtedly ſee your miſtake hereafter; when periſhing, you will be convinced that you periſh, not becauſe you had not a Saviour, but becauſe you neglected to make uſe of him.

In like manner, the righteouſneſs of Chriſt is yours, namely, that which he fulfilled as the condition of the covenant. It is yours by heaven's gift, being given you with himſelf; and therefore it is called *the gift of righteouſneſs*, Rom. v. 17. it is a teſtamentary gift, made over to you in Chriſt's teſtament, where ſinners of mankind, without exception, are the legatees, as hath been already cleared. Eternal life is another ſuch gift or legacy; ſo it is yours too. And you have the record, teſtimony, or witneſs of God himſelf upon it, that it is given you, 1 John v. 11. 'And this is the record that 'God hath given to us eternal life: and this life is in his 'Son.' Is not God's own record a ſufficient ground for believing? will you venture to miſbelieve it on any pretence whatſoever? Here you have that record, namely, *that God hath given to us eternal life*. It may be you will imagine, that it relates only to actual believers in Chriſt, or at moſt to the elect; and uſe that for a defence of your unbelief. But, I pray you, conſider it is the ground and warrant of all to believe on Chriſt, and to lay hold on eternal life in him; being the *witneſs of God, which he hath teſtified of his Son*, to be received by all to whom the goſpel comes, verſe 9. but that God hath given eternal life to a certain ſelect ſet of men, can never in reaſon, be deemed to be a warrant for all men to believe. Moreover, the great ſin of unbelief lies in not believing this record: but it doth not lie in not believing that God hath given eternal life to actual believers, or to the elect; for the moſt deſperate unbelievers believe that, inſomuch that their belief of it adds to their torment: but it lies in their not believing that to mankind-ſinners, and to themſelves in particular, God hath given eternal life. This is what flies in the face of the goſpel of God, which is the proclaimed deed of the gift and grant of Chriſt and all his benefits, to ſinners of mankind, declaring the grant thereof to be made them, and calling them to take poſſeſſion of the ſame as their own, Iſa. ix. 6. 'Unto us a child is born.' (the word ſignifies *preſented born*, as to his relations having a particular intereſt in him; as Machir's children were preſented to Joſeph, and laid on his knees, Gen. l. 23. and Ruth's ſon to Naomi, Ruth iv. 17.) 'unto us a ſon is 'given.' John iii. 16. 'God ſo loved the world that he 'gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth 'in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.' 1 Cor. i. 30. Chriſt Jeſus, who of God is *made unto us* (namely, by legal deſtination) *wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption.*

And thus you ſee you have an infallible ground for this act of faith, namely, the teſtimony of God that cannot lie. Wherefore, as ever you would be united to Chriſt, and ſo inſtated in the covenant, believe firmly that Chriſt is yours, his righteouſneſs yours, and eternal life in him yours.

This is a more cloſe application of faith than the former, and ariſeth from it; for thus one believeth the efficacy of the divine appointment, and of the goſpel offer. If God appoints Chriſt a Saviour to you, with his righteouſneſs and eternal life, and Chriſt offers himſelf to you accordingly; ſurely the effect of that appointment and offer muſt be, that they are indeed yours, to be uſed by you, as your own, for your ſalvation. If you believe that appointment of the Father, and the Son's offer, you muſt needs believe this: for if they be real, and not ludicrous deeds, they certainly convey to you a right to Chriſt, his righteouſneſs and ſalvation; ſo that, in virtue of them, theſe muſt be yours, to be warrantably claimed and uſed by you as your own, for the purpoſes of ſalvation. It is not doubted, but mens deeds of gift, and their offers, real and not ludicrous, do convey ſuch a right to the parties in favour of whom they are made. If a friend of yours, having a ſum of money lying in a neighbour's hand, ſhould, eſpecially by a deed of writing under his own hand, appoint and ordain that ſum a gift to you, to relieve you out of a certain ſtrait; you then would make no queſtion but you might go and claim it, and take it up; if having the ſum in his own hand, he ſhould offer it to you as a gift, you would make no queſtion but you might take it to you; and, in both caſes uſe it as your own by your friends appointment or offer. And ſhall not the Father's ordinance and appointment, and Chriſt's offer, be as efficacious? Why then will ye not believe this its efficacy? Why will ye not believe that Chriſt with his righteouſneſs and eternal life are yours?

Truly, the believing hereof is the very next ſtep to the ſoul's uniting with Chriſt: and therefore it is propoſed to the ſinner, as the neareſt means to bring him cloſe unto God in Chriſt, Hoſ. xiv. 1. 'Return unto the 'Lord thy God;' he is thy God, thou haſt a right to him, return, come even to him, take poſſeſſion of him as thine own God. Accordingly, the ſinner coming to him by faith, comes on this very ground, Jer. iii. 22. 'Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our 'God. Verſe 23. 'Truly in the Lord our God is the 'ſalvation of Iſrael.' As Hagar's eyes were ſeaſonably opened, to ſee ſhe had a well by her, when ſhe had given up her ſon for dead: ſo when the ſinner lies in his death's wounds from the law, in a work of conviction, the ſpirit of faith opens his eyes, by means of the glorious goſpel, in a work of ſaving illumination, ſo that he ſees he hath a Saviour, a righteouſneſs, and ſalvation. And then he preſently apprehends or grips the ſame as his own. Thus the prodigal firſt believed that he had yet a father, and a father's houſe, where there was enough and to ſpare, and then ariſeth and goeth to him, Luke xv. 17. 18.

Object. 1. If it be true, that Chriſt is my Saviour, that his righteouſneſs, and eternal life in him, are mine; then I may be eaſy, I will certainly be ſaved without any more ado. Anſw. That is but a cavil, beſt ſuiting thoſe who, being indifferent about Chriſt and ſalvation, think it not worth their pains ſeriouſly to conſider ſuch things. One truly weighted with the matter, and duly conſidering, being once brought to believe this, would rather ſay, "Then, ſince Chriſt is really my Saviour, "his righteouſneſs and eternal life mine; I will take "him to me, I will receive and reſt upon him as my "Saviour, I will rely on his righteouſneſs, and look for "eternal life in him: why ſhould I be loſt for ever, "ſince I have a full Saviour? why ſhould I go naked, "ſince I have a complete righteouſneſs made over to me "by Heaven's gift? why ſhould I die, when I have e"ternal life in Chriſt?" Put the caſe, you did ſee a man at the point of ſtarving for want of bread; and out of kindneſs and pity to him, you ſhould appoint and ordain meat for him, out of your own ſtore, for preſervation of his life; and withal ſhould carry it to him, and ſet it before him, ſaying, Ha, there is meat I and my father have ordained for you, eat, and welcome. If that man ſhould ſay, Oh! I may not take it, for it is not mine own; would you not tell him, that your gift, appointment, and offer of it to him, makes it his, ſo that, with a good conſcience, he may freely eat it as his own bread? But ſhould he then reply, and ſay, Why then, if it is mine, without any more ado I am ſecured from ſtarving; I need not at all be at pains to take and eat it; would you not reckon him either mad, or but jeſting with you, not ſenſible of his hazard of ſtarving? The application is obvious. It is not meat's being one's own, ſo that he may uſe it freely as ſuch, that will keep him from ſtarving: he muſt take and eat it, and ſo uſe it as his own, if he would have that benefit by it. Even ſo it is not Chriſt's being yours, with his righteouſneſs and ſalvation, that will ſave you: you muſt take poſſeſſion of him, and make uſe of him as your own for ſalvation, if you would be actually ſaved by him. There is a wide difference betwixt a thing's being ours in ſimple right thereto, and its being ours in poſſeſſion. It is in the former way only that Chriſt is yours before uniting with him; and if you do not improve that, by receiving him, and taking poſſeſſion, you will periſh eternally for all it: Heb. iv. 1. ‘Let us therefore fear, leſt a promiſe being left ‘ us of entering into his reſt, any of you ſhould ſeem to ‘ come ſhort of it.’ Luke xvi. 12. ‘ If ye have not been ‘ faithful in that which is another man's, who ſhall ‘ give you that which is your own?’

Object. 2. But Chriſt, a Saviour, his perfect righteouſneſs, and eternal life, are things ſo exceeding great and precious, and I am ſo very ſinful and unworthy, that it is mighty hard for me to believe they are mine. Anſw. Yea, here indeed lies a great difficulty of believing; when once a ſinner's eyes are opened, to ſee the tranſcendent excellency of Chriſt, the exceeding ſinfulneſs of ſin, and his own utter unworthineſs: a difficulty not to be ſurmounted, but by the effectual operation of the Spirit of faith, cauſing one to believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Eph. i. 19. But for your help, conſider they are yours by mere free gift; which is ſo far from requiring any worth in the creature, that it excludes all reſpect thereto. Chriſt himſelf is the Father's gift to you, John iv. 10. and vi. 32. His righteouſneſs is a gift too, Rom. v. 17. And ſo is eternal life in him, 1 John v. 11. Now, what is freer than a gift? And then, howbeit they are indeed a gift far beyond whatever you could have expected, yet they are not too great for an infinite God to give. In making of this gift, he acted not according to the dignity of the party in whoſe favour it was made; but according to himſelf, his own greatneſs and majeſty. Mean while, though the gift is quite above your dignity, yet it is no more than what your need required. If leſs could have anſwered your neceſſity, there is no ground to think, a crucified Chriſt, the Son of God, would have been prepared for you. If you do but ſuppoſe it, you mar that expreſſion of matchleſs love, John iii. 16. ‘ God ſo loved the world, that he gave his ‘ only begotten Son.’ Wherefore, argue with yourſelf in this manner: “ The gift is indeed unſpeakable, but “ no leſs can ſerve my need; if Chriſt be not mine, I “ muſt periſh: ſince therefore God hath ſaid it, that he “ hath given me Chriſt; and the gift is not above him “ to give, and no leſs can ſerve my turn; I muſt and “ will believe that he is mine, with his righteouſneſs “ and ſalvation.”

IV. *The Faith of particular Truſt for Salvation.*

Finally, You muſt wholly truſt on him as your Saviour, and in his righteouſneſs as made over to you; and that for his whole ſalvation to you in particular, upon the ground of God's faithfulneſs in his word. And this is that ſaving faith, or believing on Chriſt Jeſus, by which a ſinner is united to him, and perſonally entered within the covenant of grace unto ſalvation; Acts xvi. 31. ‘ Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt ‘ be ſaved.’ Pſalm ii. 12. ‘ Kiſs the Son leſt he be angry, and ye periſh;—bleſſed are all they that put their ‘ truſt in him.’ And Pſalm xxxvi. 4. ‘ He ſhall ſave ‘ them, becauſe they truſt in him.’ Rom. xv. 12. ‘ In ‘ him ſhall the Gentiles truſt.’ Compare Iſa. xi. 10. Rom. i. 17. ‘ Therein is the righteouſneſs of God re‘vealed from faith to faith;’ or, ‘ Therein is the right‘eouſneſs of God by faith, revealed unto faith,’ to wit to be believed or truſted on. See Phil iii. 9. Gal. ii. 16. ‘ We have believed in Jeſus Chriſt, that we might be ‘ juſtified.’ Acts xv. 11. ‘ We believe, that, through ‘ the grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt we ſhall be ſaved.’ 1 Theſſ. ii. 13. ‘ Ye received it not as the word of men, ‘ but (as it is in truth) the word of God.’ 1 Cor. ii. 5. ‘ That your faith ſhould not ſtand in the wiſdom of men ‘ but in the power of God.’ This, according to the ſcripture, is a ſinner's *receiving and reſting upon Chriſt for ſalvation*, as ſaving faith is defined in our Catechiſm, and this is indeed believing, and nothing but believing; according to the ſcriptural uſe of that word.

1. I ſay, this is the ſcriptural receiving and reſting on Chriſt. It is the receiving of him in the ſenſe of the holy ſcripture: John i. 12. ‘ As many as received him, ‘ to them gave he power to become the ſons of God, ‘ even to them that believe on his name:’ where the receiving of Chriſt is explained by believing on his name. God hath appointed Chriſt Saviour of the world, and your Saviour. You hear the ſame publiſhed in the goſpel; and you accordingly believe that he is your Saviour by his Father's appointment, and his own offer: hereupon you truſt on him, and on him alone, for ſalvation, and all that you need for your ſalvation. Is not this a receiving of him for your part in the character of a Saviour, wherein his Father ſent him forth to you? is it not a taking of him to yourſelf, as offered to you? Our Lord complains of the Jews, John v. 43. that whereas he came in his father's name, they received him not, to wit, in the character wherein he was ſent, namely, as the Meſſias, the *Saviour of the world*, and their Saviour, truſting in him that he would ſave them. This plainly appears to be the meaning, if one compares herewith the words there immediately following: ‘ If ano‘ther ſhall come in his own name, him will ye re‘ceive:’ q. d. Ye will believe him to be the Meſſias, and your Saviour, and truſt on him accordingly, that he will ſave you, the which has been often verified in that unbelieving people. Moreover this is reſting on Chriſt in the ſcripture ſenſe of that expreſſion: Iſa. xxvi. 3. ‘ Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whoſe mind is ‘ ſtayed on thee: becauſe he truſteth in thee.’ And indeed one cannot deviſe what way a perſon can reſt on a word, or a ſoul or ſpirit can reſt on a perſon, but by truſting them, or truſting in or on them. It is ſaid, 2 Chron. xxxii. 8. ‘ The people reſted themſelves up‘on the words of Hezekiah.’ What way can one imagine they did ſo, but by truſting them? Chap. xiv. 11. ‘ Help us, O Lord our God; for we reſt on thee.’ How could they do ſo, but by truſting on him for their help?

2. This is believing, in the ſcriptural uſe of that word, which, in our entry on the queſtion under conſideration, we eſtabliſhed from the ſcripture itſelf. For it is a truſting of, or truſting in a perſon, namely, Jeſus Chriſt, and God in him, the perſonal object of ſaving faith, Acts xvi. 31.; a truſting in a thing, namely, the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, the ultimate real object of faith, Rom. i. 17.; and a truſting in a word, namely, the record and teſtimony of God, the word of the promiſe of the goſpel, the proximate or neareſt real object of faith, *ibid*; and all this for the great purpoſe of ſalvation. And then it is nothing but ſuch believing: for thus faith is not explained away into, but is a thing quite diſtinct from the nature of a work, as the ſcripture contradiſtinguiſheth works to faith.

Wherefore we conclude, that this truſt is that believing on Chriſt, by which the ſoul is united to him, and ſavingly inſtated in the covenant. And for opening of it, we ſhall take notice of theſe five things plainly imported in it.

1. This truſt imports, not only a willingneſs, but a ſincere and honeſt deſire to be delivered from ſin and wrath; a deſire to be ſanctified, as well as to be juſtified; to be delivered from the reigning power, pollution, practice, and inbeing of ſin, as well as from the guilt of it; according to that of the apoſtle, Rom. vii. 24. 25. ‘ Who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death! I ‘ thank God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.’ For it is a truſting on Chriſt, not for the half of his ſalvation, to wit, ſalvation from wrath only, which is all the truſt of many, being by no means deſirous to part with ſin; but for the whole of it, namely, ſalvation from wrath, and ſalvation from ſin too, which is the principal part thereof, Matth i. 21. Now, a man may indeed fear that from one, which he doth not deſire: but no body truſts in one for what he deſires not. Faith is a believing with the heart, Rom. x. 10. The whole ſalvation of Chriſt is the believers choice; it is the end he deſires to

compaſs; and the truſt of faith is exerted as the means to compaſs that end.

2. A renouncing of all confidence in all that is not Chriſt, or in Chriſt, as to the matter of ſalvation particularly. In this truſt is overturned ſelf confidence, law-confidence, creature-confidence; and the ſoul builds on a quite new ground: Philip. iii. 3. ‘ We rejoice in ‘ Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the fleſh.’ Jer. xvi 19. ‘ The Gentiles ſhall come unto thee,—and ‘ ſhall ſay, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vani‘ ty, and things wherein there is no profit.’ For it is a truſting wholly on Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, a truſting, or a *believing with all the heart*, Prov. iii. 5. Acts viii. 37. At this rate the believer is carried off from the works of the law, to the blood of Jeſus, for his juſtification; and carried out of himſelf too, unto the Spirit of holineſs in Chriſt, for his ſanctification: being perſuaded, that no doing nor ſuffering of his own, can procure him the pardon of, or atone for the leaſt piece of guilt; and that he is not able truly to mortify one luſt, more as to purge away the guilt of one ſin, Matth. v. 3. Iſa. xlv. 24.

3. A hearty approbation of the plan or device of ſalvation according to the covenant, manifeſted in the goſpel, as ſuited to the divine perfections, and to the caſe of ſinners, and their own in particular: 1 Cor. i. 23. ‘ We preach Chriſt crucified, unto the Jews a ſtumb‘ ling block, and unto the Greeks fooliſhneſs;’ ver. 24. ‘ But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, ‘ Chriſt the power of God, and the wiſdom of God.’ Without this, no man knowing what God is, what ſin is, and what is the worth of his own ſoul, will ever venture his ſalvation upon it; but one's truſting his ſalvation to Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, ſpeaks him to be well pleaſed therewith, as what one may ſafely truſt to, even in the ſight of a holy God. And this is that rejoicing in Chriſt Jeſus, which makes an illuſtrious piece of the believer's character, Philip. iii. 3.

Withal it bears three things. (1.) An eying of Chriſt in this matter, as a crucified Saviour, who hath fulfilled all righteouſneſs, according to the ſtated condition of the covenant, 1 Cor. ii. 2. It is not Chriſt in the eternal glory he had with his Father before the world was, that faith fixeth its view on, while the ſoul in this caſe ſtands trembling before a holy God; but Chriſt the Son of God made man, come in the fleſh, being born holy, leading a life perfectly righteous, and at laſt dying on the croſs, to ſatisfy the demands which the law had on poor ſinners. It looks unto him lifted up on the croſs, as thoſe who were bitten by the ſerpents in the wilderneſs looked unto the braſen ſerpent lifted up on the pole, Iſa. xlv. 22. Numb. xxi. 9. John iii. 14, 15. Therefore it is called faith in his blood, Rom. iii. 25. his righteouſneſs; whereof the ſhedding of his blood was the completing part, being the ſpring of the believer's hope. (2.) A real perſuaſion of the ſufficiency of Chriſt's righteouſneſs to ſave ſinners, and us in particular, from ſin and wrath; to anſwer for us before a holy juſt God, in the eye of his holy law; and to procure for us eternal holineſs and happineſs. There is no ſaving faith without this: Chriſt's ability to ſave muſt be believed, and that with application to your own caſe in particular, Matth. ix. 28. ‘ Believe ye that I am able to do this?’ And in order hereunto, faith eyes Chriſt's righteouſneſs as the righteouſneſs of God, and therefore of infinite value and efficacy, Philip. iii. 9. 1 John i. 7. The reaſon why the goſpel, and no other doctrine whatſoever, is the power of God unto ſalvation of ſinners, is, becauſe therein is revealed the righteouſneſs of God unto faith, Rom. i. 16. 17. and that is the only righteouſneſs, ſuited at once to the divine perfections and our caſe. (3.) An acquieſcing to that way of ſalvation, for ourſelves in particular. The believer hath a cordial liking of it, for the way of his ſalvation as perfectly ſafe, being *the power of God, and the wiſdom of God*, 1 Cor. i. 24. His ſoul pronounceth them ſafe and happy, that are in it; he deſires for his own part to be found in it; and is perſuaded he would be ſaved if he were in it. Thus faith acted in the woman diſeaſed with an iſſue of blood, Matth. ix. 21. ‘ She ſaid within herſelf, If I ‘ may but touch his garment, I ſhall be whole.’ And thus it acteth in all believers, determining them to that way, and to that way alone, for their caſe in particular. And here unbelievers are always unſettled.

4. A betaking one's ſelf unto Chriſt and his righteouſneſs alone, for ſalvation from ſin and wrath. This is done by this truſting. For the ſinner believing that Chriſt is his Saviour, and that his righteouſneſs is made over to him by free gift; and withal, that this his Saviour, with his righteouſneſs, is ſufficient to ſave him from ſin and wrath; doth accordingly truſt on Chriſt and his righteouſneſs for his own ſalvation, and ſo betake himſelf thereto: even as a beggar once having, and withal believing himſelf to have riches and wealth made over to him by a friend, leaves off to beg, and for his maintenance truſts to that wealth allenarly; and thereupon betakes himſelf to it. It is true, that wealth being a corporal thing, to which there is a bodily motion, the betaking one's ſelf thereto is not the ſame thing with the truſting to it; howbeit the former is a native conſequent of the latter: but Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, as revealed unto faith, being things purely ſpiritual, to which there is no bodily motion requiſite, that we may betake ourſelves to them; the truſting and betaking one's ſelf thereto are one and the ſame. So by this truſt the ſoul takes poſſeſſion of Chriſt and his righteouſneſs; and uſeth the ſame as its own, to the purpoſe of ſalvation. By it the ſinner betakes himſelf as a condemned man unto Jeſus Chriſt as the propitiatory mercy ſeat through his blood, affording the ſafety to the guilty before a holy God: and by it the ſinner betakes himſelf as a ſick man unto the ſame Jeſus as the Phyſician of ſouls, having the fulneſs of the Spirit of ſanctification in him, to be communicate. Accordingly faith is called a coming to Chriſt, John vi. 36. a fleeing for refuge, as one in hazard of his life by a purſuer, Heb. vi. 18. and is often expreſſed, as Pſalm ii. 12. by a word which properly ſignifies to retire as into a ſhadow, Judg. ix. 15. or as the chickens do under the wings of the hen, Ruth ii. 12. ‘ The Lord God of Iſrael, under whoſe ‘ wings thou art come to truſt:’ properly, *to retire.* Compare Matth. xxiii. 37. ‘ How often would I have ‘ gathered thy children together, even as a hen gather‘ eth her chickens under her wings.’

5. Laſtly, This truſt of faith imports an affiance, confidence, or truſt on Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, that he will ſave us from ſin and wrath, according to his promiſe ſet before us in the goſpel: ‘ Whoſoever believeth ‘ in him ſhall not periſh, but have everlaſting life.’ Iſa. xxv. 9. ‘ We have waited for him, and he will ſave us. Heb. iii. 6. ‘ Whoſe houſe are we, if we hold faſt ‘ the confidence.’ Iſa. l. 10. ‘ Let him truſt in the ‘ name of the Lord, and ſtay upon his God.’ And that this truſt of faith is thus particular, is evident alſo from the nature of the thing. For whoſoever truſts in a perſon for any thing, hath a perſuaſion of the ſame degree of firmneſs with the truſt, that that perſon will do that thing for him. And for a ſure token of this, where the party truſted fails, the party truſting is aſhamed and confounded; as being diſappointed in that which he truſted he would do for him. Wherefore, ſince the truſt of faith is never diſappointed, the ſcripture doth therefore aſſure us, that *he that believeth on him ſhall not be confounded*, 1 Pet. ii. 6. nor *aſhamed*, Rom. x. 11. The which doth ſufficiently intimate, that he that believeth on Jeſus Chriſt for ſalvation, doth truſt that he will ſave him; otherwiſe there could be no place for his being confounded or aſhamed, whatever ſhould be the event of his truſt. Accordingly the truſt of faith doth, in proportion to the firmneſs thereof, eſtabliſh and fix the heart, Pſalm cxii. 7. ‘ His heart is fixed, truſt‘ ing in the Lord:’ and hereof we have a plain inſtance

in Paul's caſe, 2 Tim. i. 12. 'I am not aſhamed; for 'I know whom I have believed,' marg. or *truſted*. Agreeable hereunto, faith is called in effect a building on Chriſt, as upon a foundation that will bear our weight, Iſa. xxviii. 16. with 1 Pet. ii. 6. It is called a *leaning upon* him, Cant. viii. 5. a *ſtaying on* him, Iſa. xxvi. 3. a *reſting* or *relying on him*, 2 Chron. xiv. 11. and xvi. 8. as upon one that will bear us up; a *looking unto* him, Iſa. xlv. 22. having *our eyes upon* him, 2 Chron. xx. 12. as one from whom we look for help and ſalvation; and finally, *believing on* him, 1 Pet. ii. 6. as one by whom we ſhall be ſaved, Acts xv. 11.

The ſinner being ſhaken out of all confidence for life and ſalvation in other things, ſtays himſelf by faith on Jeſus Chriſt and his righteouſneſs; truſting on him, that he ſhall have life and ſalvation thro' his righteouſneſs. It is true indeed, this particular truſt and confidence may be aſſaulted with many doubts and fears: but theſe are things that faith hath to conflict with, as its oppoſite; and the ſtronger that faith is, the leſs they prevail; the weaker it is, they prevail the more; Matth. xiv. 31. 'O thou of little faith, wherefore didſt 'thou doubt?' It is indeed of very different degrees in different perſons, and in one and the ſame perſon at different times: but if you remove all truſt and confidence in Chriſt for one's ſalvation, from faith, the very nature and eſſence of it is deſtroyed. For at that rate, the ſinner, whoſe confidence in the fleſh for his ſalvation is razed, having no confidence for it in Chriſt neither, is left quite unſettled and wavering, like a wave of the ſea, or a reed in the water; and where then is faith's building, leaning, ſtaying, relying, and reſting the ſoul on Chriſt? James i. 6. 'Let him aſk in faith, nothing 'wavering, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the 'ſea, driven with the wind and toſſed.' Verſe 7. 'For 'let not that man think that he ſhall receive any thing 'of the Lord.' But the believing ſinner, finding his confidence in the fleſh razed, doth, by believing, caſt the anchor of his truſt and confidence on Chriſt Jeſus and his righteouſneſs, confiding and truſting that he will ſave him. And however he may indeed waver in that matter; being toſſed with doubts and fears about his ſalvation, weakening the actings of that his confidence; and ſometimes prevailing ſo far, as to cauſe an intermitting of the exerciſe thereof; yet, even in that caſe, under all that toſſing, he doth not waver as a wave of the ſea, that hath nothing to fix it; but only like a ſhip at anchor. His confidence is never quite rooted out, as to the habit thereof; but will again exert itſelf: and in that reſpect every believer, as a real partaker of Chriſt, holds the beginning of his confidence ſtedfaſt unto the end, Heb. iii. 14. And this truſt and confidence is what our reformers called aſſurance, and deſcribed faith by.

Object. 1. Since it is not true of all who hear the goſpel, that they ſhall be ſaved; there cannot be, in the caſe of every one of them, a ground on which this particular truſt may be warrantably founded. Anſw. All and every one of them, notwithſtanding that, have a ſolid ground for it, even for truſting on Chriſt and his righteouſneſs for their own ſalvation in particular. And that is the record and teſtimony of God in his goſpel, that 'whoſoever believeth in him, ſhall not periſh, but have 'everlaſting life,' John iii. 16. The true ſenſe of which, as appears from what is ſaid, is, that whoſoever ſhall have this truſt and confidence in Chriſt, ſhall not be diſappointed, but certainly ſhall be ſaved. Here then is the faithfulneſs of God in his word, for the foundation of this faith of particular truſt: and true faith is always built on that foundation. It is certain indeed, that, in the event, many to whom the goſpel comes will not be ſaved: but then, it is as certain, that thoſe who will not be ſaved, will not believe neither; that is, they will not come up to this particular truſt and confidence, we have deſcribed from the word, Iſa. liii. 1. 'Who hath believ'ed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord 'revealed?' Howbeit, at this rate they have a firm ground of particular confidence. If they will not believe for all it, their ruin is of themſelves, they will periſh without excuſe: and their unbelief will be the great ground of their condemnation. Jeſus Chriſt, with his righteouſneſs and ſalvation, is ſo far made theirs, by the Father's appointment, and his own offer, that they may lawfully and warrantably truſt on him as their Saviour, each one for his own ſalvation. If they will not believe it, or not truſt on him accordingly; they do, by their unbelief and diſtruſt, diſhonour the Father and his Son, and muſt juſtly periſh.

Object. 2. Many truſt in Chriſt as their Saviour, with a particular confidence that he will ſave them; and yet are groſsly ignorant, profane, and formal hypocrites; and therefore not true believers, nor united to Chriſt. Anſw. The apoſtle ſpeaking of faith *unfeigned*, 1 Tim. i. 5. doth ſuppoſe that there is a *feigned faith*. And indeed ſuch truſters in Chriſt have it; but as for this truſt which we have deſcribed from the word, it is as certain they have it not, as it is certain that true faith purifies the heart, Acts xv. 9. and truly ſanctifies, chap. xxvi. 18. As ſuch truſters ſay, that they receive Chriſt, and reſt on him alone for ſalvation, embrace, accept, and conſent to him in the goſpel-offer: even ſo, they ſay, that they truſt on him. But this truſt on him they really have not. For, firſt, They truſt not on him for his whole ſalvation; nay, as for the chief part thereof, to wit, ſalvation from ſin, they are by no means reconciled thereto: wherefore it may well be an object of their fears and averſion; but it cannot be an object of their truſt. Secondly, They truſt not on him alone for the ſalvation they really deſire: they do not truſt on him with all their heart; but partly to him, and partly to their own doings and ſufferings, betwixt which and the Saviour their heart is divided. This is clear from Matth. v. 3. 'Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit: for theirs is the 'kingdom of heaven.' Laſtly, Their truſt is not grounded on the faithfulneſs of God in the free promiſe of the goſpel; but reared up on ſome one or other ſandy foundation: Iſa. liii. 1. 'Who hath believed our report?' Matth. vii. 26. 'Every one that heareth theſe ſayings of 'mine, and doth them not, ſhall be likened unto a fooliſh man, which built his houſe upon the ſand.'

And thus have we ſhown, what is that faith or believing by which a ſinner unites with Jeſus Chriſt, and ſo enters ſavingly into the covenant of grace. Why God hath appointed it to be the means of union with Chriſt, may be learned from Rom. iv. 16. 'Therefore it 'is of faith, that it might be by grace;' of which before. Here I ſhall only obſerve, that this *truſting* wholly on Chriſt and his righteouſneſs for his whole ſalvation, is an apt means or inſtrument of union, betwixt Chriſt the party truſted, and the ſoul truſting on him: forasmuch as the ſoul is therein ſo carried forth unto him, that from that moment it is thereby as it were wholly to ſtand or fall with him; as the *ſuperſtructure* with the *foundation*; the *leaner* with the *leaning-ſtock*; the thing *relying*, *reſting*, *ſtaying* upon another thing, with the *ſtay* or *baſe* on which it is laid. Wherefore the object of faith being infallible, *they that* thus *truſt in the Lord, ſhall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever*, Pſal. cxxv. 1. Thereby they are united to Chriſt, and being united to him, are perſonally inſtated in the covenant to their eternal ſalvation.

2 AU 58

A MEMORIAL CONCERNING PERSONAL AND FAMILY FASTING AND HUMILIATION, preſented to Saints and Sinners:

WHEREIN ALSO

The Nature of PERSONAL COVENANTING with GOD, is occaſionally opened.

ZECH. xii. 12.

And the land ſhall mourn, every family apart, ... *apart.*

BRITISH MUSEUM

CHAP. I.

Of PERSONAL and FAMILY FASTING *and Humiliation, in the general.*

RELigious faſts, kept in ſecret by a particular perſon apart by himſelf, and by a particular family apart by themſelves, concerning which this Memorial is preſented both to ſaints and ſinners, are not indeed the ſtated and ordinary duties of all times, to be performed daily, or at ſet times recurring; ſuch as prayer, praiſe, and reading of the word are; but they are extraordinary duties of ſome times; and to be performed occaſionally, as depending entirely, in reſpect of the exerciſe of them on the call of providence, which is variable.

They are authoriſed, and injoined us, in the word of God; and therefore, when we ſhall have performed them, we muſt ſay, 'We are unprofitable ſervants,' we have done that which was our *duty* to do; and muſt abhor the leaſt thought of meriting thereby.

The particular ſeaſons of them are determined by providence. Wherefore they who would be practiſers of them, muſt be religious obſervers of providence: otherways God may be calling aloud for *weeping and mourning, and girding with ſackcloth,* while they not heeding it, are indulging themſelves in *joy and gladneſs,* Iſa. xxii. 12. 13. a dangerous adventure! Ver. 14. 'Surely 'this iniquity ſhall not be purged from you till ye die, 'ſaith the Lord.'

Hence the moſt ſerious and tender among knowing Chriſtians, will readily be found the moſt frequent in theſe exerciſes. It is on the *pouring out of the Spirit,* that *the land is to mourn, every family apart, and their wives apart,* Zech. xii. 10. 12. Paul was a ſcene wherein corrupt nature ſhewed her curſed vigour, he being, when he was bad, very bad; and grace in its turn, its ſacred power, he being, when he was good, very good; and then in faſtings often, 2 Cor. xi. 27.

Theſe duties conſiſt of an external and circumſtantial part, and internal and ſubſtantial part.

To the external and circumſtantial part of them belong *time, place,* and *abſtinence.*

I. Firſt of all, a proper *time* muſt be ſet apart for theſe duties. And this is to be regulated by Chriſtian prudence, as beſts ſuits the circumſtances of the perſon or family.

We find the ſaints, in ſcripture, ordinarily kept their faſts by day. But we have an inſtance of a perſonal faſt kept by night, 2 Sam. xii. 16. 'David faſted, and went 'in, and lay all night upon the earth.' This I do the rather notice, to obviate the excuſe of thoſe who quite neglect this duty, under the pretence of their not being maſters of their own time. If the heart can be brought to it, one will readily find ſome time or other for it, either by day, or elſe by night. It is recorded to the honour of one of the weaker ſex, namely Anna, that ſhe *ſerved God with faſtings and prayers night and day,* Luke ii. 36. 37.

As to the quantity of time to be ſpent in perſonal or family faſting and humiliation; the duty, I judge, is to regulate it; and not it to regulate the duty. The family faſt of Eſther with her maidens, obſerved alſo by all the Jews in Shuſhan, laſted three days, Eſther iv. 16. We read of the *faſting day,* Jer. xxxvi. 16. Sometimes, it would ſeem, it was but a part of a day, that was ſpent in ſuch exerciſe, as in Cornelius his perſonal faſt, which ſeems to have been over before the ninth hour, that is before three o'clock in the afternoon; Acts x. 30. 'Four days ago I was faſting untill this hour, and at the ninth hour I prayed in my houſe,' before the which time of the fourth day, Peter, to whom Cornelius ſaith this, might be come; there being but 36 miles from Joppa to Ceſarea, verſe 23. 24. Compare verſes 8. 9. 17. Much about that time of the day, Daniel got the anſwer of his prayers, made in his perſonal faſt, namely, *about the time of the evening oblation*, or the ninth hour, Dan. ix. 21. And the people being *aſſembled with faſting*, Neh. ix. 1. they *read in the book of the law, one fourth part of the day, and another fourth part they confeſſed, and worſhipped*, verſe 3. So they continued in the work ſix hours; from nine o' clock in the morning, till three in the afternoon; that is from the time of the morning ſacrifice, to the time of the evening ſacrifice, with which the work ſeems to have been cloſed, as, it may be preſumed, they ſpent the morning in private preparation for the public duty.

Wherefore I judge, that none are to be ſollicitous, as to what quantity of time, more or leſs, they ſpend in theſe exerciſes, ſo that the work of the time be done. Nay, I very much doubt, men lay a ſnare for themſelves in tying themſelves to a certain quantity of time in ſuch caſes. It is ſufficient, to reſolve, that according to our ability, we will take as much time as the work ſhall be found to require.

II. A proper *place* is alſo to be choſen, where the perſon or family may perform the duty without diſturbance from others. Time and place are natural circumſtances of the action; and all places are alike now, under the goſpel; none more holy than another. Men may pray every where, whether in the houſe or in the field, *lifting up holy hands*, 1 Tim. ii. 8. Only for as much as family-faſting is a private duty, it requires a private place; and perſonal faſting a ſecret duty, it requires a ſecret place; according to the caution given us by our Saviour, Matth. vi. 18. 'That thou appear not unto men to faſt but unto thy Father which is in ſecret.'

III. *Abſtinence* is included in the nature of the thing; abſtinence from meat and drink, and all bodily pleaſures whatſoever, as well as ceaſing from worldly buſineſs. The Jews are taxed for finding pleaſure, and exacting their labours in the day of their faſt, Iſa. lviii. 3. A time of religious faſting, is a time for one's *afflicting his ſoul*, verſe 5. by denying himſelf even thoſe lawful comforts and delights, which he may freely uſe at other time: Exod. xxxiii. 4. 'The people—mourned, and no man did put on his ornaments.' Dan. ix. 3. 'I ſet my face unto the Lord God, to ſeek by prayer, and ſupplications, with faſting, and ſackcloth, and aſhes.' 1 Cor. vii. 5. 'Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with conſent for a time, that ye may give yourſelves to faſting and prayer.'

The rule for abſtinence from meat and drink, cannot be the ſame as to all; for faſting, not being a part of worſhip, but a means to diſpoſe and fit us for extraordinary worſhipping, is to be uſed only as helping thereto; but it is certain, that what meaſure of it would be helpful to ſome for that end, would be a great hinderance to others. Wherefore weakly perſons, whom total abſtinence would diſfit and indiſpoſe for duty, are not called to faſt at that rate: in their caſe, that ſaying takes place, Hoſ. vi. 6. 'I deſired mercy and not ſacrifice.' Yet ought they not in that caſe, to indulge themſelves the uſe of meat and drink, with the ſame freedom as at other times; but to uſe a partial abſtinence, altering the quantity or quality of them, or both, ſo as they may thereby be afflicted, as the ſcripture expreſſeth it, Lev. xxiii. 29. So Daniel in his mourning, Dan. x. 3. ate no pleaſant bread, neither came fleſh nor wine into his mouth.

Mean while, all theſe things are but the outward ſhell of theſe duties: the internal and ſubſtantial part of them, lies in the following ſpiritual exerciſes.

1. Serious meditation, and conſideration of our ways, Hag. i. 5. Such times are to be ſet apart from converſing with the world, that we may the more ſolemnly commune with our hearts, as to the ſtate of matters between God and us. In them we are diligently to review our paſt life, ſearch and try our ways, Lam. iii. 40. And we are to ſearch out our ſins, by a ſorrowful calling to remembrance the ſins of our heart and life; and that, as particularly as we can: and to ſearch into them, by a deep conſideration of the evil of them, and of their aggravations, the light, love, mercies, and warnings, we have ſinned againſt; tracing them up to the ſin of our nature, the impoiſoned fountain, from whence they have all proceeded. And the more fully and freely we converſe with ourſelves upon them, we will be the more fit to ſpeak unto God anent them, in confeſſing and pleading for pardon.

2. Deep humiliation of ſoul before the Lord; the which was ſignified by the ſackcloth and aſhes uſed, under the law, on ſuch occaſions. The conſideration of our ways is to be purſued, till our ſoul be humbled within us; our heart rent, not with remorſe for ſin only, but with regret and kindly ſorrow for it, as an offence to a gracious and merciful God, Joel ii. 12. 13. our face filled with ſhame and bluſhing before him, in view of our ſpiritual nakedneſs, pollution, and defilement, Ezra ix. 6. and we lothe ourſelves, as moſt vile in our own eyes, Ezek. xxxvi. 31. Job xl. 4.

3. Free and open confeſſion of ſin before God, without reſerve. This is a very material part of the duty incumbent on us in religious faſting: and the due conſideration and deep humiliation juſt now mentioned, do natively iſſue in it; producing, of courſe, extraordinary confeſſion of ſin, an exerciſe moſt ſuitable on ſuch an occaſion. Hence the Jews ſpent *one fourth part of the day in confeſſing and worſhipping*, Neh. ix. 3.; and the angel, who brought the anſwer to Daniel's ſupplications, about the time of the evening-oblation, found him ſtill praying and confeſſing his ſin, Dan. ix. 20. 21. For here the ſinner duly humbly has much ado, acting againſt himſelf the part of an accuſer, recounting before the Lord his tranſgreſſions of the holy law, ſo far as he is able to reach them; the part of an advocate, opening up the particulars, in their nature, and aggravating circumſtances; and the part of a judge, juſtifying God in all the evil he has brought upon him, and condemning himſelf as unworthy of the leaſt of all his mercies, and deſerving to periſh under eternal wrath.

4. The exerciſe of repentance in turning from ſin unto God, both in heart and life; the native reſult of deep humiliation and ſincere confeſſing: Joel ii. 12. 'Turn ye even to me—with faſting, and with weeping, and with mourning.' In vain will we faſt, and pretend to be humbled for our ſins, and make confeſſion of them, if our love of ſin be not turned into hatred; our liking of it into loathing; and our cleaving to it, into a longing to be rid of it; with full purpoſe to reſiſt the motions of it in our heart, and the outbreakings thereof in our life: and if we turn not unto God as our rightful Lord and Maſter, and return to our duty again. If we are indeed true penitents, we will turn from ſin, not only becauſe it is dangerous and deſtructive to us; but becauſe it is offenſive to God, diſhonours his Son, grieves his Spirit, tranſgreſſeth his law, and defaceth his image: and we will caſt away all our tranſgreſſions, not only as one would caſt away a live-coal out of his boſom, for that it burns him; but as one would caſt away a loathſome and filthy thing, for that it defiles him.

But withal, it is to be remembered, that the true way to deal with a hard heart, to bring it to this temper, is to believe the goſpel. As ravenous fowls firſt fly upward, and then come down on their prey; ſo muſt we firſt ſoar aloft in believing, and then we ſhall come down in deep humiliation, ſincere and free confeſſion, and true repentance: Zech. xii. 10. 'They ſhall look 'upon me whom they have pierced, and ſhall mourn.' Therefore the ſcripture propoſeth the object of faith in the promiſe of grace, as a motive to repentance, that, by a believing application thereof, the hard heart may be moved and turned, Joel ii. 13. 'Turn unto the Lord 'your God, for he is gracious.' One may otherwiſe toil long with it; but all in vain. 'Without faith it is 'impoſſible to pleaſe God,' Heb. xi. 6.; and therefore impoſſible to reach true humiliation, right confeſſion, and ſincere repentance, which are very pleaſant to him, Jer. xxxi. 18. 19. 20. The unbelieving ſinner may be brought to roar under law horror; but one will never be a kindly mourner, but under goſpel-influences. When guilt ſtares one in the face, unbelief locks up the heart, as a keen froſt doth the waters: but faith in the Redeemer's blood melts it, to flow in tears of godly ſorrow. Hard thoughts of God, which unbelief ſuggeſts to a ſoul ſtung with guilt, alienate that ſoul more and more from him; they render it like the worm, which, when one offers to tread upon it, preſently contracts itſelf, and puts itſelf in the beſt poſture of defence that it can: but the believing of the proclaimed pardon touches the heart of the rebel ſo, that he caſts down himſelf at the feet of his Sovereign, willingly yielding himſelf to return to his duty.

5. Solemn covenanting with God, entering into, or renewing covenant with him in expreſs words. As a faſt-day is a day to looſe the bands of wickedneſs, ſo it is a day for coming explicitely into the bond of the holy covenant, Jer. l. 4. 'Going and weeping; they ſhall 'go, and ſeek the Lord their God. Verſe 5.—Saying 'Come, and let us join ourſelves to the Lord, in a per'petual covenant, that ſhall not be forgotten.' Accordingly this was an eminent part of their faſt day's work, Neh. ix. 38. It follows of courſe, on due humiliation, confeſſion, and the exerciſe of repentance, whereby the league with ſin is broken. And it lies in a ſolemn profeſſing before the Lord, that we take hold of his covenant, believing on the name of his Son as the Saviour of the world, and our Saviour, and that in and through him he will be our God, and we ſhall be his people; and that we are from the heart content, and conſent to take him for our Portion, Lord, and Maſter, and reſign ourſelves to him only, wholly, and for ever: Heb. viii. 10. 'This is the covenant,—I will be to them a God, 'and they ſhall be to me a people,' Iſa. xlix. 8. 'I 'will give thee for a covenant.' Chap. lvi. 6. 'Every 'one that taketh hold of my covenant.' John i. 12. 'As many as received him,—that believe on his name.' Pſalm xvi. 2. 'O my ſoul, thou haſt ſaid unto the Lord, 'Thou art my Lord.' Iſa. xliv. 5. 'One ſhall ſay, I 'am the Lord's.'

6. Laſtly, Extraordinary prayer, in importunate addreſſes and petitions unto our covenanted God for that which is the particular occaſion of our faſt. The confeſſion and the covenanting are, both of them, to be done prayer-ways, as appears from Dan. ix. 4.—15. Neh. ix. 6.—38. But beſides, there muſt be prayers, ſupplications, and petitions made for what the perſon or family hath particularly in view, in their faſt: Pſalm xxxv. 13. 'When they were ſick, my cloathing was 'ſackcloth: I humbled my ſoul with faſting, and my 'prayer returned into mine own boſom.' And, indeed, the great end and deſign for which ſuch faſts are to be kept, is, that thereby the parties may be the more ſtirred up unto, and fitted for wreſtling with God in prayer, anent the caſe which they have particularly at heart. So the Ninivites having their threatened overthrow at heart, it was ordered, that *man and beaſt* ſhould *be covered with ſackcloth, and cry mightily unto God*, Jonah iii. 8. that is, that the men ſhould cry in prayer for pity and ſparing; and to the end they might be moved to the greater fervency in theſe their praying cries, it is provided, that they and their beaſts ſhould be covered with ſackcloth; and that their beaſts having fodder withheld from them on that occaſion, ſhould be made to cry for hunger and thirſt, even *to cry unto God*, namely, interpretatively, as the *young ravens cry unto him*, Job xxxviii. 41. At which rate the cries of the beaſts, being mixed with the cries of men, would make the ſolemnity of that extraordinary mourning very great: and the hearts of the men being, every now and then, during that ſolemnity, pierced with the cries of the harmleſs brutes, would be ſtirred up to a more earneſt, fervent, and importunate pleading with God for mercy.

Thus far of perſonal and family faſting and humiliation, in the general.

CHAP. II.

Of PERSONAL *Faſting and Humiliation, in particular.*

FROM what is ſaid it appears, that a perſonal faſt is a religious exerciſe, wherein a particular perſon having ſet apart ſome time from his ordinary buſineſs in the world, ſpends it in ſome ſecret place by himſelf, in acts of devotion tending to his humiliation and reformation, and particularly in prayer, with faſting. Concerning the which we ſhall conſider, (1.) The divine warrant for it; (2.) The call to it; and, (3.) Offer advice how to manage it.

SECT. I.

Of the divine Warrant for perſonal Faſting and Humiliation.

FOraſmuch as will-worſhip is condemned by the word, and that can never be obedience to God, whereof his revealed will is not the reaſon and rule; it concerneth all who would perform this duty in faith, ſo as to have it accepted of him, to know who hath required it at their hands. And to ſet that matter in a light ſufficient to ſatisfy and bind it upon the conſcience, as a duty owing unto God, let theſe few things following be duly weighed.

1. God requires it in his word; and that both directly and indirectly.

It is directly required, James iv. 9. 'Be afflicted and 'mourn and weep.' It is plain enough from the context, thoſe things are propoſed as agreeing to particular perſons in their perſonal capacity. See verſes 8. 10. And what it is that is required of them in theſe words, could not miſs to be as plain to thoſe unto whom they were originally directed: to wit, that it is faſting and humiliation that was intended by them. For this epiſtle was written to thoſe who were Jews by nation, *the twelve tribes ſcattered abroad*, chap. i. 1. And this is the very language of the Old Teſtament in that caſe, the ſame manner of expreſſion in which their prophets called them to it; Lev. xxiii. 27. ‘ On the tenth day ‘ of the ſeventh month, there ſhall be a day of atonement, ‘ and ye ſhall afflict your ſouls;’ to wit, with faſting, Iſa. lviii. 5. ‘ Is it ſuch a faſt as I have choſen? a day ‘ for a man to afflict his ſoul?’ Or, more agreeable to the original, ‘ Shall a faſt I will chuſe, a day of mens ‘ afflicting their ſoul be like this?’ Joel ii. 12. ‘ Turn ‘ ye even to me—with faſting, and with weeping, and ‘ with mourning.’ And the mourning required in theſe texts differs from the weeping, as the habit and geſtures of mourners differ from their tears, Gen. xxxvii. 34. Eccleſ. iii. 4. directly pointing unto the duty of faſting and humiliation.

It is alſo required indirectly in the word, which ſuppoſeth it to be a duty the ſaints will practiſe; inaſmuch as divine directions are given anent it. Now it is inconſiſtent with the holineſs of God, to give directions for regulating of will-worſhip, which he doth ſimply condemn, Matth. xv. 9. Col. ii. 23. Jer. viii. 31. But our Saviour gives directions about perſonal faſting: Matth. vi. 16. ‘ When ye faſt be not as the hypocrites, ‘ of a ſad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, ‘ that they may appear unto men to faſt. Verily I ſay ‘ unto you, they have their reward.’ Ver. 17. ‘ But ‘ when thou faſteſt, anoint thine head, and waſh thy ‘ face:’ Ver. 18. ‘ That thou appear not unto men ‘ to faſt, but unto thy Father which is in ſecret: and ‘ thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret, ſhall reward thee ‘ openly.’ And it is evident, that theſe directions do concern ſecret and perſonal faſting; for, beſides that the text ſpeaks expreſly of that which is done in ſecret, and therefore is to be kept ſecret, contrary to the practice of the hypocritical Phariſees, who made it their buſineſs to propale their ſecret devotions, the outward ſigns of faſting are commended in the caſe of public faſts, Exod. xxxiii. 4. Jonah iii. 8. Joel ii. 15. 16. 17. In like manner the apoſtle Paul gives a direction about this duty, 1 Cor. vii. 5. ‘ Defraud ye not one the other, except ‘ it be with conſent for a time, that ye may give your‘ ſelves to faſting and prayer;’ where the conſent mentioned as neceſſary, determines the faſting to be perſonal; foraſmuch as, in the caſe of public faſts, that matter is predetermined by a ſuperior authority; and in the caſe of family faſts, it follows of courſe on the appointment of ſuch a faſt.

2. It is promiſed that the ſaints ſhall perform this duty; Zech. xii. 10. ‘ I will pour upon the houſe of Da‘ vid, and upon the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, the ſpirit ‘ of grace and of ſupplication.’ Ver. 12. ‘ And the ‘ land ſhall mourn, every family apart,—and their wives ‘ apart.’ Thus, in virtue of the grace of the covenant, this duty is made the matter of a promiſe, even as other duties of holy obedience are. Accordingly our Lord promiſed it, in the caſe of his diſciples in particular, Matth. ix. 15. ‘ The days will come when the bride‘ groom ſhall be taken from them, and then ſhall they ‘ faſt’: to wit, perſonally: for it was not the neglect of the public faſt appointed and ſtated in the law, Lev. xxiii. 27.—32. that they were taxed; but the neglect of perſonal faſting, uſed by the diſciples of John, upon the occaſion of their maſter, *the friend of the bridegroom*, his being taken from them; and alſo by the Phariſees, out of their ſuperſtitious and vain-glorious diſpoſition, Matth. ix. 14. with Luke xviii. 12.

3. It is recommended unto us by the practice of the ſaints mentioned in ſcripture. It was, as we have already ſeen, practiſed by David, a man according to God's own heart, 2 Sam. xii. 16. Pſal. xxxv. 13.; by Daniel, a man greatly beloved, Dan. ix. 3. and x. 2. 3.; and by the devout centurion, Acts x. 30. It was a frequent exerciſe of Paul the laborious apoſtle of the Gentiles, 2 Cor. xi. 27. Theſe all had the ſeal of God's good pleaſure with their work ſet upon it, in the communion with God allowed them therein. And it is our duty to go forth by the footſteps of the flock, following their approved example.

4. Laſtly, That occaſional religious faſting and humiliation is a duty required in the word of God, and to be performed by ſocieties in a public capacity, will not, I preſume, be queſtioned. Now, upon that ground the duty of perſonal faſting and humiliation may be thus evinced.

1ſt, There is nothing in the nature of religious faſting and humiliation, that of itſelf is public, or neceſſarily requiring a plurality of perſons to join therein. The preaching of the word, and celebrating of the ſacraments, do, in their nature, require ſociety; and therefore are not to be uſed by a ſingle perſon alone in his cloſet. But it is not ſo in this caſe. One may keep a faſt alone, as well as he may pray, read the ſcriptures, and ſing pſalms alone. Now, whatever ordinances God hath appointed, and hath not tied to ſocieties or aſſemblies, nor to any certain ſet of men, they are the duty of every one in particular, who is capable to perform them.

2dly, The ground upon which the duty of faſting and humiliation is bound on ſocieties, in a public capacity, takes place in the caſe of particular perſons, namely, that extraordinary duties are called for on extraordinary emergents and occaſions. If then a church or congregation is called to faſting and humiliation, on ſuch occaſions in their caſe; is not a particular perſon called to the ſame, on ſuch occaſions in his caſe? If abounding ſin, or judgments threatened or inflicted on a land, require ſolemn public faſting and humiliation; do not the ſame things, in the caſe of a particular perſon, call for perſonal faſting and humiliation? Surely, every one ought to keep his own vineyard, with the ſame diligence the public vineyard is to be kept: If one does not ſo, it will be bitterneſs in the end, Cant. i. 6.

3dly, Extraordinary duties to be performed by a whole nation, church, or congregation, cannot be ſoon overtaken; becauſe all great bodies are ſlow in their motions: and ſometimes the ſeaſon may be over, ere they can move thereto in a public capacity: yea, and oft times God is calling aloud, by his providence, for national and congregational faſting and humiliation, when the call is not heeded by them, on whom it is incumbent to appoint them. Now, what ſhould particular perſons, diſcerning the call of providence, do in ſuch caſes? Muſt they ſit ſtill, and not anſwer the call as they may, becauſe they cannot anſwer it as they would? Should they not rather keep perſonal and family faſts, for thoſe cauſes, for which others either cannot or will not keep public faſts; as in the caſe of God's pleading with the land of Egypt, ‘ He that feared the word of the Lord amongſt ‘ the ſervants of Pharaoh, made his ſervants and his cat‘ tle flee into the houſes,’ Exod. ix. 20. When the Jews are diſperſed, ſome of them in one country, ſome in another, how ſhall the land mourn? Muſt they wait until they be gathered together? No; but the land ſhall mourn, families apart, and particular perſons apart: even as when our neighbour's houſe is on fire, we do not tarry until the whole town or neighbourhood be gathered; but immediately fall to work ourſelves, to do what lies in our power for quenching the flames.

And thus much ſhall ſuffice to have ſpoken of the divine warrant for this extraordinary duty.

SECT. III.

Of a providential Call to perſonal faſting and humiliation.

THE caſe of the church, the caſe of a neighbour, and one's private caſe, may, each of them ſeparately, and much more all of them conjunctly, found a providential call to perſonal faſting and humiliation. The prophet Daniel kept a perſonal faſt on the church's account, Dan. ix. 2. 3. David, on his neighbour's account, Pſal. xxxv. 13. and on his own, 2 Sam. xii. 16. Zion's children ſhould reckon her intereſt theirs: and as ſecret perſonal faſting for public cauſes, argues a truly public ſpirit; ſo it is highly commendable, and being rightly managed, is very acceptable in the ſight of God, Dan. ix. 20. 21.

The communion of ſaints is an article of our creed, and a moſt beneficial thing in the practice thereof. Conſidered only in theſe two parts of it, namely, a communion of burdens, Gal. vi. 2. and a communion of prayers, James v. 16. it is one of the beſt cordials the travellers towards Zion have by the way. For one to love his neighbour as himſelf, whereof ſecret faſting on his account is a good evidence, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and ſacrifices, Mark xii. 33. And whether it do good to his neighbour, or not, it will not fail, if rightly managed, to return with a plentiful reward into his own boſom, according to the Pſalmiſt's experience, Pſal. xxxv. 13.

Howbeit, it is hardly to be expected, that one will be brought to the practice of this duty on the account of others, till once he has been engaged therein upon his own account. But ſurely, if profeſſors of religion were more exerciſed about their own ſpiritual caſe, this duty of perſonal faſting and humiliation would not be ſo rare as it is. Paul, who had much of this kind of exerciſe, Acts xxiv. 16. was in faſtings often, 2 Cor. xi. 27.; kept under his body, and brought it into ſubjection, 1 Cor. ix. 27.

Now, any or all of theſe caſes call for this extraordinary duty, in three kinds of events, other circumſtances agreeing, and pointing thereto in the conduct of providence.

Either, 1. When there is any ſpecial evil actually lying upon us, the church, or our neighbour, in whom we have a ſpecial concern; whether it be ſinful or penal evil. There are ſome ſins that leave ſuch guilt on the conſcience, and ſuch defilement on the heart and life, as call aloud for faſting and humiliation, in order to a recovery from the diſmal effects thereof, Jam. iv. 8. 'Cleanſe your hands ye ſinners, and purify your hearts ye double-minded.' Ver. 9. 'Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep.' Accordingly the Iſraelites gathered to Mizpeh, being ſenſible of the abominable idolatries they had fallen into, 'faſted that day, and ſaid, We have ſinned againſt the Lord,' 1 Sam. vii. 6.

In like manner, when the tokens of God's high diſpleaſure are gone out in afflicting providences, it is time for us to roll ourſelves in the duſt; and ſo to accommodate our ſpirit and way to the diſpenſation, humbling ourſelves before him with faſting. Thus Nehemiah found himſelf called to faſting, upon information received of the continued ruins of Jeruſalem, and the affliction that the returned captives were in, Neh. i. 3. 4.; David, and thoſe with him, upon the news of the defeat of Iſrael, and the death of Saul and Jonathan, 2 Sam. i. 11. 12.; and the people, upon the conſideration of the ſlaughter which the Benjamites had made among them, Judg. xx. 26.

Or, 2. When there is any ſpecial ſtroke threatened and impending. Thus the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, being in imminent danger from their enemies, were providentially called to weeping and mourning, though they heeded it not, Iſa. xxii. 12. 13. But the Ninevites took ſuch an alarm, and complied with the call of providence, Jon. iii. 4.—9. So did David, when God ſtruck his child with ſickneſs, 2 Sam. xii. 15. 16. Yea, and ſo did even Ahaz, when he had heard Elijah's heavy meſſage againſt him and his houſe, 1 Kings xxi. 27. When the lion roars, it becomes us to fear: when God's hand is lifted up, and he appears to be about to ſtrike, it is high time for us to ſtrip ourſelves of our ornaments, and to lie in ſackcloth and aſhes.

Or elſe, 3. When there is ſome ſpecial mercy and favour to be deſired of the Lord; as was the return of the Babyloniſh captivity, for which Daniel kept his faſt, Dan. ix. 1. 2. 3. Chriſtians exerciſed unto godlineſs, will rarely, if ever, want their particular ſuits, and ſpecial errands unto the throne of grace. The ſame God, who makes ſome mercies fall into the lap of others, without their being at much pains about them, will give his own children many an errand unto himſelf for them, ere they obtain them; becauſe they muſt have them in the way of the covenant; whereas they come to others only in the way of a common providence, in which a blaſting curſe may come along with the mercy.

To ſet this matter yet in a clearer light, we ſhall exemplify theſe general heads, in one's own private caſe; and that in ſeveral inſtances, to be accommodate to the caſe of the church, and of our neighbour, by thoſe who are diſpoſed religiouſly to obſerve and conſider the diſpenſations of providence. There is a variety of theſe particular caſes, which, with agreeing circumſtances to be diſcerned by each one for himſelf, call for perſonal faſting and humiliation. As,

1. When through a long tract of ſinning and careleſs walking, the caſe of one's ſoul is left quite in diſorder and confuſion; Iſa. xxxii. 11. 'Tremble, ye women that are at eaſe; be troubled ye careleſs ones; ſtrip ye and make ye bare, and gird ſackcloth upon your loins.' Certainly the voice of God unto ſuch, is, 'Thus ſaith the Lord, Conſider your ways,' Hag. i. 5. Want of conſideration ruins many. They deal with their ſouls, as ſome fooliſh men do with their eſtates, running on without conſideration, till they have run themſelves aground. But thoſe who adventure ſo to take a time for ſinning, have need alſo to ſet a time for mourning; for it is not to be expected, that accounts which have been long running on, can be cleared and adjuſted with a glance of one's eye. O careleſs ſinner, conſider how matters ſtand betwixt God and you: are you in any tolerable caſe for the other world, for death and eternity? are not matters gone quite to wreck with your ſoul? are you not pining away in your iniquity? is not the ſtate and condition of your ſoul like that of the ſluggard's *vineyard that was all grown over with thorns, and nettles covered the face thereof, and the ſtone wall thereof was broken down?* Prov. xxiv. 31. O ſet about perſonal faſting and humiliation. Ordinary pains will not ſerve to recover the long neglected garden: it muſt be trenched, digged deep. A little may help the caſe, that is timely ſeen to, but all this will be little enough for thine, which hath lain ſo long neglected.

2. When one is under convictions, entertaining ſome thoughts to reform. On ſuch an occaſion was that faſt kept, Neh. ix. 1. 2. and had very good effects, ver. 38. Chap. x. 1. 28. 29. This method is, in ſuch a caſe a proper means to bring men to a point in the matter, and to fix their reſolutions, otherways ready to prove abortive. Some have convictions, which, at times, coming and paſſing away, like a ſtitch in one's ſide, ſet them now and then to their prayers: but never prevail to bring them to a ſettled courſe of reformation of life; their diſeaſe is too inveterate, to be ſo eaſily carried off. But were they ſo wiſe as to make theſe convictions a matter of ſolemn ſeriouſneſs, ſetting ſome time apart on that occaſion for perſonal faſting and humiliation, they might through the divine bleſſing, turn to a good account for the intereſt of their ſouls.

3. When the conſcience is defiled with the guilt of ſome atrocious ſin. Doth national guilt of that kind require national faſting? and doth not perſonal guilt of the ſame kind, require perſonal faſting? Yea, ſure, God calls men, in that caſe, to be afflicted, and mourn, and weep, Jam. iv. 8. 9. Strong diſeaſes require ſtrong remedies; and conſcience-waſting guilt deep humiliation, as in David's caſe, Pſal. li. and Peter's, Matth. xxvi. 75. This kind of guilt, deeply wounding and ſtinging the ſoul, defiling and waſting the conſcience, may be without any ſcandalous enormities of life, appearing to the view of the world. God is witneſs to ſecret ſins, even to the ſins of the heart: and men of tender con-

ſciences will be ſick at the heart with ſuch ſins as are hid from all the world, and will never move others.

4. When one would fain get over a ſnare he is often caught in, and have victory over a luſt that hath often maſtered him. There are not a few who have many good things about them, yet lack one thing: and that one thing is like to part between heaven and them; marring all their good things, both by way of evidence and of efficacy, Mark x. 21. They know that it is wrong; they often reſolve to amend; and they would fain get above it: but whenever a new temptation comes, Satan attacking them on the weak ſide, down go all their reſolutions, like a bowing high wall, whoſe breaking cometh ſuddenly at an inſtant; and they are hard and faſt in the ſnare again. O conſider, that *this kind goeth not out, but by prayer and faſting*, Matth. xvii. 21. Set therefore ſome time apart for perſonal faſting and humiliation, on the account of that very thing, that you may wreſtle with God in prayer anent it: and uſe this method time after time, until you prevail againſt it: elſe that one thing may ruin you; and you will be condemned for it, not becauſe you could not help it, but becauſe you would not uſe the means appointed of God for relief in that caſe.

5. When one is under a dead deſertion: in which caſe the Lord is departed, the wonted influences from heaven are with-held, but, the wound not ſmarting, by reaſon of ſpiritual deadneſs, the party is not much moved therewith. This was the caſe of the ſpouſe, Cant. iii. 1. 'By night on my bed I ſought him whom my ſoul 'loveth: I ſought him, but I found him not.' And, for a recovery from it, ſhe made ſome extraordinary efforts in the way of duty, ver. 2. 3. 4. The ſame appears to be the caſe of many, with whom ſome time aday it was better than now. God hides his face from them: their incomes from heaven are rare and ſcanty, in compariſon of what they have formerly been: they are ſighing, and going backward. Though they go the round of ordinary religious exerciſes ſtill; yet it is long ſince they had a token from the beloved, acceſs to or communion with God in them. O faſt and pray for a recovery; as did Iſrael, when, after they had been long deſerted, and very little affected with it, they began at length to *lament after the Lord*, 1 Sam. vii. 2. 6. It requires much, in the way of ordinary means, for to go to the ground of ſuch a caſe, wherein *by much ſlothfulneſs the building* hath *decayed, and through idleneſs of the hands the houſe droppeth through.* Though true grace can never be totally loſt; yet it may be brought to ſuch a very low paſs, that as ſome ſcholars, for retrieving the loſs ſuſtained through long abſence from the ſchool, muſt begin anew again; ſo ſome Chriſtians, in order to their recovery, muſt be carried through the ſeveral ſteps of converſion again, as we may learn from our Saviour's words to Peter, with relation to his fall, Luke xxii. 32. 'I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when 'thou art converted, ſtrengthen thy brethren.'

6. When one is under a felt and ſmarting deſertion, Iſa. xlix. 14. 'Zion ſaid, The Lord hath forſaken me, 'and my Lord hath forgotten me.' This is a more hopeful caſe than the former: howbeit it goes to the quick, Prov. xviii. 14. 'The ſpirit of a man will ſuſ'tain his infirmity; but a wounded ſpirit who can 'bear? There are many bitter ingredients in it, which make it a ſorrowful caſe, exquiſitely painful to the ſoul, like that of *a woman forſaken, and grieved in ſpirit*, even *a wife of youth*, Iſa. liv. 6. To one thus deſerted, wrath appears in the face of God, and impreſſed on every diſpenſation, Pſalm lxxxviii. 7. 8. To his ſenſe and feeling, his prayer is ſhut out, Lam. iii. 8. and flaſhes of hell come into his ſoul, Pſalm lxxxviii. 15. 16. Under the preſſure hereof, ſome very grave and ſolid perſons have not been able to contain themſelves, Job xxx. 28. 'I went mourning without the ſun; I 'ſtood up, and I cried in the congregation.' This ſmarting deſertion, in greater or leſſer meaſure, has often been the fearful outgoing from the dead deſertion, as it was in the experience of the ſpouſe, Cant. v. 3.—7. And it is a loud call to perſonal faſting and humiliation, Matth. ix. 15. 'When the bridegroom ſhall be taken 'from them, then ſhall they faſt.'

7. When one is preſſed with ſome outward affliction, whether in his body, relations, name, ſubſtance, or otherwiſe. In ſuch a caſe, 'Job rent his mantle, and 'ſhaved his head, and fell down and worſhipped.' Job i. 20. and 'David's knees were weak through faſting,' Pſalm cix. 24. A time of affliction is a ſpecial ſeaſon for faſting and prayer. The Lord often lays afflictions on his people, on purpoſe to awaken them to their duty, and as it were to neceſſitate them to it; even as Abſalom, who, having ſent once and again for Joab, obliged him at length to come unto him, by cauſing ſet his corn field on fire. This is the way to get affliction ſanctified, and in due time removed, James iv. 10. 'Humble 'yourſelves in the ſight of the Lord, and he ſhall lift 'you up.' We ought therefore to take heed, that we be not of thoſe who cry not when he bindeth them; but that in this caſe we do as Benhadad's ſervants, who upon a ſignal defeat of his army, *put ſackcloth on their loins, and ropes on their heads, and went out to the king of Iſrael*, who had ſmote them, 1 Kings xx. 31.

8. When, by the aſpect of providence, one is threatened with ſome ſuch affliction. It is an ungracious hardneſs, not to be affected when the Lord is lifting up his hand againſt us. He was a man of an excellent ſpirit, who ſaid, 'My fleſh trembleth for fear of thee, 'and I am afraid of thy judgments,' Pſalm cxix. 120. Though he was an hero that feared the face of no man, he laid aſide that bravery of ſpirit when he had do with his God. Wherefore when the Lord was threatening the removal of a child of his by death, though the continuing of that child in life would have been a laſting memorial of his reproach, yet the impreſſion of the Lord's anger on that threatening diſpenſation, moved him to betake himſelf to perſonal faſting and humiliation before the Lord, for the life of that child, 2 Sam. xii. 21. 22.

9. When one would have light and direction in ſome particular matter of ſpecial weight. It is much to be lamented, that men profeſſing the belief of a divine providence in human affairs, ſhould, in confidence of their own wiſdom, take the weight of their matters on themſelves, without acknowledging God in them; aiming only to pleaſe themſelves therein, and not their God; as if their fancy, conveniency, or advantage, and not their conſcience, were concerned in their determinations and reſolves. Hence it is, that wiſe men are often left to ſignal blunders in conduct, and feel marks of God's indignation juſtly impreſſed on their raſh determinations. Thus Joſhua and the princes of Iſrael, in the matter of the league with the Gibeonites, finding no need of the exerciſe of their faith, but of their wit, vainly imagining they could ſee well enough with their own eyes, *took of their victuals, and aſked not counſel at the mouth of the Lord*, and were egregiouſly over-reached by them, as they ſaw afterward, when it was too late, Joſh. ix. 14. 22.

We have a divine command and promiſe, extending to our temporal, as well as to our ſpiritual concerns; and very ſuitable to the neceſſary dependance we have on God, in all things, as creatures on their Creator, Prov. iii. 5. 'Lean not unto thine own underſtanding.' Verſe 6. 'In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he ſhall 'direct thy paths.' We ought therefore, in all our matters, to eye him as our director; and ſteer our whole courſe, as he directs by his word and providence. Since he hath ſaid, 'I will teach thee in the way which thou 'ſhalt go, I will guide thee with mine eye.' Pſalm xxxii. 8. it is unqueſtionably our duty to ſet the Lord always before us, Pſal. xvi. 8. to regulate our acting, and ceaſing from action by the divine direction; even as the Iſraelites in the wilderneſs removed and reſted, juſt as the pillar of cloud and of fire removed or reſted before them, Numb ix. 15.—23.

Sometimes indeed an affair may be in ſuch a ſituation as allows not an opportunity of making an addreſs unto God, for light in it, by ſolemn prayer: but we are never ſo circumſtanced, but we have acceſs to lift up our eyes to the holy oracle, in a devout ejaculation; as Nehemiah did in ſuch a ſituation, Neh. ii. 4. 5. And there is a promiſe relative to that caſe, which has been often verified, in the comfortable experience of the ſaints taking that method to obtain the divine direction, Prov. iv. 12. ‘ When thou runneſt, thou ſhalt not ſtumble.’ But Chriſtians ſhould accuſtom themſelves to lay their matters before the Lord, in ſolemn prayer, for light, and direction therein, as far as circumſtances do permit. So did Abraham's pious ſervant, with the affair his maſter had committed to him, Gen. xxiv. 12. 13. 14. And accordingly he had a pleaſurable experience of the accompliſhment of the promiſe relative to that caſe; Prov. iv. 12. ‘ When thou goeſt, thy ſteps ſhall ‘ not be ſtraitened.’ And where they are to be determined in a matter of ſpecial weight, ſuch as the change of their lot, the choice of an employment, ſome momentuous undertaking, or any the like occurrences in life, whereof ſerious Chriſtians will find not a few, allowing them time and opportunity to deliberate on them; that is a ſpecial occaſion for extraordinary prayer with faſting, for light from the Lord the Father of lights, to diſcover what is their duty therein, and what he is calling them to in the matter. So the captives returning from Babylon with Ezra, kept a faſt at the river Ahava, *to ſeek of God a right way*, Ezra viii. 21.

10. When duty being cleared in a matter of ſpecial weight, it comes to the ſetting to; in which event one needs the preſence of God with him therein, the divine bleſſing upon it, and ſucceſs in it. Thus Eſther being to go in unto the king, to make requeſt for her people, there was ſolemn faſting, on that occaſion, uſed by her and the Jews in Shuſhan, Eſther iv. 8. 16. And Barnabas and Saul being called of God unto a ſpecial work, were not ſent away to it, but after faſting and prayer, Acts xiii. 2. 3. We need not only light from the Lord to diſcover unto us our duty in particular caſes; but that being obtained, we need alſo his preſence to go along with us in the thing, that we may be enabled rightly to make our way, which he bids us go. Therefore ſaid Moſes, Exod. xxiii. 15. ‘ If thy preſence go ‘ not with me, carry us not up hence.’ Sin hath defiled every thing to us: and however promiſing any worldly ſtate, condition, or thing whatſoever, may appear in our eyes; yet if we have not the preſence of God in it, and his bleſſing upon it, to purify it unto us, we will be mired in it, and find a ſnare and a trap, if not a curſe, therein to us.

11. When one having ſome unordinary difficulty to encounter, is in hazard of being inſnared either into ſin or danger. On ſuch an occaſion was the forementioned faſt at Shuſhan kept; Eſther jeoparding her life, in going in unto the king in the inner-court, not called by him, Eſth. iv. 11. 16. The ſhip has need to be well ballaſted, that ſails while the wind blows high: and in a difficult and inſnaring time, there is need of faſting and prayer for Heaven's ſafe conduct through it. Mens truſting to themſelves in ſuch a caſe, cannot miſs of betraying them into ſnares.

12. Laſtly, When one hath in view ſome ſpecial ſolemn approach unto God; in which caſe a ſpecial preparation is requiſite. Thus Jacob called his family to ſuch preparation, in the exerciſe of repentance, in order to their appearing before the Lord at Bethel, Gen. xxxv. 2. 3. The Iſraelites were called to the ſame, in order to the awful ſolemnity of the giving of the law on mount Sinai, Exod. xix. 10 11. 15. And it is obſervable, that whereas the feaſt of tabernacles was the moſt joyful of all the feaſts the Jews had throughout the year, a ſolemn faſt was appointed of God to be obſerved always before it, four free days only intervening, Lev. xxiii. 27. 34. For, in the method of grace, none ſtand ſo fair for a lifting up, as thoſe who are moſt deeply humbled, Iſa. xl. 4. Luke xviii. 14. Jam. iv. 10. Whereſore, it is a laudable practice of our church, that congregations keep a congregational faſt, before the celebration of the feaſt of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper among them, in order to their preparation for a ſolemn approach unto God in that holy ordinance. And for the ſame reaſon, ſecret faſting by particular perſons apart, and private faſting by families apart, eſpecially ſuch as have not acceſs to join the public faſt, would be very ſeaſonable on ſuch an occaſion. And if thoſe ſecret and private faſts could more generally obtain, and get place in congregations, ſome little time before the communion work did begin; it would be a token for good, and might prove like the noiſe and ſhaking among the dry bones, that uſhered in the breathing on the ſlain, and the cauſing them to ſtand up upon their feet, Ezek. xxxvii. 7. 10.

Theſe things duly conſidered, each Chriſtian may be in caſe to judge for himſelf, when it is that he is under a providential call to perſonal faſting and humiliation.

S E C T. III.

Directions anent perſonal faſting and humiliation.

HAving ſeen the divine warrant for perſonal faſting and humiliation, and conſidered the nature of a providential call to that extraordinary duty, it remains to offer ſome advices or directions for the profitable managing of it in practice.

DIRECTION I.

When you find that the Lord is calling you to this duty, prudently make choice of a fit time and place for it aforehand, wherein you may have acceſs to go about it without diſtraction. And carefully diſpoſe of your ordinary affairs before that time, ſo as you may have no let nor hindrance from that part, which you can prevent. Works of neceſſity and mercy, which are lawfully done on the Lord's day, are much more ſo in this caſe, wherein the duty waits not on the time, but the time on the duty. Yea, in caſe ſomething of worldly buſineſs, which you could not foreſee nor prevent, do fall out in the time of your faſt, and cannot be deferred or put off without ſome notable inconveniency; you may, without ſcruple, diſpatch it: for the time is not holy. But, in that caſe, labour that, if poſſible, your work be not thereby marred, and carefully keep up your frame of ſpirit for the duty you are engaged in. But Chriſtian providence to weigh circumſtances, for which you are to look up unto the Lord, is neceſſary to determine herein, according to the general rules of the word, Mat. xii. 3.-7.

As for ſuch as are not maſters of their time, which is the caſe of ſervants, they cannot lawfully diſpoſe of their time at their own hand, even for this duty; for our God hates robbery for burnt offering, Iſa. lxi. 8. But then they may endeavour to procure the neceſſary time, at the hand of their maſters; to whom, if they be godly and ſerious, they may modeſtly hint their deſign; pitching on a time with ſo much diſcretion, as that their good may not be evil ſpoken of. And if any be ſo unmindful of their Maſter which is in heaven, as to refuſe ſuch a diſcreet deſire; yet let not the party by any means think, that the ſacred nature of the thing he has then in view, gives him a power to rob his maſter of ſo much of his time; for men can offer nothing to God, with a good conſcience, but what is their own; and exerciſes of devotion are ſo far from ſlacking the tie of moral duty to our neighbour, that they are nothing but an outward form of devotion, unacceptable to God, ſo far as they do not influence the party to a careful and religious obſervance of the duties of morality, ſuch as judgment or juſtice, mercy, and faith or faithfulneſs, Matth. xxiii. 23. Neither yet let him imagine, on the other hand, that he is then no more concerned to look after that extraordinary duty: for no reaſon can be aſſigned, why one ought not to be willing to be at as much pains or expence, for procuring to himſelf an opportunity of communion with God in that duty, as he will be for an opportunity of attending ſome worldly buſineſs of his own, placing another in his room. But if none of theſe can effectuate it; then though the day or time of labouring is the maſter's, yet the night or time of reſting is the ſervant's; let him give unto God what he has, and it ſhall be accepted through Chriſt. But excepting the caſe of a providential neceſſity obliging one to take the night for this exerciſe, the day is, generally ſpeaking, the moſt proper time for it, beginning the exerciſe in the morning.

DIRECT. II.

Make ſome preparation for it the night before, turning your thoughts towards the exerciſe you have in view, conſidering of it, and avoiding every thing that hath a decency to disfit or indiſpoſe for it. Shun carnal mirth and ſenſual delights; ſup ſparingly; to eat the more, that one is to faſt religiouſly after, is to mock God, and cheat one's ſelf. In the intervals of ſleep, take heed that your thoughts be not vain, and much more that they be not vile; but that they be ſuch as tend to fit you for the extraordinary duty in view.

DIRECT. III.

Riſe early in the morning; even ſooner than ordinary, unleſs by reaſon of bodily weakneſs, that would tend to disfit you for the work; for then you are called, in a ſpecial manner, to watch unto prayer, Eph. vi. 18. Sleep is a fleſhly comfort, which howbeit it is neceſſary, yet one is in this caſe called to be ſparing of. Therefore the prieſts were bid *lie all night in ſackcloth*, Joel i. 13. and it is recorded of Ahab, that he in his faſt lay ſo, 1 Kings xxi. 27. A proper means to make one ſleep ſparingly.

DIRECT. IV.

As ſoon as you awake in the morning, let holy thoughts with a view to your work, immediately have acceſs into your heart. And beware that carnal or worldly thoughts get not the ſtart of them; for if you allow that, they will be to your ſoul like water poured upon fire-wood, that makes it hard to kindle. Surely, if one is at any time to follow the example of the Pſalmiſt David, Pſalm cxxxix. 18. *When I awake I am ſtill with thee;* he is to do it at ſuch a time.

DIRECT. V.

Let your ordinary duties of prayer and reading of the word, be firſt of all performed: for extraordinary duties are not to juſtle out the ordinary, but to be ſuperadded unto them. And, in ſuch prayer, beg of God grace to enable you for the work before you, according to his promiſe. Yea, it may be very expedient, that thereafter you go unto God again by prayer, particularly and purpoſedly for his grace, to enable you unto the duty now come to the ſetting to. And foraſmuch as our corrupt hearts are, upon a near view of a difficult and laborious holy exerciſe, very apt to wax faint, and our hands to hang down; albeit *the way of the Lord* is declared to be *ſtrength to the upright*, Prov. x. 29. do you therefore, by all means, ſtudy to exerciſe faith; and labour to believe ſtedfaſtly, that his grace ſhall be ſufficient for you, to the making of *his yoke eaſy, and his burden light* unto you, 2 Cor. xii. 9. with Matth. xi. 30. For no man ſhall ever be able to perform a duty acceptably unto God, without a believing perſuaſion, in greater or leſſer meaſure, of an allowance made him of grace ſufficient for an acceptable performance of it, 2 Cor. iii. 4. 5. Philip ii. 12. 13. One will otherwiſe be but a wicked and ſlothful ſervant, as our Saviour teacheth, Matth. xxv. 24. 25. 26.

DIRECT. VI.

After prayer in faith, for the aid of divine grace, as in the preceding direction, begin the work with a ſolemn review of your ſins, in deep meditation, and ſerious communing with your own heart thereupon; applying yourſelf to think of them in ſuch manner as you think of your affairs, when conſidering how to manage them in caſes of difficulty. God calls for this at your hand, Hag. i. 5. 'Thus ſaith the Lord of hoſts, Conſider your ways.' Lam. iii. 40. 'Let us ſearch and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord.' It is recommended unto us by the practice of the ſaints, Pſalm lxxvii. 6. 'I communed with mine heart, and my ſpirit made diligent ſearch,' and cxix. 59. 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy teſtimonies.' The nature of a religious faſt requires it; for how can the deep humiliation therein to be aimed at, be otherwiſe obtained? or what way elſe can one be fitted to make a confeſſion ſuitable to ſuch an occaſion? It is obſervable, that in the faſt mentioned, Neh. ix. the reading of the law went before the making of the confeſſion, verſ. 3. So the firſt work was to ſet the looking glaſs before their eyes, that therein every one might ſee his foul face. And the direction given to fallen Iſrael, in order to a recovery, Hoſ. xiv. 2. *Take with you words, and ſay,* &c. doth plainly bear, that there ſhould, in that caſe, be a ſolemn ſerious thinking before ſolemn prayer.

Now, to aſſiſt you in the practice of this part of your work, the following advices are offered.

Firſt, Read ſome pertinent paſſage of the holy ſcripture; and that with application, as reading your own heart and life therein. Such are thoſe paſſages, which contain diſcoveries and confeſſion of ſin, as Iſa. lix. or liſts of ſins, or of ſeveral ſorts of ſinners, as Rom. i. 29.—32. 2 Cor. vi. 9. 10. Gal. v. 19. 20. 21. 2 Tim. iii. 1.—5, Rev. xxi. 8. Particularly, I recommend for this purpoſe Ezra ix. Neh. ix. Dan. ix. Of theſe, or other ſcriptures of the like nature, you may read ſuch as you ſhall judge meet.

Secondly, It will be expedient and uſeful, in this caſe, to read alſo the Larger Catechiſm on the ten commands, in the anſwers to the queſtions, *What is required?* and, *What is forbidden?* and eſpecially the latter. For by reading thereof with application to yourſelf, you will find out your guiltineſs in many points, which perhaps would not otherwiſe come into your mind.

Thirdly, This done, apply yourſelf to think of your ſins, in order to your getting a broad and humbling view of your ſinful and wretched caſe. And for your help herein, I ſuggeſt to you theſe things following.

1. You may compoſe yourſelf what way you find, by experience, to be beſt for keeping the mind fixed. It is a piece of Chriſtian prudence in this caſe, to diſpoſe of every thing ſo, as you may the more readily reach that end, and block up the avenues by which impertinent thoughts may make their entrance. And (1.) Becauſe the eyes often betray the heart, through a variety of objects, which preſent themſelves to one's view in the light: if you are in a houſe, you may darken it by ſtopping the light; if in the fields, you may lie down on your face, and cloſe your eyes. (2.) If you can by no means keep your heart at ſimple thinking, you may ſpeak to yourſelf with a low voice, that words may help to fix the mind unto the thing. Theſe are only prudential advices, which they that need may uſe, they that need not may let alone.

2. It will be very profitable to obſerve ſome method and order, in thinking of your ſins. A confuſed and indeterminate manner of thinking of our ſins, in ſeveral reſpects, fall ſhort of an orderly thought about them. It is true, when the Spirit of the Lord is carrying on a ſpecial work of conviction in the heart of a ſinner, the man's ſins will of courſe be readily laid to hand, and ſet in order before his eyes, Pſalm l. 21. But it is another caſe, where one is ſearching out his ſins, with an ordinary aſſiſtance of the Spirit: herein thoſe do not duly conſult their own intereſt, who refuſe the help of method in the ſearch.

And there is a twofold method or order, which may be helpful to you therein; to wit, the order of the time of life, and the order of the ten commandments. Both theſe are natural, and eaſy to the meaneſt capacity.

Thinking on your ſins in the order of the time of your life, you will thereby get a general view of your own ſinfulneſs, and that throughout your whole life. And in this method.

1ſt, You are to conſider the ſin of your nature. You are to *look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged*, Iſa. li. 1. Think, what a ſinful lump thou waſt in thy conception and birth, ſhapen in iniquity, conceived in ſin, Pſalm li. 5. how thou cameſt into the world, with cords of guilt wreathed about thy neck, binding thee over to wrath under the curſe; ſtripped naked of original righteouſneſs; thy whole nature corrupted, being the very reverſe of the holy nature of God; thy ſoul in all its faculties quite perverted, ready to diſcover with the firſt occaſion its wrong ſet, namely, a propenſity to evil, and an averſion to good; and thy body in all its members ſinful fleſh. In conſideration whereof, thou mayeſt well ſay, with admiration of the divine patience, 'O why 'did the knees prevent me! Or why the breaſts that I 'ſhould ſuck!'

2dly, Then turn your thoughts to the ſins of your childhood. Solomon in his penitentials, tells us, that childhood and youth are vanity, Eccleſ. xi. 10. Truly, the ſins of that early period of our life, are not to be remembered to be laughed at, but mourned over; and ſo they will be thy true penitents; for they are the early ſproutings and buds of corrupt nature, that might have been fatal to us, ere we had gone further, 'Be'hold,' how in that period, 'thou haſt ſpoken and 'done evil things as thou couldſt.' It is likely that many of theſe things are forgotten: but yet you may ſtill ſearch out as many of them, as may be matter of deep humiliation unto you before the Lord. There may be ſins of childhood, that will make a bleeding wound in a gracious heart, on every remembrance thereof, even unto the dying day.

3dly, Then take a view of the ſins of your youth. Job got a moving view of his, when he was come to a good age, Job. xiii. 26. 'Thou writeſt bitter things 'againſt me, and makeſt me to poſſeſs the iniquities 'of my youth.' David's heart bleeds at the remembrance of his, crying unto God, 'Remember not the 'ſins of my youth,' Pſalm xxv. 7 Youth is but vain, raſh and inconſiderate; and therefore a dangerous period of life, precipitating ſome into ſuch ſteps as make them to halt all their life after, proving fatal to many, and laying up matter of repentance to all. And if the follies of it be not timely repented of, and mourned over, by the ſinner, they *ſhall lie down with him in the duſt*, Job xx. 11. and preſent themſelves again in full tale, when for all theſe God will bring him into judgment, Eccleſ. xi. 9. Therefore do you take a mournful view of them, and judge yourſelves, in time.

4thly, If you are to come to middle age, proceed to the ſearching out of the ſins of that period of your life. In it you cannot miſs of matter of deep humiliation; for *man at his beſt ſtate is altogether vanity*, Pſalm xxxix. 5. Every period of life is attended with its proper ſnares and temptations. And he who, right or wrong, hath made his way through thoſe of youth, doth but enter into a new throng of temptations of another kind, while he enters on the next ſtage of life; in the which men often, ere they are aware, pierce themſelves through with many ſorrows, loſe themſelves in a cloud of cares and buſineſs, and troubled about many things, forget the one thing needful.

Laſtly, If you are advanced into old age, go forward and view your ſins in that period. Whatever infirmities do attend it, the ſins of it muſt be ſearched out, and repented of too: for it will not excuſe a man, before a holy God, that he is an aged ſinner. The corruption of nature, the longer it hath kept its ground, is the more hateful, and will be the more humbling to a gracious ſoul.

Thus you will have your whole life before you, in parcels. And that you may, with the greater diſtinctneſs, review any period thereof which you have fully paſt, or of which you have paſt a great part; you may diſtinguiſh the ſame into leſſer periods, according to the more notable events, turns, or changes that were in it, and review them ſeparately; as for inſtance, the time before you went to ſchool, by itſelf; the time of your being at it, by itſelf; and ſo in other caſes.

But for a more full and particular view of your ſins, do you proceed in the order of the ten commandments. The holy law conſidered in its ſpirituality and vaſt extent, is the proper means for ſound conviction: it is the ſinner's looking glaſs, whereby to diſcern the vaſt multitude of his ſpots and defilements, in order to his humiliation: Rom. vii. 7. 'I had not known 'ſin, but by the law: for I had not known luſt except 'the law had ſaid, Thou ſhalt not covet.' Wherefore by no means neglect, in this review, to go through the ten commandments; and pauſe upon every one of them, conſidering the duties therein required, and wherein you have been guilty by omiſſion of them; and the ſins forbidden therein, and wherein you have been guilty, by commiſſion of them; guilty in both kinds, in thought, word, and deed. This would be a proper means to ſhew you the multitude of your tranſgreſſions.

But to proceed in both the one and the other order jointly, namely, by reviewing each period of your life ſeparately, in the order of the ten commandments, would, through the divine bleſſing, be of the moſt ſingular uſe for reaching the moſt humbling view of your whole life.

Thus far of the ſecond thing ſuggeſted for your help, to think of your ſins, in order to a humbling view of your caſe. And for your farther help therein,

3. Be ſure that in a ſpecial manner you ſet before your eyes the ſignal miſcarriages of your life, thoſe ſins that have wounded your conſcience deepeſt. I doubt there are but few, if any, of a tender conſcience, who ſee not ſome ſuch blots in their eſcutcheon; ſome remarkable treſpaſſes in heart or life, that are ready to gall them on every remembrance; though perhaps known unto none but God and themſelves. Good Eli had ſuch a blot on him, pointed out to him under the name of *The iniquity which he knoweth*, 1 Sam. iii. 13. And the beſt of the ſaints mentioned in ſcripture, had ſomething of that nature to humble them. Now, as ever you would be duly humbled in your exerciſe of perſonal faſting, let theſe, in your review of your ſins, be brought forth by head-mark, and ſet before you in the ſight of a holy God: and that, although they be freely pardoned unto you long ago: for the view of theſe is moſt likely to affect you; and pardoned ſins, inaſmuch as they are pardoned, are humbling in the remembrance of them, Luke vii. 37. 38. 47. as Paul's pardoned blaſphemy and perſecution were to him, 1 Tim. i. 13.

4. In thinking on your ſins, take along with you the aggravations of them. Repreſent to yourſelf the infinite majeſty of God, againſt whom you have ſinned; and as ever you would be duly humbled, entertain high

and elevated thoughts of the Lord our Lawgiver. This will make you to ſay with David, Pſalm li. 4. ‘Againſt thee, thee only have I ſinned, and done this evil in thy ſight’; underſtanding by your own experience what he meant thereby. In your meditation, ſet God’s way of dealing with you, all along from your very birth, over againſt your way of dealing with him; ſo ſhall conviction be brought home on your conſcience, with a peculiar edge; while, conſidering the mercies he hath heaped on you, the light and warnings he hath afforded you, your guilt will appear of a deepeſt dye.

5. Having thus ſeen your extreme ſinfulneſs, conſider in the next place the juſt demerit of your ſin, even God’s wrath and curſe, both in this life, and that which is to come. ‘For becauſe of theſe things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of diſobedience,’ Eph. v. 6. The law is a looking glaſs for ſinners, not only in its commands, but alſo in its threatenings and curſe, ſhewing unto all their curſed ſtate by nature; to unbelievers, what they are actually lying under for their ſins; and to believers, what theirs do deſerve. And therefore, after you have, as before directed, gone through all the ten commandments, for your conviction and humiliation; do you, for your further humiliation, ſet your eyes upon the threatnings and curſe of that holy law as a covenant of works; and ſee therein your juſt deſerving, ſo as that God may be juſtified when he ſpeaketh againſt you, and clear when he judgeth, Pſalm li. 4. And think with thyſelf, how thou ſhouldſt, without peradventure, eternally periſh under his wrath, if he ſhould proceed againſt thee according to his law and juſtice; as he hath actually proceeded againſt many, for thoſe very ſins wherewith thou art chargeable.

6. In this review of your ſins, endeavour all along that your eye may affect your heart. In vain will you rake into that dunghill, if ſuitable affections or emotions of heart be not thereby excited in you. And theſe ſuitable affections are, (1.) Hatred, deteſtation, and abhorrence of ſin, Pſal. cxix. 128. Rom. xii. 9. Wherefore pull the maſk from off it, remove the paint and varniſh that has been laid over it, that you may ſee it in its native deformity, and look on it untill your ſtomach turn on the ſometimes ſweet morſel. (2.) Grief and ſorrow of heart for it, Pſal. xxxviii. 18. Let your heart be rent, in conſideration of the offence thereby given to a gracious God, its contrariety to his holy nature and will, its diſhonouring of his Son who gave himſelf a ſacrifice for ſin, and grieving of his Spirit who ſanctifies us. (3.) Holy ſhame upon the account of it, Jer. xxxi. 19. Behold it is a filthy thing, the very reverſe of the beauty of holineſs, the holineſs of God expreſſed in his law; and be confounded at the ſight. Behold it as a baſe requital of divine favours, and bluſh before him. (4.) Self-loathing, Ezek. xxxvi. 31. Purſue the thought of the filthineſs of your ſin, till you lothe yourſelf in your own ſight, as rendered unclean all over, by abominations of heart and life. (5.) A longing to be rid of ſin, the guilt, defilement, prevailing, and indwelling of it. Dwell on the thought of your ſinfulneſs, till your heart, pained and burdened therewith, grone out longing deſires of deliverance, as Rom. vii. 24. ‘O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death!’ Who will draw this dagger out of my bowels! this ſting out of my conſcience! this poiſon out of my fleſh! Who will take this load off my back!

All this would be no more than neceſſary humiliation. For it will be the lot of every ſinner, either in time or in eternity, to be like the fiſh that is boiled in the water which it ſometime a day ſwimmed in. But ‘bleſſed are ye that weep now,’ Luke vi. 21. ‘Wo unto you that laugh now! for ye ſhall mourn and weep,’ verſe 25.

Laſtly, It will be very neceſſary, that the whole of this work be mixed with devout ejaculations. For be ſure Satan will be at your right hand, to reſiſt you, and to mar your work: your heart will be ready to miſgive you in it, to ſtop, and turn aſide: therefore preſs forward in it, lifting your eyes, every now and then, to the Lord for help.

With this review of your own ſins, let a view of the public ſins of the church and land wherein you live, be joined; uſing the ſame helps, as in your own particular caſe, which need not be here repeated.

And in relation to this, I ſubjoin only three advices.

1. Begin always with your own ſins; even though the principal cauſe of your faſt be the ſtate of the church or land. This has been the manner of the ſaints, Iſa. vi. 5. ‘Then ſaid I, wo is me, for I am undone, becauſe that I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midſt of a people of unclean lips.’ Dan. ix. 20. ‘And whilſt I was ſpeaking and praying, and confeſſing my ſin, and the ſin of my people Iſrael.’ The reaſon hereof is manifeſt: for one will never be duly humbled for the ſins of others, who is not in the firſt place ſo humbled for his own.

2. Repreſent public ſins to yourſelf, under ſuch notions as may tend to excite ſuitable affections and emotions of heart in you. Look on them as they are diſhonouring to our gracious God, wounding or ruining to the ſouls of men, diſgraceful to our holy Chriſtian profeſſion, and provoking God to wrath againſt the land. Hate and lothe them, be aſhamed of them, and mourn over them, on theſe accounts; and long for the day of purging them away.

3. See your own ſinful part in them, by all means. Bring them home to your own conſcience, before the Lord: ſearch out, and ſee what of the guilt thereof you are, either directly or indirectly, chargeable with in his ſight; and be deeply humbled for the ſame.

Thus far of the review of ſin.

DIRECT. VII.

After this review of your ſins made, go unto God by prayer, and make confeſſion of them. And here, confeſſion is to be the chief part of your prayer; yea, and if the whole of it almoſt be confeſſion, it will not be amiſs. Certainly extraordinary confeſſion of ſin, is a great part of the work of a religious faſt, Neh. ix. 3. Dan. ix. 20. And the ſolemn review, in which one’s ſins are ſo particularly ſearched out, natively iſſues therein.

For the more profitable management of this confeſſion of ſin, the following advices are offered.

1. Take no thought of your voice, farther than to keep it from being unſeaſonably high. For the voice in itſelf, is nothing before the heart-ſearching God, who regards not the ſound of mens throats, but of their heart and affections. ‘The true worſhippers ſhall worſhip the Father in ſpirit and in truth; for the Father ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him,’ John iv. 23. But ſometimes there is a deceit in the voice, to the beguiling of the ſoul; as it fared with Ezekiel’s hearers, with the mouth ſhewing much love, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. And one by an indiſcreet management of it, may be fruitleſsly weakened, and diſfitted for continuing at the work, ſo as need may require. The affections are the beſt rulers of the voice.

2. Endeavour to bring along into your confeſſion, and carry along, thoſe affections and emotions of heart, of which before: namely, hatred and deteſtation of ſin, godly ſorrow, holy ſhame, ſelf-loathing, and longing to be rid of ſin, Pſalm xxxviii. 18. ‘I will declare mine iniquity; I will be ſorry for my ſin.’ When the leper was to cry, Unclean, unclean, his cloaths were to be rent, his head bare, and there was to be a covering upon his upper lip, Lev. xiii. 45. A confeſſing tongue requires a broken heart, a ſpirit really weighted with a ſenſe of ſin. And the marble that ſweats in foul weather, but yet is neither a whit the ſofter, ſhall be an emblem of one confeſſing his ſin with a whole heart.

Yet let none ſenſible of the hardneſs of their heart, be thereby made to ſtand aloof from confeſſion, ſaying, ‘ Who will roll away the ſtone!’ Let them go forward, and eſſay it: let them confeſs their hardneſs of heart, and unfitneſs to make confeſſion; for ſo they may find the ſtone rolled away to their hand.

3. Be as full as you can in your confeſſion; laying all your ſpiritual ſores before the Lord, ſo far as you know them. One wound concealed from the phyſician, may prove fatal to the patient: and one ſin induſtriouſly paſſed over in confeſſion, may prove fatal to the ſinner; for ‘ he that covereth his ſins, ſhall not proſper,’ Prov. xxviii. 13. David was aware of this, Pſal. xxxii. 5. ‘ I acknowledged my ſin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid.’ It fared ill with Ananias and Sapphira, for that in another caſe, they lied unto God, and kept back a part, Acts v. And he is no true penitent, that deſires to hide any ſweet morſel under his tongue, and is not willing to take ſhame to himſelf for every known ſin.

4. Be very particular in your confeſſion, opening out your ſpiritual ſores before the Lord, Pſal. li. 4. ‘ I have ‘ done this evil in thy ſight.’ Joſh. vii. 20. ‘ I have ſin‘ ned,—and thus and thus have I done.” To confeſs the ſeveral kinds of your ſin in general, without deſcending to particulars, is too ſuperficial work on ſuch an occaſion. The particular abominations of your heart and life, are raiſed up in meditation, to be laid before the Lord in humble confeſſion. I ſuppoſe you to be at this work in a ſecret place, where you may freely utter before him, what it would not be proper you ſhould ſay in the hearing of others. No doubt, a great deal of freedom may be uſed in ſecret prayer, in narrating of thoughts and actions, with the deſignation of time, place, and perſons, ſo as may tend to one's deeper humiliation: which would not be to edification, in ſocial prayer.

Now, in order to your being the more full and particular in your confeſſion, I would recommend the ſame method and order to be obſerved therein, as in the review of your ſins. I believe, that, ſo doing, you will find the advantage of it. Go orderly through the ſeveral periods of your life, and through all the ten commandments, making your confeſſion; where alſo you may take in the confeſſion of public ſins, always ſo as may beſt tend to the further humiliation of yourſelf In a ſpecial manner, be very particular as to the ſignal miſcarriages of your life: and aggravate your guilt, acknowledging the aggravating circumſtances thereof. And unto the confeſſion of your known ſins, againſt all the ten commandments, add a humble acknowledgment of a large void and blank to be left for your unknown ſins againſt every one of them; which you can by no means fill up; but the all-knowing God can: for ‘ who can un‘ derſtand his errors?’ Pſal. xix. 12. And, conſidering the commands of the perfect law, as binding you to embrace the goſpel, confeſs your atrocious guilt in ſinning againſt the remedy of ſin, therein revealed, offered, and exhibited unto you.

5. It will be profitable, that all along through your confeſſion you approve of the law, as holy, juſt, and good, Rom. vii. 12. For as black doth beſt appear, when ſet by white; ſo ſin appears moſt clearly in its native hue, exceeding ſinful, when ſet over againſt the pure, holy, juſt, and good commandment. As for example, when you are to confeſs your ſins againſt the firſt commandment, you may ſay to this purpoſe, “ Lord, thou “ commandeſt me, ſaying, *Thou ſhalt have no other* “ *gods before me*. I acknowledge, this thy command “ is moſt juſt and reaſonable in itſelf, and moſt good “ for me. It was thou alone who made me, thou alone “ haſt preſerved me.—I never needed another god be“ ſides thee, and none but thou could ever do the part “ of a god to me.——Thou didſt magnify thy rich “ grace, in condeſcending to be in Chriſt a God to *me* “ a moſt wretched creature. Nevertheleſs, over the “ belly of this law of love, my duty, and my intereſt, “ I have had many other gods before thee: I have ſet “ up my curſed ſelf in thy room and ſtead,—made “ the vain world my god,—&c.” And ſo in other caſes.

6. Laſtly, Let your confeſſion be cloſed with ſelf-condemning, ſelf emptying, and a look of faith.

1ſt, Condemn yourſelf, as did the returning prodigal, Luke xv. 18. ‘ Father, I have ſinned againſt heaven, ‘ and before thee.’ Ver. 19. ‘ And am no more wor‘ thy to be called thy ſon.’ As you looked to the commandments before, and confeſſed your ſin; ſo look now to the threatenings and curſe of the law, and confeſs your juſt deſerving. Read there your deſerved doom, and paſs ſentence againſt yourſelf. Nothing is more natural, than that now you call yourſelf fool and beaſt; for that you have followed the wild fire of your corrupt inclinations, to the miring of yourſelf thus in ſin and guilt; and have broken over the hedge, where now you find the ſerpent biting you. And here,

(1.) Confeſs you deſerve no good, but all evil, in time. If the cauſe of your faſt be ſome evil you are at preſent ſmarting under, acknowledge God to be juſt, very juſt in it. If it is ſome ſtroke threatened, and hanging over your head, confeſs that you well deſerve it ſhould fall on you in its full weight. If it is light that you want, confeſs you deſerve to be left in darkneſs: or whatever be the mercy you come to make ſupplication for, acknowledge from the heart, that you have forfeited it. Surely, in caſe your uncircumciſed heart be humbled, you will accept of the puniſhment of your iniquity, Lev. xxvi. 41. And then, if your ſin has found you out, you will own the procedure againſt you to be righteous and holy; if your broken bones ſmart, you will ſay it is juſt: if the Lord has turned his former ſmiles into frowns, mixed your comforts with gall and wormwood, ſouring them ſo as to ſet your teeth on edge, blaſted your enjoyments, and ſqueezed the ſap out of them, you will, after confeſſion of ſin, ſay from your very heart, ‘ My folly makes it ſo.’

(2.) Confeſs you deſerve eternally to periſh, and that it is of the Lord's mercies you are not conſumed, Lam. iii. 22.; that God might in juſtice wrap you up in the filthy garments of your ſin, and caſt you out of his ſight, into the lake burning with fire and brimſtone, as the fitteſt place for ſuch a ſinful lump. Acknowledge yourſelf to be, in yourſelf, a wretched creature, juſtly under the curſe and condemnatory ſentence of the law, having nothing to ſay for yourſelf, at the bar of juſtice, why it may not be fully executed againſt you, a ſelf-condemned, as well as a law-condemned ſinner, Pſal. li. 4. Whatever your ſtate be in the ſight of God, it is altogether juſt, that your libel againſt yourſelf be not concluded without this.

2dly, Be emptied of yourſelf, in a humble and hearty acknowledgment of utter inability to help yourſelf. Having taken a view of the load of ſin lying upon you, and laid before the Lord the particulars of your burden, with the ſinking weight thereof, acknowledge that it is quite beyond your power to move it from off you. Say from the heart, “ Lord, here is a load of guilt lying “ upon me, which by no doing or ſuffering of mine can “ can be moved: here is a mighty power of ſin I am “ no more able to grapple with, than a little child with “ a giant: a dead weight I can no more remove, than “ I can remove a mountain. If thou leave me under “ it, as juſtly thou mayeſt, I periſh.’

This is true humiliation, where the poor broken ſinner lies at the Lord's feet, ſenſible that he is bound with ten thouſand cords of guilt, but unable to looſe the weakeſt of them; that his ſoul is preyed upon, and like to be devoured, by a ſwarm of living luſts, yet unable to kill or ſhake off any of them. If we are duly humbled, our humiliation will be carried thus far; for it is the ruin of many, that they ſee not the abſolute need of the blood of Chriſt, for removing of their guilt; and far leſs, the abſolute need of his Spirit, for breaking of the power of ſin in them.

Laſtly, Let there be a look of faith out of the low dungeon. Look unto God in Chriſt, and ſay, *God be merciful to me a ſinner*, Luke xviii. 13. *Turn thou to me, and I ſhall be turned*, Jer. xxxi. 18. Tell him, that, ſince according to his holy goſpel, there is yet hope in Iſrael concerning this thing, you muſt and will take the benefit of the goſpel-proclamation of grace and mercy, and lay hold on the horns of the altar; and therefore, tho' your weight be heavier than mountains of braſs, you do, with humble confidence, at the Father's bidding, lay it wholly over on the blood of his Son, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, truſting thereon allenarly for remiſſion of ſin, ſanctification, and complete ſalvation.

Now, as to the two directions laſt mentioned, I mean not, that what is propoſed in either of them, muſt needs be done all at once, without intermiſſion. You may uſe them, as you are beſt able to reach them. It is not very likely, that thoſe who ſpent one fourth part of the day in confeſſing and worſhipping, Neh. ix. 3. did make but one confeſſion continued without intermiſſion. So you may make ſuch intermiſſion in in either or both of them, as you find neceſſary. Chriſtian prudence muſt direct in the matter, to uſe the means, ſo as may beſt conduce to the end.

DIRECT. VIII.

After confeſſion of ſin, apply yourſelf to the duty of perſonal covenanting, explicit entering into, or renewing covenant with God, by taking hold of God's covenant of grace, in expreſs words. That this is a neceſſary part of the work of a perſonal faſt, may be gathered from Jer. l. 4. and Neh. ix. 38. both cited before. And it is clear from the nature of the thing; for to what purpoſe ſhall men lay open their wounds before the Phyſician of ſouls, if they mind not to put themſelves in his hand for cure, in the way of the covenant; or how can they pretend to mourn for ſin, if they are not to enter on the way of reformation? A time of perſonal faſting is a time for the runaway to return to his duty, and to ſet matters right again, that were put wrong by turning aſide from God and his way. And one unwilling to enter into covenant with God, cannot be ſincere in his confeſſion of ſin and mourning over it, whatever he may pretend.

For the right managing of this duty of perſonal covenanting, theſe three following advices are offered.

1. See that you underſtand, and rightly take up the covenant, the covenant of grace, together with the way and manner of a ſinner's perſonal entering into it, and being inſtated in it unto ſalvation; the which are to be learned from the holy ſcripture alone, as being revealed in it only. Miſtakes and miſapprehenſions of theſe things may be of very bad conſequence in the practice of this duty; for which cauſe men ought earneſtly to pray, that God would, by his own word and Spirit, ſhew them his covenant, according to the promiſe, Pſal. xxv. 14.

According to the ſcripture, the covenant, namely the covenant of grace for life and ſalvation, is not left unto you to make, in whole or in part, by propoſing and condeſcending on terms thereof, as a party-contractor; it is made already, completely made and concluded in all the articles thereof, whether conditionary or promiſſory, and that between God the party contractor on Heaven's ſide, and Chriſt as Mediator and ſecond Adam, the party contractor on loſt man's ſide. And it is regiſtered in the ſacred records, the holy ſcripture. And you are invited unto the fellowſhip of it, Pſal. lxxxix. 3. 'I have made a covenant with my choſen.——David 'my ſervant' 1 Cor. xv. 45. 'The laſt Adam,' 1 John i. 3. 'That which we have ſeen and heard, declare we 'unto you, that ye alſo may have fellowſhip with us; 'and truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with 'his Son Jeſus Chriſt.'

The condition of it is, Chriſt's fulfilling all righteouſneſs in the name of his Spiritual ſeed, Matth. iii. 15. *Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteouſneſs.* This righteouſneſs was ſtated from the broken covenant of works; and that in three things, namely, perfect holineſs of nature, righteouſneſs of life, and ſatisfaction for ſin; all which Chriſt did fulfil, in his being born perfectly holy, living perfectly righteous, and making compleat ſatisfaction by his death and ſufferings. And thus the condition of the covenant, on which is founded the right and claim to the promiſes of it, is fulfilled already to your hand.

The promiſe of it, reſpecting loſt ſinners, is the promiſe of eternal life in its full latitude, comprehending all things neceſſary to make a ſinner holy and happy: that God in Chriſt will be their God, and they ſhall be his people, Tit. i. 2. 'In hope of eternal life, which 'God that cannot lie, promiſed before the world began.' Heb. viii. 10. 'This is the covenant;—I will be to 'them a God, and they ſhall be to me a people.' And it is begun to be fulfilled to all who have taken hold of the covenant; and is ready to be fulfilled unto all, who yet ſhall take hold thereof.

This covenant is the plan laid by infinite wiſdom for the ſalvation of loſt ſinners; upon which they may ſafely venture themſelves, for time and eternity, as upon a bottom infallibly ſure, Iſa. lv. 3. 'I will make an ever'laſting covenant with you,' (Heb. *I will cut to you an everlaſting covenant*) 'even the ſure mercies of David,' 1 Cor. i. 23. 24. 'We preach Chriſt,—Chriſt the 'power of God, and the wiſdom of God.' It is heaven's device for repairing the loſs we ſuſtained by Adam's fall, whereby we become unholy and miſerable, lying in ignorance which we could not cure, under guilt and the curſe which we could not remove, and under bondage to ſin and Satan which we could not break, ver. 30. 'But of him are ye in Chriſt Jeſus, who of 'God is made unto us wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and 'ſanctification, and redemption.'

The great deſign of it, is to exalt the free grace of God, in the ſalvation of ſinners; to ſhew therein the exceeding riches of his grace to them, in Chriſt. It is a plan laid for cutting off all ground of boaſting from the creature; to make Chriſt all, and the creature nothing in its own ſalvation, as being indebted to free grace for the whole thereof, Eph. i. 6. 'To the praiſe of the 'glory of his grace.' Chap. ii. 7. 'That he might 'ſhew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kind'neſs towards us through Chriſt Jeſus.' Ver. 9. 'Not 'of works leſt any man ſhould boaſt.' It is much like unto a contract of marriage, deviſed and drawn by a wealthy and wiſe phyſician, of his own proper motion alone, between himſelf and a poor woman drowned in debt, weak and witleſs, and withal over-run with lothſome ſores, rendering her incapable to do any thing, whether for her own relief, or for his ſervice; and this upon a deſign to have her wholly indebted to him for her relief, the payment of her debt, the managing of her perſon, and her recovery for action and buſineſs.

This covenant is offered and exhibited to you in the goſpel, as really as that contract drawn and ſigned by the phyſician, would be offered and exhibited to the woman, if he ſhould come and preſent it to her, for her acceptance: Rom. x. 6. 'Say not in thine heart, Who 'ſhall aſcend into heaven (that is, to bring Chriſt down 'from above,') Verſ. 7. 'Or, Who ſhall deſcend in'to the deep? (that is, to bring up Chriſt again from 'the dead.') Verſ. 8. 'But what ſaith it? The word 'is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: 'that is the word of faith which we preach.' So that the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, to wit, the holineſs of nature wherewith he was born, and which he retained unſpotted till death, the righteouſneſs of his life, and his ſatisfaction made by his ſufferings, is in that word freely offered and exhibited to you, as the fulfilled condition of the covenant, being *therein revealed unto faith*, Rom. i.

17. *Gr.* as alſo, the promiſe of eternal life, as the promiſe of the covenant to be fulfilled, being therein left you. Heb. iv. 1.

Hence it appears that the duty of perſonal covenanting is much miſtaken and miſmanaged, where the party apprehending that God, in the word, declares himſelf willing to be his God, upon certain terms to be by him performed, different from accepting God's full and free covenant of promiſe, does accordingly make a covenant with God, ſolemnly taking him for his God upon theſe terms; promiſing and vowing, that if God will be his God, pardon his ſins, be at peace with him, and ſave his ſoul, he will for his part, be one of his people, and faithfully ſerve him all the days of his life, watching againſt all known ſin, and performing every known duty. This is juſt as if the woman, in the caſe before put, ſhould tell him who offers her the contract, that ſhe is content to take him for her huſband, upon certain terms; particularly, that if he will be her huſband, and do the duty of a huſband to her, ſhe will, for her part, be a faithful wife to him, all the days of her life, doing all that ſhe is able to do for paying off her debt, managing herſelf and his houſhold to the beſt of her ſkill, and taking all pains on her ſores, to make her lovely in his eyes: the which being quite contrary to the deſign and end of that unuſual kind of contract, which is, to have the wife wholly indebted to the huſband for all, doth alter the nature of the propoſal, and would quite mar the ſurpriſing match, which was in a fair way to be carried on.

But likeas, in that caſe, nothing remains for the woman to do, to entitle her to the benefit of the contract, but believing it to be a real and ſerious, not a ludicrous deed, to ſign her acceptance: which ſigned with the hand is neceſſary, becauſe her belief of the reality of the offered contract, and truſting to it accordingly, being inward acts of the ſoul, cannot be known among men, but by a proper external ſign; even ſo all that remains for you, to inſtate you ſavingly in God's covenant of grace, offered and exhibited to you in the goſpel, is to take hold of it, Iſa. lvi. 4.

And to the end that, in your aiming to take hold of the covenant, you may not be at a loſs, fearing that you may miſs any part or parts thereof, lying ſcattered through the bleſſed Bible; know, that Jeſus Chriſt, the ſecond Adam, head of the covenant, is by his Father given for a covenant to you, Iſa. xlix. 8. So that you have the whole covenant in him; and you take hold of it, by taking hold of him offered and exhibited to you in the free promiſe of the goſpel.

And this is done by faith, or believing on his name, according to John i. 12. ‘As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the ſons of God, even to them that believe on his name.’ Wherefore, by believing on the name of Chriſt, we take hold of the covenant, and are inſtated in it unto ſalvation. And God hath made believing to be the means of inſtating ſinners perſonally and ſavingly in the covenant, in conſonancy with the great deſign and end thereof, declared in the word, and of which before: Rom. iv. 16. ‘Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace.’ chap. iii. 27. ‘Where is boaſting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay, but by the law of faith.’

Now, to believe on the name of Chriſt, is to believe or credit the free promiſe of the goſpel with application to yourſelf, and accordingly to truſt on him as the Saviour of the world, and your Saviour, in whom God will be your God, and you ſhall be one of his people, unto your ſalvation from ſin and from wrath: Mark i. 15. ‘Believe the goſpel.’ Gal. iii. 2. ‘The hearing of faith.’ 1 Theſſ. i. 5. ‘Our goſpel came not unto you in word only, but alſo in power, and in the Holy Ghoſt, and in much aſſurance.’ 1 Cor. ii. 4. ‘In demonſtration of the Spirit, and of power:’ Ver. 5. ‘That your faith ſhould ſtand—in the power of God.’ And Acts xvi 31. ‘Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved.’ Pſal. xxxvii. 40. ‘He ſhall ſave them, becauſe they truſt in him.’ And ii. 12. ‘Bleſſed are they that put their truſt in him.’ Acts xv. 11. ‘We believe, that, through the grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, we ſhall be ſaved.’ This believing, or crediting the word, and truſting on the perſon of Chriſt, is that which of all things is fartheſt removed from the nature of a work, according to the ſcripture-uſe of that word; and therefore is the moſt agreeable means of ſaving entrance into that covenant, which is *of faith, that it might be by grace: not of works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt.*

A ſinner, being by this believing on Chriſt united to him as the head of the covenant, is thereby perſonally entered into the covenant; ſo as, in his right, to have a ſaving intereſt in the condition, promiſe and privileges thereof, unto his eternal ſalvation: even as becoming, through natural generation, children of Adam the head of the covenant of works, we are perſonally entered into that covenant; ſo as to be involved in the guilt of the breach of it, and laid under the curſe thereof: Rom. v. 19. ‘For as by one man's diſobedience many were made ſinners: ſo by the obedience of one ſhall many be made righteous.’ John x. 9. ‘I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he ſhall be ſaved.’ Eph. iii. 17. ‘That Chriſt may dwell in your hearts by faith.’

Upon this believing on the name of Chriſt, crediting and truſting in manner ſaid before, do neceſſarily follow, an abſolute conſent to take him for our Huſband, Head, and Lord, and God in him for our God; an unconditional reſignation of ourſelves unto him, ſoul and body, to be his only, wholly, and for ever: with an illimited renounciation of all other for him; even as, in the caſe before put, upon the woman's believing the reality of the offer of the contract of marriage between the phyſician and her, and accordingly, that he will indeed be her huſband, follows her conſenting to take him for her huſband, head, and lord, giving up herſelf unto him, and renouncing all other for him, abſolutely, unconditionally, without limitation or reſervation; the which ſhe can never do, till once ſhe believe that. And thus to the word of grace, the covenant offered and exhibited in the goſpel, ‘I will be to them a God, and they ſhall be to me a people,’ the believing ſoul anſwereth, as an echo, ‘My beloved is mine, and I am his,’ Cant. ii. 16.

2. Having underſtood the covenant aright, together with the way and manner of being perſonally and ſavingly entered into it, examine yourſelf anent it impartially, as ever you would make ſure work in this weighty matter. Inquire into your ſenſe of the need of the covenant, your belief of it, and the diſpoſition of your heart towards it. And upon theſe heads, poſe yourſelf with theſe or the like queſtions.

“In the firſt place, O my ſoul, do I verily believe, that I was loſt, ruined, and undone in Adam, by his breaking of the covenant of works; and that I have ruined myſelf more and more, by my actual tranſgreſſions? Do I believe, that I am by nature wholly corrupt and ſinful, averſe to good, prone to evil, and juſtly laid under the curſe, binding me over to the revenging wrath of God for time and eternity? Am I convinced, that I am utterly unable to help myſelf, in whole or in part, out of this guilt of ſin and miſery into which I am plunged; and that I muſt needs periſh under the guilt, dominion, and pollution of my ſin without being juſtified or ſanctified, for ever, if I be not relieved by heaven's own hand?

“Next, O my ſoul, do I believe, that there is a covenant of grace, for the relief of loſt ſinners, eſtabliſhed between God the Father, and his Son Jeſus Chriſt, as ſecond Adam, wherein, upon condition of Chriſt's fulfilling all righteouſneſs, as a public perſon, is promiſed eternal life to them, that God in Chriſt will be their God, and they ſhall be his people? Do I believe that this is the plan and device of heaven, for life and ſalvation to loſt ſinners, for making of them holy, and for making of them happy ? Do I believe, that Jeſus Chriſt hath by his holy birth, righteous life, ſatisfactory death and ſufferings, performed that condition of the covenant, and thereby purchaſed and ſecured the benefit therein promiſed, for poor ſinners ? Then, do I indeed believe, that this covenant already fulfilled in its condition, and certainly to be fulfilled in its promiſe, is, in Chriſt crucified, really offered and exhibited to me in the goſpel ; and that I am called to the fellowſhip of it in him ? And then, do I verily believe on the name of Chriſt crucified, offered and exhibited to me, as the great High Prieſt, who, by the ſacrifice of himſelf, hath made the atonement, paid the ranſom, and brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs for poor ſinners ? That is to ſay, (1.) Can I credit his word of grace to me, that he with his righteouſneſs will be mine, and in him, God will be my God, and I ſhall be one of his people ? (2.) And can I, as on a ſafe bottom, truſt on him as my Saviour, that in him it ſhall be ſo unto me, to my eternal life and ſalvation, to the making of me holy and happy ?

“ Finally, O my ſoul, how do I like the covenant ? Am I pleaſed with the frame of it, whereby Chriſt was from eternity appointed, not only the Prieſt of the covenant, to fulfill the condition of it, but alſo the Prophet and the King thereof, to adminiſter it ? And can I find in my heart to acquieſce in that device for ſalvation, as all my ſalvation, and all my deſire, for making me holy and happy ? Am I content to take Chriſt the Son of God, for my only Prieſt, Surety, Interceſſor, and Redeemer ; and in him, the Father for my Father, and the Holy Ghoſt for my Sanctifier ; God in Chriſt for my God ? Am I willing wholly to reſign myſelf, ſoul and body, to him, to be ſaved by his blood alone, renouncing all confidence in my own righteouſneſs, doings, and ſufferings ? Am I content to take him for my Head and Huſband ? Particularly, am I content to take him for my alone Prophet, Oracle, and Guide ; to reſign and give up myſelf wholly to him, to be taught, guided, and directed in all things, by his word and Spirit ; renouncing mine own wiſdom, and the wiſdom of this world ? Am I content to take him for my alone King and Lord ; to reſign myſelf wholly, ſoul and body, unto him, to be reſcued by his power from ſin, death, and the devil, and this preſent evil world, for to ſerve him for ever, and to be ruled by the will of his command, as to my duty, and the will of his providence, as to my lot ? And am I heartily content to part with and renounce every known ſin, and particularly that which moſt eaſily beſets me ; together with my own fooliſh will, and all other lords beſides him ; without reſervation, and without exception againſt his croſs ? And am I really, as in his ſight, willing to have diſcovered unto me, and upon diſcovery to part with every ſin in me, that I know not ?”

Now, howbeit all doubting as to ſuch of theſe points as are points of faith, and every the leaſt degree of averſion to the conſenting, reſignation, and renunciation, is ſin before the Lord, and needs to be purged away by the Redeemer's blood ; yet they ought not to ſtop your proceedings, unleſs they be predominant over your belief and willingneſs in the matter : Mark ix. 24. *Lord, I believe : help thou mine unbelief.* Gal v. 17. *The fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit ;—ſo that ye cannot do the things that ye would*, namely, in that perfection that ye fain would *do them.* But indeed, if they be predominant, keeping your mind and heart quite unſettled, and wavering like a wave of the ſea, that hath nothing to fix it ; one cannot adviſe proceeding in that caſe ; for that would be to lie unto the Lord, with a witneſs ; James i. 6. *For he that wavereth is like a wave of the ſea, driven with the wind and toſſed.* Verſe 7. *For let not that man think that he ſhall receive any thing of the Lord.* Howbeit, a ſincere belief and willingneſs in theſe points, may indeed waver like a ſhip at anchor, which is ſtill held faſt in the place, notwithſtanding of all its wavering therein. And one may take hold of God's covenant of grace, unto ſalvation, even with a trembling hand.

3. Laſtly, Having in your ſelf-examination ſatisfied your conſcience as to theſe points, go unto God by prayer, and therein ſolemnly and in expreſs words, take hold of the covenant. The which may be done in words to this purpoſe.

“ O Lord, the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, I confeſs I am by nature a loſt ſinner wholly corrupted, and laid under the curſe, in Adam, thro' the breach of the covenant of works ; and have ruined myſelf more and more by my actual tranſgreſſions innumerable. I am convinced, and do acknowledge, that I am utterly unable to help myſelf, in whole or in part, out of this gulf of ſin and miſery, into which I am plunged ; and that it is beyond the reach of the whole creation to help me out of it : ſo that I muſt inevitably periſh for ever, if thine own ſtrong hand do not make help to me.

“ But foraſmuch as there is a covenant of grace for life and ſalvation to loſt ſinners, eſtabliſhed between Thee and thine own Son, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as ſecond Adam ; wherein, upon condition of his fulfilling all righteouſneſs, which is now performed in his having been born perfectly holy, lived altogether righteouſly, and made perfect ſatisfaction to juſtice by his death and ſufferings, thou haſt promiſed, that thou wilt be their God, and they ſhall be thy people, to the making of them holy and happy for ever : and that this covenant is, in Chriſt the head thereof, offered and exhibited to me in thy goſpel : and thou calleſt me into the fellowſhip of it in him : Therefore, upon the warrant of, and in obedience to thy command and call, I, a poor periſhing ſinner, do take hold of that covenant, for life and ſalvation to me ; believing on the name of Chriſt crucified, the head thereof, offered and exhibited to me, as the great High Prieſt, who, by the ſacrifice of himſelf, hath made atonement, paid the ranſom, and brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs for poor ſinners. I credit his word of grace to me, and accordingly truſt on him, that he with his righteouſneſs will be mine, and that in and through him, God will be my God, and I ſhall be one of his people, to the making of me holy and happy for ever.

“ O my God, I do by thy grace acquieſce in that covenant, as all my ſalvation and all my deſire. With my whole heart and ſoul the Son incarnate is my only Prieſt, my Surety, my Interceſſor, and my Redeemer ; and, in him, the Father my Father, the Holy Ghoſt my Sanctifier ; God in Chriſt my God. I reſign myſelf, ſoul and body, to him, to be ſaved by his blood alone ; renouncing all confidence in mine own righteouſneſs, doings, and ſufferings. With my whole heart and ſoul, he is my Head and Huſband. And I am his only, wholly, and forever ; to live by him, to him, and for him. I take him for my alone Prophet, Oracle, and Guide ; give up myſelf wholly to him, to be taught, guided, and directed in all things, by his word and Spirit ; and renounce mine own wiſdom, and the wiſdom of this world. He is, with my heart's conſent, my alone King and Lord. And I reſign myſelf wholly, ſoul and body, unto him, to be reſcued by the ſtrength of his mighty hand, from ſin, death, and the devil, and this preſent evil world, for to ſerve him for ever, and to be ruled by the will of his command, as to my duty, and the will of his providence, as to my lot. I am with my whole heart content (Lord, thou knoweſt) to part with, and do renounce every known ſin, luſt, or idol, and particularly, my——the ſin which moſt eaſily beſets me ; together with my own fooliſh

“ will, and all other lords beſides him; without reſervation, and without exception againſt his croſs: proteſting in thy ſight, O Lord, that I am, through grace, willing to have diſcovered unto me, and upon diſcovery, to part with every ſin in me that I know not: and that the doubtings and averſeneſs of heart mixed with this my accepting of thy covenant, are what I allow not; and that, notwithſtanding thereof, I look to be accepted of thee herein, in the beloved, thine only Son and my Saviour, purging away theſe, with all my other ſins, by his precious blood.

“ Let it be recorded in heaven, O Lord, and let ——— and whatever is here preſent, bear witneſs, that I, tho' moſt unworthy, have this day here taken hold of, and come into thy covenant of grace, offered and exhibited to me in thy goſpel; and that thou art my God in the tenor of that covenant, and I am one of thy people, from henceforth and for ever.”

DIRECT. IX.

After covenanting with God, ſet yourſelf to ply the throne of grace by prayer and ſupplication, with reference to what is the particular cauſe or cauſes of your faſt. This is ſurely the proper order: for then is one in beſt caſe to make ſpecial requeſts unto the Lord, when, by application of the blood of Chriſt, in taking hold of the covenant, his conſcience is purged; whereas if one falls to that work before this, he cannot have the confidence towards God neceſſary in this caſe, 1 John iii. 20. 21.

And for the right managing hereof, the following advices are offered.

1. As it is fit you ſhould, the night before, condeſcend in your own mind, on the cauſes of your faſt; ſo now again you ſhould review them, partly, that the things which you are to lay before the Lord in prayer and ſupplication, may be ready before you; and partly that you may be duly affected therewith.

2. Then go to prayer, and preſent your petitions anent them, to your covenanted God. And pray again and again on theſe heads, as you ſhall find your caſe to require; for the time is ſet apart for that end, that you may have opportunity to wreſtle with God, in prayer and ſupplication thereanent.

3. In theſe prayers, let there be a holy mixture of humility ſuitable to our unworthineſs, fervency ſuitable to our preſſing needs, and of confidence in God ſuitable to the acceſs unto him allowed us by the covenant: the which are the ſpecial ingredients in prevailing prayer.

1ſt, In all your addreſſes to the throne of grace, continue a humble ſupplicant, not forgetting, but maintaining a due ſenſe of your ſinfulneſs, vileneſs, and unworthineſs of the mercies you make ſuit for. *Lord, I am not worthy that thou ſhouldſt come under my roof*, ſaith the Centurion, Matth. viii. 8. *I am not worthy of the leaſt of all thy mercies*, ſaith Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 10. Due humility will oblige you to look on yourſelf as abſolutely unworthy of ſpiritual mercies, though in the mean time, you ſee an abſolute need of them: it will keep you from being peremptory in the matter of temporal mercies, and diſpoſe you to a holy ſubmiſſion unto the will of God therein: and it will engage you in matters of light, to lay yourſelf fairly open to the divine determination.

If, in this laſt caſe, your own inclination do ſway you to any one ſide; yet be ſure to have no regard to it before the Lord, but come unto him, as it were, in an equipoiſe, to be caſt to what ſide he will. Such are the *meek he will guide in judgment, the meek he will teach his way*, Pſal. xxv. 9. Unfair dealing with God in this caſe is exceeding ſinful and dangerous. They who venture on it, are therein diſſemblers; and will readily throw off their maſk, if the anſwer of God fall not in with the ſide that their inclination is on: they will repel it, they will not ſee it; but will take their own way, notwithſtanding, to the provoking of the eyes of his glory. Whereof we have a remarkable inſtance, in the Jews conſulting God as to what they ſhould do, while in the mean time they were aforehand reſolved what to do, being bent to go to Egypt, Jer. xli. 17. chap. xlii. 1.—6. 19. 20. chap. xliii. 2.-7. Such dealing with God, in the matter of light, ſometimes provokes him to give men their will, with a vengeance. Thus Balaam got an anſwer from God, plainly notifying to him, that he ſhould not go with Balak's meſſengers, Numb xxii. 12. But that anſwer not ſuiting his inclinations, which were towards *the wages of unrighteouſneſs*, 2 Pet. ii. 15. he went back for another anſwer more agreeable thereto, and in wrath he got it, ver 19. 20. 21. 22.

2dly, Be fervent in your addreſſes, *labouring fervently in prayer*, Col. iv. 12. On ſuch occaſions, the body is afflicted, that the ſpirit may become the more earneſt in ſupplication; the ordinary weight of worldly incumbrances is laid aſide, that the ſoul may the more readily take wing, and mount heavenward. *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*, James v. 16.

3dly, Pray with confidence in God, through Jeſus Chriſt; believingly, not doubtingly and diſtruſtfully: Matth. xxi. 22. *And all things whatſoever ye ſhall aſk in prayer, believing, ye ſhall receive.* Whether your petitions be for temporal or ſpiritual mercies, preſent them to the Father in the name of Chriſt, according to the promiſes of the covenant relative thereto; believing, and being confident on the ground of the merit and interceſſion of the Mediator, that God will do the beſt in your caſe, that your labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord, and that what is for his glory and your good ſhall not be withheld from you, Pſal. lxxxv. 11.

4. In the intervals of prayer, give yourſelf to ſome godly exerciſe, ſuch as ſinging of Pſalms, reading of the word, or meditation. And particularly, if you be ſeeking light into a matter, you may enter on thinking about it, in order to your clearing therein; weighing circumſtances with dependence on the Lord, according to the promiſe, Pſal. xxxii. 8. *I will inſtruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou ſhalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.* And eſpecially, if you are ſeeking light into the ſtate of your ſoul; here is a favourable nick of time for it; the marks and evidences of a gracious ſtate being, upon the back of covenanting with God, in a fair way to be diſcovered, to the ſatisfaction of the ſincere ſoul.

5. Laſtly, Lay no weight on the quantity of your prayers; that is to ſay, how long, or how many they are. Theſe things avail nothing with God; by whom prayers are not meaſured, but weighed. And what makes the weight in them, is the faith, fervency, and humility therein: ſo that one of thoſe groanings mentioned, Rom. viii. 26. will down-weigh a whole day's prayers, in which theſe things are wanting. Do you labour to get near God in prayer, and preſs forward to obtain that.

DIRECT. X.

As you have ability and opportunity, let works of charity and mercy be joined with your faſt; doing them, whether in the time of it, or before it, or after it: Iſa. lviii. 6. *Is not this the faſt that I have choſen?*—ver. 7.—*to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are caſt out, to thy houſe? when thou ſeeſt the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyſelf from thine own fleſh?* Let the poor be gainers by your faſt: for it is the promiſe of God, that *he that watereth, ſhall be watered alſo himſelf*, Prov. xi. 25.: and one's finding mercy with God, natively iſſues in a merciful diſpoſition towards one's fellow-creatures, Matth. xviii. 33. Eph. iv. 32.

DIRECT. XI.

Before you give over your work, you will do well to conſider ſeriouſly, that you are now the Lord's and no more your own: and foraſmuch as your covenanting with God, ſuppoſeth that you are reſolved to reform, and to walk more cloſely with God; lay down reſolutions, in the ſtrength of your covenanted God, to watch. And by all means forget not to conſider, what are thoſe things whereby, in a ſpecial manner, your ſpiritual condition hath formerly been worſted; and by what means it may be kept right; and ſincerely reſolve, to eſchew the one, and purſue the other; that ſo what gaps have been in your converſation, may be filled up, whereby it will appear, that by your faſt you have been ſet forward in your Chriſtian courſe. And withal review your failures in all the parts of the exerciſe you have now been employed in.

DIRECT. XII.

You may conclude the work with prayer, wherein you may humbly confeſs your failures in the management of this duty, and apply anew to the blood of ſprinkling for purging them away; avouch your covenant-intereſt in God, and his in you; and lay the cauſes of your faſt again before him, and ſolemnly leave them on him. The laying over a matter on the Lord believingly, in prayer, gives great eaſe to a burdened heart: it turns a faſt ſometimes into a ſpiritual feaſt. When Hannah had done ſo with her caſe, ſhe *went away and did eat, and her countenance was no more ſad*, 1 Sam. i. 18. And lay over yourſelf upon him, for the grace of the covenant, to ſubdue your corruptions, bear you up againſt temptations, and carry on your reſolutions; that you may go out into the world again, in the faith of his grace ſufficient for you in all exigencies.

DIRECT. XIII.

When the work is over, take heed to your ſpirit: And,

1. Beware of ſpiritual pride. Do not value yourſelf upon the account of the work done, as they did who ſaid, 'Wherefore have we faſted, and thou ſeeſt not?' Iſa. lviii. 3. The opinion of the merit of good works, is what the heart of man eaſily goes off into, by its natural bias; and there is ſo much of the old man in the beſt, that they are apt to think highly of their religious performances and ſervices. Wherefore be on your guard, particularly on that ſide; and conſider the perfection required by the holy law, and keep in view your own miſmanagements, ſo as when you ſhall have done all thoſe things, you may be obliged to ſay, *We are unprofitable ſervants*, Luke xvii. 10.

2. Beware of carnal ſecurity. Saints ſometimes fall aſleep, quickly after a full meal of ſpiritual enjoyment; as it fared with the ſpouſe, Cant. v. 1. 2. And Satan, watching the advantage, rallies his ſcattered forces, and with his wounded men burns the city. So it comes to paſs, that, according to Solomon's obſerve, Prov. xii. 27. *The ſlothful roſteth not that which he took in hunting*: what was gathered with much pains, is loſt through unwatchfulneſs, ere he gets the uſe of it.

3. Laſtly, Beware of forgetting the cauſes of your faſt; but in your ordinary addreſſes to God, remember them; and wait on for an anſwer. Pſal. v. 3. *I will direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.* Prayers may be accepted, and yet not preſently anſwered. In which caſe, it is neceſſary that with patience we wait for a return from heaven, mean while uſing the appointed means for obtaining the end. The neglecting hereof may provoke the Lord to continue the ſymptoms of his anger, or ſtroke of his hand, which otherwiſe might ſooner be removed; and to leave one perplexed and embarraſſed, in matters wherein light is needed.

But in your waiting for light, whatever the Sovereign Lord may do, do not you look for impreſſions, far leſs for voices, nor extraordinary revelations any manner of way, to diſcover your duty in particular caſes, 2 Pet. i. 18. 19. But, having laid yourſelf fairly open to the divine determination, and made humble and earneſt ſupplication unto God for light in your particular caſe, believe that you ſhall be guided, taught, and directed by him, according to his promiſe, Pſal. xxv. 9. Prov. iii. 6. And then, in dependence on the Lord, weigh the matter and circumſtantiate caſe in the balance of ſanctified reaſon, according to the general directions of the word, ſuch as Philip. iv. 8. *Whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praiſe, think on theſe things.* And carefully obſerve the conduct and motions of providence, with reference to it, ſtill comparing them with the word. And you will find, that he will guide you with his eye, according to the promiſe, Pſal. xxxii. 8. And with reſpect thereto, you may put up that petition unto him in faith, Pſal. lxxxvi. 17. *Shew me a token for good.*

Thus far of perſonal faſting and humiliation.

CHAP. III.

Of FAMILY *Faſting and Humiliation in particular.*

Wherein the ſubſtance of this duty, which is the ſame in all religious faſts whatſoever, doth conſiſt, is already declared. And there being many things common to family-faſts, with perſonal ones, of which we have treated at large; it remains only to add here ſome few things peculiar to family-faſting. And,

First, As to the divine warrant for it, one may be ſatisfied upon theſe grounds.

1. Foraſmuch as every Chriſtian family ought to be a church, Rom. xvi. 5. to receive all ordinances appointed of God, and competent to them in their family capacity; and that religious faſting is an ordinance of divine appointment, in the nature whereof there is nothing to hinder its being performed by a family in their family-capacity: it is evident, that family faſting and humiliation is a part of family-worſhip; namely, an extraordinary part thereof, to be occaſionally performed. Accordingly, it is promiſed as an effect of the pouring out of the Spirit, Zech. xii. 12. *The land ſhall mourn, every family apart.* We have alſo a plain inſtance of it, in Eſther's family, on the occaſion of the miſchievous decree againſt the Jews, procured by Haman, Eſth. iv.

16. *I alſo and my maidens will faſt likewiſe.* And the faſting of the Jews, on the ſame occaſion, in every province whitherſoever that decree came, mentioned ver. 3. ſeems to have been moſtly, if not altogether, of the ſame kind, to wit, family-faſting; not only, in reſpect of their circumſtances in thoſe provinces where they were diſperſed, chap. iii. 8. but alſo, that the thankſgiving for their deliverance was appointed to be kept throughout every family, chap. ix. 28.

2. The ground upon which the duty of faſting and humiliation is bound upon public worſhipping ſocieties, and upon particular perſons, takes place alſo in the caſe of families. If national, congregational, and perſonal ſins to be mourned over, judgments to be deprecated, and mercies to be ſought, do found a call to a nation, congregation, or perſon, reſpectively, to humble themſelves with faſting; can there be any reaſon aſſigned, why the ſame ſhould not hold in like manner, in the caſe of families? Surely, as there are times wherein it goes ill with a land, or with a particular congregation or perſon; ſo there are times wherein it goes evil with one's houſe, 1 Chron. vii. 23. in reſpect of ſpecial family ſins or ſtrokes; and in which there are ſpecial family-mercies needed. And families are obliged to the uſing of the ſame appointed means for getting rid of the one, and obtaining the other; as other worſhipping ſocieties, and particular perſons, are, in their reſpective caſes. And where the concern of members of a family is common, although it be not equal, all of them ought, in reaſon, to take part of the burden.

3. Laſtly, The promiſe made to joint prayers hath weight here. Matth. xviii. 19. *If two of you ſhall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they ſhall aſk, it ſhall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.* Ver. 20. *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midſt of them.* It is certain, there is ſuch a thing as extraordinary prayer, which hath a ſhare in the benefit of this promiſe: and if the Lord is pleaſed to lay ſuch a weight on ſome of his people, their agreeing together to aſk a thing of him, or their ſounding together, as the word properly ſignifies; it is not to be doubted, but extraordinary prayer in families, upon ſome ſpecial occaſions, is both required by him, and acceptable unto him through Jeſus Chriſt his Son.

Secondly, As for a providential call to family faſting and humiliation; by what is ſaid before, for clearing of one's call to perſonal faſting, it may be judged of and diſcerned; the circumſtances of the family being duly conſidered, and what the conduct of providence towards it, appears to point unto. The caſe of others, in whom the family hath a particular concern, eſpecially the caſe of the church, may found a call to family faſting: as in the practice of Eſther with her maids, Eſth. iv 16. And ſo may the privace caſe of the family itſelf; whether in reſpect of family-ſins, family-ſtrokes, threatned or inflicted, or ſome ſpecial family-mercies to be deſired. And ſince the exemplification of theſe general heads, in one's private caſe, made in the ſecond ſection of the foregoing chapter, may without difficulty be accomodated to the caſe of one's family, by perſons of the meaneſt capacity diſpoſed to conſider them, it is not neceſſary here to deſcend to particulars again.

Laſtly, For directions towards family-faſting; there are but few that need to be added unto thoſe given before, in the caſe of perſonal faſting. It is plain from the nature of the thing, that the external ordering and management of this matter belongs to the head of the family: and he or ſhe is diſcreetly to chuſe and appoint the time and place, wherein the family may perform the duty with leaſt diſturbance; and to ſee that all be done decently and in order. And,

1. Let the head of the family, ſome competent time, at leaſt the night before, give notice to them, that ſuch a time is ſet apart for, and to be ſpent in that exerciſe: and withal ſhew them the cauſes of it, and exhort them to ſtir up themſelves to the duties of ſuch a ſolemn approach unto God. Common prudence will direct, as well as Chriſtian duty doth oblige, the huſband to conſult his wife aforehand, as to the fixing of the time to be ſet apart in the family for that extraordinary piece of devotion.

2. In the morning, let each member in the family go apart by himſelf into ſome ſecret place, and there ſpend ſome time in reviewing, confeſſing, covenanting, praying, and ſupplicating, as directed in the caſe of perſonal faſting, ſo far as he can overtake them. The more conſcientiouſly this ſecret work is managed, it will readily fare the better with the family, when met together.

3. Let the head of the family, having taken to himſelf, and allowed to them, a competent time for their extraordinary ſecret devotions, thereafter call them together. And the family being conveened, he may again, if need be, lay before them the cauſes of their faſt, with ſuitable exhortations and encouragements, for exciting them unto the duty. And after calling on God for aid of his holy Spirit, let him ſing with them ſome pſalm or a part of a pſalm, ſuitable to ſuch an occaſion, ſuch as Pſalm. lxxx. 1. and downwards, Pſalm xxxix. 6. to the end, Pſalm li. 1. and downwards; read before them ſome pertinent paſſage of ſcripture, ſuch as thoſe mentioned in the 6th direction of the preceeding chapter; and then pray with them. After prayer made by the head of the family, let the miſtreſs of the family, and ſuch others as he judgeth fit, pray, one after another. It is very deſirable, that each member of the family, being through grace fit to be employed, do take a part in that work. In the intervals of prayer, there may be ſinging, reading, or conference, as may be found moſt expedient.

4. It is fit that in theſe prayers there be extraordinary confeſſion of ſin, as particular as may be expedient; together with profeſſion of repentance, and hearty ſorrow for ſin, and of unfeigned deſire to return unto God, and unto the duties of a chriſtian life: and then, fervent and earneſt ſupplications, upon the matters that are the peculiar cauſes of the faſt.

5. It is proper, that the concluding prayer be made by the head of the family; and that therein he reſume the confeſſions, profeſſions, and ſupplications on the matters of the faſt; humbly acknowledge their failures in the management of the work; and profeſs their looking for pardon and acceptance through the blood of Jeſus Chriſt alone, and alſo for grace to walk in the ways of new obedience, through the ſame atoning blood. Then the joint exerciſe may be cloſed, with ſinging ſome part of a pſalm, ſuch as Pſalm. xc. 13. to the end; Pſal. lxxxv. 6. to the end: or Pſal. lxix. 30. and downward.

6. Laſtly, The joint exerciſe of the family being over, let each of them go apart by himſelf again, and ſpend ſome time in a review of what they have been employed in, and in ſecret prayer: the which is but a ſuitable concluſion to ſuch ſolemn work. And family reformation ought to follow hereupon; every member of the family watching over himſelf, and all of them watching one over another; that by their holy walking in peace and unity, and a conſcientious performance of their relative duties, it may appear, that they have been ſincere and upright before the Lord, in their faſt.

The CONCLUSION.

AND now, to recommend the practice of thoſe duties, to perſons and families, theſe five things are offered in favour thereof; namely, that the practice of them is a proper means, 1. To bring ſtrangers to religion acquainted with it; 2. To recover backſliders; 3. To prevent relapſes; 4 To prepare for a time of trial; and laſtly, to get matters clear for eternity.

Firſt. The practice of perſonal and family faſting and humiliation, is a proper means to bring ſtrangers to religion acquainted with it; that thoſe who have not yet dipt into practical religion, may begin to enter into it. The work of converſion unto God begins at ſolemn ſerious conſideration of one's own ſpiritual ſtate and caſe: the which if ſinners could once be brought unto, there would be ſome hope of them, as of the prodigal, when he came to himſelf, Luke xv. 17. And if they would ſet themſelves to the duty of perſonal faſting, and maſters of families would now and then uſe family-faſts, they might at length be brought to conſider of their ſpiritual ſtate and caſe. Wherefore,

1. Ye who are young, and have not yet dipt into the heart of religion, this memorial is for you. It is preſumed, ye were baptized in your infancy, and that now ye are come to the years of diſcretion: but have you ever as yet taken a ſolemn deliberate view of your loſt and undone ſtate by nature, under ſin and the curſe; and of the remedy provided for you in Jeſus Chriſt? And have you ever as yet perſonally entered into covenant with God, by taking hold of this covenant of grace? You eat, you drink, you ſleep, you work, you play or divert yourſelves; and ſo do young beaſts too, the which, when they are dead, are done: but you have an immortal ſoul, that muſt eternally live happy in heaven, or miſerable in hell. It may be, that you ſay your prayers too: but have you as yet perſonally renounced the devil, the vain world, and the fleſh? You cannot but ſee, that death ſeizeth ſome as young and ſprightly as you are; and you know not how ſoon God may call you off: have you then laid your meaſures for eternity? Alas! you are heedleſsly running about the devil's trap, playing yourſelves about the pit's mouth: and ſhould your foot ſlip now, you are undone for ever. *Thus ſaith the Lord of hoſts, Conſider your ways.*

2. Careleſs ſinners, careleſs about the concerns of the other world, whatever your age or years be, this memorial is for you. 'Ye careleſs ones, ſtrip ye, and make ye bare, and gird ſackcloth upon your loins,' Iſa. xxxii. 11. What is your religion? Is it not like the foam on the water, no ſubſtance in it? What is your life and converſation? See your own picture, Jer. ii. 24. 'A wild aſs uſed to the wilderneſs, that ſnuffeth up the wind at her pleaſure.' What condition is your ſoul in? The emblem of it is the ſluggard's vine-yard, *All grown over with thorns, nettles covering the face thereof, and the ſtone wall thereof broken down*, Prov. xxiv. 30, 31. Can you really perſuade yourſelves, that you are going forth by the footſteps of the flock? that the ſaints now in glory took the ſinful liberty of thinking, ſpeaking, and acting, that you do? that their ſouls ſtate and caſe coſt them as few ſerious thoughts as yours hath coſt you? Do you think to ſtumble on a ſaving intereſt in Chriſt, a pardon, a heaven? No, you will not find it ſo. Up then, and be doing: ſet apart ſome time for conſidering of, and doing ſomething effectually in your ſoul's caſe; that you may go to the ground of the matter, and get it rectified.

Secondly, It is a proper means for the recovery of backſliders, that they may remember whence they are fallen, and repent, and do the firſt works, Rev. ii. 5. There are not a few, who ſome time a day bloſſomed fair, in hopeful beginnings of religion, who are now withered. Their bones are dried, and there is no ſap of that kind in them now: and by their ſinning againſt light, they have provoked God to depart from them, ſo as there is no ſap in ordinances, nor in providences, to them neither; but theſe are all, as it were, blaſted to them, and they are left in the unhappy caſe of the vineyard, Iſa. v. 6. *I will alſo command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.* And ſome are not only withered, but are become noiſome in their life and converſation: they have not only loſt any life of religion they ſometimes ſeemed to have, but their luſts are become rampant in them, as given up to vile affections, defiling the very outward man. 'It has happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and, The ſow that was waſhed, to her wallowing in the mire,' 2 Pet. ii. 22.

O backſliders, your caſe is a fearful one, Heb. x. 38. *If any man draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him.* What mind ye to do with it? Will ye continue in it, to your eternal ruin? Oh! no, pity your own ſouls. There is hope in Iſrael concerning this things, as bad as it is. Perhaps your heart tells you that your caſe is now gone too far, to be mended: but it is not ſo; that is but a ſatanical ſuggeſtion. God's word ſays otherwiſe: Jer. iii. 1. 'Though thou haſt played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, ſaith the Lord.' Iſa. liv. 6. 'I have called thee as—a wife of youth, when thou waſt refuſed, ſaith thy God.' Wherefore, O backſlider, beſtir thyſelf to anſwer the Lord's call, and remember that ſome devils go not out but by prayer and faſting, Matth. xvii. 22. Try this method then for your recovery: try it, as you would not be guilty of wilful dying of your diſeaſe. Our heavenly Father kindly meets returning prodigals; the returning backſlider will be treated by him as a dear ſon, a pleaſant child, Jer. xxxi. 20. Return ye then, and he *will reſtore to you the years that the locuſt hath eaten*, Joel ii. 25. And as yet, *your bones ſhall flouriſh like an herb*, Iſa. lxvi. 14.

Thirdly, It is a proper means to prevent relapſes, and to keep one's ſpiritual caſe right, when once it is right. Frequent ſtating of accounts, keeps matters clear, which otherwiſe might come to be perplexed, and involved. And the caſe which, being on the decline, is taken in time, is eaſily righted, in compariſon of that which is long run on; even as when Chriſt raiſed the young man of Nain, whom they were carrying out to the grave, he only *touched the bier*, and ſaid, *young man, I ſay unto thee ariſe*, Luke vii. 14. but he wept and groaned once and again at the raiſing of Lazarus, who had been *four days dead*, John xi. 33. 35. 38. The unhealthy and ſickly diſpoſition of the ſouls of men, by reaſon of the remains of corruption that are always in the beſt, while here, makes the occaſional performance of extraordinary duties now and then neceſſary, over and above the courſe of their ordinary and ſtated devotions.

Fourthly, it is a proper means of preparation for a time of trial. It is a piece of Chriſtian prudence to foreſee the evil, and hide one's ſelf, while *the ſimple paſs on, and are puniſhed*, Prov. xxii. 3. When God is threatening a land with his judgments, it becomes the inhabitants to take the alarm, and prepare to meet their God: and perſonal and family faſts are proper expedients for that end; ſince they who in ſinning times *ſigh and cry for all the abominations done in the midſt thereof*, ſtand fair to receive the mark of ſpecial favour in ſuffering times, Ezekiel ix. 4. For all the leſſer ſtrokes and deliverances theſe nations have met with of late years, it is alas! viſible to ſober men, of whatever denomination, that we are not thereby reformed, nor duly convinced of, far leſs humbled under, the cauſes of God's flaming controverſy with us. And while there is a God to judge on the earth, we can have no reaſon to think that a generation chargeable with the guilt which we are chargeable with, is in ſafety with ſuch a load upon them: but that either God will, by an unordinary pouring out of his Spirit, awaken, humble, and make the land to mourn; or elſe by ſome rouſing ſtroke of judgment, will vindicate his own honour, injured to a pitch that our fathers arrived not at. And the leſs appearance there is of the former, there is the greater appearance of the latter. However we ſeem to have no ſuch ſecurity againſt it, as to render it unſeaſonable to keep perſonal and family faſts in that view; that we may mourn over our own ſins, and the ſins of the nations, and may ſolemnly commit ourſelves and our families to the divine grace, mercy, and protection, whatever may be the occurrences of providence in our day. None know what dark ſteps may be between them and the grave; and therefore it cannot be an unwiſe courſe, timely to take God in Chriſt for our guide through the mountains of darkneſs, for our protector in all dangers, and for our ſupporter and helper in the midſt of trouble.

Laſtly, It is a proper means to get matters clear for eternity, and ſo to make us a ſafe and comfortable paſſage out of this world. It was David's unſpeakable comfort on his death bed, that he could ſay of the God unto whom his ſpirit was about to return, *He hath made with me an everlaſting covenant*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Jacob being an old man and a dying, comfortably reflected on the place and time, where and when, in the days of his youth, he had remarkable communion with God, received the bleſſing, and vowed the vow, Gen. xlviii. 3. with chap. xxxviii. 10 ——23. Would one be in a condition to look death in the face? to paſs ſafely and comfortably to the other world? there is not a more feaſible means to reach it than this. Therefore,

1. Ye who are under doubts and fears, complaining that ye can never reach clear evidences for heaven, this memorial is for you. No wonder they walk in the dark, who will not be at ſo much pains to get light into their ſtate. The obtaining of ſuch light, might of itſelf be a ſufficient ground for ſuch an exerciſe. Clear evidences for heaven are ſuch an unſpeakable comfort, and ſo hard to raiſe up amidſt ſo much corruption of heart and life, that it is not at all ſtrange, they require ſomething beyond the ordinary courſe of devotion and application, to obtain the ſame. And this is a moſt feaſible means for that purpoſe; for after one has got his ſoul humbled by a review of his ſins, hath poured out his heart before the Lord in ſolemn confeſſion of ſin, and perſonally entered into, or renewed covenant with God, by taking hold of God's covenant of grace; if he ſhall then take the matter in hand, and examine himſelf as to the evidences of ſaving grace in him, they will then be as likely to appear clearly as ever.

2. Ye who are, one way or other, getting warnings of approaching death, this memorial is for you. Do you obſerve your equals in years, or younger than you carried off by death? Have you been at any time reſcued from imminent danger of your life, ariſing from ſome accident, or unforeſeen occurrence? Are ye now and then viſited with ſickneſs? Do you perceive your ſtrength begin to fail, the pins of your tabernacle begin to be looſened? Theſe and the like are loud providential calls to you to prepare for the other world. And preparation for that world, is ſufficient to found a call unto ſuch extraordinary devotion: a proſpect of approaching death, may well be allowed to call one to ſet ſome time apart in order to prepare for it. Preparation for death is work to be done in time of health: and why ſhould it be delayed, ſince you ſee that death is approaching? How unreaſonable is it for men, to leave that work to the ſick bed, where they will have enough ado to die, or may be deprived of their judgment, if they do at all get a ſick bed, and be not ſuddenly ſnatched away, ere they or their friends are aware? No, ſirs; ye know that death is coming: therefore while ye are able, ſet ſome time apart for that very end, to prepare for it, and to ſtate matters clearly for eternity: otherwiſe ye are cruel to your own ſouls, by your negligence, making of death but a leap in the dark into the other world.

3. Laſtly, All without exception, who believe a heaven and a hell, this memorial is for you. The eternal ſtate is not a matter to venture upon at random. If you do really believe a life to come, ye cannot reaſonably think, that this is too much to make a ſuitable preparation for it. Their hearts are certainly more ſtout than holy, who, amidſt ſo many inſtances of mortality, as the world is ſtill affording, are not thereby excited to ſet their own ſouls caſe in order, with an eye to death's coming about to their own door; and thus to ſet ſome time apart for that end, is little enough in a caſe of ſuch vaſt importance.

The End of the VIEW *of the* COVENANT *of* GRACE.

2 AL 58

The Sovereignty and Wiſdom of GOD diſplayed in the Afflictions of Men, together with a Chriſtian Deportment under them.

BEING

The Subſtance of ſeveral

SERMONS

ON

ECCLES. vii. 13. PROV. xvi. 19. and 1 PET. v. 6.

To which are added ſome

SERMONS

On the NATURE of

CHURCH-COMMUNION.

From 1 COR. x. 17.

To the READER.

Habitual unreconciledneſs to the croſs, and a palpable deficiency in many of the duties incumbent on us, as members of the body of Chriſt, mightily mar our Chriſtian comfort, our edification, our uſefulneſs: and inſtead of adorning, they caſt a dark ſhade on our holy profeſſion. For remedy in both caſes, the Lord in his kind providence is ſending us freſh aſſiſtance in the two following treatiſes. Both the ſubjects are ſet in a new and engaging light. It is not amiſs the reader ſhould know that the former, namely, that of the Crook in one's lot, *was among the laſt ſubjects the bleſſed author handled; and that the reviſing of it ſo far (for he got not through his notes) was among his laſt works with the pen. We ſhall leave it to exerciſe the reader's attention how far he himſelf reviſed; and where we have only his notes as he preached them. May the ſame divine bleſſing, which the author often and earneſtly ſought to accompany ought of his that was, or ſhould be called forth for the ſervice of the church, go along with theſe treatiſes that here follow.*

ECCLES. vii. 13.

Conſider the work of God: for who can make that ſtraight which he hath made crooked?

A Juſt view of afflicting incidents is altogether neceſſary to a Chriſtian deportment under them: and that view is to obtained only by faith, not by ſenſe. For it is the light of the word alone that repreſents them juſtly, diſcovering in them the work of God, and conſequently deſigns becoming the divine perfections. Theſe perceived by the eye of faith, and duly conſidered, one has a juſt view of afflicting incidents, fitted to quell the turbulent motions of corrupt affections under diſmal outward appearances.

It is under this view, that Solomon, in the preceeding part of this chapter, advances ſeveral paradoxes, which are ſurpriſing determinations in favour of certain things, that to the eye of ſenſe, looking gloomy and hideous, are therefore generally reputed grievous and ſhocking. He pronounceth the day of one's death to be better than the day of his birth, namely, the day of the death of one, who, having become the friend of God through faith, hath led a life to the honour of God, and ſervice of his generation; and thereby raiſed to himſelf the good and ſavoury name, better than precious ointment, ver. 1. In like manner, he pronounceth the houſe of mourning to be preferable to the houſe of feaſting, ſorrow to laughter, and a wiſe man's rebuke to a fool's ſong; for that, howbeit the latter are indeed the more pleaſant, yet the former are the more profitable, ver.

2.——6. And obſerving with concern, how men are in hazard, not only from the world's frowns and ill uſage, oppreſſion making a wiſe man mad, but alſo from its ſmiles and careſſes, a gift deſtroying the heart; therefore, ſince whatever way it goes, there is a danger, he pronounceth the end of every worldly thing better than the beginning thereof, ver. 7. 8. And, from the whole, he juſtly infers, that it is better to be humble and patient, than proud and impatient, under afflicting diſpenſations; ſince, in the former caſe, one wiſely ſubmits to what is really beſt; in the latter, he fights againſt it, ver. 8. And he dehorts from being angry with our lot, becauſe of the adverſity found therein, ver. 9. cautions againſt making odious compariſons of former and preſent times, in that point inſinuating undue reflections on the providence of God, ver. 10. And, againſt that querulous and fretful diſpoſition, he firſt preſcribes a general remedy, namely, holy wiſdom, as that which enables one to make the beſt of every thing, and even giveth life in killing circumſtances, ver. 11. 12. And then a particular remedy, conſiſting in a due application of that wiſdom, towards the taking a juſt view of the caſe, *Conſider the work of God: for who can make that ſtraight which he hath made crooked?*

In which words are propoſed, (1.) The remedy itſelf, (2.) The ſuitableneſs thereof. Firſt, The remedy itſelf is a wiſe eying of the hand of God in all we find to bear hard upon us: Conſider the work (or, See thou the doing) of God, to wit, in the crooked, rough, and diſagreeable parts of thy lot, the croſſes thou findeſt in it. Thou ſeeſt very well the croſs itſelf; yea, thou turneſt it over and over in thy mind, and leiſurely views it on all ſides; thou lookeſt withal to this and the other ſecond cauſe of it; and ſo thou art in a foam and fret: but, wouldſt thou be quieted and ſatisfied in the matter, lift up thine eyes towards heaven, ſee the doing of God in it, the operation of his hand: look at that, and conſider it well; eye the firſt cauſe of the crook in thy lot, behold how it is the work of God, his doing. Secondly, As for the ſuitableneſs of this remedy, that view of the crook in our lot is very ſuitable to ſtill indecent riſing of heart, and quiets us under it: for who can (that is, none can) make that ſtraight which God hath made crooked? As to the crook in thy lot, God hath made it; and it muſt continue while he will have it ſo. Shouldſt thou ply thine utmoſt force to even it, or make it ſtraight, thine attempt will be vain: it will not alter for all thou canſt do, only he who made it can mend it, or make it ſtraight. This conſideration, this view of the matter, is a proper means, at once to ſilence and to ſatisfy men, and ſo to bring them unto a dutiful ſubmiſſion to their Maker and Governor, under the crook in their lot.

Now we take up the purpoſe of the text in theſe three doctrines. I. *Whatſoever crook there is in one's lot, it is of God's making.* II. *What God ſees meet to mar, one will not be able to mend in his lot.* III. *The conſidering of the crook in the lot, as the work of God, or of his making, is a proper means to bring one to a Chriſtian deportment under it.*

DOCTRINE I. *Whatſoever crook there is one's lot it is of God's making.*

Here two things fall to be conſidered, namely, the crook itſelf, and God's making of it.

I. As to the crook itſelf, the crook in the lot, for the better underſtanding thereof, theſe few things following are premiſed. 1. There is a certain train or courſe of events, by the providence of God, falling to every one of us during our life in this world: and that is our lot as being allotted to us by the ſovereign God, our Creator and Governor, in whoſe hand our breath is, and whoſe are all our ways. This train of events is widely different to different perſons, according to the will and pleaſure of the ſovereign Manager, who ordereth mens conditions in the world in a great variety, ſome moving in a higher, ſome in a lower ſphere. 2. In that train or courſe of events, ſome fall out croſs to us, and againſt the grain; and theſe make the crook in our lot. While we are here, there will be croſs events, as well as agreeable ones, in our lot and condition. Sometimes things are ſoftly and agreeably gliding on; but, by and by, there is ſome incident which alters that courſe, grates us, and pains us, as when, having made a wrong ſtep, we begin to halt. 3. Every body's lot in this world hath ſome crook in it. Complainers are apt to make odious compariſons: they look about, and taking a diſtant view of the condition of others, can diſcern nothing in it but what is ſtraight, and juſt to one's wiſh; ſo they pronounce their neighbour's lot wholly ſtraight. But that is a falſe verdict: there is no perfection here, no lot out of heaven without a crook. For as to 'all 'the works that are done under the ſun, behold, all is "vanity and vexation of ſpirit. That which is crooked "cannot be made ſtraight," Eccleſ. i. 14. 15. Who would have thought but Haman's lot was very ſtraight, while his family was in a flouriſhing condition, and he proſpering in riches and honour, being prime miniſter of ſtate in the Perſian court, and ſtanding high in the king's favour? yet there was at the ſame time, a crook in his lot, which ſo galled him, that all this availed him nothing, Eſth. v. 13. Every one feels for himſelf, where he is pinched, though others perceive it not. No body's lot in this world, is wholly crooked: there are always ſome ſtraight and even parts in it. Indeed, when mens paſſions, having got up, have caſt a miſt over their minds, they are ready to ſay, all is wrong with them, nothing right: but though in hell that tale is, and ever will be true, yet it is never true in this world; for there indeed, there is not a drop of comfort allowed, Luke xvi. 25. but here it always holds good, that it is of the Lord's mercies we are not conſumed, Lam. iii. 22. Laſtly, The crook of the lot came into the world by ſin; it is owing to the fall, Rom. v. 12. *By one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin*, under which death the crook in the lot is comprehended, as a ſtate of comfort or proſperity is, in ſcripture ſtile, expreſſed by living, 1 Sam. xxv. 6. John iv. 50. 51. Sin ſo bowed the hearts and minds of men, as they became crooked in reſpect of the holy law: and God juſtly ſo bowed their lot, as it became crooked too. And this crook in our lot inſeparably follows our ſinful condition, till, dropping this body of ſin and death, we get within heaven's gates.

Theſe being premiſed, a crook in the lot ſpeaks in the general, two things, (1.) Adverſity. (2.) Continuance. Accordingly it makes the day of adverſity, oppoſed to the day of proſperity in the verſe immediately following the text.

The crook in the lot is, Firſt, Some one or other piece of adverſity. The proſperous part of one's lot, which goes forward according to one's wiſh, is the ſtraight and even part of it, the adverſe part, going a contrary way, is the crooked part thereof. God hath intermixed theſe two in mens condition in this world; that as there is proſperity therein, making the ſtraight line, ſo there is alſo ſome adverſity, making the crooked. The which mixture hath place, not only in the lot of ſaints, who are told, that in the world you ſhall have tribulation, but in the lot of all, as already obſerved. Secondly, It is adverſity of ſome continuance. We do not reckon it a crooked thing, which, though forcibly bended and bowed together, yet preſently recovers its former ſtraightneſs. There are twinges of the rod of adverſity, which paſſing like a ſtitch in one's ſide, all is immediately ſet to rights again: one's lot may be ſuddenly overclouded, and the cloud evaniſh ere he is aware. But under the crook, one having leiſure to find his ſmart, is in ſome concern to get the crook evened. So the crook in the lot is adverſity continued for a ſhorter or longer time.

Now there is a threefold crook in the lot incident to the children of men. (1.) One made by a croſs diſpenſation, which howſoever in itſelf paſſing, yet hath laſting effects. Such a crook did Herod's cruelty make in the lot of the mothers in Bethlehem, who by the murderers were left ‘ weeping for their ſlain children, ‘ and would not be comforted, becauſe they were not.’ Matth. ii. 18. A ſlip of the foot may ſoon be made, which will make a man go halting all along after. ‘ As ‘ the fiſhes are taken in an evil net——ſo are the ſons ‘ of men ſnared in an evil time,’ Eccleſ. ix. 12. The thing may fall out in a moment, under which the party ſhall go halting to the grave. There is a crook made by a train of croſs diſpenſations, whether of the ſame or different kinds, following hard one upon another, and leaving laſting effects behind them. Thus in the caſe of Job, while one meſſenger of evil tidings was yet ſpeaking, another came, Job i. 16. 17. 18. Croſs events coming one upon the neck of another, deep calling unto deep, make a ſore crook. In that caſe the party is like unto one, who recovering his ſliding foot from one unfirm piece of ground, ſets it on another equally unfirm, which immediately gives way under him too: or like unto one, who travelling in an unknown mountainous track, after having with difficulty made his way over one mountain, is expecting to ſee the plain country, but inſtead thereof there comes in view, time after time, a new mountain to be paſſed. This crook in Aſaph's lot had like to have made him give up all his religion, untill he went into the ſanctuary, where this myſtery of providenee was unriddled to him, Pſal. lxxxiii. 13.——17. Solomon obſerves, that ‘ there ‘ being juſt men unto whom it happeneth according to ‘ the work of the wicked,’ Eccleſ. viii. 14. Providence taking a run againſt them, as if they were to be run down for good and all. Whoever they be whoſe life in no part thereof affords them experience of this, ſure Joſeph miſſed not of it in his young days, nor Jacob in his middle days, nor Peter in his old days, John xxi. 18. nor our Saviour all his days. (3.) There is a crook made by one croſs diſpenſation, with laſting effects thereof coming in the room of another removed. Thus one crook ſtraightened, there is another made in its place: and ſo there is ſtill a crook. Want of children had long been the crook in Rachel's lot, Gen. xxx. 1. That was at length evened to her mind: but then ſhe got another in its ſtead, hard labour in travailing to bring forth, chap. xxxv. 16. This world is but a wilderneſs, in which we may indeed get our ſtation changed: but the remove will be out of one wilderneſs ſtation to another. When one part of the lot is evened, readily ſome other part thereof will be crooked.

More particularly, the crook in the lot hath in it four things of the nature of that which is crooked.

Firſt, Diſagreeableneſs. A crooked thing is wayward; and being laid to a rule anſwers it not, but declines from it. There is not in any body's lot, any ſuch thing as a crook in reſpect of the will and purpoſe of God. Take the moſt harſh and diſmal diſpenſation in one's lot, and lay it to the eternal decree, made in the depth of infinite wiſdom, before the world began, and it will anſwer it exactly without the leaſt deviation, all things being wrought after the counſel of his will, Eph. i. 11. Lay it to the providential will of God, in the government of the world, and there is a perfect harmony. If Paul is to be bound at Jeruſalem, and delivered into the hands of the Gentiles, it is the will of the Lord it ſhould be ſo, Acts xxi. 11. 14. Wherefore the greateſt crook of the lot, on earth, is ſtraight in heaven: there is no diſagreeableneſs in it there. But in every body's lot there is a crook in reſpect of their mind and natural inclination. The adverſe diſpenſation lies croſs to that rule, and will by no means anſwer it, nor harmonize with it. When divine Providence lays the one to the other, there is a manifeſt diſagreeableneſs: the man's will goes one way, and the diſpenſation another way; the will bends upward, the croſs events preſſeth down; ſo they are contrary. And there, and only there, lies the crook. It is this diſagreeableneſs which makes the crook in the lot fit matter of trial and exerciſe to us, in this our ſtate of probation: in the which, if thou wouldſt approve thyſelf to God, walking by faith, not by ſight, thou muſt quiet thyſelf in the will and purpoſe of God, and not inſiſt that it ſhould be according to thy mind, Job xxxiv. 23.

Secondly, Unſightlineſs. Crooked things are unpleaſant to the eye: and no crook in the lot ſeemeth to be joyous, but grievous, making but an unſightly appearance, Heb. xii. 11. Therefore men need to beware of giving way to their thoughts to dwell on the crook in their lot, and of keeping it too much in view. David ſhews a hurtful experience in his, in that kind, Pſal. xxxix. 3. ‘ While I was muſing, the fire burned.’ Jacob acted a wiſer part, called his youngeſt ſon Benjamin, the ſon of the right-hand, whom the dying mother had named Ben-oni, the ſon of my ſorrow; by this means providing, that the crook in his lot ſhould not be ſet afreſh in his view, on every occaſion of mentioning the name of his ſon. Indeed a Chriſtian may ſafely take a ſteady and leiſurely view of the crook of his lot in the light of the holy word, which repreſents it as the diſcipline of the covenant. So faith will diſcover a hidden ſightlineſs in it, under a very unſightly outward appearance; perceiving the ſuitableneſs thereof to the infinite goodneſs, love, and wiſdom of God, and to the real and moſt valuable intereſt of the party; by which means one comes to take pleaſure, and that a moſt refined pleaſure, in diſtreſſes, 2 Cor. xii. 10. But whatever the crook in the lot be to the eye of faith, it is not at all pleaſant to the eye of ſenſe.

Thirdly, Unfitneſs for motion. Solomon obſerves the cauſe of the uneaſy and ungraceful walking of the lame, Prov. xxvi. 7. ‘ The legs of the lame are not equal.’ This uneaſineſs they find, who are exerciſed about the crook in their lot: a high ſpirit and a low adverſe lot, makes great difficulty in the Chriſtian walk. There is nothing that gives temptation more eaſy acceſs, than the crook in the lot; nothing more apt to occaſion out-of-the-way ſteps. Therefore ſaith the apoſtle, Heb. xii. 13. ‘ Make ſtraight paths for your feet, leſt that ‘ which is lame be turned out of the way.’ They are to be pitied then, who are labouring under it, and not to be rigidly cenſured; though they are rare perſons who learn this leſſon, till taught by their own experience. It is long ſince Job made an obſerve in this caſe, which holds good until this day, Job xii. 5. ‘ He that is ready ‘ to ſlip with his feet, is as a lamp deſpiſed in the thought ‘ of him that is at eaſe.’

Laſtly, Aptneſs to catch hold and entangle, like hooks, fiſh-hooks, Amos iv. 2. The crook in the lot doth ſo very readily make impreſſions, to the ruffling and fretting of one's ſpirit, irritating corruption, that Satan fails not to make diligent uſe of it to theſe dangerous purpoſes, the which point once gained by the tempter, the tempted, ere he is aware, finds himſelf intangled as in a thicket, out of which he knows not how to extricate himſelf. In that temptation it often proves like a crooked ſtick troubling a ſtanding pool; the which not only raiſeth up the mud all over, but brings up from the bottom ſome very ugly thing. Thus it brought up a ſpice of blaſphemy and atheiſm in Aſaph's caſe, Pſal. lxxiii. 13. ‘ Verily I have cleanſed my heart in vain, and ‘ waſhed my hands in innocence.’ As if he had ſaid, There is nothing at all in religion; it is a vain and empty thing that profiteth nothing, I was a fool to have been in care about purity and holineſs whether of heart or life. Ah! is this the pious Aſaph! How is he turned ſo unlike himſelf! but the crook in the lot is a handle whereby the tempter makes ſurpriſing diſcoveries of latent corruption, even in the beſt.

This is the nature of the crook in the lot. Let us now obſerve what part of the lot it falls in.

And, in the general, three concluſions may be eſtabliſhed upon this head. Firſt, It may fall in any part of the lot; there is no exempted one in the caſe: for ſin being found in every part, the crook may take place in any part. Being all as an unclean thing, we may all fade as a leaf, Iſa. lxiv. 6. The main ſtream of ſin which the crook readily follows, runs in very different channels: in the caſe of different perſons; and in regard of the various diſpoſitions of the minds of men, that will prove a ſinking weight unto one, which another would go very lightly under. Secondly, It may at once fall in many parts of the lot, the Lord calling as in a ſolemn day, one's terrors round about, Lam. ii. 22. Sometimes God makes one notable crook in a man's lot: but its name may be Gad, being but the forerunner of a troop which cometh. Then the crooks are multiplied, ſo that the party is made to halt on each ſide. While one ſtream let in from one quarter, is running full againſt him, another is let in on him from another quarter, till in the end the waters break in on every hand. Thirdly, It often falls in the tender part, I mean that part of the lot wherein one is leaſt able to bear it, or, at leaſt, thinks he is ſo, Pſal. lv. 12. 13. 'It was not an 'enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne 'it—But it was thou, a man, mine equal, my guide, and 'mine acquaintance.' If there is any one part of the lot, which of all other, one is diſpoſed to neſtle in, the thorn will readily be laid there, eſpecially if he belongs to God: in that thing wherein he is leaſt of all able to be touched, he will be ſure to be preſſed. There the trial will be taken of him: for there is the grand competition with Chriſt. 'I take from them the deſires of 'their eyes, and that whereupon they ſet their minds,' Ezek. xxiv. 25. Since the crook in the lot is the ſpecial trial appointed for every one, it is altogether reaſonable, and becoming the wiſdom of God, that it fall on that which of all things doth moſt rival him.

But more particularly, the crook may be obſerved to fall in theſe four parts of the lot.

Firſt, In the natural part, affecting perſons conſidered as of the make allotted for them by *the great God that formed all things.* The parents of mankind, Adam and Eve, were formed altogether ſound and entire, without the leaſt blemiſh, whether in ſoul or body; but, in the formation of their poſterity, there often appears a notable variation from the original. Bodily defects, ſuperfluities, deformities, infirmities, natural or accidental, make the crook in the lot of ſome: they have ſomething unſightly or grievous about them. Crooks of this kind, more or leſs obſervable, are very common and ordinary, the beſt not exempted from them: and it is purely owing to ſovereign pleaſure they are not more numerous. Tender eyes made the crook in the lot of Leah, Gen. xxix. 17. Rachel's beauty was balanced with barrenneſs, the crook in her lot, chap. xxx. 1. Paul, the great apoſtle of the Gentiles, was, it ſhould ſeem, no perſonable man, but of a mean outward appearance, for which fools were apt to contemn him, 2 Cor. x. 10. Timothy was of a crazy frame, weakly and ſickly, 1 Tim. v. 23. And there is yet a far more conſiderable crook in the lot of the lame, the blind, the deaf, and dumb. Some are weak to a degree in their intellectuals; and it is the crook in the lot of ſeveral bright ſouls to be overcaſt with clouds, notably bemiſted, and darkened from the crazy bodies they are lodged in: an eminent inſtance whereof we have in the grave, wiſe, and patient Job, *going mourning without the ſun*, yea, *ſtanding up and crying in the congregation*, Job xxx. 28.

Secondly, It may fall in the honorary part. There is an honour due to all men, the ſmall as well as the great, 1 Pet. ii. 17.; and that upon the ground of the original conſtitution of human nature, as it was framed in the image of God. But, in the ſovereign diſpoſal of holy providence, the crook in the lot of ſome falls here: they are neglected and ſlighted, their credit is ſtill kept low; they go through the world under a cloud, being put into an ill name, their reputation ſunk. This ſometimes is the native conſequent of their own fooliſh and ſinful conduct; as, in the caſe of Dinah, who, by her gadding abroad to ſatisfy her youthful curioſity, regardleſs of, and therefore not waiting for a providential call, brought a laſting ſtain on her honour, Gen. xxxiv. But where the Lord minds a crook of this kind in one's lot, innocence will not be able to ward it off in an ill-natured world: neither will true merit be able to make head againſt it, to make one's lot ſtand ſtraight in that part. Thus David repreſents his caſe, Pſal. xxxi. 11. 12. 13. 'They that did ſee me without fled from me. I am for'gotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a bro'ken veſſel. For I have heard the ſlander of many.'

Thirdly, It may fall in the vocational part. Whatever is mens calling or ſtation in the world, be it ſacred or civil, the crook in the lot may take its place therein. Iſaiah was an eminent prophet, but moſt unſucceſsful, Iſa. liii. 1. Jeremiah met with ſuch a train of diſcouragements and ill uſage in the exerciſe of his ſacred function, that he was well-near giving it up, ſaying, 'I will 'not make mention of him, nor ſpeak any more in his 'name,' Jer. xx 9. The Pſalmiſt obſerves this crook often to be made in the lot of ſome men very induſtrious in their civil buſineſs, who *ſow the fields*—and at times God *bleſſeth them,—and ſuffereth not their cattle to decreaſe*: but *again, they are miniſhed and brought low, through oppreſſion, affliction, and ſorrow*, Pſal. cvii. 37. 38. 39. Such a crook was made in Job's lot, after it had long ſtood even. Some manage their employments with all care and diligence; the huſbandman carefully labouring his ground, the ſheep-maſter *diligent to know the ſtate of his flocks, and looking well to his herds*, the tradeſman early and late at his buſineſs; the merchant diligently plying his, watching and falling in with the moſt fair and promiſing opportunities; but there is ſuch a crook in that part of their lot, as all they are able to do can by no means even. For why? The moſt proper means uſed for compaſſing an end are inſignificant, without a word of divine appointment commanding their ſucceſs: 'Who is he that ſaith, and it com'eth to paſs, when the Lord commandeth it not?' Lam. iii. 37. People ply their buſineſs with ſkill and induſtry, but the wind turns in their face, providence croſſeth their enterprizes diſconcerts their meaſures, fruſtrates their hopes and expectations, renders their endeavours ſucceſsleſs, and ſo puts and keeps them ſtill in ſtraitening circumſtances. 'So the race is not to the ſwift, nor 'the battle to the ſtrong, neither yet bread to the wiſe,' Eccl. ix. 11. Providence interpoſing, crooks the meaſures which human prudence and induſtry had laid ſtraight towards the reſpective ends; ſo the ſwift loſe the race, the ſtrong the battle, and the wiſe miſs of bread, while, in the mean time, ſome one or other providential incident, ſupplying the defect of human wiſdom, conduct, and ability, the ſlow gain the race, and carry the prize; the weak win the battle, and enrich themſelves with the ſpoil; and bread falls into the lap of the fool.

Laſtly, It may fall in the relational part. Relations are the joints of ſociety; and there the crook in the lot may take place, one's ſmarteſt pain being often felt in theſe joints. They are in their nature the ſprings of man's comfort: yet they often run the greateſt bitterneſs to him. Sometimes this crook is occaſioned by the loſs of relations. Thus a crook was made in the lot of Jacob, by means of the death of Rachel, his beloved wife, and the loſs of Joſeph, his ſon and darling, which had like to have made him go halting to the grave. Job laments this crook in his lot, Job xvi. 7. *Thou haſt made deſolate all my company*; meaning his dear children, every one of whom he had laid in the grave, not ſo much as one ſon or daughter left him. Again, ſometimes it is made through the afflicting hand of God lying heavy on them; the which, in virtue of their relation, recoils on the party, as is feelingly expreſſed by that believing woman, Matth. xv. 22. 'Have 'mercy on me, O Lord,—my daughter is grievouſly 'vexed.' Ephraim felt the ſmart of a courſe of family afflictions, when he called his ſon's name Beriah, becauſe it went evil with his houſe, 1 Chron. vii. 23. Since all is not only vanity, but vexation of ſpirit, it can hardly miſs, but, the more of theſe ſprings of comfort are opened to a man, he muſt, at one time or other, find he has but the more ſources of ſorrow to guſh out, and ſpring in upon him; the ſorrow always proportioned to the comfort found in them, or expected from them. And finally, the crook is ſometimes made here by their proving uncomfortable through the diſagreeableneſs of their temper, diſpoſition, and way. There was a crook in Job's lot, by means of an undutiful, ill-natured wife, Job xix. 17. in Abigal's, by means of a ſurly, ill tempered huſband, 1 Sam. xxv. 25. in Eli's, through the perverſeneſs and obſtinacy of his children, chap. ii. 25. in Jonathan's, through the furious temper of his father, chap. xx. 30. 33. So do men oftentimes find their greateſt croſs where they expected their greateſt comfort. Sin hath unhinged the whole creation, and made every relation ſuſceptible of the crook. In the family are found maſters hard and unjuſt, ſervants froward and unfaithful; in neighbourhood, men ſelfiſh and uneaſy; in the church, miniſters unedifying, and offenſive in their walk, and people contemptuous and diſorderly, a burden to the ſpirits of miniſters; in the ſtate, magiſtrates oppreſſive, and diſcountenancers of that which is good, and ſubjects turbulent and ſeditious; all theſe cauſe crooks in the lot of their relatives.

And thus far of the crook itſelf.

II. Having ſeen the crook itſelf, we are in the next place, to conſider of God's making it. And here is to be ſhewn, (1.) That it is of God's making. (2.) How it is of his making. (3.) Why he makes it.

Firſt, That the crook in the lot, whatever it is, is of God's making, appears from theſe three conſiderations.

Firſt, It cannot be queſtioned, but the crook in the lot, conſidered as the crook, is a penal evil, whatever it is for the matter thereof, that is, whether the thing in itſelf, its immediate cauſe and occaſion, be ſinful or not, it is certainly a puniſhment or affliction. Now, as it may be, as ſuch holily and juſtly brought on us, by our ſovereign Lord and judge, ſo he expreſsly claims the doing or making of it, Amos iii. 6. 'Shall there be 'evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it'? Wherefore, ſince there can be no penal evil, but of God's making, and the crook in the lot is ſuch an evil, it is neceſſarily concluded to be of God's making.

Secondly, It is evident, from the ſcripture doctrine of divine providence, that God brings about every man's lot, and all the parts thereof. He ſits at the helm of human affairs, and turns them about whitherſoever he liſteth, 'Whatſoever the Lord pleaſed, that did he 'in heaven and in earth, in the ſeas, and all deep 'places,' Pſal. cxxxv. 6. There is not any thing whatſoever befals us, without his over-ruling hand. The ſame providence that brought us out of the womb, bringeth us to, and fixeth us in the condition and place allotted for us, by him who *hath determined the times and the bounds of* our *habitation*, Acts xvii. 26. It overruleth the ſmalleſt and moſt caſual things about us, ſuch as *hairs of* our *head falling on the ground*, Matth. x. 29. 30. *A lot caſt into the lap*, Prov. xvi. 33. Yea, the free acts of our will, whereby we chuſe for ourſelves, for, even 'the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, 'as the rivers of water,' Prov. xxi. 1. And the whole ſteps which we make, and which others make in reference to us; for 'the way of man is not in himſelf; 'it is not in man that walketh to direct his ſteps,' Jer. x. 23. And this, whether theſe ſteps cauſing the crook to be deliberate and ſinful ones, ſuch as Joſeph's brethren ſelling him into Egypt; or whether they be undeſigned, ſuch as manſlaughter purely caſual, as *when one hewing wood* kills his neighbour with *the head of the ax ſlipping from the helve*, Deut. xix. 5. For there is a holy and wiſe providence that governs the ſinful and the heedleſs actions of men, as a rider doth a lame horſe, of whoſe halting, not he but the horſe's own lameneſs, is the true and proper cauſe; wherefore, in the former of theſe caſes, God is ſaid to have ſent Joſeph into Egypt, Gen. xlv. 7. and in the latter, to deliver one into his neighbour's hand, Exodus xxi. 13.

Laſtly, God hath by an eternal decree, immoveable as mountains of braſs, (Zech vi. 1.) appointed the whole of every one's lot, the crooked parts thereof as well as the ſtraight. By the ſame eternal decree, whereby the high and low parts of the earth, the mountains and the valleys, were appointed, are the heights and depths, the proſperity, and adverſity in the lot of the inhabitants thereof, determined; and they are brought about, in time, in a perfect agreeableneſs thereto. The myſtery of providence, in the government of the world, is in all the parts thereof, the building reared up of God in exact conformity to the plan in his decree 'who worketh all 'things after the counſel of his own will,' Eph. i. 11. So that there is never a crook in one's lot, but may be run up to this original. Hereof Job piouſly ſets us an example, in his own caſe, Job xxiii. 13. 14. 'He is in 'one mind, and who can turn him? And what his ſoul 'deſireth, even that he doth. For he performeth the 'thing that is appointed for me; and many ſuch things 'are with him.'

Secondly, That we may ſee how the crook in the lot is of God's making, we muſt diſtinguiſh between the pure ſinleſs crooks, and impure ſinful ones.

Firſt, there are pure and ſinleſs crooks, the which are mere afflictions, cleanly croſſes; grievous indeed, but not defiling. Such were Lazarus's poverty, Rachel's barrenneſs, Leah's tender eyes, the blindneſs of the man who had been ſo from his birth, John ix. 1. Now the crooks of this kind, are of God's making, by the efficacy of his power directly bringing them to paſs, and cauſing them to be. He is the maker of the poor, Prov. xvii. 5. 'Whoſo mocketh the poor, reproacheth his Maker,' that is, reproacheth God who made him poor, according to that, 1 Sam. ii. 7. 'The Lord maketh poor.' It is he that hath the key of the womb, and as he ſees meet ſhuts it, 1 Sam. i. 5. or opens it, Gen. xxix. 31. And it is *he that formed the eye*, Pſal. xciv. 9. And the man was *born blind, that the works of God ſhould be made manifeſt in him*, John ix. 3. Therefore he ſaith to Moſes, Exod. iv. 11. 'Who maketh the dumb, or deaf, 'or the ſeeing, or the blind? Have not I the Lord?' Such crooks in the lot are of God's making, in the moſt ample ſenſe, and in their full comprehenſion, being of his agency, as well as the heavens and the earth are.

Secondly, There are impure ſinful crooks, which, in their own nature, are ſins as well as afflictions, defiling as well as grievous. Such was the crook made in David's lot, through his family-diſorders, the defiling of Tamar, the murder of Amnon, the rebellion of Abſalom, all of them unnatural. Of the ſame kind was that made in Job's lot, by the Sabeans and Caldeans taking away his ſubſtance, and ſlaying his ſervants. As theſe were the afflictions of David and Job, reſpectively, ſo they were the ſins of the actors, the unhappy inſtruments thereof. Thus one and the ſame thing may be, to one a heinous ſin, defiling and laying him under guilt; and to another an affliction, laying him under ſuffering only. Now, the crooks of this kind are not of God's making, in the ſame latitude as theſe of the former; for he neither puts evil in the heart of any, nor ſtirreth up to it; 'He cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth 'he any man,' James i. 13. But they are of his making, by his holy permiſſion of them, powerful bounding of them, and wiſe over-ruling of them to ſome good end.

Firſt, He holily permits them, ſuffering men to walk in their own ways, Acts xiv. 16. Though he is not the author of theſe ſinful crooks, cauſing them to be by the efficacy of his power; yet, if he did not permit them, willing not to hinder them, they could not be at all; for he ſhutteth, and no man openeth, Rev. iii. 7. But he juſtly with-holds his grace, which the ſinner does not deſire, takes off the reſtraint under which he is uneaſy, and, ſince the ſinner will be gone, lays the reins on his neck, and leaves him to the ſwing of his luſt. Hoſ. iv. 17. 'Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone.' Pſal. lxxxi. 11, 12. 'Iſrael would none of me. So I gave 'them up to their own hearts luſts.' In which unhappy ſituation, the ſinful crook doth, from the ſinner's own proper motion, natively and infallibly follow; even as water runs down a hill, wherever there is a gap left open before it. So, in theſe circumſtances, 'Iſrael 'walked in their own counſels,' ver. 12. And thus this kind of crook is of God's making, as a juſt Judge, puniſhing the ſufferer by it. The which view of the matter ſilenced David under Shimei's curſings, 2 Sam. xvi. 10. 'Let him alone, and let him curſe: for the Lord 'hath bidden him.'

Secondly, He powerfully bounds them, Pſal. lxxvi. 10. 'The remainder of wrath' (namely the creature's wrath) 'thou wilt reſtrain.' Did not God bound theſe crooks, howſoever ſore they are in any one's caſe, they would be yet ſorer: but he lays to the ſinful inſtrument, as he ſaid to the ſea, 'Hitherto ſhalt thou come, but no 'farther; and here ſhall thy proud waves be ſtayed.' He lays a reſtraining band on him, that he cannot go one ſtep farther, in the way his impetuous luſt drives, than he ſees meet to permit. Hence it comes to paſs, that the crook of this kind is neither more nor leſs, but juſt as great as he by his powerful bounding makes it to be. An eminent inſtance hereof we have in the caſe of Job, whoſe lot was crooked through a peculiar agency of the devil: but, even to that grand ſinner, God ſet a bound in the caſe. 'The Lord ſaid unto Sa'tan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power, only on 'himſelf put not forth thine hand,' Job i. 12. Now Satan went the full length of the bound, leaving nothing within the compaſs thereof untouched, which he ſaw could make for his purpoſe, ver. 18, 19. But he could by no means move one ſtep beyond it, to carry his point which he could not gain within it. And therefore, to make the trial greater, and crook ſorer, nothing remained, but that the bound ſet ſhould be removed, and the ſphere of his agency enlarged; for which cauſe he ſaith, 'But touch his bone and his 'fleſh, and he will curſe thee to thy face,' chap. ii. 5. And it being removed accordingly, but withal a new one ſet, ver. 6. 'Behold, he is in thine hand, but ſave 'his life;' the crook was carried to the utmoſt that the new bound would permit, in a conſiſtency with his deſign of bringing Job to blaſpheme; 'Satan ſmote him 'with ſore boils, from the ſole of his foot unto his 'crown,' ver. 7. And had it not been for this bound, ſecuring Job's life, he, after finding this attempt unſucceſsful too, had doubtleſs diſpatched him for good and all.

Thirdly, He wiſely over-rules them to ſome good purpoſe, becoming the divine perfections. While the ſinful inſtrument hath an ill deſign in the crook cauſed by him, God directs it to a holy and good end. In the the diſorders of David's family, Amnon's deſign was to gratify a bruitiſh luſt, Abſalom's to glut himſelf with revenge, and to ſatisfy his pride and ambition: but God meant thereby to puniſh David for his ſin in the matter of Uriah. In the crook made in Job's lot, by Satan and the Sabeans and Chaldeans his inſtruments, Satan's deſign was to cauſe Job blaſpheme, and theirs to gratify their covetouſneſs: but God had another deſign therein, becoming himſelf, namely, to manifeſt Job's ſincerity and uprightneſs. Did he not wiſely and powerfully over-rule theſe crooks made in mens lot, no good could come out of them: but he always over-rules them ſo, as to fulfill his own holy purpoſes thereby, howbeit the ſinner meaneth not ſo; for his deſigns cannot miſcarry, his counſel ſhall ſtand, Iſa. xlvi. 10. So the ſinful crook is, by the over-ruling hand of God, turned about to his own glory, and his people's good, in the end; according to the word, Prov. xvi. 4. 'The Lord hath made 'all things for himſelf.' Rom. viii. 28. 'All things 'work together for good to them that love God.' Thus Haman's plot, for the deſtruction of the Jews, was turned to the contrary, Eſth. ix. 1. And the crook made in Joſeph's lot, by his own brethren ſelling him into Egypt, though it was on their part moſt ſinful, and of a moſt miſchievous deſign; yet, as it was of God's making, by his holy permiſſion, powerful bounding, and wiſe over-ruling of it, had an iſſue well becoming the divine wiſdom and goodneſs: both which Joſeph noticeth to them, Gen. l. 20. 'As for you, ye thought evil a'gainſt me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to 'paſs, as it is this day, to ſave much people alive.'

Thirdly, It remains to enquire, why God makes a crook in one's lot. And this is to be cleared by diſcovering the deſign of that diſpenſation: a matter which it concerns every one to know, and carefully to notice, in order to a chriſtian improvement of the crook in their lot. The deſign thereof ſeems to be, chiefly, ſeven-fold.

First, The trial of one's ſtate, Whether one is in the ſtate of grace, or not? Whether a ſincere Chriſtian, or a hypocrite? though every affliction is trying, yet here I conceive, lies the main providential trial a man is brought upon with reference to his ſtate: foraſmuch as the crook in the lot, being a matter of a continued courſe, one has occaſion to open and ſhew himſelf again and again in the ſame thing; whence it comes to paſs, it miniſters ground for a deciſion, in that momentous point. It was plainly on this bottom that the trial of Job's ſtate was put. The queſtion was, Whether Job was an upright and ſincere ſervant of God, as God himſelf teſtified of him; or, but a mercenary one, a hypocrite, as Satan alledged againſt him? and the trial hereof was put upon the crook to be made in his lot, Job i. 8.—12; and ii. 3.——6. Accordingly that which all his friends, ſave Elihu the laſt ſpeaker, did, in their reaſonings with him under his trial, aim at, was to prove him a hypocrite; Satan thus making uſe of theſe good men for gaining his point. As God took trial of Iſrael in the wilderneſs, for the land of Canaan, by a train of afflicting diſpenſations, the which Caleb and Joſhua bearing ſtrenuouſly were declared meet to enter the promiſed land, as having followed the Lord fully; while others being tired out with them, their carcaſes fell in the wilderneſs: ſo he takes trial of men, for heaven, by the crook in their lot. If one can ſtand that teſt, he is manifeſted to be a ſaint, a ſincere ſervant of God, as Job was proven to be: if not, he is but a hypocrite; he cannot ſtand the teſt of the crook in his lot, but goes away like droſs in God's furnace. A melancholy inſtance of which we have in that man of honour and wealth, who, with high pretences of religion, ariſing only from a principal of moral ſeriouſneſs, addreſſed himſelf to our Saviour, to know 'what he ſhould do 'that he might inherit eternal life,' Mark x. 17. 21. Our Saviour, to diſcover the man to himſelf, makes a crook in his lot, where all along before it had ſtood even, obliging him, by a probatory command, to ſell and give away all he had, and follow him, verſ. 21. 'Sell whatſoever thou haſt, and give to the poor—— 'and come, take up the croſs and follow me.' Hereby he was, that moment, in the court of conſcience, ſtript of his great poſſeſſions; ſo that henceforth he could no longer keep them, with a good conſcience, as he might have done before. The man inſtantly felt the ſmart of that crook made in his lot, 'he was ſad at that 'ſaying,' verſ. 22. that is, immediately upon the hearing of it, being ſtruck with pain, diſorder, and confuſion of mind, his countenance changed, became cloudy and louring, as the ſame word is uſed, Matth. xvi. 3. He could not ſtand the teſt of that crook; he could by no means ſubmit his lot to God in that point, but behoved to have it, at any rate, according to his own mind. So he 'went away grieved, for he had great poſſeſſions.' He went away from Chriſt back to his plentiful eſtate, though with a pained and ſorrowful heart, ſat him down again on it, a violent poſſeſſor before the Lord, thwarting the divine order. And there is no appearance that ever this order was revoked, nor that ever he came to a better temper in reference thereunto.

Secondly, Excitation to duty, weaning one from this world, and prompting him to look after the happineſs of the other world. Many have been beholden to the crook in their lot, for that ever they came to themſelves, ſettled, and turned ſerious. Going for a time, like a *wild aſs uſed to the wilderneſs*, ſcorning to be turned, their foot hath ſlid in due time; and a crook being thereby made in their lot, their month hath come, wherein they have been caught, Jer. ii. 24. Thus was the prodigal brought to himſelf, and obliged to entertain thoughts of returning unto his Father, Luke xv. 17. The crook in their lot convinces them at length, that here is not their reſt. Finding ſtill a pricking thorn of uneaſineſs, whenſoever they lay down their head, where they would faineſt take reſt in the creature, and that they are obliged to lift it again, they are brought to conclude, there is no hope from that quarter, and begin to caſt about for reſt another way. So it makes them errands to God, which they had not before; for as much as they feel a need of the comforts of the other world, to which their mouths were out of taſte, while their lot ſtood even to their mind. Wherefore whatever uſe we make of the crook in our lot, the voice of it is, 'Ariſe ye, and depart, this is not your reſt.' And it is ſurely that, which of all means of mortification of the afflictive kind, doth moſt deaden a real Chriſtian to this life and world.

Thirdly, Conviction of ſin. As when one walking heedleſsly, is ſuddenly taken ill of a lameneſs; his going halting the reſt of his way convinceth him of having made a wrong ſtep; and every new painful ſtep brings it afreſh to his mind: ſo God makes a crook in one's lot, to convince him of ſome falſe ſtep he hath made, or courſe he hath taken. What the ſinner would otherwiſe be apt to overlook, forget, or think light of, is, by this means, recalled to mind, ſet before him as an evil and bitter thing, and kept in remembrance, that his heart may every now and then bleed for it afreſh. Thus by the crook, mens ſins find them out to their conviction, *as the thief is aſhamed when he is found*, Numb. xxxii. 23. Jer. ii. 26. The which Joſeph's brethren ſo feelingly expreſs, under the crook made in their lot in Egypt, Gen. xlii. 21. 'We are verily guilty concerning our brother,' chap. xliv. 16. 'God hath found out the iniquity of thy ſervants.' The crook in the lot doth uſually, in its nature or circumſtances, ſo natively refer to the falſe ſtep or courſe, that it ſerves for a providential memorial of it, bringing the ſin, though of an old date, freſh to remembrance, and for a badge of the ſinner's folly, in word or deed, to keep it ever before him. When Jacob found Leah, through Laban's unfair dealing, palmed upon him for Rachel, how could he miſs of a ſtinging remembrance of the cheat he had ſeven years at leaſt before put on his own father, pretending himſelf to be Eſau? Gen. xxvii. 10. How could it miſs of galling him occaſionally afterwards during the courſe of the marriage? He had impoſed on his father the younger brother for the elder: and Laban impoſed on him the elder ſiſter for the younger. The dimneſs of Iſaac's eyes favoured the former cheat: and the darkneſs of the evening did as much favour the latter. So he behoved to ſay, as Adonibezek in another caſe, Judg. i. 7. 'As I have done, ſo God hath requited me.' In like manner, Rachel dying in child-birth, could hardly evite a melancholy reflection on her raſh and paſſionate expreſſion, mentioned Gen. xxx. 1. 'Give me children, or elſe I die.' Even holy Job read, in the crook of his lot, ſome falſe ſteps he had made in his youth many years before, Job xiii. 26. 'Thou writeſt bitter things againſt me, and makeſt me to poſſeſs the iniquities of my youth.'

Fourthly, Correction or puniſhment for ſin. In nothing more than in the crook of the lot is that word verified, Jer. ii. 19. *Thine own wickedneſs ſhall correct thee.* God may for a time wink at one's ſin, which afterward he will ſet a brand of his indignation upon in crooking the ſinner's lot, as he did in the caſe of Jacob, and of Rachel, mentioned before. Though the ſin was a paſſing action, or a courſe of no long continuance, the mark of the divine diſpleaſure for it, ſet on the ſinner in the crook of his lot, may pinch him long and ſore, that, by repeated experience, he may know what an evil and bitter thing it was. David's killing Uriah by the ſword of the Ammonites was ſoon over; but for that cauſe *the ſword never departed from his houſe*, 1 Sam. xii. 10. Gehazi quickly obtained two bags of money from Naaman, in the way of falſehood and lying; but, as a laſting mark of the divine indignation againſt the profane trick, he got withal a leproſy which clave to him, while he lived, and to his poſterity after him, 2 Kings v. 27. This may be the caſe, as well where the ſin is pardoned, as to the guilt of eternal wrath, as where it is not. And one may have confeſſed and ſincerely repented of that ſin, which yet ſhall make him go halting to the grave, though it cannot carry him to hell. A man's perſon may be *accepted in the beloved*, who yet hath a particular badge of the divine diſpleaſure, with his ſin hung upon him in the crook of his lot, Pſal. xcix. 8. 'Thou waſt a God that forgaveſt them, though thou tookeſt vengeance on their inventions.'

Fifthly, Preventing of ſin, Hoſ. ii. 6. 'I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall that ſhe ſhall not find her paths.' The crook in the lot will readily be found to lie croſs to ſome wrong bias of the heart, which peculiarly ſways with the party; ſo it is like a thorn hedge or wall in the way, which that bias inclines him to. The defiling objects in the world do ſpecially take, and prove enſnaring, as they are ſuited to the particular caſt of temper in men; but, by means of the crook in the lot, the paint and varniſh is worn off the defiling object, whereby it loſeth its former taking appearance; ſo the fuel being removed, the edge of corrupt affections is blunted, temptation weakened, and much ſin prevented; the ſinner, after gadding about ſo much to change his way, returning aſhamed, Jer. ii. 36, 37. Thus the Lord crooks one's lot, 'That he may withdraw man from his purpoſe, and hide pride from man;' and ſo, 'he keepeth back his ſoul from the pit,' Job xxxiii. 17. 18. Every one knows what is moſt pleaſing to him, but God alone knows what is the moſt profitable. As all men are liars, ſo all men are fools too; he is the only wiſe God, Jude 25. Many are obliged to the crook in their lot, that they go not to theſe exceſſes, which their vain minds and corrupt affections would with full ſail carry them to; and they would from their hearts bleſs God for making it, if they did but calmly conſider what would moſt likely be the iſſue of the removal thereof. When one is in hazard of fretting under the hardſhip of bearing the crook, he would do well to conſider what condition he is as yet in, for to bear the removal of it in a Chriſtian manner.

Sixthly, Diſcovery of latent corruption, whether in ſaints or ſinners. There are ſome corruptions in every man's heart, which lie, as it were, ſo near the ſurface, that they are ready on every turn to caſt up; but then there are others alſo which lie ſo very deep, that they are ſcarcely obſerved at all. But as the fire under the pot, makes the ſcum to caſt up, appear a-top, and run over, ſo the crook in the lot raiſeth up from the bottom, and brings out ſuch corruption as otherwiſe one would hardly imagine to be within. Who would have ſuſpected ſuch ſtrength of paſſion in the meek Moſes as he diſcovered at the waters of ſtrife, and for which he was kept out of Canaan? Pſal. cvi. 32. 33. Numb. xx. 13.

much bitterneſs of ſpirit in the patient Job, as to charge God with becoming cruel to him? Job xxx. 21. So much ill-nature in the good Jeremiah, as to curſe not only the day of his birth, but even the man who brought tidings of it to his father? Jer. xx. 14. 15. Or, ſuch a twang of Atheiſm in Aſaph, as to pronounce religion a vain thing? Pſal. lxxiii. 13. But the crook in the lot, bringing out theſe things, ſhewed them to have been within, how long ſoever they have lurked unobſerved. And as this deſign, however indecently proud ſcoffers allow themſelves to treat it, is in nowiſe incoſiſtent with the divine perfections; ſo the diſcovery itſelf is neceſſary for the due humiliation of ſinners, and to ſtain the pride of all glory, that men may know themſelves. Both which appear, in that it was on this very deſign that God made the long continued crook in Iſrael's lot in the wilderneſs; even to humble them, and prove them, to know what was in their heart, Deut. viii. 2.

Laſtly, The exerciſe of grace in the children of God. Believers, through the remains of indwelling corruption, are liable to fits of ſpiritual lazineſs and inactivity, in which their graces lie dormant for the time. Beſides, there are ſome graces which, of their own nature, are but occaſional in their exerciſe; as being exerciſed only upon occaſion of certain things which they have a neceſſary relation to; ſuch as patience and long-ſuffering. Now, the crook in the lot ſerves to rouſe up a Chriſtian to the exerciſe of the graces overpowered by corruption, and withal to call forth to action the occaſional graces, miniſtering proper occaſions for them. The truth is, the crook in the lot is the great engine of providence for making men appear in their true colours, diſcovering both their ill and their good: and if the grace of God be in them, it will bring it out, and cauſe it to diſplay itſelf. It ſo puts the Chriſtian to his ſhifts, that however it makes him ſtagger for a while, yet it will at length evidence both the reality and the ſtrength of grace in him. ‘Ye are in heavineſs through manifold temptations, that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that periſheth——may be found ‘unto praiſe,’ 1 Pet. i. 6. 7. The crook in the lot gives riſe to many acts of faith, hope, love, ſelf-denial, reſignation, and other graces; to many heavenly breathings, pantings, longings, and groanings, which otherwiſe would not be brought forth. And I make no queſtion but theſe things, howſoever by carnal men deſpiſed as trifling, are more precious in the ſight of God, than even believers are aware of, being acts of immediate internal worſhip; and will have a ſurpriſing notice taken of them, and of the ſum of them, at long-run, howbeit the perſons themſelves often can hardly think them worth their own notice at all. We know who hath ſaid to the gracious ſoul, ‘Let me ſee thy countenance—thy ‘countenance is comely,’ Cant. ii. 14. ‘Thou haſt raviſhed my heart with one of thy eyes,’ chap. iv. 9. The ſteady acting of a gallant army of horſe and foot to the routing of the enemy, is highly prized; but the acting of holy fear and humble hope is in reality far more valuable, as being ſo in the ſight of God, whoſe judgment, we are ſure, is according to truth. This the Pſalmiſt teacheth, Pſal. cxlvii. 11. 12. ‘He delighteth not ‘in the ſtrength of the horſe: he taketh not pleaſure in ‘the legs of a man. The Lord taketh pleaſure in them ‘that fear him, in thoſe that hope in his mercy.’ And indeed the exerciſe of the graces of his Spirit in his people, is ſo very precious in his ſight, that whatever grace any of them do excel in, they will readily get ſuch a crook made in their lot, as will be ſpecial trial for it, that will make a proof of its full ſtrength. Abraham excelled in the grace of faith, in truſting God's bare word of promiſe, over the belly of ſenſe: and God giving him a promiſe, that he would make of him a great nation, made withal a crook in his lot, by which he had enough ado with all the ſtrength of his faith; while he was obliged for good and all to leave his country and kindred, and ſojourn among the Canaanites; his wiſe continuing barren, till paſt the age of child-bearing; and when ſhe had at length brought forth Iſaac, and he was grown up, he was called to offer him up for a burnt-offering, the more exquiſite trial of his faith, that Iſhmael was now expelled his family, and that it was declared, That in Iſaac only his ſeed ſhould be called, Gen. xxi. 12. ‘Moſes was very meek, above all the ‘men which were upon the face of the earth,’ Numb. xii. 13. And he was intruſted with the conduct of a moſt perverſe and unmanageable people, the crook in his lot plainly deſigned for the exerciſe of his meekneſs. Job excelled in patience, and, by the crook in his lot, he got as much to do with it. For God gives none of his people to excel in a gift, but ſome one time or other, he will afford them uſe for the whole compaſs of it.

Now the uſe of this doctrine is threefold. (1.) For reproof. (2.) For conſolation. And, (3.) For exhortation.

Uſe I. Of reproof. And it meets with three ſorts of perſons as reproveable.

Firſt, The carnal and earthly, who do not with awe and reverence regard the crook in their lot as of God's making. There is certainly a ſignature of the divine hand upon it to be perceived by juſt obſervers; and that challengeth an awful regard, the neglect of which forebodes deſtruction, Pſal. xxviii. 5. ‘Becauſe they regard ‘not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his ‘hands, thou ſhalt deſtroy them, and not build them ‘up.’ And herein they are deeply guilty, who poring upon ſecond cauſes, and looking no farther than the unhappy inſtruments of the crook in their lot, overlook the firſt cauſe: as a dog ſnarles at the ſtone, but looks not at the hand that caſts it. This is, in effect, to make a god of the creature: ſo regarding it, as if it could of itſelf effectuate any thing, while, in the mean time, it is but an inſtrument in the hand of God, the rod of his anger, Iſa. x. 5. *ordained* of *him for judgment, eſtabliſhed for correction*, Hab. i. 12. O! why ſhould men terminate their view on the inſtruments in the crook of their lot, and ſo magnify their ſcourges! The truth is, they are, for the moſt part, rather to be pitied: as having an undeſirable office, which, for their gratifying their own corrupt affections, in making the crook in their lot of others, returns on their own head at length with a vengeance, as did the blood of Jezreel on the houſe of Jehu, Hoſ. i. 4. And it is ſpecially undeſirable to be ſo employed in the caſe of ſuch as belong to God; for rarely is the ground of the quarrel the ſame on the part of the inſtrument, as on God's part, but very different: witneſs Shimei's curſing of David, as a bloody man, meaning the blood of the houſe of Saul, which he was not guilty of, while God meant it of the blood of Uriah which he could not deny, 2 Sam. xvi. 7. 8. Moreover the quarrel will be, at long-run, taken up between God and his people; and then their ſcourges will find they had but a thankleſs office, Zech. i. 15. ‘I was but a little ‘diſpleaſed, and they helped forward the affliction,’ ſaith God, in reſentment to the heathens crooking the lot of his people. In like manner are they guilty, who impute the crook in their lot to fortune, or their ill luck, which in very deed is nothing but a creature of imagination, framed for a blind to keep men from acknowledging the hand of God. Thus, what the Philiſtines doubted, they did more impiouſly determine, ſaying, in effect, ‘It is not his hand that ſmote us, it was a chance that ‘happened us,’ 1 Sam. vi. 9. And, finally, theſe alſo who, in the way of giving up themſelves to carnal mirth and ſenſuality, ſet themſelves to deſpiſe the crook in their lot, to make nothing of it, and to forget it. I queſtion not, but one committing his caſe to the Lord, and looking to him for remedy in the firſt place, may lawfully call in the moderate uſe of the comforts of life, for help in the ſecond place. But as for that courſe, ſo frequent and uſual in this caſe among carnal men, if the crook of the lot really be, as indeed it is, of God's making, it muſt needs be a moſt indecent unbecoming courſe, to be abhorred of all good men, Prov. iii. 11.

‘ My ſon deſpiſe not the chaſtening of the Lord.’ It is ſurely a very deſperate method of cure, which cannot miſs of iſſuing in ſomething worſe than the diſeaſe, however it may palliate it for a while, Iſa. xxii. 13. 14. ‘ In that day did the Lord God of hoſts call to weeping ‘ and to mourning,——and behold, joy and gladneſs, ‘ ——eating fleſh, and drinking wine.——And it was re‘ vealed in mine ears, by the Lord of hoſts, ſurely this ‘ iniquity ſhall not be purged from you, till ye die.’

Secondly, The unſubmiſſive, whoſe hearts, like the troubled ſea, ſwell and boil, fret and murmur, and cannot be at reſt under the crook in their lot This is a moſt ſinful and dangerous courſe. The apoſtle Jude, characteriſing ſome, *to whom is reſerved the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever*, ver. 13. ſaith of them, ver. 16. *Theſe are murmurers, complainers*, namely, ſtill complaining of their lot, which is the import of the word there uſed by the Holy Ghoſt. For, ſince the crook in their lot, which their unſubdued ſpirits can by no means ſubmit to, is of God’s making, this their practice muſt needs be a fighting againſt God, and theſe their complainings and murmurings are indeed againſt him, whatever face they put upon them. Thus, when the *Iſraelites murmured againſt Moſes*, Numb. xiv. 2. God charges them with murmuring againſt himſelf; ‘ How long ſhall I bear ‘ with this evil congregation, which murmur againſt ‘ me:’ ver. 27. Ah! may not he, who made and faſhioned us without our advice, be allowed to make our lot too without aſking our mind, but we muſt riſe up againſt him on account of the crook made in it; What doth this ſpeak, but that the proud creature cannot endure God’s work, nor digeſt what he hath done? And how black and dangerous is that temper of ſpirit? how is it poſſible to miſs of being broken to pieces in ſuch a courſe? ‘ He is wiſe in heart, and mighty in ſtrength: ‘ who hath hardened himſelf againſt him, and hath ‘ proſpered?’ Job ix. 4.

Laſtly, The careleſs and unfruitful, who do not ſet themſelves dutifully to comply with the deſign of the crook in their lot. God and nature do nothing in vain. Since he makes the crook, there is, doubtleſs, a becoming deſign in it, which we are obliged in duty to fall in with, according to that, Mic. vi. 9. ‘ Hear ye the rod.’ And indeed, if one ſhut not his own eyes, but be willing to underſtand, he may eaſily perceive the general deſign thereof to be, to wean him from this world, and move him to ſeek and take up his heart’s reſt in God. And the nature and circumſtances of the crook itſelf being duly conſidered, it will not be very hard to make a more particular diſcovery of the deſign thereof. But, alas! the careleſs ſinner, ſunk in ſpiritual ſloth and ſtupidity, is in no concern to diſcover the deſign of providence in the crook: ſo he cannot fall in with it, but remains unfruitful: and all the pains taken on him, by the great Huſbandman, in the diſpenſation, are loſt. ‘ They cry out by reaſon of the arm of the mighty,’ groaning under the preſſure of the crook itſelf, and weight of the hand of the inſtrument thereof: ‘ but none ſaith, ‘ Where is God my Maker?’ they look not, they turn not unto God for all that, Job xxxv. 9. 10.

Uſe II. Of conſolation. It ſpeaks comfort to the afflicted children of God. Whatever is the crook in your lot, it is of God’s making: and therefore you may look upon it kindly. Since it is your Father has made it for you, queſtion not but there is a favourable deſign in it towards you. A diſcreet child welcometh his father’s rod, knowing that, being a father, he ſeeks his benefit thereby: and ſhall not God’s children welcome the crook in their lot, as deſigned by their Father, who cannot miſtake his meaſures to work for their good, according to the promiſe? The truth is, the crook in the lot of a believer, how painful ſoever it proves, is a part of the diſcipline of the covenant, the nurture ſecured by the promiſe of the Father to Chriſt’s children, Pſal. lxxxix. 30. 32. ‘ If his children forſake my law, and walk not ‘ in my judgments——then will I viſit their tranſgreſ‘ ſions with the rod.’ Farthermore, all who are diſpoſed to betake themſelves to God, under the crook in their lot, may take comfort in this. Let them know, that there is no crook in their lot, but may be made ſtraight: for God made it, ſurely then he can mend it. He himſelf can make ſtraight what he hath made crooked, tho’ none other can. There is nothing too hard for him to do. ‘ He raiſeth up the poor out of the duſt, and lifteth ‘ the needy out of the dunghill: that he may ſet him ‘ with princes. He maketh the barren woman to keep ‘ houſe, and to be a joyful mother of children,’ Pſal. cxiii. 7. 8. 9. Say not that your crook hath been of ſo long continuance, that it will never mend. Put it in the hand of God, who made it, that he may mend it, and wait on him: and if it be for thy good, that it ſhould be mended, it ſhall be mended; for ‘ no good ‘ thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly,’ Pſal. lxxxiv. 11.

Uſe laſt, Of exhortation. Since the crook in the lot is of God’s making, then, eyeing the hand of God in yours, be reconciled to it, and ſubmit under it, whatever it is. I ſay, eyeing the hand of God in it; for otherwiſe your ſubmiſſion, under the crook in your lot, cannot be a Chriſtian ſubmiſſion, acceptable to God, having no reference to him as your party in the matter.

Object. 1. But ſome will ſay, *The crook in my lot is from the hand of the creature; and ſuch a one too as I deſerved no ſuch treatment from.* Anſw. From what hath been already ſaid, it appears, that although the crook in thy lot be indeed immediately from the creature’s hand, yet it is mediately from the hand of God; there being nothing of that kind, no penal evil, but *the Lord hath done it.* Therefore, without all peradventure, God himſelf is thy principal party, whoever be the leſs principal. And albeit thou haſt not deſerved thy crook at the hand of the inſtrument or inſtruments which he makes uſe of for thy correction, thou certainly deſerveſt it at his hand, and he may make uſe of what inſtrument he will in the matter, or may do it immediately by himſelf, even as ſeems good in his ſight.

Object. 2. *But the crook in my lot might quickly be evened, if the inſtrument or inſtruments thereof pleaſed; only there is no dealing with them, ſo as to convince them of their fault in making it.* Anſw. If it is ſo, be ſure God’s time is not as yet come that that crook ſhould be evened; for if it were come, though they ſtand now like an impregnable fort, they would give way like a ſandy bank under one’s foot; they ſhould ‘ bow down ‘ to thee with their face towards the earth, and lick up ‘ the duſt of thy feet,’ Iſa. xlix. 23. Mean while, that ſtate of the matter is ſo far from juſtifying one’s not eyeing the hand of God in the crook in the lot, that it makes a piece of trial, in which his hand very eminently appears; namely, that men ſhould be ſignally injurious and burdenſome to others, yet by no means ſuſceptible of conviction. This was the trial of the church from her adverſaries, Jer. l. 7. ‘ All that found them ‘ have devoured them, and their adverſaries ſaid, We ‘ offend not, becauſe they have ſinned againſt the Lord, ‘ the habitation of juſtice.’ They were very abuſive, and gave her barbarous uſage; yet would they take with no fault in the matter. How could they ward off the conviction? Were they verily blameleſs in their devouring the Lord’s ſtraying ſheep? No, ſure they were not. Did they look on themſelves as miniſters of the divine juſtice againſt her? No, they did not. Some indeed would make a queſtion here, how the adverſaries of the church could celebrate her God as the habitation of juſtice? But the original pointing of the text being retained, it appears that there is no ground at all for this queſtion here, and withal the whole matter is ſet in a clear light. ‘ All that found them have devoured them, and ‘ their adverſaries ſaid, We offend not: becauſe they ‘ have ſinned againſt the Lord, the habitation of juſtice.’ Theſe laſt are not the words of the adverſaries, but the words of the prophet, ſhewing how it came to paſs that the adverſaries devoured the Lord's ſheep, as they lighted on them, and withal ſtood to the defence of it, when they had done, far from acknowledging any wrong: the matter lay here, the ſheep had ſinned againſt the Lord, the habitation of juſtice, and, as a juſt puniſhment hereof from his hand, they could have no juſtice at the hand of their adverſaries.

Wherefore, laying aſide theſe frivolous pretences, and eyeing the hand of God, as that which hath bowed your lot in that part, and keeps it in the bow, be reconciled to, and ſubmit under the crook, whatever it is, ſaying from the heart, 'Truly this a grief, and I muſt bear it,' Jer. x. 19.

And, to move you hereunto, conſider, (1.) It is a duty you owe to God, as your ſovereign Lord and Benefactor. His ſovereignty challengeth our ſubmiſſion; and it can in no caſe be meanneſs of ſpirit to ſubmit unto the crook which his hand hath made in our lot, and to go quietly under the yoke that he hath laid on: but it is really madneſs for the potſherds of the earth, by their turbulent and refractory carriage under it, to ſtrive with their Maker. And his beneficence to us, ill-deſerving creatures, may well ſtop our mouths from complaining of his making a crook in our lot, who had done us no wrong, had he made the whole of it crooked. 'Shall 'we receive good at the hand of God, and ſhall we not 'receive evil?' Job ii. 10. (2.) It is an unalterable ſtatute, for the time of this life, that nobody ſhall want a crook in their lot: for 'man is born unto trouble, as 'the ſparks fly upward,' Job v. 7. And thoſe who are deſigned for heaven, are in a ſpecial manner aſſured of the crook in theirs, that in the world they ſhall have tribulation, John xvi. 33. for by means thereof the Lord makes them meet for heaven. And how can you imagine that you ſhall be exempted from the common lot of mankind! 'Shall the rock be removed out of his 'place for thee?' And ſince God makes the crooks in mens lot, according to the different exigence of their caſes, you may be ſure that yours is neceſſary for you. (3.) A crook in the lot, which one can by no means ſubmit to, makes a condition of all things the likeſt to that in hell. For there a yoke, which the wretched ſufferers can neither bear nor yet ſhake off, is wreathed about their necks: there the almighty arm draws againſt them, and they againſt it: there they are ever ſuffering and ever ſinning; ſtill in the furnace, but their droſs not conſumed, nor they purified. Even ſuch is the caſe of thoſe who now cannot ſubmit under the crook in their lot. Laſtly, Great is the loſs by not ſubmitting under it. The crook in the lot, rightly improven, hath turned to the beſt account, and made the beſt time to ſome that ever they had all their life long, as the Pſalmiſt from his own experience teſtifies, Pſal. cxix. 67. 'Before I 'was afflicted, I went aſtray: but now have I kept thy 'word.' There are many now in heaven, who are bleſſing God for the crook they had in their lot here. What a ſad thing muſt it then be to loſe this teeth wind for Immanuel's land? But if the crook in thy lot do thee no good, be ſure it will not miſs of doing thee great damage; it will hugely increaſe guilt, and aggravate thy condemnation, while it ſhall for ever cut to the heart, to think of the pains taken on thee, by means of the crook in the lot, to wean thee from the world, and bring thee to God, but all in vain. Take heed, therefore, how you manage it, 'Leſt—thou mourn at the laſt—'and ſay, How have I hated inſtruction, and my heart 'deſpiſed reproof?' Prov. v. 10. 11. 12.

Doct. II. *What God ſees meet to mar, we will not be able to mend in our lot. What crook God makes in our lot, we will not be able to even.*

We ſhall, 1*ſt*, ſhew God's marring and making a crook in one's lot, as he ſees meet.

2*dly*, We ſhall conſider mens attempting to mend or even that crook in their lot.

3*dly*, In what ſenſe it is to be underſtood, that we will not be able to mend or even the crook in our lot.

4*thly*, Render ſome reaſons of the point.

I. As to the firſt head, namely, &c.

1. God keeps the choice of every one's crook to himſelf: and therein he exerts his ſovereignty, Matth. xx. 15. It is not left to our option what that crook ſhall be, or what our peculiar burden, but, as the potter makes of the ſame clay one veſſel for one uſe, another for another uſe; ſo God makes one crook for one, another for another, according to his own will and pleaſure. Pſal. cxxxv. 6. 'Whatſoever the Lord pleaſed, that did 'he in heaven and in earth,' &c.

2. He ſees and obſerves the bias of every one's will and inclination how it lies, and wherein it eſpecially bends away from himſelf, and conſequently wherein it needs the ſpecial bow; ſo he did in that man's caſe, Mark x. 21. 'One thing thou lackeſt; go thy way, 'ſell whatſoever thou haſt, and give to the poor,' &c. Obſerve the bent of his heart to his great poſſeſſions. He takes notice what is that idol that in every one's caſe is moſt apt to be his rival, that ſo he may ſuit the trial to the caſe, making the crook there.

3. By the conduct of his providence, or a touch of his hand, he gives that part of one's lot a bow the contrary way; ſo that henceforth it lies quite contrary to that bias of the party's will, Ezek. xxiv. 25. And here the trial is made, the bent of the will lying one way, and that part of one's lot another, that it does not anſwer the inclination of the party, but thwarts with it.

Laſtly, He wills that crook in the lot to remain while he ſees meet, for longer or ſhorter time, juſt according to his own holy ends he deſigns it for, 2 Sam. xii. 10. Hoſ. v. 15. By that will it is ſo fixed, that the whole creation cannot alter it, or put it out of the bow.

II. We ſhall conſider mens attempting to mend or even that crook in their lot. This, in a word, lies in their making efforts to bring their lot in that point to their own will, that they may both go one way; ſo it imports three things.

Firſt, A certain uneaſineſs under the crook in the lot; it is a yoke which is hard for the party to bear, till his ſpirit be tamed and ſubdued, Jer. xxxi. 18. 'Thou 'haſt chaſtiſed me, and I was chaſtiſed, as a bullock 'unaccuſtomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I ſhall 'be turned,' &c. And it is for the breaking down of the weight of one's ſpirit that God lays it on; for which cauſe it is declared to be a good thing to bear it, Lam. iii. 27. that being the way to make one at length as a weaned child.

Secondly, A ſtrong deſire to have the croſs removed, and to have matters in that part going according to our inclinations. This is very natural, nature deſiring to be freed from every thing that is burdenſome or croſs to it: and if that deſire be kept in a due ſubordination to the will of God, and be not too peremptory, it is not ſinful, Matth. xxvi. 39. 'If it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from 'me; nevertheleſs, not as I will, &c. Hence ſo many accepted prayers of the people of God, for the removal of the crook in their lot.

Laſtly, An earneſt uſe of means for that end. This natively follows on that deſire. The man, being preſſed with the croſs which is his crook, labours all he can in the uſe of means to be rid of it. And if the means uſed be lawful, and not relied on, but followed with an eye to God in them, the attempt is not ſinful either, whether he ſucceed in the uſe of them or not.

III. In what ſenſe it is to be underſtood, that we will not be able to mend or even the crook in our lot?

Negatively, It is not to be underſtood, as if the caſe were abſolutely hopeleſs, and that there is no remedy for the crook in the lot. For there is no caſe ſo deſperate but God may right it, Gen. xviii. 14. 'Is any thing 'too hard for the Lord?' When the crook has continued long, and ſpurned all remedies one has uſed for it, one is ready to loſe hope about it; but many a crook, given over for hopeleſs that would never mend, God has made perfectly ſtraight, as in Job's caſe. But,

Poſitively, We will never be able to mend it by ourſelves; if the Lord himſelf take it not in hand to remove it, it will ſtand before us immoveable, like a mountain of braſs, though perhaps it may be in itſelf a thing that might eaſily be removed. We take it up in theſe three things.

1. It will never do by the mere force of our hand, 1 Sam. ii. 9.——' For by ſtrength ſhall no man prevail.' The moſt vigorous endeavours we can uſe will not even the crook, if God give it not a touch of his hand: ſo that all endeavours that way, without an eye to God, are vain and fruitleſs, and will be but plowing on the rock, Pſal. cxxvii. 1. 2.

2 The uſe of all allowable means, for it will be ſucceſsleſs unleſs the Lord bleſs them for that end, Lam. iii. 37. *Who is he that ſaith and it cometh to paſs, when the Lord commandeth it not?* As one may eat and not be ſatisfied, ſo one may uſe means proper for evening the crook in his lot, and yet prevail nothing; for nothing can be or do for us any more than God makes it to be or do, Eccleſ. ix. 11.——' The race is not to the ' ſwift, nor the battle to the ſtrong, neither yet bread ' to the wiſe, nor yet riches to men of underſtanding,' &c.

3. It will never do in our time, but in God's time, which ſeldom is ſo early as ours, John vii. 6.——' My ' time is not yet come; but your time is always ready.' Hence that crook remains ſometimes immoveable, as if it were kept by an inviſible hand; and at another time it goes away with a touch, becauſe God's time is come for evening it.

IV. Reaſons of the point.

1ſt, Becauſe of the abſolute dependence we have upon God, Acts xvii. 28. As the light depends on the ſun, or the ſhadow on the body, ſo we depend on God, and without him can do nothing, great or ſmall. And God will have us to find it ſo, to teach us our dependence.

2dly, Becauſe his will is irreſiſtible, Iſ. xlvi. 10.——' My counſel ſhall ſtand, and I will do all my pleaſure.' When God wills one thing, and the creature the contrary, it is eaſy to ſee which will muſt be done. When the omnipotent arm holds, in vain does the creature draw, Job ix. 4.—' Who hath hardened himſelf againſt ' him and proſpered?'

Inference 1. There is a neceſſity of yielding and ſubmitting under the crook in our lot; for we may as well think to remove rocks and mountains, which God has ſettled, as to make that part of our lot ſtraight which he hath made crooked.

2. The evening of the crook in our lot, by main force of our own, is but a cheat we put on ourſelves, and will not laſt, but, like a ſtick by main force made ſtraight, it will quickly return to the bow again.

Laſtly, The only habile way of getting the crook evened, is to apply to God for it.

Exhortation 1. Let us then apply to God for removing any crook in our lot, that in the ſettled order of things may be removed. Men cannot ceaſe to deſire the removal of a crook, more than that of a thorn in the fleſh: but, ſince we are not able to mend what God ſees meet to mar, it is evident we are to apply to him that made it to mend it, and not take the evening of it in our own hand.

Motive 1. All our attempts for its removal will, without him, be vain and fruitleſs, Pſal. cxxvii. 1. Let us be as reſolute as we will to have it evened, if God ſay it not, we will labour in vain, Lam. iii. 37. Howſoever fair the means we uſe bid for it, they will be ineffectual if he command not the bleſſing, Eccleſ. ix. 11.

2. Such attempts will readily make it worſe. Nothing is more ordinary, than for a proud ſpirit, ſtriving with the crook, to make it more crooked, Eccleſ. x. 8. 9. ' Whoſo breaketh a hedge, a ſerpent ſhall bite him,' Ver. 9. ' Whoſo removeth ſtones ſhall be hurt there' with,' &c. This is evident in the caſe of the murmurers in the wilderneſs. It natively comes to be ſo, becauſe at that rate, the will of the party bends farther away from it: and moreover, God is provoked to wreathe the yoke the faſter about one's neck, that he will by no means let it ſit eaſy on him.

3. There is no crook but what may be remedied by him, and made perfectly ſtraight, Pſal. cxlvi. 8—' The ' Lord raiſeth them that are bowed down,' &c. He can raiſe the oldeſt ſit-faſt, concerning which there remains no hopes with us, Rom. iv. 17.—' Who hath ' quickened the dead, and calleth thoſe things which ' be not, as though they were.' It is his prerogative to do wonders; to begin a work, where the whole creation gives it over as hopeleſs, and carry it on to perfection, Gen. xviii. 14.

4. He loves to be employed in evening crooks, and calls us to employ him that way, Pſal. l. 15.—' Call ' upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee,' &c. He makes them for that very end, that he may bring us to him on that errand, and may manifeſt his power and goodneſs in evening of them, Hoſ. v. 15. The ſtraits of the children of men afford a large field for diſplaying his glorious perfections, which otherwiſe would be wanting, Exod. xv. 11.

5. A crook thus got evened is a double mercy. There are ſome crooks evened by a touch of the hand of common providence, while people are either not exerciſed about them, or when they fret for their removal; theſe are ſapleſs mercies, and ſhort-lived, Pſal. lxxviii. 30. 31. Hoſ. xiii. 11. Fruits thus too haſtily plucked off the tree of providence can hardly miſs to ſet the teeth on edge, and certainly will be bitter to gracious ſouls. But, O the ſweet of the evening of a crook got by a humble application to, and waiting on the Lord! It has the image and ſuperſcription of divine favour upon it, which makes it bulky and valuable, Gen. xxxiii. 10.—' For therefore I have ſeen thy face, as though I had ſeen ' the face of God,' &c. chap. xxi. 6.

6. God has ſignalized his favour to his deareſt children in making and mending notable crooks in their lot. His darling ones ordinarily have the greateſt crooks made in their lot, Heb. xii. 6. But then they make way for the richeſt experiences in the removal of them, upon their application to him. This is clear from the caſe of Abraham, Jacob, and Joſeph. Which of the patriarchs had ſo great crooks as they? But which of them on the other hand, had ſo ſignal tokens of the divine favour? The greateſt of men, as Samſon and the Baptiſt, have been born of women naturally barren; ſo do the greateſt crooks iſſue in the richeſt mercies to them that are exerciſed thereby.

Laſtly, It is the ſhorteſt and ſureſt way to go ſtraight to God with the crook in the lot. If we would have our wiſh in that point, we muſt as the eagle, firſt ſoar aloft, and then come down on the prey, Mark v. 36. Our faithleſs out-of-the-way attempts to even the crook, are our fool's haſte, that is no ſpeed; as in the caſe of Abraham's going into Hagar. God is the firſt mover, who ſets all the wheels in motion for evening the crook, the which without him will remain immoveable, Hoſ. ii. 21. 22.

Object. (1.) *But it is needleſs: for I ſee that though the crook in my lot may mend, yet it will never mend. In its own nature it is capable of being removed, but it is plain, it is not to be removed, it is hopeleſs.* Anſwer. That is the language of unbelieving haſte, which faith and patience ſhould correct, Pſal. cxvi. 11, 12. Abraham had as much to ſay for the hopeleſſneſs of his crook, but yet he applies to God in faith for the mending of it, Rom. iv. 19, 20. Sarah had made ſuch a concluſion, for which ſhe was rebuked, Gen. xviii. 13, 14. Nothing can make it needleſs in ſuch a caſe to apply to God.

Object. (2.) *But I have applied to him again and again for it, yet it is never mended.* Anſw. Delays are not denials of ſuits at the court of heaven, but trials of the faith and patience of the petitioners. And whoſo will hang on, will certainly come ſpeed at long-run, Luke xviii. 7, 8. 'And ſhall not God avenge his 'own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though 'he bear long with them?' Ver. 8. 'I tell you that he 'will avenge them ſpeedily.' Sometimes indeed folk grow pettiſh in the caſe of the crook in the lot, and let it drop out of their prayers, in a courſe of deſpondency, while it yet continues uneaſy to them: but, if God mind to even it in mercy, he will oblige them to take it in again into them, Ezek. xxxvi. 37.——'I will yet for 'this be enquired of by the houſe of Iſrael, to do it for 'them,' &c. If the removal come, while it is dropt, there will be little ſavour in it; though it were never to be removed while we live, that ſhould not cut off our applying to God for the removal; for there are many prayers not to be anſwered till we come to the other world, and there all our prayers will be anſwered at once, Rom. vii. 24.

DIRECTIONS *for rightly managing the application for removing the crook in the lot.*

1. Pray for it, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. and pray in faith, believing that, for the ſake of Jeſus, you ſhall certainly obtain it at length, and in this life too, if it is good for you; but without peradventure in the other life, Matth. xxi. 22. They will not be diſappointed that get the ſong of Moſes and of the Lamb, Rev. xv. 3. And in ſome caſes of that nature, extraordinary prayer, with faſting, is very expedient, Matth. xvii. 21.

2. Humble yourſelves under it, as the yoke which the ſovereign hand has laid on you, Mic. vii. 9. *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned againſt him,* &c. Juſtify God, condemn yourſelves, kiſs the rod, and go quietly under it: this is the moſt feaſible way to get rid of it, James iv. 10. When the bullock is broken and tamed, as accuſtomed to the yoke, then it is taken off, the end being obtained, Pſal. x. 17. 'Thou 'wilt prepare their hearts, thou wilt cauſe thine ear to 'hear.'

Laſtly, Wait on patiently till the hand that made it mend it, Pſal. xxvii. 14. Do not give up the matter as hopeleſs, becauſe you are not ſo ſoon relieved as you would; 'but let patience have her perfect work, that 'ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing,' Jam. i. 4. Leave the timing of the deliverance to the Lord, his time will at length to conviction appear the beſt, and it will not go beyond it, Iſa. lx. 22.——*I the Lord will haſten it in his time*; waiting on him you will not be diſappointed,——*For they ſhall not be aſhamed that wait for me*, Iſ. xlix. 23.

Exhortation 2. What crook there is, that, in the ſettled order of things, cannot be got removed or evened in this world, let us apply to God for ſuitable relief under it. For inſtance, the common crook in the lot of the ſaints, viz. indwelling ſin; as God has made that crook not to be removed here, He can certainly balance it, and afford relief under it. The ſame is to be ſaid of any crook, while it remains unremoved. In both caſes apply yourſelf to God, for making up your loſſes another way. And there are five things I would have you to keep in view, and aim at here.

1. To take God in Chriſt, for and inſtead of that thing, with-holding or taking away of which from you makes the crook in your lot, Pſal. cxlii. 4, 5. There is never a crook God makes in our lot, but it is in effect Heaven's offer of a bleſſed exchange to us, ſuch as, Mark x. 21.——*Sell whatſoever thou haſt,——and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven.* In managing of which exchange, God firſt puts out his hand, and takes away ſome earthly thing from us; and it is expected we put out our hand next, and take ſome heavenly thing from him in the ſtead of it, and particularly his Chriſt. Wherefore has God emptyed his left hand of ſuch and ſuch an earthly comfort? Stretch out your right hand to a God in Chriſt, take him in the room of it, and welcome. Therefore the ſoul's cloſing with Chriſt is called buying, wherein, parting with one thing, we get another in its ſtead, Matth. xiii. 45, 46.——*The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant-man ſeeking goodly pearls*; ver. 46. *Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and ſold all that he had, and bought it.* Do this, and you will be more than even hands with the crook in your lot.

2. Look for the ſtream's running as full from him as ever it did or could run, when the crook of the lot has dried it. This is the work of faith, confidently to hang on for that from God which is denied us from the creature. *When my father and mother forſake me, then the Lord will take me up*, Pſal. xxvii. 10. This is a moſt rational expectation: for it is certain there is no good in the creature, but what is from God; therefore there is no good to be found in the creature, the ſtream, but what may be got immediately from God, the Fountain. And, O but it is a welcome plea, to come to God, and ſay, Now, Lord, thou haſt taken away from me ſuch a creature-comfort, I muſt have as good from thyſelf.

3. The ſpiritual fruits of the crook in the lot, Heb. xii. 11. We ſee the way of the world is, when one trade fails, to fall on and drive another trade; ſo ſhould we, when there is a crook in the lot, making our earthly comforts low, ſet ourſelves the more for ſpiritual attainments. If our trade with the world ſinks, let us ſet to drive a trade with heaven more vigorouſly: ſee if, by means of the crook, we can reach more faith, love, heavenly-mindedneſs, contempt of the world, humility, ſelf denial, &c. 2 Cor. iv. 16. So, while we loſe at one hand, we will gain at another.

4. Grace to carry us under the crook, 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9. *For this thing I beſought the Lord thrice.* Ver. 9. *And he ſaid, My grace is ſufficient for thee.* Whether a man be faint and have a light burden, or be refreſhed and ſtrengthened, and have a heavy one, it is all a caſe, the latter can go as eaſy under his burden, as the former. Grace proportioned to the trial is what we ſhould aim at, as getting that, though the crook be not evened, we are even hands with it.

Laſtly, The keeping in our eye the eternal reſt and weight of glory in the other world, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. 'For our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, 'work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight 'of glory; while we look not at the things which are 'ſeen, but at the things which are not ſeen.' This will balance the crook in your lot, be it what it will; while they, who have no well grounded hope of ſalvation, will find the crook in their lot in this world ſuch a weight as they have nothing to counterbalance it; yet the hope of eternal reſt may bear up under all the toil and labour met with here.

Exhortation 3. Let us then ſet ourſelves rightly to bear and carry under the crook in our lot, while God ſees meet to continue it. What we cannot mend, let us bear Chriſtianly, and not fight againſt God, and ſo kick againſt the pricks. So let us bear it,

1. Patiently, without fuming and fretting, or murmuring, James v. 7. Pſal. xxxvii. 7. Though we loſe our comfort in the creature, through the crook in our lot, let us not loſe the poſſeſſion of ourſelves, Luke xxi. 19. The crook in our lot makes us like one who has but a ſcanty coldriſe fire to warm at; but impatience under it ſcatters it, ſo as to ſet the houſe on fire about us, that expoſeth us, Prov. xxv. 28. *He that hath no rule over his own ſpirit, is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.*

2. With Chriſtian fortitude, without ſinking under diſcouragements, 'nor faint when thou art rebuked of 'him,' Heb. xii. 5. Satan's work is, by the crook, either to bend or break people's ſpirits, and oft-times by bending to break them: our work is to carry evenly under it, ſteering a middle courſe, guarding againſt

ſplitting on the rocks on either hand. Our happineſs lies not in any earthly comfort, nor will the want of any of them render us miſerable, Hab. iii. 5. So that we are reſolutely to hold on our way, with a holy contempt and regardleſſneſs of the hardſhips, Job xvii. 9. *The righteous alſo ſhall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands ſhall be ſtronger and ſtronger.*

Queſt. When is one to be reckoned to fall under ſinking diſcouragements from the crook in his lot? *Anſw.* When it prevails ſo far as to unfit for the duties either of our particular or Chriſtian calling. We may be ſure it has carried us beyond the bounds of moderate grief, when it unfits us for the common affairs of life, which the Lord calls us to manage, 1 Cor. vii. 24. It is recorded to the commendation of Abraham, Gen. xxiii. 3, 4. Or for the duties of religion, hindering them altogether, 1 Pet. iii. 7. *that your prayers be not hindered*, Greek, *cut off*, or *up, like a tree from the roots*; or making one quite hopeleſs in them, Mal. ii. 13.

Laſtly, Profitably, ſo as we may gain ſome advantage thereby, Pſal. cxix. 71. *It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy ſtatutes.* There is advantage to be made thereby, Rom. v. 3, 4, 5. and it is certainly an ill managed crook in our lot, when we get not ſome ſpiritual good of it, Heb. xii. 11. The crook is a kind of ſpiritual medicine; and as it is loſt phyſic that purges away no ill humours, but in vain are its unpleaſantneſs to the taſte, and its grippings endured; ſo it is a loſt crook, and ill is the bitterneſs of it wared, that we are not bettered by, Iſa. xxvii. 9. 'By this 'therefore ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this 'is all the fruit to take away his ſin.'

Motives to preſs this exhortation. Conſider,

1. There will be no evening of it while God ſees meet to continue it. Let us carry under it as we will, and make what ſallies we pleaſe in the caſe, it will continue immoveable, as fixed with bands of iron and braſs, Job xxiii. 13, 14. *But he is of one mind, and who can turn him? And what his ſoul deſireth, even that he doth.* Ver. 14. *For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many ſuch things are with him.* Is it not wiſdom then to make the beſt we may of what we cannot mend? Make a virtue then of neceſſity. What is not to be cured muſt be endured, and ſhould with a Chriſtian reſignation.

2. An aukward carriage under it notably increaſes the pain of it. What makes the yoke gall our necks, but that we ſtruggle ſo much againſt it, and cannot let it ſit at eaſe on us, Jer. xxxi. 18. How often are we in that caſe, like men daſhing their heads againſt a rock to remove it? The rock ſtands unmoved, but they are wounded, and loſe exceedingly by their ſtruggle. Impatience under the crook lays an overweight on the burden, and makes it heavier; while withal it weakens us, and makes us leſs able to bear it.

3. The crook in thy lot is the ſpecial trial God has choſen for thee to take thy meaſure by, 1 Pet. i. 6, 7. It is God's fire, whereby he tries what metal men are of; Heaven's touch-ſtone for diſcovering of true and counterfeit Chriſtians. They may bear, and go through ſeveral trials, whom the crook in the lot will diſcover to be naught, becauſe by no means they can bear that, Mark x. 21, 22. Think then with thyſelf under it, Now, here the trial of thy ſtate turns; I muſt, by this, be proven either ſincere or a hypocrite. For, (1.) Can any be a cordial ſubject of Chriſt, without being able to ſubmit his lot to him? Do not all who ſincerely come to Chriſt, put a blank in his hand? Acts ix. 6. Pſal. xlvii. 4. And does he not tell us, that without that diſpoſition we are not his diſciples? Luke xiv. 26. *If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and ſiſters, yea, and his own life alſo, he cannot be my diſciple.* Perhaps you find you can ſubmit to any thing *but* that: but that *but* will mar all? Mark x. 21. Did ever any hear of a ſincere cloſing with Chriſt, with a reſerve or exception of one thing, wherein they behoved to be their own lords?

Queſt. Is that diſpoſition then a qualification neceſſarily prerequired to our believing? And if ſo, where muſt we have it? Can we work it out of our natural powers? *Anſw.* No, it is not ſo; but it neceſſarily accompanies and goes along with believing, flowing from the ſame ſaving illumination in the knowledge of Chriſt, whereby the ſoul is brought to believe on him. Hereby the ſoul ſees him an able Saviour, ſo truſts on him for ſalvation; the rightful Lord, and infinitely wiſe Ruler, and ſo ſubmits the lot to him, Matth. xiii. 45, 46. The ſoul, taking him for a Saviour, takes him alſo for a Head and Ruler. It is Chriſt's giving himſelf to us, and our receiving him, that cauſes us quit other things to and for him: as it is the light diſpels the darkneſs. *Caſe.* Alas! I cannot get my heart freely to ſubmit my lot to him in that point. *Anſw.* That ſubmiſſion will not be carried on in any without a ſtruggle; the old man will never ſubmit it, and when the new man of grace is ſubmitting it, the old man will ſtill be reclaiming, Gal. v. 17. 'For 'the fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt 'the fleſh; and theſe are contrary the one to the 'other; ſo that ye cannot do the things that ye would.' But are ye ſincerely deſirous, and habitually aiming to ſubmit it? Do ye from the ungracious ſtruggle againſt the crook, turn away to the ſtruggle with your own heart to bring it to ſubmit, believing the promiſe, and uſing the means for it, being grieved from the heart with yourſelves that ye cannot ſubmit it? this is ſubmitting of your lot, in the favourable conſtruction of the goſpel, Rom. vii. 17,—20. 2 Cor. viii. 12. If ye had your choice, would ye rather have your heart brought to ſubmit to the crook, than the crook turned to your heart's deſire? Rom. vii. 22, 23. And do ye not ſincerely endeavour to ſubmit it over the belly of the reluctancy of the fleſh? Gal. v. 17.

2. Where is the chriſtian ſelf-denial, and taking up of the croſs, without ſubmitting to the crook? This is the firſt leſſon Chriſt puts in the hand of his diſciples, Matth. xvi. 24. *If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs, and follow me.* Self-denial would procure a reconciliation with the crook, and an admittance of the croſs; but while we cannot bear our corrupt ſelf to be denied any of its cravings, and particularly that which God ſees meet eſpecially to be denied it, we cannot bear the crook in our lot, but fight againſt it in favour of ſelf.

3. Where is our conformity to Chriſt, while we cannot ſubmit to the crook? We cannot evidence ourſelves Chriſtians without conformity to Chriſt. *He that ſaith, he abideth in him, ought himſelf alſo to walk, even as he walked*, 1 John ii. 6. There was a continued crook in Chriſt's lot, but he ſubmitted to it, Philip. ii. 8. *And being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs.* Rom. xv. 3. *For even Chriſt pleaſed not himſelf, &c.* And ſo muſt we, if we will prove ourſelves Chriſtians indeed, Matth. x. 22. 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12.

4. How will we prove ourſelves the genuine kindly children of God, if ſtill warring with the crook? We cannot pray, *Our Father,—thy will be done in earth, as, &c.* Matth. vi. Nay, the language of that practice is, We muſt have our own will, and God's will cannot ſatiſfy us.

Motive 4. The trial by the crook here will not laſt long, 1 Cor. vii. 31. What though the work be ſore, it may be the better comported with, that it will not be longſome; a few days or years at fartheſt will put an end to it, and take you off your trials. Do not ſay, I will never be eaſed of it, for if ye be not eaſed of it before, ye will be eaſed of it at death, come in the room of it after what will. A ſerious view of death and eternity might make us to ſet ourſelves to carry rightly under our crook while it laſteth.

5. If ye would in a Chriſtian manner, ſet yourſelves

to bear the crook, ye would find it eaſier than ye imagine, Matth. xi. 29, 30. *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me,——and ye ſhall find reſt to your ſouls.* Verſe. 30. *For my yoke is eaſy, and my burden is light.* Satan has no readier way to gain his purpoſe, than to perſuade men it is impoſſible that ever their minds ſhould ply with the crook; that it is a burden to them altogether inſupportable: as long as ye believe that, be ſure ye will never be able to bear it. But the Lord makes no crook in the lot of any, but what may be ſo borne of them acceptably, though not ſinleſsly and perfectly, Matth. xi. 30. For there is ſtrength for that effect ſecured in the covenant, 2 Cor. iii. 5. Philip iv. 13. and being by faith fetched out, it will certainly come, Pſal. xxviii. 7.

6. If ye carry chriſtianly under your crook here, ye will not loſe your labour, but get a full reward of grace in the other world, through Chriſt, 2 Tim. ii. 12. 1 Cor. xv. 58. There is a bleſſing pronounced on him that endureth, on this very ground, James i. 2. 'Bleſſed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he 'is tried, he ſhall receive the crown of life, which the 'Lord hath promiſed to them that love him.' Heaven is the place into which the approven, upon the trial of the crook, are received, Rev. vii. 14.——*Theſe are they which came out of great tribulation, and have waſhed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.* When ye come there, no veſtiges of it will be remaining in your lot, nor will ye have the leaſt uneaſy remembrance of it; but it will accent your praiſes, and ſcrew up your joy.

7. If ye do not carry chriſtianly under it, ye will loſe your ſouls in the other world, Jude 15, 16. Thoſe who are at war with God in their lot here, God will have war with them for ever. If they will not ſubmit to his yoke here, and go quietly under it, he will wreathe his yoke about their neck for ever, with everlaſting bonds that ſhall never be looſed, Job ix. 4.

Laſtly, Whatever crook is in the lot of any, it is very likely there is a public crook abiding the generation, that will be more trying. This is a day of ſinning beyond the days of our fathers, a day wherein God is making great crooks in the lot of the deareſt to himſelf: but theſe ſeem to preſage ſuch a general publick crook to be abiding the generation, as will make our now private ones of very little weight, 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18. Therefore ſet yourſelves to carry rightly under the crook in your lot.

If ye aſk what way one may reach that, for direction we propoſe,

DOCTRINE *laſt. The conſidering the crook in the lot, as the work of God, is a proper means to bring one to carry rightly under it.*

I. What it is to conſider the crook as the work of God, we take it up in theſe five things.

1ſt, An enquiry into the ſpring whence it riſeth, Gen. xxv. 22. Reaſon and religion both teach us, not only to notice the crook, which we cannot avoid, but to conſider and enquire into the ſpring of it. Surely it is not our choice, nor do we deſignedly make it for ourſelves: and to aſcribe it to fortune, is to aſcribe it to nothing; it is not ſprung of itſelf, but ſown by one hand or other for us, Job v. 6. And we are to notice the hand from whence it comes.

2dly, A perceiving of the hand of God in it. Whatever hand any creature hath therein, we ought not to terminate our view in them, but look above and beyond them to the ſupreme Manager's agency therein, Job i. 21. Without this we make a God of the creature inſtrumental of the crook, looking on it as if it were the firſt cauſe, which is peculiar to God, Rom. xi. 36. and bring ourſelves under that doom, Pſal. xxviii. 5. *Becauſe they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands, he ſhall deſtroy them, and not build them up.*

3dly, A repreſenting it to ourſelves as a work of God, which he hath wrought againſt us for holy and wiſe ends, becoming the divine perfections. This is to take it by the right handle, to repreſent it to ourſelves under a right notion, from whence a right management under it may ſpring. It can never be ſafe to overlook God in it, but very ſafe to overlook the creature, aſcribing it unto God, as if no other hand were in it, his being always the principal therein.—'It is the Lord, let him do what 'ſeemeth him good,' 1 Sam. iii. 18. Thus David overlooked Shimei, and looked to God in the matter of his curſing, as one would the ax, fixing his eye on him that weilded it. Here two things are to come into our conſideration.

1. The decree of God purpoſing that crook for us from eternity.—'For he worketh all things after the 'counſel of his own will,' Eph. i. 11. the ſealed book in which are written all the black lines that make the crook. Whatever valley of darkneſs, grief, and ſorrow, we are carried through, we are to look on them as made by the mountains of braſs, the immoveable divine purpoſes, Zech. vi. 1. This can be no preſumption in that caſe, if we carry it no farther than the event goes in our ſight and feeling; for ſo far the book is opened for us to look into.

2. The providence of God bringing to paſs that crook for us in time, Amos iii. 6. There is nothing can befal us without him in whom we live. Whatever kind of agency of the creatures may be in the making of our crook, whatever they have done or not done towards it, he is the ſpring that ſets all the created wheels in motion, which ceaſing they would all ſtop; though he is ſtill infinitely pure in his agency, however impure they be in theirs. Job conſidered both theſe, Job xxiii. 14.

4thly, A continuing of the thought of it as ſuch. It is not a ſimple glance of the eye, but a contemplating and leiſurely viewing of it as his work, that is the proper mean. We are to be,

(1.) Habitually impreſſed with this conſideration; as the crook is ſome laſting grievance, ſo the conſideration of this as the remedy ſhould be habitually kept up. There are other conſiderations beſides this, that we muſt entertain, ſo that we cannot always have it expreſsly in our mind: but we muſt lay it down for a rooted principle, according to which we are to manage the crook, and keep the heart in a diſpoſition, whereby it may ſlip into our minds, as occaſion requires, expreſsly.

(2.) Occaſionally exerciſed in it. Whenever we begin to feel the ſmart of the crook, we ſhould fetch in this remedy; when the yoke begins to gall the neck, there ſhould be an application of this ſpiritual ointment. And however often the former comes in on us, it will be our wiſdom to fetch in the latter as the proper remedy: the oftener it is uſed, it will more eaſily come to hand, and alſo be the more effectual.

Laſtly, A conſidering it for the end for which it is propoſed to us, viz. to bring to a dutiful carriage under it. Mens corruptions will cauſe them to enter on this conſideration: and as is the principal, ſo will the end and effect of it be corrupt, 2 Kings vi. 33. But we muſt enter on, and uſe it for a good end, if we would have good of it, taking it as a practical conſideration for regulating our conduct under the crook.

II. How it is to be underſtood to be a proper means to bring one to carry rightly under the crook.

1. *Negatively*, Not as if it were ſufficient of itſelf, and as it ſtands alone, to produce that effect. But, 2. *Poſitively*, As it is uſed in faith, in the faith of the goſpel: that is to ſay, a ſinner's bare conſidering the crook in his lot as the work of God, without any ſaving relation to him, will never be a way to carry rightly under it: but having believed in Jeſus Chriſt, and ſo taking God for his God, the conſidering of the crook as the work of God, his God, is the proper means to bring him to that deſirable temper and behaviour. Many hearers miſtake here. When they hear ſuch and ſuch law-con-

ſiderations propoſed for bringing them to duty, they preſently imagine, that, by the mere force of them, they may gain that point. And many preachers too, who, forgetting Chriſt and the goſpel, pretend by the force of reaſon, to make men Chriſtians: the eyes of both being held, that they do not ſee the corruption of mens nature, which is ſuch as ſets the true cure above the force of reaſon, all that they are ſenſible of, being ſome ill habits, which they think may be ſhaken off by a vigorous application of their rational faculties. To clear this matter, conſider,

Firſt, Is it rational to think to ſet fallen man with his corrupted nature, to work the ſame way with innocent Adam? that is to ſet beggars on a level with the rich, lame men to a journey with them that have limbs. Innocent Adam had a ſtock of gracious abilities, whereby he might by the force of moral conſiderations, brought himſelf to perform duty aright. But where is that with us? 2 Cor. iii. 5. Whatever force be in them to a ſoul endued with ſpiritual life, what force is in them to raiſe the dead, ſuch as we are? Eph. ii. 1.

Secondly, The ſcripture is very plain on this head, ſhewing the indiſpenſible neceſſity of faith, Heb. xi. and that ſuch as unites to Chriſt, John xv. 5. *Without me*, i. e. ſeparate from me, *ye can do nothing*; no not with all the moral conſiderations ye can uſe. How were the ten commands given on mount Sinai? Not bare exactions of duty, but fronted with the goſpel, to be believed in the firſt place; *I am the Lord thy God*, &c. And ſo Solomon, whom many do regard rather as a moral Philoſopher, than an inſpired writer leading to Chriſt, fronts his writings, in the beginning of the Proverbs, with moſt expreſs goſpel. And muſt we have it expreſsly repeated in our Bibles with every moral precept, or elſe ſhut our eyes, and take theſe precepts without it? That is the effect of our natural enmity to Chriſt. If we loved him more, we would ſee him more in every page, and in every command, receiving the law at his mouth.

Thirdly, Do but conſider what it is to carry rightly under the crook in the lot; what humiliation of ſoul, ſelf denial, and abſolute reſignation to the will of God, muſt be in it: what love to God it muſt proceed from, how regard to his glory muſt influence it as the chief end thereof; and try and ſee, if it is not impoſſible for you to reach it without that faith aforementioned. I know a Chriſtian may reach it without full aſſurance, but ſtill, according to the meaſure of their perſuaſion that God is their God, ſo will their attainments in it be; theſe keep equal pace. O what kind of hearts do they imagine themſelves to have, that think they can for a moment empty them of the creature, farther than they can fill them with a God, as their God, in its room and ſtead! No doubt men may, from the force of moral conſiderations, work themſelves to a behaviour under the crook, externally right, ſuch as many Pagans had, but a Chriſtian diſpoſition of ſpirit under it, will never be reached without that faith in God.

OBJECTION. *Then it is ſaints only that are capable of the improvement of that conſideration.* ANSW. Yea, indeed it is ſo, as to that and all other moral conſiderations, for true Chriſtian ends; and that amounts to no more, than that directions for walking rightly are only for the living that have the uſe of their limbs; and therefore, that ye may improve it, ſet yourſelves to believe in the firſt place.

III. I ſhall confirm that it is a proper mean to bring one to carry rightly under it. This will appear, if ye conſider theſe four things.

1. It is of great uſe to divert from the conſidering and dwelling on theſe things about the crook, which ſerve to irritate our corruption. Such are the baulking of our will and wiſhes; the ſatisfaction we would have in the matter's going according to our mind; the inſtruments of the crook, how injurious they are to us, how unreaſonable, how obſtinate, &c. The dwelling on theſe conſiderations is but the blowing of the fire within: but to turn our eyes to it as the work of God, would be a cure by way of diverſion, 2 Sam. vi. 9. 10. and ſuch diverſion of the thoughts is not only lawful, but expedient and neceſſary.

2. It has a moral aptitude for producing the good effect. Though our cure is not compaſſed by the mere force of reaſon; yet it is carried on, not by a brutal movement, but in a rational way, Eph. v. 14. This conſideration has a moral efficacy on our reaſon, is fit to awe us into a ſubmiſſion, and miniſters a deal of argument for it, moving to carry Chriſtianly under our crook.

3. It hath a divine appointment on it for that end, which is to be believed, Prov. iii. 6. ſo the text. The creature in itſelf is an inefficacious and moveleſs thing, a mere vanity, Acts xvii. 28. What makes any thing a means fit for the end, is a word of divine appointment, Matth. iv. 4. To uſe any thing then for an end, without the faith of this, is to make a God of the creature; therefore it is to be uſed in a dependance on God, according to that word of appointment, 1 Tim. iv. 4. 5. And every thing is fit for the end for which God has appointed it. This conſideration is appointed for that end; and therefore is a fit means for it.

Laſtly, The ſpirit may be expected to work by it, and does work by it in them that believe, and look to him for it, for as much as it is a mean of his own appointment. Papiſts, Legaliſts, and all ſuperſtitious perſons, deviſe various means of ſanctification, ſeeming to have or really having a moral fitneſs for the ſame: but they are quite ineffectual, becauſe, like Abana and Pharpar, they want a word of divine appointment for curing us of our leproſy; therefore, the Spirit works not with them, ſince they are none of his own tools, but deviſed of their hearts. And ſince the means of divine appointment are ineffectual without the Spirit, theſe can never be effectual. But this conſideration having a divine appointment, the Spirit works by it.

Uſe. Then take this direction for your carrying right under the crook in your lot. Inure yourſelves to conſider it as the work of God. And for helping you to improve it, ſo as it may be effectual, I offer theſe advices.

1. Conſider it as the work of your God, in Chriſt. This is the way to ſprinkle it with goſpel-grace, and ſo to make it tolerable, Pſal. xxiii. 1. 2. 3. The diſcerning of a Father's hand in the crook will take out much of the bitterneſs of it, and ſugar the pill to you. For this cauſe it will be neceſſary, (1.) Solemnly to take God for your God under your crook, Pſal. cxlii. 4. 5. (2.) In all your encounters with it, reſolutely to believe and claim your intereſt in him, 1 Sam. xxx. 6.

2. Enlarge the conſideration with a view of the divine relation to you, and the divine attributes. Conſider it, being the work of your God, and the work of your Father, elder Brother, Head, Huſband, &c. who therefore ſurely conſults your good. Conſider his holineſs and juſtice, ſhewing he wrongs you not; his mercy and goodneſs, that it is not worſe; his ſovereignty, that may ſilence you; his infinite wiſdom and love, that may ſatisfy you in it.

3. Conſider what a work of his it is; how it is a convincing work, for bringing ſin to remembrance; a correcting work, to chaſtiſe you for your follies: a preventing work, to hedge you up from courſes of ſin ye would otherwiſe be apt to run into; a trying work, to diſcover your ſtate, your graces, and corruptions; a weaning work, to wean you from the world, and fit you for heaven.

Laſtly, In all your conſiderations of it in this manner, look upward for his Spirit to render them effectual, 1 Cor. iii. 6. Thus may ye carry chriſtianly under it till God even it either here or in heaven.

PROVERBS xvi. 19.

Better it is to be of an humble ſpirit with the lowly, than to divide the ſpoil with the proud.

COULD men once be brought to believe, that it is better to have their minds brought to ply with the crook in their lot; than to force even the crook to their mind, they would then be in a fair way to bring their matters in that caſe to a good account. Hear then the divine deciſion in that caſe, *Better it is to be of an humble ſpirit with the lowly, than to divide the ſpoil with the proud.* In which words,

Firſt, There is a compariſon inſtituted, and that between two parties, and two points wherein they vaſtly differ.

1ſt. The parties are the lowly and the proud, who differ like heaven and the centre of the earth; the proud are ay climbing up, ſoaring aloft; the lowly are content to creep on the ground, if that is the will of God; let us view them more particularly as the text repreſents them.

(1.) On the one hand is the lowly. Here there is a line reading and a marginal, both from the Holy Spirit, and they differ only in a letter. The former is the afflicted or poor, that are low in their condition; thoſe that have a notable crook in their lot through affliction laid on them, whereby their condition is lowered in the world. The other is the lowly or meek humble ones, who are low in their ſpirits as well as their condition, and ſo have their mind brought down to their lot. Both together make the character of this lowly party.

(2.) On the other hand is the proud, the gay and high minded ones. It is ſuppoſed here, that they are croſſed too, and have crooks in their lot; for dividing the ſpoil is the conſequent of a victory, and a victory preſuppoſes a battle.

2d, The points wherein theſe parties are ſuppoſed to differ, viz. being of a *humble ſpirit,* and *dividing the ſpoil.*

Afflicted and lowly ones may ſometimes get their condition changed, may be raiſed up on high, and divide the ſpoil, as Hannah, Job, &c. The proud may be ſometimes thrown down and cruſhed, as Pharoah, Nebuchadnezzar, &c. But that is not the queſtion, whether it is better to be raiſed up with the lowly, or thrown down with the proud. There would be no difficulty in determining that. But the queſtion is, whether it is better to be a low and humble ſpirit, in low circumſtances, with afflicted humble ones, or to divide the ſpoil, and get one's will, with the proud? If men would ſpeak the native ſentiments of their hearts, that queſtion would be determined in a contradiction to the text. The points then here compared, and ſet one againſt another are theſe.

(1.) On the one hand, to be of a humble ſpirit with afflicted lowly ones. Hebrew, *to be of low ſpirit;* for the word primarily denotes lowneſs in ſituation or ſtate. So the point here propoſed is to be with or in the ſtate of afflicted lowly ones, having the ſpirit brought down to that low lot, the lowneſs of the ſpirit, balancing the lowneſs of one's condition.

(2.) On the other hand, to *divide the ſpoil with the proud.* The point here propoſed is, to be with or in the ſtate of the proud, having their lot by main force brought to their mind; as thoſe who, taking themſelves to be injured, fight it out with the enemy, overcome and divide the ſpoil according to their will.

2. The deciſion made, wherein the former is preferred to the latter, *Better it is,* &c. If theſe two parties were ſet before us, it were better to take our lot with thoſe of a low condition, who have their ſpirits brought as low as their lot, than with thoſe who, being of a proud and high-bended ſpirit, have their lot brought up to their mind. A humbled ſpirit is better than a heightened condition.

DOCTRINE, *There is a generation of lowly afflicted ones, having their ſpirit lowered and brought down to their lot, whoſe caſe, in that reſpect, is better than that of the proud getting their will, and carrying all to their mind.*

I. We ſhall conſider the generation of the lowly afflicted ones, having their ſpirit brought down to their lot. And we ſhall,

1ſt. Lay down ſome general conſiderations about them.

1. There is ſuch a generation in the world, for as bad as the world is. The text expreſsly mentions them, and the ſcripture elſewhere makes mention of them, as Pſal. ix. 12, Matth. v. 3. with Luke vi. 20. Where ſhall we ſeek them? Not in heaven, there are no afflicted ones there; not in hell, there are no lowly or humble ones there, whoſe ſpirit is brought to their lot. In this world they muſt then be, where the ſtate of trial is.

2. If it were not ſo, Chriſt, as he was in the world, would have no followers in it. He was the Head of that generation whom they all copy after.—— *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart,* Matth. xi. 29. And for his honour, and for the honour of his croſs, they will never be wanting while the world ſtands, Rom. viii. 29.——'Whom he did foreknow, he alſo 'did predeſtinate to be conformed to the image of his 'Son.' His image lies in theſe two, ſuffering and holineſs, whereof lowlineſs is a chief part.

3. Nevertheleſs they are certainly very rare in the world. Agur obſerves, there is another generation, (Prov. xxx. 13. *Their eyes are lofty, and their eye-lids lifted up,*) quite oppoſite to them; and this makes the greateſt company by far. The low and afflicted lot is not ſo very rare, but the lowly diſpoſition of ſpirit is rarely yoked with it. Many a high-bended ſpirit keeps on the bend in ſpite of lowering circumſtances.

4. They can be no more in number than the truly godly are; for nothing leſs than the power of divine grace can bring down mens minds from their native height, and make their will plaint to the will of God, 2 Cor. x. 4. 5. Men may put on a face of ſubmiſſion to a low and croſſed lot, becauſe they cannot help it, and they ſee it is in vain to ſtrive: but to bring the ſpirit truly to it, muſt be then the effect of humbling grace.

5. Though all the godly are of that generation, yet there are ſome of them to whom that character more eſpecially belongs. The way to heaven lies through tribulation to all, Acts xiv. 22.; and all Chriſt's followers are reconciled to it notwithſtanding, Luke xiv. 26.; yet there are ſome of them more remarkably diſciplined than others, whoſe ſpirit however is thereby humbled, and brought down to their lot, Pſal. cxxxi. 2. 'Surely I 'have behaved and quieted myſelf as a child that is weaned of his mother: my ſoul is even as a weaned child.' Phil. iv. 11. 12.——'For I have learned in whatever 'ſtate I am, therewith to be content. I know how to 'to be abaſed, and I know how to abound: every where, 'and in all things I am inſtructed, both to be full and

‘ to be hungry, both to abound and to ſuffer need.’

Laſtly, A lowly diſpoſition of ſoul, and habitual aim and bent of the heart that way, has a very favourable conſtruction put upon it in heaven. Should we look for a generation perfectly purged of pride and riſings of heart againſt their adverſe lot at any time, we would find none in this world: but theſe who are ſincerely aiming and endeavouring to reach it, and keep the way of contented ſubmiſſion, though ſometimes they are blown aſide, returning to it again, God accounts to be that lowly generation, 2 Cor. viii. 12. James v. 11.

II. We ſhall enter into the particulars of their character. There are three things which together make up their character.

Firſt, Affliction in their lot. That lowly generation, preferred to the proud and proſperous, are a generation of afflicted ones, whom God keeps under the diſcipline of the covenant. We may take it up in theſe two.

1. There is a yoke of affliction, of one kind or other, oftentimes upon them, Pſal. lxxiii. 14. If there be ſilence in heaven, it is but for half an hour, Rev. viii. 1. God is frequently viſiting them, as a maſter doth his ſcholars, and a phyſician his patients; whereas others are in a ſort overlooked by him, Rev. iii. 19. They are accuſtomed to the yoke, and that from the time they enter into God's family, Pſal. cxxix. 1. 2. 3. God ſees it good for them, Lam. iii. 27. 28.

2. There is a particular yoke of affliction, which God has choſen for them, that hangs about them, and is ſeldom, if ever, off them, Luke ix. 23. That is their ſpecial trial, the crook in their lot, the yoke which lies on them for their conſtant exerciſe. Their other trials may be changed, but that is a weight that ſtill hangs about them, bowing them down.

Secondly, Lowlineſs in their diſpoſition and tenor of ſpirit. They are a generation of lowly humble ones, whoſe ſpirits God has by his grace brought down from their natural height. And thus,

1. They think ſoberly and meanly of themſelves; what they are, 2 Cor. xii. 11.; what they can do, 2 Cor. iii. 5.; what they are worth, Gen. xxxii. 10.; and what they deſerve, Lam. iii. 22. Viewing themſelves in the glaſs of the divine law and perfection, they ſee themſelves a maſs of imperfection and ſinfulneſs, Job xlii. 5. 6.

2. They think highly and honourably of God, Pſal. cxliv. 3. They are taught by the Spirit what God is, and ſo entertain elevated thoughts of him. They conſider him as the Sovereign of the world, his perfections as infinite, his work as perfect. They look on him as the fountain of happineſs, as a God in Chriſt, doing all things well, truſting his wiſdom, goodneſs, and love, even where they cannot ſee, Heb. xi. 8.

3. They think favourably of others, as far as in juſtice they may, Phil. ii. 3. Though they cannot hinder themſelves to ſee their glaring faults, yet they are ready withal to acknowledge their excellencies, and eſteem them ſo far. And becauſe they ſee more into their own mercies and advantages for holineſs, and miſimproving thereof, than they can ſee into others, they are apt to look on others as better themſelves, circumſtances compared.

4. They are ſunk down into a ſtate of ſubordination to God and his will, Pſal. cxxxi. 1. 2. Pride ſets up a man againſt God, lowlineſs brings him back to his place, and lays him down at the feet of his ſovereign Lord, ſaying, ‘ Thy will be done on earth,’ &c. They ſeek no more the command, but are content that God himſelf ſit at the helm of their affairs, and manage all for them, Pſal. xlvii. 4.

5. They are not bent on high things, but diſpoſed to ſtoop to low things, Pſalm cxxxi. 1. Lowlineſs levels the towering imaginations, which pride mounts up againſt heaven; draws a veil over all perſonal worth and excellencies before the Lord; and yields a man's all to the Lord, to be as ſtepping ſtones to the throne of his glory, 2 Sam. xv. 25. 26.

Laſtly, They are apt to magnify mercies beſtowed on them, Gen. xxxii. 10. Pride of heart overlooks and vilifies mercies one is poſſeſſed of, and fixeth the eye on what is wanting in one's condition, making one like the flies, which paſs over the ſound places, and ſwarm together on the ſore. On the contrary, lowlineſs teaches men to recount the mercies they enjoy in the loweſt condition, and to ſet a mark on the good things they have poſſeſſed, or yet do, Job ii. 10.

Thirdly, A ſpirit brought down to their lot. Their lot is a low and afflicted one; but their ſpirit is as low, being through grace brought down to it. We may take it up in theſe five things.

1. They ſubmit to it as juſt, Mic. vii. 9. ‘ I will ‘ bear the indignation of the Lord, becauſe I have ſin‘ned againſt him.’ There are no hardſhips in our condition, but we have procured them to ourſelves; and it is therefore juſt we kiſs the rod, and be ſilent under it, and ſo lower our ſpirits to our lot. If they complain, they have their complaints on themſelves; their hearts riſe not up againſt the Lord, far leſs do they open their mouths againſt the heavens. They juſtify God, and condemn themſelves, reverencing his holineſs and ſpotleſs righteouſneſs in his proceedings againſt them.

2. They go quietly under it as tolerable, Lam. iii. 26.—29. ‘ It is good that a man ſhould both hope and ‘ quietly wait for the ſalvation of the Lord. It is good ‘ for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He ‘ ſitteth alone, and keepeth ſilence, becauſe he hath ‘ borne it upon him. He putteth his mouth in the duſt, ‘ if ſo be there may be hope.’ While the unſubdued ſpirit rageth under the yoke, as a bullock unaccuſtomed to it, the ſpirit brought to the lot goes ſoftly under it. They ſee it is of the Lord's mercies that it is not worſe; they take up the naked croſs, as God lays it down, without theſe overweights upon it, that turbulent paſſions add thereto; and ſo it becomes really more eaſy than they thought it could have been, like a burden fitted on the back.

3. They are ſatisfied in it, as drawing their comfort from another airth than their outward condition; even as the houſe ſtands faſt when the prop is taken away that it did not lean upon. ‘ Although the fig-tree ſhould ‘ not bloſſom, neither fruit be in the vine—yet I will ‘ rejoice in the Lord,’—Hab. iii. 17. 18. Thus did David in the day of his diſtreſs, ‘ he encouraged himſelf in ‘ the Lord his God,’ 1 Sam. xxx. 6. It is an argument of a ſpirit not brought down to the lot, when one is damped and ſunk under the hardſhips of it, as if their condition in the world were the point whereon their happineſs turned. It is want of mortification that makes mens comforts to waxe and wane, ebb, and flow, according to the various appearances of their lot in the world.

4. They have a complacency in it, as that which is fit and good for them, Iſa. xxxix. 8. 2 Cor. xii. 10. Men have a ſort of complacency in the working of phyſic, though it gripes them ſore: they rationally think with themſelves, that it is good and beſt for them; ſo theſe lowly ſouls conſider their afflicted lot as a ſpiritual medicine, neceſſary, fit, and good for them, yea, beſt for them for the time, ſince it is miniſtered by their heavenly Father; and ſo they reach a holy complacency in their low afflicted lot.

The lowly ſpirit extracts this ſweet out of the bitterneſs in his lot, conſidering how the Lord, by means of that afflicting lot, ſtops the proviſion for unruly luſts, that they may be ſtarved: how he cuts off the by-channels, that the whole ſtream of the ſoul's love may run towards himſelf; how he pulls off and holds off the man's burden and clog of earthly comforts, that he may run the more expeditely in the way to heaven.

Laſtly, They reſt in it, as what they deſire not to come out of, till the God that brought them into it, ſee it meet to bring them out with his good will, Iſa. xxviii.

16. Though an unſubdued ſpirit's time for deliverance is always ready, a humbled ſoul will be afraid of being taken out of its afflicted lot too ſoon. It will not be for moving for a change, till the heaven's moving bring it about: ſo this hinders not prayer, and the uſe of appointed means, with dependence on the Lord, but requires faith, hope, patience, reſignation, 2 Sam. xv. 25. 26.

II. We ſhall conſider the generation of the proud getting their will, and carrying all to their mind. And in their character are alſo three things.

Firſt, Croſſes in their lot. They alſo have their trials alloted them by over-ruling providence; and let them be in what circumſtances they will in the world, they cannot miſs them altogether. For conſider,

1. The confuſion and vanity brought into the creation by man's ſin, have made it impoſſible to get through the world, but men muſt meet with what will ruffle them, Eccleſ. i. 14. Sin has turned the world from a paradiſe into a thicket, there is no getting through it without being ſcratcht. As the midges in the ſummer will fly about thoſe walking abroad in goodly attire as well as about thoſe in ſordid apparel; ſo will croſſes in the world meet with the high as well as the low.

2. The pride of their heart expoſes them particularly to croſſes. A proud heart will make a croſs to itſelf, where a lowly ſoul would find none, Eſth. v. 13. It will make a real croſs ten times the weight it would be to the humble. The generation of the proud are like nettles and thorn-hedges, upon which things flying about do fix, while they paſs over low and plain things: ſo none are more expoſed to croſſes than they, though none ſo unfit to bear them; as appears from,

Secondly, Reigning pride in their ſpirit. Their ſpirits were never ſubdued by a work of thorough humiliation, they remain at the height in which the corruption of nature ſet them; hence they can by no means bear the yoke God lays on them. The neck is ſwollen with the ill humours of pride and paſſion; hence when the yoke once begins to touch it, they cannot have any more eaſe. We may view the caſe of the proud generation here in three things.

1. They have an over-value for themſelves; and ſo the proud mind ſays, the man ſhould not ſtoop to the yoke; it is below them. What a ſwelling vanity is in that, Exod. v. 2. "Who is the Lord, that I ſhould obey his voice?" Hence a work of humiliation is neceſſary to make one take on the yoke, whether of Chriſt's precepts or providence. The firſt error is in the underſtanding, whence Solomon ordinarily calls a wicked man a fool: accordingly the firſt ſtroke in converſion is there too, by conviction to humble. Men are bigger in their own conceit than they are indeed; therefore God, ſuiting things to what we are really, cannot pleaſe us.

2. They have an unmortified ſelf-will ariſing from that over value for themſelves, and it ſays he will not ſtoop, Exod. v. 2. The queſtion betwixt heaven and us, is, Whether God's will or our own muſt carry it? Our will is corrupt, God's will is holy: they cannot agree in one. God ſays, in his providence, our will muſt yield to his; but that it will not do till the iron ſinew in it be broken, Rom. vi. 7. Iſa. xlviii. 4.

3. They have a crowd of unſubdued paſſions taking part with the ſelf-will, and they ſay, he ſhall not ſtoop, Rom. vii. 8. 9. and ſo the war begins, and there is a field of battle within and without the man, James iv. 1.

1ſt, A holy God croſſes the ſelf-will of the proud creatures by his providence, over-ruling and diſpoſing of things contrary to their inclination; ſometimes by his own immediate hand, as in the caſe of Cain, Gen. iv. 4. 5. ſometimes by the hand of men carrying things againſt their mind, as in the caſe of Ahab, to whom Naboth refuſed his vineyard, 1 Kings xxi. 4.

2dly, The proud heart and will, unable to ſubmit to the croſs, or to bear to be controlled, riſes up againſt it, and fights for the maſtery, with its whole force of unmortified paſſions. The deſign is to remove the croſs, even the crook, and bring the thing to their own mind: this is the cauſe of this unholy war, in which,

(1.) There is one black band of helliſh paſſions that marches upwards, and makes an attack on heaven itſelf, viz. diſcontent, impatience, murmuring, fretting, and the like. *The fooliſhneſs of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth againſt the Lord*, Prov. xix. 3. Theſe fire the breaſt, fall the countenance, Gen. iv. 5. let off ſometimes a volley of indecent and paſſionate complaints, Jude 16. and ſometimes of blaſphemies, 2 Kings vi. 33.

(2.) There is another that marches forward, and makes an attack on the inſtrument or inſtruments of the croſs, viz. anger, wrath, fury, revenge, bitterneſs, &c. Prov. xxvii. 4. Theſe carry the man out of the poſſeſſion of himſelf, Luke xxi. 16. fill the heart with a boiling heat, Pſal. xxxxix. 3. the mouth with clamour and evil-ſpeaking. Eph. iv. 31. and threatenings are breathed out, Acts ix. 1. and ſometimes let the hands on work, ſo as has a moſt heavy event, Matth. v. 21. 22. as in the caſe of Ahab againſt Naboth.

Thus the proud carry on the war, but oftentimes they loſe the day, and the croſs remains unmoveable for all they can do; yea, and ſometimes they themſelves fall in the quarrel, it ends in their ruin, Exod. xv. 9. 10. But that is not the caſe in the text. We are to conſider them as,

Thirdly, Getting their will and carrying all to their mind. This ſpeaks,

1. Holy providence yielding to the man's unmortified ſelf-will, and letting it go according to his mind, Gen. vi. 3. God ſees it meet to let the ſtruggle with him fall, for it prevails not to his good, Iſa. i. 5. So the reins are laid on the proud man's neck, and he has what he would be at. *Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone*, Hoſ. iv. 17.

2. The luſt remaining in its ſtrength and vigour, Pſal. lxxviii. 30. *They were not eſtranged from their luſt.* God, in the method of his covenant, ſometimes gives his people their will, and ſets them where they would be: but then, in that caſe, the luſt for the thing is mortified, and they are as weaned children, Pſal. x. 17. But here the luſt remains rampant; the proud ſeek meat for it, and get it.

3. The croſs removed, the yoke taken off, Pſal. lxxviii. 29. They could not think of bringing their mind to their lot; but they thwarted with it, wreſtled and fought againſt it, till it is brought up to their mind: ſo the day is their own, the victory is on their ſide.

4. *Laſtly*, The man is pleaſed in his having carried his point, even as one is when he is dividing the ſpoil, 1 Kings xxi. 18. 19.

Thus the caſe of the afflicted lowly generation, and the proud generation proſpering, is ſtated. Now,

III. I am to confirm the doctrine or the deciſion of the text, That the caſe of the former is better than that of the latter. It is better to be in a low afflicted condition, with the ſpirit humbled and brought down to the lot, than to be of a proud and high ſpirit, getting the lot brought up to it, and matters go to will and wiſh, according to one's mind. This will appear from the following conſiderations.

Firſt, Humility is ſo far preferable to pride, that in no circumſtances whatſoever its preferableneſs can fail. Let all the afflictions in a world attend the humble ſpirit, and all the proſperity in the world attend pride, humility will ſtill have the better; as gold in a dung-hill is more excellent than ſo much lead in a cabinet. For,

1. Humility is a piece of the image of God. Pride is the maſter-piece of the image of the devil. Let us view him who was the expreſs image of the Father's perſon, and we ſhall behold him meek and lowly in heart, Matth. xi. 29. None more afflicted, yet his ſpirit perfectly brought down to his lot, Iſa. liii. 7. *He was oppreſſed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth.*

That is a ſhining piece of the divine image: for though God cannot be low in reſpect of his ſtate and condition, yet he is of infinite condeſcenſion, Iſa. lvii. 15. None bears as he, Rom. ii. 14. nor ſuffers patiently ſo much contradiction to his will, which is propoſed to us for our encouragement in affliction, as it ſhone in Chriſt, *For conſider him that endured ſuch contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf, leſt you be weary and ſaint in your minds*, Heb. xii. 3.

Pride, on the other hand, is the very image of the devil, 1 Tim. iii. 6. Will we value ourſelves on the height of our ſpirits? Satan will vie with the higheſt of us in that point; for though he is the moſt miſerable, yet he is the proudeſt in the whole creation. There is the greateſt diſtance between his ſpirit and his lot; the former is as high as the throne of God, the latter as low as hell; and as it is impoſſible that ever his lot ſhould be brought up to his ſpirit; ſo his ſpirit will never come down to his lot; and therefore he will be eternally in a ſtate of war with his lot. Hence, even at this time, he has no reſt, but goes about, ſeeks reſt indeed, but finds none.

Now, is it not better to be like God, than like the devil? Like him who is the fountain of all good, than him who is the ſpring and ſink of all evil? Can any thing poſſibly caſt the balance here, and turn the preference to the other ſide? *Then better it is to be of an humble ſpirit with the lowly*, &c.

2. Humility and lowlineſs of ſpirit qualify us for friendly communion and intercourſe with God in Chriſt. Pride makes God our enemy, 1 Pet. v. 5. Our happineſs here and hereaſter depends on our friendly intercourſe with heaven. If we have not that, nothing can make up our loſs, Pſal. xxx. 5. If we have that, nothing can make us miſerable, Rom. viii. 31.——*If God be for us, who can be againſt us?* Now, who are they whom God is for, but the humble and lowly? They who being in Chriſt are ſo made like him. He bleſſes them, and declares them the heirs to the crown of glory. *Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*, Matth. v. 3. He will look to them, be their condition never ſo low, while he overlooks others, Iſa. lxvi. 2. He will have reſpect to them, however they be deſpiſed: *Though the Lord be high, yet hath he reſpect to the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off*, Pſal. cxxxviii. 6. He will dwell with them, however poorly they dwell, Iſa. lvii. 15. He will certainly exalt them in due time, however low they lie now, Iſa. xl. 4.

Whom is he againſt? Whom does he reſiſt? The proud. Them he curſeth, Jer. xviii. 5. and that curſe will dry up their arm at length. The proud man is God's rival; he makes himſelf his own god, and would have thoſe about him make him theirs too: he rages, he bluſters if they will not fall down before him. But God will bring him down, Iſa. xl. 4. Pſal. xviii. 27.

Now, is it not better to be qualified for communion with God, than to have him engaged againſt us at any rate?

3. Humility is a duty pleaſing to God, pride a ſin pleaſing to the devil, Iſa. lvii. 15. 1 Tim. iii. 6. God requires us to be humble, eſpecially under affliction—*and be clothed with humility*,—1 Pet. v. 5. 6. That is our becoming garment. The humble publican was accepted, the proud Phariſee rejected. We may ſay of the generation of the proud, as 1 Theſſ. ii. 16. 'Wrath 'is come upon them to the uttermoſt.' They pleaſe neither God nor man, but only themſelves and Satan, whom they reſemble in it. Now, duty is ay better than ſin at any rate.

Secondly, They whoſe ſpirits are brought down to their afflicted lot, have much quiet and repoſe of mind, while the proud, that muſt have their lot brought up to their mind, have much diſquiet, trouble and vexation. Conſider here, that, on the one hand,

1. Quiet of mind, and eaſe within, is a great bleſſing, upon which the comfort of life depends. Nothing without this can make one's life happy, Dan. v. 6. And where this is maintained, nothing can make it miſerable, John xvi. 33. This being ſecured in God, there is a defiance bid to all the troubles of the world, Pſal. xlvi. 2. 3. 4. Like the child ſailing in the midſt of the rolling waves.

2. The ſpirit brought down to the lot makes and maintains this inward tranquillity. Our whole trouble in our lot in the world riſeth from the diſagreement of our mind therewith: let the mind be brought to the lot, and the whole tumult is inſtantly huſhed; let it be kept in that diſpoſition, and the man ſhall ſtand at eaſe in his affliction, like a rock unmoved with waters beating on it, Col. iii. 15. 'And let the peace of God rule in your 'hearts, to the which alſo ye are called,'——

On the other hand conſider,

1. What diſquiet of mind the proud do ſuffer ere they can get their lot brought up to their mind.—'They 'have taught their tongue to ſpeak lies, and they weary 'themſelves to commit iniquity,' Jer. ix. 5. James iv. 2. 'Ye luſt, and ye have not: ye kill, and deſire to have, 'and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not.' ——What arrows of grief go through their heart? What torture of anxiety, fretting and vexation muſt they endure? What contrary paſſions do fight with them? And what ſallies of paſſion do they make? What uneaſineſs was Haman in, before he could carry the point of the revenge againſt Mordecai, obtaining the king's decree?

2. When the thing is got to their mind, it will not quit the coſt. The enjoyment thereof brings not ſo much ſatisfaction and pleaſure, as the want of it gave pain. This was evident in Rachel's caſe as to the having of children, and in that caſe, Pſal. lxxviii. 30, 31. There is a dead fly in the ointment that mars the ſavour they expected to find in it. Fruit plucked off the tree of providence, ere it is ripe, will readily ſet the teeth on edge. It proves like the manna, kept over night, Exod. xvi. 20.

3. They have but an unſure grip of it; it doth not laſte with them. Either it is taken from them ſoon, and they are juſt where they were again, *I gave thee a king in my anger, and took him away in my wrath*, Hoſ. xiii. 11. having a root of pride, it quickly withers away: or elſe they are taken from it, that they have no acceſs to enjoy it. So Haman obtained the decree; but ere the day of execution came, he was gone.

Thirdly, They that get their ſpirit brought down to their afflicted lot, do gain a point far more valuable than they who in their pride force up their lot to their mind, Prov. xvi. 32. *He that is ſlow to anger, is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his ſpirit, than he that taketh a city.* This will appear, if ye conſider,

1. The latter makes but a better condition in outward things, the former a better man. The life is more than meat.—The man himſelf is more valuable than all external conveniencies that attend him. What therefore betters the man is preferable to what betters only his condition. Who doubts, but where two are ſick, and the one gets himſelf tranſported from a coarſe bed to a fine one, but the ſickneſs ſtill remaining, the other lies ſtill in the coarſe bed, but his ſickneſs is removed, that the caſe of the latter is preferable? So, &c.

2. The ſubduing of our own paſſions is more excellent than to have the whole world ſubdued to our will; for then we are maſters of ourſelves, according to that, Luke xxi. 19. Whereas, in the other caſe, we are ſtill ſlaves to the worſt of maſters, Rom. vi. 16. In the one caſe, we are ſafe, blow what ſtorm will, in the other we lie expoſed to thouſands of dangers, Prov. xxv. 28. *He that hath no rule over his own ſpirit, is like a city that is broken down and without walls.*

Laſtly, When both ſhall come to be judged, it will appear the one has multiplied the tale of their good works, in bringing their ſpirit to their lot; the other the tale of their ill works, in bringing their lot to their ſpirit. We have to do with an omniſcient God, in whoſe eyes every internal action is a work good or bad to be reckoned for, Rom. ii. 16.

An afflicted lot is painful, but, where it is well managed, it is very fruitful; it exerciſes the graces of the Spirit in a Chriſtian, which otherwiſe would lie dormant. But there is never an act of reſignation to the will of God under the croſs, nor an act of truſting in him for his help, but they will be recorded in Heaven's regiſter as good works, Mal. iii. 16. And theſe are occaſioned by affliction.

On the other hand, there is never a riſing of the proud heart againſt the lot, nor a faithleſs attempt to bring it to our mind, whether it ſucceed or not, but it paſſes for an ill work before God. How then will the tale of ſuch be multiplied by the war in which this ſpoil is divided!

Use I. Of information. Hence we may learn,

1. It is not always beſt for men to get their will. Many there are who cannot be pleaſed with God's will about them, and they get their own will with a vengeance, Pſal. lxxxi. 11. 12.—*Iſrael would none of me. So I gave them up to their own heart's luſt, and they walked in their own counſels.* It may be pleaſanteſt and gratefulleſt for the time, but it is not ſafeſt. Let not people pride themſelves in their carrying things that way then by ſtrong hand; let them not triumph on ſuch a victory; the after-reckoning will open their eyes.

2. The afflicted croſſed party, whoſe lot is kept low, is ſo far from being a loſer, that he is a gainer thereby, if his ſpirit is brought down to it. And if he will ſee his caſe in the light of God's unerring word, he is in better caſe than if he had got all carried to his mind. In the one way the veſſels of wrath are fitted for deſtruction, Pſal. lxxviii. 22. 30. 31. In the other the veſſels of mercy are fitted for glory, and ſo God diſciplines his own, Lam. iii. 27.

3. It is better to yield to providence than to fight it out, though we ſhould win. Yielding to the ſovereign diſpoſal is both our becoming duty and our greateſt intereſt. Taking that way we act moſt honourably: for what honour can there be in a creature's diſputing his ground with his Creator? And we act moſt wiſely: for whatever may be the ſucceſs of ſome battles in that caſe, we may be ſure ſome victory will be on heaven's ſide in the war, 1 Sam. ii. 9.—'for by ſtrength ſhall 'no man prevail.'

Laſtly, It is of far greater concern for us to get our ſpirits brought down than our outward condition raiſed. But who believes this? All men ſtrive to raiſe their outward condition: moſt men never mind the bringing down of their ſpirits, and few there are who apply themſelves to it. And what is that but to be concerned to miniſter drink to the thirſty ſick, but never to mind to ſeek a cure for them, whereby their thirſt may be carried off?

Use II. As you meet with croſſes in your lot in the world, let your bent be rather to get your ſpirit humbled and brought down, than to get the croſs removed. I mean not but that you may uſe all lawful means for the removal of your croſs, in dependance on God; but only that you be more concerned to get your ſpirit to bow and ply, than to get the crook in your lot evened.

Motive 1. It is far more needful for us to have our ſpirits humbled under the croſs, than to have the croſs removed. The removal of the croſs is needful only for the eaſe of the fleſh, the humbling for the profit of our ſouls, to purify them and bring them into a ſtate of health and cure.

2. The humbling of the Spirit will have a mighty good effect on a croſſed lot, but the removal of the croſs will have none on the unhumbled ſpirit. The humbling will lighten the croſs mightily for the time, Matth. xi. 30. and in due time carry it cleanly off, 1 Pet. v. 6. But the removal of the croſs is not a means to humble the unhumbled; though it may prevent irritation, yet the diſeaſe ſtill remains.

Laſtly, Think with yourſelves, how dangerous and hopeleſs a caſe it is to have the croſs removed ere the ſpirit is humbled; that is, to have the means of cure pulled away, and blocked up from us, while the power of the diſeaſe is yet unbroken; to be taken off trials ere we have given any good proof of ourſelves, and ſo to be given over of our Phyſician as hopeleſs, Iſa. i. 5. Hoſ. iv. 17.

For direction, Believing the goſpel, take God for your God in Chriſt for your eternal ſalvation, and then dwell much on the thoughts of God's greatneſs and holineſs and of your own ſinfulneſs, ſo will ye be humbled under the mighty hand of God, and in due time he will lift you up.

1 PETER v. 6.

Humble yourſelves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.

IN the preceding part of this chapter, the apoſtle preſſeth the duties of church officers towards the people, and then the duty of the people both towards their officers and among themſelves, which he winds up in one word, ſubmiſſion. For which cauſes he recommends humility as the great means to bring all to their reſpective duties. This is inforced with an argument taken from the different treatment the Lord gives to the proud and the humble; his oppoſing himſelf to the one, and ſhewing favour to the other. Our text is an exhortation drawn from that conſideration: and in it we have,

1. The duty we are therefore to ſtudy, *Humble yourſelves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.* And therein we may notice.

(1.) The ſtate of thoſe whom it is propoſed to, theſe under the mighty hand of God, whom his hand has humbled, or ſtated ſomeway low in reſpect of their circumſtances in the world. And by theſe are, I think, meant, not only ſuch as are under particular ſignal afflictions, which is the lot of ſome, but alſo thoſe, who, by the providence of God, are any manner of way lowered, which is the lot of all. All being in a ſtate of ſubmiſſion or dependence on others: God has made this life a ſtate of trial; and for that cauſe he has, by his mighty hand, ſubjected men one to another, as wives, children, ſervants, to huſbands, parents, maſters; and theſe again to their ſuperiors; among whom, again, even the higheſt depend on thoſe under them, as magiſtrates and miniſters on the people, even the ſupreme magiſtrate, being *major ſingulis, minor univerſis.* This ſtate of the world God has made for taking trial of men in their ſeveral ſtations and dependence on others: and therefore when the time of trial is over, it alſo comes to an end. *Then cometh the end—when he ſhall have put down all rule, and all authority and power*, 1 Cor. xv. 24. 25. Mean time, while it laſtes, it makes humility neceſſary to all, to prompt them to the duty they owe their ſuperiors, to whom God's mighty hand has ſubjected them.

(2.) The duty itſelf, viz. humiliation of our ſpirits under humbling circumſtances the Lord has placed us in. *Humble yourſelves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.* Whether it is we are under particular afflictions, which have caſt us down from the height we were ſometimes in, or whether we are only inferiors in one or more relations, or whether, which is moſt common, both theſe are in our caſe, we muſt therein eye the mighty hand of God, as that which placed us there, and is over us there to hold us down in it; and ſo, with an awful regard thereto, crouch down under it in the temper and diſpoſition of our ſpirit, ſuiting our ſpirits to our lot, and careful of performing the duty of our low ſphere.

(3.) A particular ſpring of this duty therefore we muſt conſider, that thoſe who cannot quietly keep the place aſſigned them of God, in their afflictions or relations, but ſtill preſs upward againſt the mighty hand that is over them, that mighty hand reſiſts them, throwing them down, and often farther down than before, whereas it treats them with grace and favour that compoſe themſelves under it, to a quiet diſcharge of their duty in their ſituation; ſo, eyeing this, we muſt ſet ourſelves to humble ourſelves.

2. The infallible iſſue of that courſe, that he may exalt you in due time. The particle *that*, is not always to be underſtood finally, as denoting the end or deſign the agent propoſes to himſelf, but ſometimes eventually only, as denoting the event or iſſue of the action, John ix. 2. 1 John ii. 19. So here, the meaning is not, *humble yourſelves*, on deſign *he may exalt you*, but---and it ſhall iſſue in his exalting you, Compare Jam. iv. 10.

(1.) Here is a happy event of humiliation of ſpirit ſecured, and that is exaltation or lifting up on high by the power of God, that he, &c. Exalting will as ſurely follow on humiliation of ſpirit ſuitable to the low lot, as the morning follows the night, or the ſun riſeth after the dawning. And theſe words are fitted to obviate the objections that the world and our corrupt hearts are apt to make againſt bringing down the ſpirit to the low lot.

Object. 1. *If we let our ſpirit fall, we will lie always among folks feet, and they will trample on us. Anſw.* No: pride of ſpirit unſubdued will bring men to lie among the feet of others for ever, Iſa. lxvi. 24. But humiliation of ſpirit will bring them undoubtedly out from among their feet, Mal. iv. 2. 3. They that humble themſelves now will be exalted for ever; they will be brought out of their low ſituation and circumſtances. Caſt ye yourſelves even down with your low lot, and aſſure yourſelves ye ſhall not lie there.

Object. 2. *If we do not raiſe ourſelves, none will raiſe us: and therefore we muſt ſee to ourſelves to do ourſelves right. Anſw.* That is wrong. Humble ye yourſelves in reſpect of your ſpirits, and God will raiſe you up in reſpect of your lot or low condition; and they that have God engaged for raiſing them, have no reaſon to ſay they have none to do it for them. Bringing down of the ſpirit is our duty, raiſing us up is God's work: let us not forfeit the privilege of God's raiſing us up, by arrogating that work to ourſelves, taking it out of his hand.

Object. 3. *But ſure we will never riſe high, if we let our ſpirits fall. Anſw.* That is wrong too. God will not only raiſe the humble ones, but he will lift them up on high; for ſo the word ſignifies. They ſhall be as high at length as ever they were low, were they ever ſo low; nay, the exaltation will bear proportion to the humiliation.

(2.) Here is the date of that happy event, when it will fall out. In *due time*, or in the ſeaſon, the proper ſeaſon for it, Gal. vi. 9.—'In due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if 'we faint not.' We are apt to weary in humbling trying circumſtances, and ay we would have up our head, John vii. 6. But Solomon obſerves, there is a time for every thing when it does beſt, and the wiſe will wait it, Eccleſ. iii. There is a time too for exalting them that humble themſelves; God has ſet it; and it is the due time for the purpoſe, the time when it does beſt, even as ſowing in the ſpring, and reaping in the harveſt. When that time comes, your exalting ſhall no longer be put off, and it would come too ſoon ſhould it come before that time.

DOCTRINE I. *The bent of one's heart, in humbling circumſtances, ſhould lie towards a ſuitable humbling of the ſpirit, as under God's mighty hand placing us in them.*

I. Some things ſuppoſed in this. It ſuppoſeth and bears in it, that,

1. God brings men into humbling circumſtances, Ezek. xvii. 24. *And all the trees of the field ſhall know that I the Lord have brought down the high tree*—There is a root of pride in the hearts of all men on earth, that muſt be mortified ere they can be meet for heaven: and therefore no man can miſs, in this time of trial, ſome things that will give a proof, whether he can ſtoop or no. And God brings them into humbling circumſtances for that very end, Deut. viii. 2.—'The Lord 'thy God led thee theſe forty years in the wilderneſs, 'to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was 'in thine heart.'

2. Theſe circumſtances prove preſſing as a weight on the heart, tending to bear it down, Pſal. cvii. 12. *Therefore he brought down their heart with labour.*—They ſtrike at the grain of the heart, and croſs the natural inclination: whence a trial natively ariſeth, whether, when God lays on his mighty hand, the man can yield under it, or not; and conſequently, whether he is meet for heaven or not.

3. The heart is naturally apt to riſe againſt theſe humbling circumſtances, and conſequently againſt the mighty hand that brings and keeps them on. The man naturally bends his force to get off the weight, that he may get up his head, ſeeking more to pleaſe himſelf than to pleaſe his God, Job xxxv. 9. 10.—*They cry out by reaſon of the arm of the mighty: but none ſaith, Where is God my maker?* This is the firſt gate the heart runs to in humbling circumſtances, and in this way the unſubdued ſpirits hold on.

4. But what God requires, is, rather to labour to bring down the heart than to get up the head, James iv. 10. Here lies the proof of one's meeting for heaven; and then is one in the way heavenward, when he is more concerned to get down his heart, than up his head, to go calmly under his burden, than to get it off, to crouch under the mighty hand than to put it off him.

Laſtly, There muſt be a noticing of God, as our party, in humbling circumſtances——*Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it*, Mic. vi. 9. There is an abjectneſs of ſpirit, whereby ſome give up themſelves to the will of others in the harſheſt treatment, merely to pleaſe them, without regard to the authority and command of God. This is real meanneſs of ſpirit, whereby one lies quietly to be trampled on by a fellow-worm, from its imaginary weight: and none ſo readily fall into it as the proud, at ſometimes to ſerve their own turn, Acts xii. 22. Theſe are men-pleaſe[illegible] Eph. vi. 6. with Gal. i. 10.

II. What are theſe humbling circumſtances the mighty hand brings them into. Suppoſing here, what was before taught concerning the crook in the lot's being of God's making, theſe are circumſtances,

1. Of imperfection. God has placed all men in ſuch circumſtances, under a variety of wants and imperfections, Philip. iii. 12. We can look nowhere where we are not beſet with them. There is a heap of natural and moral imperfections about us: our bodies and our ſouls, in all their faculties, are in a ſtate of imperfection. The pride of all glory is ſtained, and it is a ſhame to us not to be humbled under ſuch wants as attend us; it is like a beggar ſtrutting in his rags.

2. Of inferiority in relations, whereby men are ſet in the lower place in relations and ſociety, and made to depend on others, 1 Cor. vii. 24. God has, for trial of mens ſubmiſſion to himſelf, ſubjected them to others, whom he has ſet over them, to diſcover what regard they will pay to his authority and commands at ſecond hand. Dominion or ſuperiority is a part of the divine image, 1 Cor. xi. 7. And therefore reverence of them, conſiſting in an awful regard to that ray of the divine image ſhining in them, is neceſſarily required, Eph. v. 33. Heb. xii. 9. compare Pſal. cxi. 9. The ſame holds in all other relations and ſuperiorities, viz. that they are ſo far in the place of God to their relatives, Pſal. lxxxii. 6. And though the parties be worthleſs in themſelves, that looſeth not one from the debt to them, Acts xxiii. 4. 5. Rom. xlii. 7. The reaſon is, becauſe it is not their qualities, but their character, which is the ground of that debt of reverence and ſubjection; and the trial God takes of us in that matter turns not on the point of the former, but of the latter.

Now, God having placed us in theſe circumſtances of inferiority, all refractorineſs in all things, not contrary to the command of God, is a riſing up againſt his mighty hand, Rom. xiii. 2. becauſe it is mediately upon us for that effect, though it is man's hand that is immediately upon us.

3. Of contradiction, tending directly to baulk us of our will. This was a part of our Lord's ſtate of humiliation, and the apoſtle ſuppoſes it will be a part of ours too, Heb. xii. 3. There is a perfect harmony in heaven, no one to contradict another there; for they are in their ſtate of retribution and exaltation: but we are here in our ſtate of trial and humiliation, and therefore cannot miſs of contradiction, be we placed ever ſo high.

Whether theſe contradictions be juſt or unjuſt, God tryſtes men with them to humble them, break them off from addictedneſs to their own will, and to teach them reſignation and ſelf-denial. They are in their own nature humbling, and much the ſame to us, as the breaking of a horſe or a bullock is to them. And I believe there are many caſes in which there can be no accounting for them, but by recurring to this uſe God has for them.

4. Of affliction, Prov. xvi. 19. Proſperity puffs up ſinners with pride; and O but it is hard to keep a low ſpirit with a high and proſperous lot. But God by affliction calls men down from their heights to ſit in the duſt, plucks away their jay-feathers wherein they prided themſelves, rubs the paint and varniſh from off the creature, whereby it appears more in its native deformity. There are various kinds of affliction, ſome more, ſome leſs humbling, but all of them are humbling.

Wherefore, not to lower the ſpirit under the affliction, is to pretend to riſe up when God is caſting and holding down, with a witneſs, and cannot miſs, if continued in, to provoke the Lord to break us in pieces, Ezek. xxiv. 13. For the afflicting hand is mighty.

Laſtly, Of ſin as the puniſhment of ſin. We may allude to that, Job xxx. 19. All the ſin in the world is a puniſhment of Adam's firſt ſin. Man threw himſelf into the mire at firſt, and now he is juſtly left weltering in it. Men wilfully make one falſe ſtep, and for that cauſe they are juſtly left to make another worſe; and ſin hangs about all, even the beſt. And this is over-ruled of God for our humiliation, that we may be aſhamed, and never open our mouth any more. Wherefore, not to be humble under our ſinfulneſs, is to riſe up againſt the mighty hand of God, and juſtify all our ſinful departings from him, as loſt to all ſenſe of duty, and void of ſhame.

III. What it is, in humbling circumſtances, to humble ourſelves under the mighty hand of God. This is the great thing to be aimed at in our humbling circumſtances: and we may take it up in theſe eight things.

1. Noticing the mighty hand, as employed in bringing about every thing that concerns us, either in the way of efficacy or permiſſion, 1 Sam. iii. 18.——'And he ſaid, It is the Lord: let him do what ſeemeth him good.' 2 Sam. xvi. 10. 'And the king ſaid,—The Lord hath ſaid unto him, curſe David: who ſhall then ſay, Wherefore haſt thou done ſo?' He is the fountain of all perfection, but we muſt trace our imperfections to his ſovereign will. It is he that has poſted every one in their relations by his providence; without him we could not meet with ſuch contradictions; for 'the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whitherſoever he pleaſeth,' Prov. xxi. 1. He ſends on afflictions, and he juſtly puniſhes one ſin with another, Iſa. vi. 10.

2. A ſenſe of our own worthleſſneſs and nothingneſs before him, Pſal. cxliv. 3. Looking to the infinite majeſty of the mighty hand dealing with us, we ſhould ſay, with Abraham, Gen. xviii. 27. 'Behold I am but duſt and aſhes,' and ſay Amen to the cry, Iſa. xl. 6.——'All fleſh is graſs,' &c. The keeping up of thoughts of our own excellency, under the preſſures of the mighty hand, is the very thing that ſwells the heart in pride, cauſing it to riſe up againſt it. And it is the letting of all ſuch thoughts of ourſelves fall before the eyes of his glory, that is the humbling required.

3. A ſenſe of our guilt and filthineſs, Rom. iii. 10. Iſa. lxiv. 6. The mighty hand doth not preſs us down, but as ſinners; it is meet then that under it we ſee our ſinfulneſs; our guilt, whereby we will appear criminals juſtly cauſed to ſuffer; our filthineſs, whereupon we may be brought to lothe ourſelves: and then we will think nothing lays us lower than we well deſerve. It is the over-looking our ſinfulneſs that ſuffers the proud heart to ſwell.

4. A ſilent ſubmiſſion under the hand of God. His ſovereignty challengeth this of us, Rom. ix. 20. 'Nay but, O man, who art thou that replieſt againſt God?'——And nothing but unſubdued height and pride of ſpirit, can allow us to anſwer again under the ſovereign hand. A view of the ſovereign hand humbled and awed the Pſalmiſt into a ſubmiſſion, with a profound ſilence, Pſal. xxxix. 9. 'I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; becauſe thou didſt it.' Job i. 21.——'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; bleſſed be the name of the Lord.' And xl. 4. 5.——'What ſhall I anſwer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I ſpoken, but I will not anſwer: yea, twice, but I will proceed no farther.' Eli, 1 Sam. iii. 18. 'It is the Lord: let him do what ſeemeth him good.'

5. A magnifying of his mercies towards us in the midſt of all his proceedings againſt us, Pſal. cxliv. 3. Has he laid us low? If we be duly humbled, we will wonder he has laid us no lower, Ezra ix. 13. For, however low the humble are laid, they will ſee they are not yet ſo low as their ſins deſerve, Lam. iii. 22.

6. A holy and ſilent admiration of the ways and counſels of God, as to us unſearchable, Rom. xi. 33. Pride of heart thinks nothing too high for the man, and ſo arraigns before its tribunal the divine proceedings, pretends to ſee through them, cenſures freely and condemns: but humiliation of ſpirit diſpoſes a man to think awfully and honourably of the myſteries of providence he is not able to ſee through.

7. A forgetting and laying aſide before the Lord all our dignity, whereby we excel others, Rev. iv. 10. Pride feeds itſelf on the man's real or imaginary perſonal excellency and dignity, and, being ſo inured to it before others, cannot forget it before God. Luke xviii. 11.——'God, I thank thee, I am not as other men.'——But humiliation of ſpirit makes it all to evaniſh before him, as doth the ſhadow before the ſhining ſun, and it lays the man in his own eyes, lower than any. *Surely I am more brutiſh than any man, and have not the underſtanding of a man*, Prov. xxx. 2.

Laſtly, A ſubmitting readily to the meaneſt offices requiſite in or agreeable to our circumſtances. Pride at every turn finds ſomething that is below the man to condeſcend or ſtoop to, meaſuring by his own mind and will, not by the circumſtances God has placed him in. But humility meaſures by the circumſtances one is placed in, and readily falls in with what they require. Hereof our Saviour gave us an example, (Phil. ii. 8. *He humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death,*) to be imitated, John xiii. 14. *If I then your Lord and Maſter, have waſhed your feet, ye ought alſo to waſh one anothers feet.*

Use. Let the bent of your heart then, in all your humbling circumſtances, be towards the humbling of your ſpirit, as under the mighty hand of God. This lies in two things.

1. Carefully notice all your humbling circumſtances, and overlook none of them. Obſerve your imperfections, inferiority in relations, contradictions you meet with, your afflictions, uncertainty of all things about you, and your ſinfulneſs. Look through them deſignedly, and conſider the ſteps of the conduct of providence toward you in theſe, that ye may know yourſelves, and may not be ſtrangers at home, blind to your own real ſtate and caſe.

2. Obſerving what theſe circumſtances do require of you, as ſuitable to them, bend your endeavours towards it, to bring your ſpirits into that temper of humiliation, that as your lot is really low in all theſe reſpects, your ſpirits may be low too, as under the mighty hand of God. Let this be your great aim through your whole life, your exerciſe every day.

Motive 1. God is certainly at work to humble one and all of us. However high any are lifted up in this world, providence has hung certain badges for humiliation on them, whether they will notice them or not, Iſ. xl. 6. Now it is our duty to fall in with the deſign of providence, that while God is humbling us, we may be humbling ourſelves, and that we may not receive humbling diſpenſations in vain.

2. The humiliation of our ſpirits will not take effect without our own agency therein: while God is working on us that way, we muſt work together with him; for he works on us as rational agents, who being moved, move themſelves, Phil. ii. 12. 13. God by his providence may force down our lot and condition without us; but the ſpirit muſt come down voluntarily and of choice, or not at all: therefore ſtrike in with humbling providences in humbling yourſelves, as mariners ſpread out their ſails when the wind begins to blow, that they may go away before it.

If ye do not, ye reſiſt the mighty hand of God, Acts vii. 51. Ye reſiſt in ſo far as ye do not yield, but ſtand as a rock, keeping your ground againſt your Maker in humbling providences, Jer. v. 3.—' Thou haſt ſtricken them, but they have not grieved; thou haſt conſumed them, but they have refuſed to receive correction. They have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refuſed to return.' Much more when ye work againſt him to force up your condition, which ye may ſee God means to hold down. And of this reſiſtance conſider,

(1.) The ſinfulneſs, what an evil thing it is. It is a direct fighting againſt God, a ſhaking off of ſubjection to our ſovereign Lord, and a riſing in rebellion againſt him, Iſa. xlv. 9.

(2.) The folly of it, How unequal is the match? How can the ſtruggle end well? Job ix. 4. What elſe can poſſibly be the iſſue of the potſherds of the earth daſhing againſt the Rock of ages, but that they be broken to pieces? We may ſay, as Job xli. 8. All men muſt certainly bow and break under the mighty hand.

4. This is the time of humiliation, even the time of this life. *Every thing is beautiful in its ſeaſon*, and the bringing down of the ſpirit now is beautiful, as in the time thereof, even as the ploughing and ſowing of the ground is in the ſpring. Conſider,

(1.) Humiliation of ſpirit *is in the ſight of God of great price*, 1 Pet. iii. 4. As he has a ſpecial averſion to pride of heart, he has a ſpecial liking of heart-humility, chap. v. 5. The humbling of ſinners, and bringing them down from their heights, wherein the corruption of their nature has ſet them, is the great end of his word, and of his providences.

(2.) It is no eaſy thing to humble mens ſpirits; it is not little that will do it; it is a work that is not ſoon done. There is need of a digging deep for a thorough humiliation in the work of converſion, Luke vi. 48. Many a ſtroke muſt be given at the root of the tree of the natural pride of the heart, ere it fall; oft times it ſeems to be fallen, and yet it riſes again. And, even when the root ſtroke is given in believers, the rod of pride buds again, ſo there is ſtill an occaſion for new humbling work.

(3.) The whole time of this life is appointed for humiliation. This was ſignified by the forty years the Iſraelites had in the wilderneſs, Deut. viii. 2. It was ſo to Chriſt, and therefore it muſt be ſo to men, Heb. xii. 2. And in that time they muſt either be formed according to his image, or elſe appear as reprobate ſilver that will not take it on by any means, Rom. viii. 29. So that whatever lifting up men may now and then get in this life, the habitual courſe of it will be ſtill humbling.

(4.) There is no humbling after, Rev. xxii. 11. If the pride of the heart be not brought down in this life, it will never be: no kindly humiliation is to be expected in the other life. There the proud will be broken in pieces, but not ſoftened; their lot and condition will be brought to the loweſt paſs, but the unhumbleneſs of their ſpirits will ſtill remain, whence they will be in eternal agonies, through the oppoſition betwixt their ſpirits and lot, Rev. xvi. 21.

Wherefore beware leſt ye ſit your time of humiliation; humbled we muſt be, or we are gone for ever; and this is the time, the only time of it; therefore make your hay while the ſun ſhines: ſtrike in with humbling providences, and fight not againſt them while ye have them, Acts xiii. 41. The ſeaſon of grace will not laſte; if ye ſleep in the ſeed-time, ye will beg in harveſt.

5. This is the way to turn humbling circumſtances to a good account: ſo that, inſtead of being loſers, ye would be gainers by them, Pſal. cxix. 17. *It is good for me that I have been afflicted.* Would ye gather grapes of theſe thorns and thiſtles, ſet yourſelves to get your ſpirits humbled by them.

(1.) Humiliation of ſpirit is a moſt valuable thing in itſelf, Prov. xvi. 32. It cannot be bought too dear. Whatever one is made to ſuffer, if his ſpirit is thereby duly brought down, he has what is well worth bearing all the hardſhip for, 1 Pet. iii. 4.

(2.) Humility of ſpirit brings many advantages along with it. It is a fruitful bough, well loaden, wherever it is. It contributes to one's eaſe under the croſs, Matth. xi. 30. Lam. iii. 27. 28. 29. It is a ſacrifice particularly acceptable to God, Pſal. li. 17. The eye of God is particularly on ſuch for good, Iſa. lxvi. 2.—*To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite ſpirit, and trembleth at my word.* Yea, he dwells with them, Iſa. lvii. 15. And it carries a line of wiſdom through one's whole conduct, Prov. xi. 2. *With the lowly is wiſdom.*

Laſtly, Conſider it is a mighty hand that is at work with us; the hand of the mighty God: let us then bend our ſpirits towards a compliance with it, and not wreſtle againſt it. Conſider,

(1.) We muſt fall under it. Since the deſign of it is to bring us down, we cannot ſtand before it; for it cannot miſcarry in its deſigns, Iſ. xlvi. 10.——*My counſel ſhall ſtand.* So fall before it we muſt, either in the way of duty or judgment, Pſal. xlvi. 4. 'Thine arrows are ſharp in the heart of the king's enemies, whereby the people fall under thee.'

(2.) They that are ſo wiſe as to fall in humiliation under the mighty hand, be they never ſo low, the ſame hand will raiſe them up again, James iv. 10. In a word, be the proud never ſo high, God will bring them down. Be the humble never ſo low, God will raiſe them up.

Directions *for reaching this humiliation.*

I. General DIRECTIONS.

Direction 1. Fix it in your heart to ſeek ſome ſpiritual improvement of the conduct of providence towards you, Micah vi. 9. Till once your heart get a ſet that way, your humiliation is not to be expected, Hoſ. xiv. 9. But nothing more reaſonable, if we would act either like men or Chriſtians, than to aim at turning what is ſo grievous to the fleſh unto the profit of the ſpirit; that if we are loſers at one hand, we may be gainers at another.

2. Settle the matter of your eternal ſalvation, in the firſt place, by betaking yourſelf to Chriſt, and taking God for your God in him, according to the goſpel offer, Hoſ. ii. 19. Heb. viii. 10. Let your humbling circumſtances move you to this, that while the creature dries up you may go to the fountain: for it is impoſſible to reach due humiliation under the mighty hand, without faith in him as your God and Friend, Heb. xi. 6. 1 John iv. 19.

Laſtly, Uſe the means of ſoul-humbling in the faith of the promiſe, Pſal xxviii. 7. Moſes ſmiting the rock in the faith of the promiſe, made waters guſh out, which otherwiſe would not at all appeared. Let us do likewiſe in dealing with our rocky hearts. They muſt be laid on the ſoft bed of the goſpel, and ſtruck there, as Joel, ii. 13.—*Turn to the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful.*—or they will never kindly break or fall in humiliation.

II. Particular DIRECTIONS.

1. Aſſure yourſelves that there are no circumſtances ſo humbling that you are in, bnt you may get your heart acceptably brought down to them, 1 Cor x. 13. *But God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above what ye are able, but will with the temptation, alſo make a way to eſcape, that ye may be able to bear it,* This is truth, 2 Cor. xii. 9.—*My grace is ſufficient for thee: for my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs.*—And you would be perſuaded of it with application to yourſelves, if ever you would reach the end, Phil. iv. 13. ‘I can ‘ do all things through Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth me.’ God allows you to be perſuaded of it, whatever is your weakneſs and the difficulty of the taſk:—‘For our ‘ ſakes this is written: that he that ploweth ſhould ‘ plow in hope, and he that threſheth in hope, ſhould ‘ be partaker of his hope,’ 1 Cor. ix. 10. And the belief thereof is a piece of the life of faith, 2 Tim. ii. 1. If you have no hope of ſucceſs, your endeavours, as they will be heartleſs, ſo they will be vain. *Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees,* Heb. xii. 12.

Whatever hand is, or is not, in your humbling circumſtances, do you take God for your party, and conſider yourſelves therein as under his mighty hand, Micah vi. 9. Men in their humbling circumſtances overlook God: ſo they find not themſelves called to humility under them: they fix their eyes on the creature-inſtrument, and, inſtead of humility, their hearts riſe. But take him for your party, that ye may remember the battle, and do no more, Job xli. 8.

3. Be much in the thoughts of God's infinite greatneſs: conſider his holineſs and majeſty, fit to awe you into deepeſt humiliation, Iſa. vi. 3.—5. Job met with many humbling providences in his caſe, but he was never ſufficiently humbled under them, till the Lord made a new diſcovery of himſelf unto him, in his infinite majeſty and greatneſs. He kept his ground againſt his friends, and ſtood to his point, till the Lord took that method with him. It was begun with thunder, Job. xxxvii. 1. 2. Then followed God's voice out of the whirlwind, chap. xxxviii. 1. whereon Job is brought down, chap. xl. 4. 5. It is renewed till he is farther humbled, chap. xl. 5. 6. ‘Wherefore I abhor myſelf, ‘ and repent in duſt and aſhes.’

4. Inure yourſelves ſilently to admit myſteries in the conduct of providence towards you, which you are not able to comprehend, but will adore, Rom. xi. 33. *O the depth of the riches both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God! how unſearchable are his judgments, and his ways paſt finding out!* That was the firſt word God ſaid to Job, chap. xxxviii. 2. ‘Who is this that darkeneth ‘ counſel by words without knowledge?’ It took him by the heart, ſtuck with him, and he comes over it again, chap. xlii. 3. as that which particularly brought him to his knees to the duſt. Even in theſe ſteps of providence, which we ſeem to ſee far into, we may well allow, there are ſome myſteries beyond what we ſee. And, in theſe which are perplexing and puzzling, ſovereignty ſhould ſilence us; his infinite wiſdom ſhould ſatisfy, though we cannot ſee.

5. Be much in the thoughts of your ſinfulneſs, Job xl. 4. *Behold I am vile! what ſhall I anſwer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.* It is overlooking of that which gives us ſo much ado with humbling circumſtances. While the eyes are held, that they cannot ſee ſin, the heart riſeth againſt them; but when they are opened, it falls. Wherefore, whenever God is dealing with you in humbling diſpenſations, turn your eyes, upon that occaſion, on the ſinfulneſs of your nature, heart, and life, and that will help forward your humiliation.

6. Settle it in your heart, that there is need of all the humbling circumſtances you are put in. This is truth, 1 Pet. i. 6.—‘Though now for a ſeaſon (if need be) “ ye are in heavineſs through manifold temptations.’ God brings no needleſs trials upon us, afflicts none but as their need requires, Lam. iii. 33. ‘For he doth not ‘ afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.’ That is an obſervable difference betwixt our earthly and heavenly Father's correction, Heb. xii. 10.—— *they after their own pleaſure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holineſs.* Look to the temper of your own hearts and nature, how apt to be lift up, forget God, carried away with the vanities of this world what fooliſhneſs is bound up in your hearts. Thus you will ſee the need of humbling circumſtances for ballaſt, and of the rod for the fool's back; and if at any time, you cannot ſee that need, believe it on the ground of God's infinite wiſdom, that does nothing in vain.

7. Believe a kind deſign of providence in them towards you. God calls us to this, as the key that opens the heart under them, Rev. iii. 19. Satan ſuggeſts ſuſpicions to the contrary, as the bar which may hold it ſhut, 2 Kings iii. 33.——*This evil is of the Lord, what ſhould I wait for the Lord any longer?* As long as the ſuſpicions of an ill deſign in them againſt us reigns, the creature will, like the worm at the man's foot, put itſelf in the beſt poſture of defence it can, and harden itſelf in ſorrow: but the faith of a kind deſign will cauſe it open out itſelf with humility before him.

Caſe, O! if I knew there were a kind deſign in it, I would willingly bear it, although there were more of it; but I fear a ruining deſign of providence againſt me therein. *Anſw.* Now, what word of God, or diſcovery from heaven, have you to ground theſe fears upon? None at all, but from hell, 1 Cor x. 13. What think you the deſign towards you in the goſpel is? Can you believe no good deſign towards you in all the words of grace there heaped up? What is that, I pray, but black unbelief in its hue of hell? Iſa. lv. 1 flying in the face of the truth of God, and making him a liar, 1 John v. 10. 11. The goſpel is a breathing of love and good-will to the world of mankind-ſinners, Tit. ii. 11. and iii. 4. 1 John iv. 14. and John iii. 17. But ye believe it not in that caſe, more than devils believe it. But if ye can believe a kind deſign there, ye muſt believe it in your humbling circumſtances too; for the deſign of providence cannot be contrary to the deſign of the goſpel: but contrariwiſe the one is to help forward to the other.

8. Think with yourſelves, that this life is the time of trial for heaven, James i. 12. *Bleſſed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he ſhall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promiſed to them that love him.* And therefore there ſhould be a welcoming of humbling circumſtances on that view, verſ. 2.——'Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.' If there is an honourable office, or beneficial employment to be beſtowed, men ſtrive to be taken on trials for it, in hope they may be thereupon legally admitted to it. Now God takes trial of men for heaven, by humbling circumſtances, as the whole Bible teacheth; and ſhall men be ſo very loth to ſtoop to them? I would aſk you,

(1.) Is it nothing to you to ſtand a candidate for glory, to be put on trials for heaven? Is there not an honour in it; an honour which all the ſaints have had? James v. 11. *Behold we count them happy that endure,* &c. And a fair proſpect in it, 2 Cor. iv. 17. *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* Do but put the caſe, that God ſhould overlook you in that caſe, as one whom it is needleſs ever to try on that head, that he ſhould order you your portion in this life with full eaſe, as one that is to get no more of him; what would that be?

(2.) What a vaſt diſproportion is there between your trials and the glory? your moſt humbling circumſtances, how light are they in compariſon of the weight of it? The longeſt continued of them are but for a moment, compared with that eternal weight. Alas! there is much unbelief at the root of all our uneaſineſs under our humbling circumſtances. Had we a clearer view of the other world, we would not make ſo much of either the ſmiles or frowns of this.

(3.) What think ye of coming foul off the trial of your humbling circumſtances, Jer. vi. 29. 30.——*The lead is conſumed of the fire: the founder melteth in vain, for the wicked are not plucked away. Reprobate ſilver ſhall men call them, becauſe the Lord rejected them.* That the iſſue of it be only, that your heart appear of ſuch a temper as by no means to be humbled; and that therefore you muſt and ſhall be taken off them, while yet no humbling appears? I think the awfulneſs of the diſpenſation is ſuch, as might ſet us to our knees to deprecate the lifting us up from our humbling circumſtances, ere our heart be humbled, Iſa. i. 4. Ezek. xxiv. 13.

9. Think with yourſelves, how it is by humbling circumſtances the Lord prepares us for heaven, Col. i. 12. 'Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light,' with 2 Cor. v. 5. The ſtones and timber are laid down, turned over and over, and hewed, ere they be ſet up in the building; and not juſt ſet up as they come out of the quarry and wood. Were they capable of a choice, ſuch of them as would refuſe the iron tool would be refuſed a place in the building. Pray how think ye to be made meet for heaven, by the warm ſun-ſhine of this world's eaſe, and getting all your will here? Nay, ſirs, that would put your mouth out of taſte for the joys of the other world. Veſſels of diſhonour are fitted for deſtruction that way; but veſſels of honour for glory by humbling circumſtances. I would here ſay,

1ſt, Will nothing pleaſe you but two heavens, one here, another hereafter? God has ſecured one heaven for the ſaints, one place where they ſhall get all their will, wiſh and deſire; where there ſhall be no weight on them to hold them down: and that is in the other world. But ye muſt have it both here and there, or ye cannot digeſt it. Why do ye not quarrel too, that there are not two ſummers in one year; two days in the twenty four hours? The order of the one heaven is as firm as that of the years and days, and ye will not reverſe it: therefore chuſe ye whether ye will take your night or your day firſt, your winter or your ſummer, your heaven here or hereafter.

2dly, Without being humbled with humbling circumſtances in this life, ye are not capable of heaven, 2 Cor. v. 5. *Now he that hath wrought us for the ſelf-ſame thing is God.*—Ye may indeed lie at eaſe here in a bed of ſloth, and dream of heaven, big with hopes of a fool's paradiſe, wiſhing to caſt yourſelves juſt out of Delilah's lap, into Abraham's boſom: but without ye be humbled ye are not capable.

(1.) Of the Bible heaven, that heaven deſcribed in the Old and New Teſtament. Is not that heaven a lifting up in due time? But how ſhall ye be lifted up that are never well gotten down? Where will your tears be to be wiped away? What place will there be for your triumph, that will not fight the good fight? How can it be a reſt to you, who cannot away with labour?

(2) Of the ſaints heaven, Rev. vii. 14.——'And he ſaid unto me, Theſe are they which came out of great tribulation, and have waſhed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.' This anſwers the queſtion anent Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, and all all the ſaints with them there: they were brought down to the duſt with humbling circumſtances, and out of theſe they came before the throne. How can ye ever think to be lifted up with them, with whom ye cannot think to be brought down?

(3.) Of CHRIST's heaven, Heb. xii. 2.——'Who, for the joy that was ſet before him, endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and is now ſet down at the right hand of God.' O conſider how the forerunner made his way, Luke xxiv. 26. 'Ought not Chriſt to have ſuffered theſe things, and to enter into his glory?' And lay your accounts with it, that if ye get where he is, ye muſt go thither as he went, Luke ix. 23. 'And he ſaid, if any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs daily, and follow me.'

10. Give up at length with your towering hopes from this world, and confine them to the world to come. Be as pilgrims and ſtrangers here, looking for your reſt in heaven, and not till ye come there. There is a prevailing evil, Iſa. lvii. 10. *Thou art wearied in the greatneſs of thy way: yet ſaidſt thou not, There is no hope.*—So the Babel building is ſtill continued, though it has fallen down again and again: for men ſay, *The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn ſtones: the ſycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars,* Iſa. ix 10. This makes humbling work very longſome, we are ſo hard to quit our gripe of the creature, to fall off from the breaſt, and be weaned. But faſten your gripes on the other world, and let your gripe of this go; ſo ſhall ye be humbled indeed under the mighty hand. The faſter you gripe the happineſs of that world, the eaſier will it be to accommodate yourſelves to your humbling circumſtances here.

Laſtly, Make uſe of Chriſt in all his offices, for your humiliation under your humbling circumſtances. That only is kindly humiliation that comes in that way, Zech. xii. 10.——'And they ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they ſhall mourn,' &c. That you muſt do by truſting on him for that effect.

(1.) As a prieſt for you. You have a conſcience full of guilt, and that will make one uneaſy in any circumſtances, and far more in humbling circumſtances; it will be like a thorn in the ſhoulder on which a burden is laid. But the blood of Chriſt will purge the conſcience, draw out the thorn, give eaſe, Iſa. xxxiii. 24. and fit for ſervice, doing or ſuffering, Heb. ix. 14. 'How much more ſhall the blood of Chriſt—purge your conſcience from dead works to ſerve the living God?'

(2.) As your prophet to teach you. We have need to be taught rightly to diſcern our humbling circumſtances: for often we miſtake them ſo far, that they prove an oppreſſing load; whereas, could we rightly ſee them, juſt as God ſets them to us, they would be humbling, but not ſo oppreſſive. Truly we need Chriſt, and the light of his word and Spirit, to let us ſee our croſs and trial, as well as our duty, Pſal. xxv. 9, 10.

(3.) As your king. You have a ſtiff heart, loth to bow even in humbling circumſtances: take a leſſon from Moſes what to do in ſuch a caſe, Exod. xxxiv. 9. *And he ſaid—Let my Lord, I pray thee, go amongſt us, (for it is a ſtiff-necked people,) and pardon our iniquity, and our ſin.* ——Put it in his hand that is ſtrong and mighty, Pſal. xxiv. 8. He is able to cauſe it melt, and like wax, before the fire, turn to the ſeal.

Think on theſe directions, in order to put them in practice, remembering that if ye 'know theſe things, 'happy are ye if ye do them' Remember, humbling work is a work that will fill your hand, while you live here, and that you cannot come to the end of till death; and humbling circumſtances will attend you, while you are in this lower world. A change of them ye may get; but a freedom from them ye cannot, till ye come to heaven. So the humbling circumſtances of our imperfections, relations, contradictions, afflictions, uncertainties, and ſinfulneſs, will afford matter of exerciſe to us while here. What remains of the purpoſe of this text, I ſhall compriſe in,

DOCTRINE II. *There is a due time, wherein thoſe that now humble themſelves under the mighty hand of God, will certainly be lifted up.*

We ſhall take,

FIRST, A general view of this point. And conſider,

I. Some things ſuppoſed and implied in it. It bears,

1. That thoſe who ſhall ſhare of this lifting up, muſt lay their accounts, in the firſt place, with a caſting down, Rev. vii. 14. John xvi. 33.—*In the world ye ſhall have tribulation*—There is no coming to the promiſed land, according to the ſettled method of grace, but through the wilderneſs; nor entering into this exaltation, but through a ſtrait gate. If we cannot away with caſting down, we will not taſte of the ſweet of the lifting up.

2. Being caſt down by the mighty hand of God, we muſt learn to lie ſtill and quiet under it, till the ſame hand that caſt us down raiſe us up, if we would ſhare of this promiſed lifting up, Lam. iii. 27. It is not the being caſt down into humbling circumſtances by the providence of God, but the coming down of our ſpirits under them by the grace of God, that brings us within the compaſs of this promiſe.

3. Never humbled in humbling circumſtances, never lifted up in the way of this promiſe. Men may keep their ſpirits on the high bend in their humbling circumſtances, and in that caſe may get a lifting up, Prov. xvi. 19. But note this, that what they get will be a lifting up, to the end that they may get the more grievous fall. *Surely thou didſt ſet them in ſlippery places, thou caſtedſt them down in a moment,*——Pſal. lxxiii. 18. But they who will not humble themſelves in humbling circumſtances, will find their obſtinacy a need-nail, that will keep their miſery ever faſt on them without remedy.

4. Humility of ſpirit in humbling circumſtances aſcertains a lifting up out of them ſome time, with the good will and favour of heaven, Luke xviii. 14. 'I 'tell you, this man went down to his houſe juſtified rather than the other. for every one that exalteth himſelf 'ſhall be abaſed, and he that humbleth himſelf ſhall 'be exalted.' Solomon obſerves, Prov. xv. 1. that *a ſoft anſwer turneth away wrath: but grievous words ſtir up anger.* And ſo it is, that while the proud, through their obſtinacy, do but wreathe the yoke faſter about their own necks, the yielding humble ones, by their yielding, make their relief ſure, 1 Sam. ii. 8. 9. 10. 'He raiſeth the poor out of the duſt, and lifteth up the 'beggar from the dung-hill, to ſet them among princes, 'and to make them inherit the throne of glory——He 'will keep the feet of his ſaints, and the wicked ſhall 'be ſilent in darkneſs; for by ſtrength ſhall no man prevail. The adverſaries of the Lord ſhall be broken in 'pieces'—So the cannon-ball breaks down a ſtone-wall, while the yielding packs of wool take away its force.

5. There is an appointed time for the lifting up of thoſe that humble themſelves in their humbling circumſtances, Hab. ii. 3. *For the viſion is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it ſhall ſpeak and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it, becauſe it will ſurely come, it will not tarry.* To every thing there is a time, as for humbling, ſo for lifting up, Eccleſ. iii. 3. We know it not, but God knows it, who has appointed it. Let not the humble one ſay, I will never be lifted up: there is a time fixed for it, as preciſely as for the riſing of the ſun, after the long and dark night, or the return of the ſpring after the long and ſharp winter.

6. It is not to be expected, that immediately upon one's humbling himſelf, the lifting up is to follow. No, one is not only to lie down under the mighty hand, but lie ſtill waiting the due time; humbling work is longſome work; the Iſraelites had forty years of it in the wilderneſs. God's people muſt be brought to put a blank in his hand, as to the time, and while they have a long night of walking in darkneſs, muſt truſt, Iſa. l. 10. 'Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that o'beyeth the voice of his ſervant, that walketh in dark'neſs and hath no light? Let him truſt in the name of 'the Lord, and ſtay upon his God.'

7. The appointed time for the lifting up is the due time, the time fitteſt for it, wherein it will come moſt ſeaſonably. *And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint not,* Gal. vi. 9. For that is the time God has choſen for it: and be ſure his choice, as the choice of infinite wiſdom, is the beſt; and therefore faith ſets to wait it, Iſa. xxviii. 16.—*He that believeth ſhall not make haſte.* There is much of the beauty of a thing depends on the timing of it, and he has fixed that in all he does, Eccleſ. iii. 11. *He hath made every thing beautiful in his time.*

Laſtly, The lifting up of the humbled will not miſs to come in the appointed and due time, Hab. ii. 3. Time makes no halting, it is running day and night; ſo the due time is faſt coming, and, when it comes, it will bring the lifting up along with it. Let the humbling circumſtances be ever ſo low, ever ſo hopeleſs, it is impoſſible but the lifting up from them muſt come in the due time.

II. A word in the general to the lifting up abiding thoſe that humble themſelves. There is a twofold lifting up.

1. A partial lifting up, competent to the humbled in time during this life, Pſal. xxx. 1. *I will extol thee, O Lord, for thou haſt lifted me up, and haſt not made my foes to rejoice over me.* This is a lifting up in part, and but in part, not wholly; and ſuch liftings up the humbled may expect, while in this world, but no more. Theſe give a breathing to the weary, a change of burdens, but do not ſet them at perfect eaſe. So Iſrael in the wilderneſs, in midſt of their many mourning times, had ſome ſinging ones, Exod. xv. 1. Numb. xxi. 17.

2. A total lifting up, competent to them at the end of time, at death, Luke xvi. 22.—*It came to paſs that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's boſom*—Then the Lord deals with them no more by parcels and halves, but carries their relief to perfection, Heb. xii. 23. Then he takes off all their burdens, eaſes them of all their weights, and lays no more on for ever. He then lifts them up to a height they were never at before, no not when at their higheſt. He ſets them quite above all that is low, and therein fixes them, never to be brought down more. Now there is a due time for both theſe.

1. For the partial lifting up. Every time is not fit for it; we are not always fit to receive comfort, an eaſe, or a change of our burdens. God ſees there are times wherein it is needful for his people to be in heavineſs, 1 Pet. i. 6. To have their hearts brought down with grief, Pſal. cvii. 12. But then there is a time really appointed for it in the divine wiſdom, when he will think it as needful to comfort them, as before to bring down, 2 Cor. ii. 7. ‘So that, contraryways, ye ought rather to forgive, and comfort him, leſt perhaps ſuch a one ſhould be ſwallowed up with overmuch ſorrow.’ We are in that caſe in the hand of God, as in the hand of our phyſician, who appoints the time the drawing plaiſter ſhall lie to, and when the healing plaiſter ſhall be applied, and leaves it not to the patient.

2. For the total lifting up. When we are ſore oppreſſed with our burdens, we are ready to think, O to be away, and ſet beyond them all, Job vii. 2. 3. *As a ſervant earneſtly deſireth the ſhadow, and as an hireling looketh for the reward of his work: ſo am I made to poſſeſs months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me.* But it may be fitter, for all that, that we may ſtay a while, and wreſtle with our burdens, Phil. i. 24. 25. ‘Nevertheleſs, to abide in the fleſh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I ſhall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith.’ A few days might have taken Iſrael out of Egypt into Canaan; but they would have been over ſoon there, if they had made all that ſpeed; ſo they behoved to ſpend forty years in the wilderneſs, till their due time of entering into Canaan ſhould come. And be ſure the ſaints, entering heaven, will be convinced that the time of it is beſt choſen, and there will be a beauty in that it was no ſooner.

And thus a lifting up is ſecured to the humble.

III. The certainty of the lifting up of thoſe that humble themſelves under humbling circumſtances. If one would aſſure you, when reduced to poverty, that the time ſhould certainly come yet, that ye ſhould be rich; when ſore ſick, that ye ſhall not die of that diſeaſe, but certainly recover: that would help you to bear your poverty and ſickneſs the better, and ye would comfort yourſelves with that proſpect. However one may continue poor, and never be rich; may be ſick, and die of his diſeaſe; but whoever humble themſelves under their humbling circumſtances, we can aſſure them from the Lord's word, they ſhall certainly, without all peradventure, be lifted up out of, and relieved from their humbling circumſtances; they ſhall certainly ſee the day of their eaſe and relief, when they ſhall remember their burdens as waters that fail. And ye may be aſſured thereof from the following conſiderations.

1ſt, The nature of God, duly conſidered, inſures it, Pſal. ciii. 8, 9. *The Lord is merciful and gracious, ſlow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.* The humbled ſoul looking to God in Chriſt, may ſee three things in his nature jointly ſecuring it.

1. Infinite power, that can do all things. No circumſtances are ſo low, but he can raiſe them; none ſo intangling and perplexing, but he can unravel them; ſo hopeleſs, but he can remedy them, Gen. xviii 14. ‘Is any thing too hard for the Lord?’ Be our caſe what it will, it is never paſt reach with him to help it: but then is the moſt proper ſeaſon for him to take it in hand, when all others have given it over, Deut. xxxii. 36. *For the Lord ſhall judge his people, and repent himſelf for his ſervants: when he ſeeth that their power is gone, and there is none ſhut up, or left.*

2. Infinite goodneſs inclining to help. He is good and gracious in his nature, Exod. xxxiv. 6——9. And therefore his power is a ſpring of comfort to them, Romans xiv. 4. Men may be willing that are not able; or able that are not willing: but infinite goodneſs joining infinite power in God, may aſcertain the humbled of a lifting up in due time. That is a word of inconceivable ſweetneſs, 1 John iv. 16. ‘And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.’ He has the bowels of a Father towards the humble, Pſal. ciii. 13. ‘Like as a father pitieth his children; ſo the Lord pitieth them that fear him.’ Yea, bowels of mercy, more tender than a mother to her ſucking child, Iſ. xlix. 15. Wherefore howbeit his wiſdom may ſee it neceſſary to put them in humbling circumſtances, and keep them in them for a time, it is not poſſible he can leave them in them altogether.

3. Infinite wiſdom, that does nothing in vain, and therefore will not needleſsly keep one in humbling circumſtances, Lam. iii. 32. 33. *But though he cauſe grief, yet will he have compaſſion according to the multitude of his mercies: for he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.* God ſends them on for humbling, as the end and deſign to be brought about by them: when that is obtained, and there is no more uſe for them that way, we may aſſure ourſelves they will be taken off.

2dly, The providence of God, viewed in its ſtated methods of procedure with its objects, inſures it. Turn your eyes which way you will on the divine providence, ye may conclude thence, that in due time the humble will be lifted up.

1. Obſerve the providence of God, in the revolutions of the whole courſe of nature, day ſucceeding to the longeſt night, a ſummer to the winter, a waxing to a waning of the moon, a flowing to an ebbing of the ſea, &c. Let not the Lord's humbled ones be idle ſpectators of theſe things: they are for our learning, Jer. xxxi 35. 36 37. ‘Thus ſaith the Lord, which giveth the ſun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the ſtars for a light by night, which divideth the ſea, when the waves thereof rore; the Lord of hoſts is his name. If thoſe ordinances depart from before me, ſaith the Lord, then the ſeed of Iſrael alſo ſhall ceaſe from being a nation before me for ever.’ Will the Lord's hand keep ſuch a ſteady courſe in the earth, ſea, and viſible heavens, as to bring a lifting up in them after a caſting down, and only forget his humbled ones? No.

2. Obſerve the providence of God in the diſpenſations thereof about the man Chriſt, the moſt noble and auguſt object thereof, more valuable than a thouſand worlds, Col. ii. 9. Did not providence keep this courſe with him, firſt humbling him, then exalting him, and lifting him up? firſt bring him to the duſt of death in a courſe of ſufferings thirty-three years, then exalt him to the father's right hand in eternity of glory? Heb. xii. 2.—‘Who, for the joy that was ſet before him, endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and is now ſet down at the right hand of the throne of God.’ Phil. ii. 8. 9. ‘And being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs. Wherefore God alſo hath highly exalted him.’——The exaltation could not fail to follow his humiliation, Luke xxiv. 26. *Ought not Chriſt to have ſuffered theſe things, and to enter into his glory?* And he ſaw and believed it would follow, as the ſpringing of the ſeed doth the ſowing it, John xii. 24 There is a near concern the humbled in humbling circumſtances have herein.

(1.) This is the pattern providence copies after in its conduct towards you. The Father was ſo well pleaſed with this method in the caſe of his own Son, that it was determined to be followed, and juſt copied over again in the caſe of all heirs of glory, Rom viii. 29. ‘For whom he did foreknow, he alſo did predeſtinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firſt born amongſt many brethren.’ And who would not be pleaſed to walk through the darkeſt valley treading his ſteps?

(2.) This is a ſure pledge of your lifting up, Chriſt in his ſtate of humiliation, was conſidered as a public perſon and repreſentative, and ſo is he in his exaltation. So Chriſt's exaltation enſures your exaltation out of your humbling circumſtances, Iſ. xxvi. 19. 'Thy dead men ſhall live, together with my dead body ſhall they ariſe: awake and ſing, ye that dwell in duſt.'—Hoſ. vi. 1. 2. 'Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us: he hath ſmitten, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us, in the third day he will raiſe us up, and we ſhall live in his ſight.' Eph. ii. 6. 'And hath raiſed us up together, and made us ſit together in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus.' Yea, he is gone into the ſtate of glory for us, as our forerunner, Heb. vi. 20. 'Whether the forerunner is for us entered, even Jeſus made an high Prieſt for ever.'——

(3.) His humiliation was the price of our exaltation, and his exaltation a full teſtimony of the acceptance of its payment to the full. There are no humbling circumſtances ye are in, but ye would have periſhed in them, had not he purchaſed your lifting up out of them by his own humiliation, Iſa. xxvi. 19. Now his humbling grace in you is an evidence of the acceptance of his humiliation for your lifting up.

3. Obſerve the providence of God towards the church in all ages. This has been the courſe the Lord has kept with her, Pſal. cxxix. 1.----4. Abel was ſlain by the wicked Cain, to the great grief of Adam and Eve, and the reſt of their pious children: but then there was another ſeed raiſed up in Abel's room after, Gen. iv. 25. Noah and his ſons were buried alive in the ark more than a year; but then they were brought out into a new world, and bleſſed. Abraham for many years went childleſs; but at length Iſaac was born. Iſrael was long in miſerable bondage in Egypt; but at length ſeated in the promiſed land, &c. We muſt be content to go by the footſteps of the flock: and if in humiliation, we will ſurely follow them in exaltation too.

4. Obſerve the providence of God in the diſpenſations of his grace towards his children. The general rule is, 1 Pet. v. 5.——*For God reſiſteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.* How are they brought into a ſtate of grace? Is it not by a ſound work of humiliation going before, Luke vi. 48. And ordinarily the greater meaſure of grace that is deſigned for one, the deeper is their humiliation before, as in Paul's caſe. If they are to be recovered out of a backſlidden caſe, the ſame method is followed; ſo that deepeſt humiliations ordinarily make way for the greateſt comforts, and the darkeſt hour goes before the riſing of the Sun of righteouſneſs upon them, Iſa. lxvi. 5.——13.

Laſtly, Obſerve the providence of God at length throwing down wicked men, however long they ſtand and proſper, Pſal. xxxvii. 35. 36. *I have ſeen the wicked in great power, and ſpreading himſelf like a green bay-tree: yet he paſſed away, and lo he was not; yea, I ſought him, but he could not be found.* They are long green before the ſun, but at length they are ſuddenly ſmitten with an eaſt-wind, and wither away; their lamp goes out with a ſtink, and they are put out in obſcure darkneſs. Now, it is inconſiſtent with the benignity of the divine nature, to forget the humble to raiſe them, while he minds the proud to abaſe them.

3*dly*, The word of God puts its beyond all peradventure, which, from the beginning to the end, is the humbled ſaint's ſecurity for a lifting up, Pſal. cxix. 49. 50. *Remember the word unto thy ſervant, upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.* His word is the great letter of his name, which he will certainly ſee to cauſe to ſhine, Pſalm cxxxvii. 2.——'For thou haſt magnified thy word above all thy name;' and in all generations has been ſafely lippened to, Pſal. xii. 6. Conſider,

1. The doctrines of the word, which teach faith and hope for the time, and the happy iſſue the exerciſe of these graces will have. The whole current of ſcripture, to thoſe in humbling circumſtances is, *Not to caſt away their confidence, but to hope to the end*; and that for this good reaſon, that *it ſhall not be in vain*. See Pſal. xxvii. 14. 'Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he ſhall ſtrengthen thine heart: wait, I ſay, on the Lord.' And compare Rom. ix. 33. Iſa. xlix. 23.——'For they ſhall not be aſhamed that wait for me.'

2. The promiſes of the word, whereby Heaven is expreſsly engaged for a lifting up to thoſe that humble themſelves in humbling circumſtances, James iv. 10. 'Humble yourſelves in the ſight of the Lord, and he ſhall lift you up.' Matth. xxiii. 12.——'And he that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted.' It may take a time to prepare them for lifting up, but that being done it is ſecured, Pſal. x. 17. 'Lord thou haſt heard the deſire of the humble; thou wilt prepare their heart; thou wilt cauſe thine ear to hear.' They have his word for deliverance, Pſal. l. 15. And though they may ſeem to be forgotten, they ſhall not be always ſo; the time of their deliverance will come, Pſal. ix. 18. 'For the needy ſhall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor ſhall not periſh for ever.' Pſal. cii. 17. 'He will regard the prayer of the deſtitute, and not deſpiſe their prayer.'

3. The examples of the word ſufficiently confirming the truth of the doctrines and promiſes, Rom. xv. 4. *For whatſoever things were written afore-time, were written for our learning: that we through patience and comfort of the ſcriptures might have hope.* In the doctrines and promiſes the lifting up is propoſed to our faith, to be reckoned on the credit of God's word; but, in the examples, it is, in the caſe of others, ſet before our eyes to be ſeen, James v. 11. 'Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have ſeen the end of the Lord: that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.' There we ſee it in the caſe of Abraham, Job, David, Paul, and other ſaints: but, above all, in the caſe of the man Chriſt.

Laſtly, The interceſſion of Chriſt, joining the prayers and cries of his humbled people in their humbling circumſtances, inſures a lifting up for them at length. Be it ſo, that the proud cry not when he bindeth them, yet his humbled ones will not do ſo, they will cry, Pſal. xlii. 7. 8. *Deep calleth unto deep, at the noiſe of thy water-ſpouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me. Yet the Lord will command his loving-kindneſs in the day-time, and in the night his ſong ſhall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.* And though unbelievers may ſoon be outwearied, and give it over for altogether, ſure believers will not do ſo; but though they may, in a fit of temptation, lay it by as hopeleſs, they will find themſelves obliged to take it up again, Jer. xx. 9. 'Then I ſaid, I will not make mention of him, nor ſpeak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire ſhut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not ſtay;' and continue to cry on night and day, Luke xviii. 7. knowing no time for giving it over, till they be lifted up, Lam. iii. 49. 50. *Mine eye trickleth down, and ceaſeth not, without any intermiſſion, till the Lord look down, and behold from heaven.* Now Chriſt's interceſſion being joined with theſe cries, there cannot miſs to be a lifting up. Conſider,

1. Chriſt's interceſſion is certainly joined with the cries and prayers of the humbled in their humbling circumſtances, Rev. viii. 3. 'And another angel came and ſtood at the altar, having a golden cenſer; and there was given unto him much incenſe, that he ſhould offer it with the prayers of all ſaints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne.' They are by the Spirit helped to groan for relief, Rom. viii. 26. and the prayers and groans, which are through the Spirit, are certainly to be made effectual by the interceſſion of the Son, James v. 16. And ye may know they are by the Spirit, if ſo be ye are helped to continue praying, hop-

ing for your ſuit at laſt on the ground of God's word of promiſe; for nature's praying is a pool that will dry up in a long drought. It is the Spirit of prayer is the laſting ſpring, John iv. 14. Pſal. cxxxviii. 3. 'In the day when I cried, thou anſweredſt me; and ſtrengthenedſt me with ſtrength in my ſoul.' Truly there is an interceſſion in heaven, on the account of the humbling circumſtances of the humble ones. 'Then the angel of the Lord anſwered and ſaid, O Lord of hoſts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jeruſalem, and on the cities of Judah, againſt which thou haſt had indignation theſe threeſcore and ten years?' Zech. i. 12. How then can they miſs of a lifting up in due time?

2. He is in deep earneſt in his interceſſion for his people in their humbling circumſtances. Some will ſpeak a good word in favour of the helpleſs, that will be little concerned whether they come ſpeed or not: but our Interceſſor is in earneſt in behalf of his humbled ones; for he is touched with ſympathy in their caſe, Iſa. lxiii. 9. 'In all their affliction he was afflicted.'—And moſt tender ſympathy, Zech. ii. 8.—*For he that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye* He has their caſe upon his heart, where he is in the holy place in the higheſt heavens, Exod. xxviii. 29. and he keeps exact account of the time of their humbling circumſtances, be it as long as it will, Zech. i. 12. Moreover, it is his own buſineſs, the lifting up they are to have is a thing that is ſecured to him, in the promiſes made to him, on the account of his blood ſhed for them, Pſal. lxxxix. 33. 36. So not only are they looking on earth, but the man Chriſt is in heaven looking for the accompliſhment of theſe promiſes, Heb. x. 12. 13. 'But this man after he had offered one ſacrifice for ſins, for ever ſat down on the right hand of God; from thenceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footſtool.' How is it poſſible, then, that that looking ſhould be baulked? Moreover, theſe humbling circumſtances are his own ſufferings ſtill, though not in his perſon, yet in his members, Col. i. 24. *Who now rejoice in my ſufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Chriſt in my fleſh, for his body's ſake which is the church.* Wherefore there is all ground to conclude he is in deep earneſt.

Laſtly, His interceſſion is always effectual, John xi. 42. 'And I knew that thou heareſt me always.'——It cannot miſs to be ſo, becauſe he is the Father's well-beloved Son, his interceſſion has a plea of juſtice for the ground of it, 1 John ii. 1.——'We have an advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous.' Moreover, he has all power in heaven and earth lodged in him, John v. 22. and, finally, he and his Father are one, and their will one. So, for the preſent time, both Chriſt and his Father do will the lifting up of the humbled ones, but yet only in the due time.

SECONDLY, I proceed to a more particular view of the point. And,

I. We will conſider the lifting up as brought about in time, which is the partial lifting up. And,

Firſt, Some conſiderations for clearing the nature thereof.

1. This lifting up does not take place in every caſe of a child of God. One may be humbled in humbling circumſtances, from which he is to get a lifting up in time. We would not from the promiſe preſently conclude, that we being humbled under humbling circumſtances, ſhall certainly be taken out of them, and freed from them, ere we get to the end of our journey. For it is certain, there are ſome, ſuch as our imperfections, and ſinfulneſs, and mortality, we can by no means be rid of while in this world. And there are particular humbling circumſtances the Lord may hang about one, and keep about him till they go down to the grave, while in the mean time, he may lift up another from the ſame, Heman was preſſed down all along from his youth; Pſal. lxxxviii. 15. others all their life-time, Heb. ii. 15.

Objection. *If that be the caſe, what comes of the promiſe of lifting up? Where is the lifting up, if one may go to the grave under it?* Anſw. Were there no life after this, there would be weight in that objection; but, ſince there is another life, there is none in it at all. In the other life the promiſe will be accompliſhed to the humbled, as it was, Luke xvi. 22. Conſider that the great term for accompliſhing the promiſes, is the other life, not this. 'Theſe all died in the faith, not having received the promiſes, but having ſeen them afar off, and were perſuaded of them, and embraced them,'—Heb. xi. 13. And that whatever accompliſhment of the promiſe is here, it is not of the nature of a ſtock, but of a ſample or a pledge.

Queſtion. *But then may we not give over praying for the lifting up in that caſe?* Anſw. We do not know when that is our caſe; for a caſe may be paſt all hope in our eyes, and the eyes of others, in which God deſigns a lifting up in time, as in Job's, Job vi. 11. *What is my ſtrength that I ſhould hope: and what is mine end that I ſhould prolong my life?* But, be it as it will, we ſhould never give over praying for the lifting up, ſince it will certainly come to all that pray in faith for it; if not here, yet hereafter. The promiſe is ſure, and that is the commandment; ſo ſuch praying cannot miſs of a happy iſſue at length, Pſal. l. 15. 'And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorify me.' The whole life of a Chriſtian is ſuch a praying waiting life, to encourage whereunto all temporal deliverances are given as pledges, Rom. viii. 23. *And not only they, but ourſelves alſo, which have the firſt fruits of the Spirit; even we ourſelves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.* And whoſo obſerves that full lifting up at death to be at hand, muſt certainly riſe, if he has given over his caſe as hopeleſs.

2. However there are ſome caſes wherein this lifting up does take place. God gives his people ſome notable liftings up, even in time, raiſing them out of remarkable humbling circumſtances. The ſtorm is changed into a calm, and they remember it as waters that fail, Pſal. xl. 1—4. Two things may be obſerved on this.

(1.) One may be in humbling circumſtances very long, and ſore and hopeleſs, and yet a lifting up may be abiding them of a much longer continuance. This is ſometimes the caſe of the children of God, who are ſet to bear the yoke in their youth, as it was with Joſeph and David; and of them that get it laid on them in their middle age, as it was with Job, who could not be leſs than forty at his trouble's coming, but after it, lived one hundred and forty, Job xlii. 16. God by ſuch method prepares men for peculiar uſefulneſs.

(2.) One may be in humbling circumſtances long and ſore, and quite hopeleſs in the ordinary courſe of providence, yet they may get a clear and warm blink of a lifting up, ere they come to their journey's end. The life of ſome of God's children is like a cloudy and rainy day, wherein in the evening the ſun breaks out from under the clouds, ſhines fair and clear a little, and then ſets. *And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, that the light ſhall not be clear, nor dark.—But it ſhall come to paſs, that at evening time it ſhall be light*, Zech. xiv. 6. 7. Such was the caſe of Jacob in his old age, brought in honour and comfort to Egypt unto his ſon, and then died.

(3.) Yet whatever liftings up they get in this life, they will never want ſome weights hanging about them for their humbling. They may have their ſinging times, but their ſongs while in this world, will be mixed with groanings, 2 Cor. v. 4. *For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened.*—The unmixed diſpenſation is reſerved for the other world: but this will be a wilderneſs, unto the end, where there will be howlings, with the moſt joyful notes.

Laſtly, All the liftings up the humbled meet with now are pledges, and but pledges, ſamples, and earneſt of the great lifting up abiding them on the other ſide; and they ſhould look on them ſo.

(1.) They are really ſo, Hoſ. ii. 15. ‘And I will ‘give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of ‘Achor for a door of hope; and ſhe ſhall ſing there as ‘in the days of her youth, and as in the day when ſhe ‘came out of the land of Egypt.’ Our Lord Jeſus is leading his people now through the wilderneſs, and the manna and water of the rock are earneſts for the time of the milk and honey flowing in the promiſed land. They are not as yet come home to their Father's houſe; but they are travelling on the road, and Chriſt their elder brother with them, Cant. iv. 8. who bears their expences, takes them into inns by the way as it were, and refreſhes them with partial liftings up, after which they muſt get to the road again. But that entertainment by the way is a pledge of the full entertainment he will afford them when come home.

Objection, *But people may get a lifting up in time, that yet is no pledge of a lifting up on the other ſide. How ſhall I know it then to be a pledge? Anſ.* That lifting up, which comes by the promiſe, is a certain pledge of a full lifting up in the other world: for as the other life is the proper time of the accompliſhing of the promiſes, ſo we may be ſure, that when once God begins to clear his bond, he will certainly hold on till it is fully cleared, *The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me*, Pſalm cxxxviii. 8. So we may ſay as Naomi to Ruth, upon her receiving the ſix meaſures of barley from Boaz, Ruth iii. 18. *He will not be in reſt, until he have finiſhed the thing this day.* There are liftings up that come by common providence, and theſe indeed are ſingle, and not pledges of more: but the promiſe chains mercies together, ſo that one got is a pledge of another to come, yea, of the whole chain to the end, 2 Sam. v. 12.

Queſtion. *But how ſhall I know the lifting up to come by the way of the promiſe? Anſw.* That which comes by the way of the promiſe, does at once come the low way of humiliation, the high way of faith, or believing the promiſe, and the long way of waiting hope and patient continuance, James v. 7. *Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the huſbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, untill he receive the early and latter rain.* Humility qualifies for the accompliſhment of the promiſe, faith ſucks the breaſt of it, and patient waiting hangs by the breaſt till the milk come out abundantly.

(2.) But no lifting up of God's children here are any more than pledges of lifting up. God gives worldly men their ſtock here, but his children get nothing but a ſample of theirs here, Pſal. xvii. 14.; even as the ſervant at the term gets his fee in a round ſum, while the young heir gets nothing but a few pence for ſpending-money. The truth is, the ſame ſpending money is more valuable than the world's ſtock, Pſal. iv. 7. ‘Thou ‘haſt put gladneſs in my heart, more than in the time ‘that their corn and their wine increaſed.’ But though it is better than that and their ſervices too, and more worth than all their on-waiting, yet it is below the honour of their God to put them off with it, Heb. xi. 16. ‘But now they deſire a better country, that is, an hea‘venly; wherefore God is not aſhamed to be called their ‘God; for he hath prepared for them a city.’

Secondly, The partial lifting up itſelf. What they will get, getting this lifting up promiſed to the humbled. Why, they will get,

1. A removal of their humbling circumſtances. God having tried them a while, and humbled them, and brought down their hearts, will at length take off their burden, remove the weight ſo long hung at them, and ſo take them off that part of their trial joyfully, and let them get up their back long bowed down: and this one of two ways.

(1.) Either in kind, removing the burden for good and all. Such a lifting Job got, when the Lord turned back his captivity, increaſed again his family and ſubſtance, which had both been deſolated. David, when Saul his perſecutor fell in battle, and he was brought to the kingdom after many a weary day, expecting one day to fall by his hand. It is eaſy with our God to make ſuch turns in the moſt humbling circumſtances.

(2.) Or in equivalent or as good, removing the weight of the burden, that though it remains, it preſſes them no more, 2 Cor. xii. 9. 10. *And he ſaid unto me, My grace is ſufficient for thee: for my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs. Moſt gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Chriſt may reſt upon me. Therefore I take pleaſure in infirmities*—— Though they are not got to the ſhore, yet their head is no more under the water, but lifted up. David ſpeaks feelingly of ſuch a lifting up, Pſal. xxvii. 5. 6. ‘For ‘in the time of trouble he ſhall hide me in his pavili‘on: in the ſecret of his tabernacle ſhall he hide me, ‘he ſhall ſet me upon a rock. And now ſhall mine ‘head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: ‘therefore will I offer in his tabernacle ſacrifices of joy, ‘I will ſing, yea, I will ſing praiſes unto the Lord.’ Such had the three children in the fiery furnace; the fire burned, but it could burn nothing of them but their bonds; they had the warmth and light of it, but nothing of the ſcorching heat. Sometimes God lifts up his people this way in their humbling circumſtances.

2. A comfortable ſight of the acceptance of their prayers, put up in their humbling circumſtances. While prayers are not anſwered, but trouble continued, the hangers on about the Lord's hand are apt to think they are not accepted nor regarded in heaven, becauſe there is no alteration in their caſe, Job. ix. 16. 17. ‘If I had ‘called, and he had anſwered me, yet would I not be‘lieve that he had hearkened unto my voice; for he ‘breaketh me with a tempeſt.’ But that is a miſtake; they are accepted immediately, though not anſwered, 1 John v. 14. *And this is the confidence we have in him, that if we aſk any thing according to his will, he heareth us.* The Lord does with them as a father with the letters coming thick from his ſon abroad, reads them one by one with pleaſure, and carefully lays them up to be anſwered at his convenience. And when the anſwer comes, the ſon will know how acceptable they were to his father, Matth. xv. 28. So, &c.

3. A heart ſatisfying anſwer of theſe prayers, *ibid.* ſo as they ſhall not only get the thing, but ſee they have it as an anſwer of prayer, and they will put a double value on the mercy, 1 Sam. ii. 1. Accepted prayers may be very long in anſwering, many years, as in Abraham and David's caſe, but they cannot miſcarry of an anſwer at length, Pſal. ix. 18. The time will come when God will tell out to them, according to the promiſe, that they ſhall change their note, and ſay, Pſal. cxvi. 1. *I love the Lord, becauſe he hath heard my voice, and my ſupplication.* Looking on their lifting up as bearing the ſignature of the hand of a prayer-hearing God.

4. Full ſatisfaction, as to the conduct of providence, in all the ſteps of the humbling circumſtances, and the delay of the lifting up, however perplexing theſe were before, Rev. xv. 3. Standing on the ſhore, and looking back to what they have paſſed through, they will be made to ſay, *He hath done all things well.* Theſe things which are bitter to Chriſtians in the paſſing through, are very ſweet in the reflection on them; ſo is Samſon's riddle verified in their experience.

5. They get the lifting up, together with the intereſt for the time they lay out of it. When God pays his bonds of promiſes, he pays both ſtock and intereſt together: the mercy is increaſed according to the time the man waited on, and the expences and hardſhips ſuſtained during the dependence of the proceſs. The fruits of common providence are ſoon ripe, ſoon rotten; but the fruit of the promiſe is readily long a ripening, but then it is durable: and the longer it is a ripening, it is the more valuable when it comes. Abraham and Sarah waited for the promiſe about ten years, at length they thought on a way to haſten it, Gen. xvi. that ſoon

took in the birth of Iſhmael, but he was not the promiſed ſon. They were coming into extreme old age, ere the promiſe brought forth, Gen. xvii. 11. But, when it came, they got it with an addition of the renewing of their ages, Gen. xxi. 7. and xxv. 1. The moſt valuable of all the promiſes was the longeſt in fulfilling, viz. the promiſe of Chriſt, that was four thouſand years.

Laſtly, The ſpiritual enemies that flew thick and throng about them in the time of the darkneſs of the humbling circumſtances, will be ſcattered at this lifting up in the promiſe, 1 Sam. ii. 1. 5. ‘ And Hannah prayed, and ſaid, my heart rejoiceth in the Lord, my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies.——They that were full have hired out themſelves for bread, and they that were hungry ceaſed.’—Formidable was Pharaoh’s hoſt behind the Iſraelites, while they had the Red-ſea before them; but, when they were through the ſea, they ſaw the Egyptians dead on the ſhore, Exod xiv. 30. Such a ſight will they that humble themſelves under humbling circumſtances get of their ſpiritual enemies, when the time comes for their lifting up.

Thirdly, The due time of this lifting up. That is a natural queſtion of thoſe in humbling circumſtances, *Watchman, what of the night?* And we cannot anſwer it to the humbled ſoul, but in the general, Iſa. xxi. 11. 12. So take theſe general obſervations on it.

1. The lifting up of the humbled will not be longſome, conſidering the weight of the matter; that is to ſay, conſidering the worth and value of the lifting up of the humble? when it comes, it can by no means be reckoned long to the time of it. When ye ſow your corns in the fields, though they do not ripen ſo ſoon as ſome garden ſeeds, but you wait three months or ſo, ye do not think the harveſt long a coming, conſidering the value of the crop. This view the apoſtle takes of the lifting up in humbling circumſtances, 2 Cor. iv. 17. *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* So that a believer looking on the promiſe with an eye of faith, and perceiving its accompliſhment, and the work of it when accompliſhed, may wonder it is come on ſo ſhort on waiting. Therefore it is determined to be a time that comes ſoon, Luke xviii. 7. ſoon in reſpect of its weight and worth.

2. When the time comes, it and only it will appear the due time. To every thing there is a ſeaſon, and a great part of wiſdom lies in diſcerning it, and doing things in the ſeaſon thereof. And we may be ſure infinite wiſdom cannot miſs the ſeaſon by miſtaking it, Deut. xxxii. 4. ‘ He is a rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment.’——But whatever God doth will abide the ſtricteſt examination in that, as all other points, Eccleſ. iii. 14. *I know that whatſoever God doth, it ſhall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doth it, that men ſhould fear before him.* It is true, many times caſt up to us as the due time for lifting up, which yet really is not ſo, becauſe there is ſome circumſtance hid to us, which renders that ſeaſon unfit for the thing. Hence, John vii. 6.——‘ My time is not yet come, but your time is always ready.’ But when all the circumſtances, always foreknown of God, ſhall come to be opened out, and laid together before us, we will then ſee the lifting up is come in the nick of time, moſt for the honour of God and our good, and that it would not have done ſo well ſooner.

3. When the time comes that is really the due time, the proper time for lifting up a child of God from his humbling circumſtances, it will not be put off one moment longer, Hab. ii. 3.—*At the end it ſhall ſpeak——it will ſurely come, it will not tarry.* Though it tarry, it will not linger or put off to another time. O what reſt of heart would the firm faith of this afford us! There is not a child of God but would with the utmoſt carefulneſs proteſt againſt a lifting up before the due time, as againſt an unripe fruit caſten to him by an angry father, that would ſet his teeth on edge. Sith it is ſo then, could we firmly believe this point, that it will undoubtedly come in the due time, without loſing of a minute, it will afford a ſound reſt. It muſt be ſo, becauſe God has ſaid it: were the caſe never ſo hopeleſs, were mountains of difficulties lying in the way of it, at the appointed time it will *blow, Heb.* Hab. ii. 3. A metaphor from the wind riſing in a moment after a dead calm.

4. The humbling circumſtances are ordinarily carried to the utmoſt point of hopeleſſneſs before the lifting up. The knife was at Iſaac’s throat before the voice was heard. 2 Cor. i. 8. 9. ‘ For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Aſia, that we were preſſed out of meaſure, above ſtrength, inſomuch that we deſpaired even of life: but we had the ſentence of death in ourſelves, that we ſhould not truſt in ourſelves, but in God which raiſeth the dead.’ Things ſoon ſeem to us arrived at that point: ſuch is the haſtineſs of our ſpirits. But things may have far to go down, after we think they are at the foot of the hill. And we are almoſt as little competent judges of the point of hopeleſſneſs, as of the due time of lifting up. But readily God carries his people’s humbling circumſtances downward, downward, ſtill downward, till they come to that point. Two reaſons hereof to be noticed.

(1.) One from the explanatory cauſe of it. Herein God is holding the ſame courſe which he held in the caſe of the man Chriſt, the beloved pattern copied after in all the diſpenſations of providence towards the church, and every particular believer, Rom. viii. 29. He was all along a man of ſorrow: as his time went on, the waters ſwelled more, till he was brought to the duſt of death; then he was buried, and the grave-ſtone ſealed; which done, the world thought they were freely quit of him, and he would trouble them no more. But they quite miſtook it; then, and not till then, was the due time of lifting him up. And the liftings up that his people get moſt remarkable, are only little pieces faſhioned after this grand pattern.

(2.) Another from the final cauſe, the end and deſign providence aims at in it, and that is to carry the believer cleanly off his own, and all created bottoms, to bottom his truſt and hope in the Lord alone, 2 Cor. i. 9.—‘ That we ſhould not truſt in ourſelves, but in God which raiſeth the dead.’ The life of a Chriſtian here is deſigned to be a life of faith: and though faith may act more eaſily, that it has ſome help from ſenſe, yet it certainly acts moſt nobly, when it acts over the belly of ſenſe. Then is it pure faith, when it ſtands only on its own native legs, the power and word of God, Rom. iv. 19. 20. ‘ And being not weak in faith, he conſidered not his own body now dead—neither yet the deadneſs of Sarah’s womb. He ſtaggered not at the promiſe of God through unbelief; but was ſtrong in faith; giving glory to God:’ and thus it muſt do, when the matter is carried to the utmoſt point of hopeleſſneſs.

Laſtly, Due preparation of the heart, for the lifting up out of the humbling circumſtances, goes before the due time of that lifting up according to the promiſe. It is not ſo in every lifting up; the liftings up of the common providences are not ſo critically managed; men will have them, will want them no longer, and God flings them to them in anger, ere they are prepared for them, Hoſ. xiii. 11. *I gave thee a king in mine anger.*—They can by no means abide the trial, and God takes them off as reprobate ſilver that is not able to abide it, Jer. vi. 29. 30.

This due preparation conſiſts in due humiliation, Pſal. x. 17 And it often takes much work to bring about this, which is another point that we are very incompetent judges of. We would have thought Job was brought very low in his ſpirit, by the providence of God bruiſing him on the one hand, and his friends on the other, for a long time. Yet, after all he had endured both ways, God ſaw it neceſſary to ſpeak to himſelf, for his humiliation, chap. xxxviii. 1. By that ſpeech of God himſelf he was brought to his knees, chap. xl. 4. 5. And we would have thought he was then ſufficiently humbled, and perhaps he thought ſo himſelf too. But God ſaw a farther degree of humiliation neceſſary, and therefore juſt begins anew again to ſpeak for his humiliation, which at length laid him in the duſt, chap. xlii. 5. 6. And when he was thus prepared for lifting up, he got it.

There are ſix things, I conceive, belong to this humiliation, preparatory to lifting up.

1. A deep ſenſe of ſinfulneſs and unworthineſs of being lifted up at all, Job xl. 4. *Behold, I am vile, what ſhall I anſwer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.* People may be long in humbling circumſtances ere they be brought this length: even good men are much prejudiced in their own favours, and may ſo far forget themſelves as to think God deals his favours unequally, and is mighty ſevere on them more than others. Elihu marketh this wrong in Job under his humbling circumſtances, Job. xxxiii. 10. 11. 12. And I believe it will be found there is readily a greater keenneſs to vindicate our own honour from the imputation the humbling circumſtances ſeem to lay upon it, than to vindicate the honour of God in the juſtice and equity of the diſpenſation. The blindneſs of an ill-natured world, ſtill ready to ſuſpect the worſt cauſes for humbling circumſtances, as if the greateſt ſufferers were ſurely the greateſt ſinners, Luke xiii. 4. gives a handle for this bias of the corrupt nature. But God is a jealous God, and when he appears ſufficiently to humble, he will cauſe the matter of our honour give way, like a ſandy brae under our feet, while we ſhall be obliged to gripe haſtily to the vindication of his.

2. A reſignation to the divine pleaſure as to the time of lifting up. God gives the promiſe, leaving the time blank as to us. Our time is always ready, and we raſhly fill it up at our own hand. God does not keep our time, becauſe it is not the due time. Hence we are ready to think his word fails; whereas it is but our own raſh concluſion from it that fails, Pſal. cxvi. 11. 'I ſaid in my haſte, All men are liars.' Several of the ſaints have gotten on the finger-ends by this means, and thereby learned to let alone filling up that blank. The firſt promiſe was thus uſed by believing Eve, Gen. iv. 1. Another promiſe was ſo by believing Abraham, after about ten years on-waiting, Gen. xvi. Another by David, forecited, Pſal. cxvi. 11.

If this be the caſe of any child of God, let them not be diſcouraged upon it, thinking they were over-raſh in applying the promiſe to themſelves: they were only ſo in applying the time to the promiſe; a ſnapper that ſaints in all ages have made, which they repented, and ſaw the folly of, and let alone that point for the time to come; and then the promiſe was fulfilled in its own due time. Let them in ſuch circumſtances go and do likewiſe, leaving the time entirely to the Lord.

3. An entire reſignation as to the way and manner of bringing it about. We are ready to do, as to the way of accompliſhing the promiſe, juſt as with the time of it, to ſet a particular way for the Lord's working of it; and if that be not kept, the proud heart is ſtumbled, 2 Kings v. 11. *But Naaman was wroth, and he went away, and ſaid, Behold, I thought he will ſurely come out to me, and ſtand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and ſtrike his hand over the place*—But the Lord will have his people broke off from that too, that they ſhall preſcribe no way to him, but leave that to him intirely, as in that ſame caſe, ver. 14.—'He went down and 'dipped himſelf ſeven times in Jordan, according to the 'ſaying of the man of God—and he was clean.' The compaſs of our knowledge of ways and means is very narrow, as if one is blocked up, oft-times we cannot ſee another: but our God knows many ways of relief, where we know but one, or none at all; and it is very uſual for the Lord to bring the lifting up to his people in a way they had no view to, after repeated diſappointments from theſe airths whence they had great expectations.

4. Reſignation as to the degree of the lifting up, yea, and as to the very being of it in time. The Lord will have his people weaned ſo, that however haſty they have ſometimes been, that they behoved to be ſo ſoon lifted up, and could no longer bear, they ſhall be brought at length to ſet no time at all, but ſubmit to go to the grave under their weight, if it ſeem good in the Lord's eyes, and in that caſe they will be brought to be content with any meaſure of it in time, without preſcribing how much, 2 Sam. xv. 25. 26.—*If I ſhall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again—But if he thus ſay, I have no delight in thee: behold, here am I; let him do to me as it ſeemeth good unto him.*

5. The continuing of praying and waiting on the Lord in this caſe, Eph. vi. 18. 'Praying always with 'all prayer and ſupplication in the Spirit, and watch'ing thereunto with all perſeverance.'—It is pride of heart and unſubduedneſs of ſpirit, that makes people give over praying and waiting, becauſe their humbling circumſtances are lengthened out time after time, 2 Kings vi. 33. But due humility going before the lifting up, brings men into that temper, to pray, wait, and hang on reſolutely, ſetting no time for the giving it over, till the lifting up come, whether in time or eternity, Lam. iii. 49. 50.

Laſtly, Mourning under miſmanagements in the trial, Job. xlii. 3.—*Therefore have I uttered that I underſtood not, things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.* The proud heart dwells and expatiates on the man's ſufferings in the trial, and caſts out all the folds of the trial on that ſide, and views them again and again. But when the Spirit of God comes duly to humble, in order to lifting up, he will cauſe the man to paſs, in a ſort, the ſuffering-ſide of the trial, and turn his eyes on his own conduct in it, ranſack it, judge himſelf impartially, and condemn himſelf: ſo that his mouth will be ſtopped.

This is that humility going before the lifting up in time in the way of the promiſe.

II. We proceed to conſider the lifting up, as brought about at the end of time, in the other world. And,

Firſt. A word as to the nature of this lifting up. Concerning it we ſhall ſay theſe five things.

1. There is a certainty of this lifting up, in all caſes of the humbled under humbling circumſtances. Though one cannot, in every caſe, make them ſure of a lifting up in time, yet they may be aſſured, be the caſe what it will, they will, without all peradventure, get a lifting up on the other ſide, 2 Cor. v. 1. 'For we know, that 'if our earthly houſe of this tabernacle were diſſolved, 'we have a building of God, an houſe not made with 'hands, eternal in the heavens.' Though God's humbled children may both break-faſt and dine on bread of adverſity and water of affliction, they will be ſure to ſup ſweetly and plentifully. And the believing expectation of the latter might ſerve to qualify the former, and make eaſy under it.

2. It will be a perfect lifting up, Heb. xii. 23. They will be perfectly delivered out of their particular trials, and ſpecial furnace, be what it will, that made them many a weary day. Lazarus was then delivered from his poverty and ſores, and lying at the rich man's gate, Luke xvi. 22. and fully delivered. Yea, they will get then a lifting up from all their humbling circumſtances together. All the imperfections will then be at an end, inferiority in relations, contradictions, afflictions, uncertainty, and ſin. If it was long a coming, there will be a bleſſed moment when they ſhall get altogether.

3. They will not only be raiſed out of their low condition, but they will be ſet up on high; as Joſeph, not only brought out of priſon, but made ruler over the land of Egypt. And they will be lifted up,

(1.) Into a high place, Luke xvi. 22.——‘The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's boſom.’——Now they are at beſt in a low place, but upon this earth; there they will be ſeated in the higheſt heavens, Philip i. 23. with Eph. iv. 10. Often, in their humbling circumſtances, they are obliged now to embrace dunghills: then they will be ſet with Chriſt on his throne, Rev. iii. 21. *To him that overcometh will I grant to ſit with me in my throne.*—Though their belly now cleaves to the earth, and men ſay, Bow down that we may paſs over you, they will then be ſettled in the heavenly manſions, above ſun, moon, and ſtars.

(2.) Into a high ſtate and condition, a ſtate of perfection. Out of all their troubles and uneaſineſſes, they will be ſet into a ſtate of reſt; from their mean and inglorious condition, they will be advanced into a ſtate of glory; their weighted and ſorrowful life will be ſucceeded with a fulneſs of joy; and, for their humbling circumſtances, they will be clothed with eternal glory and honour.

4. It will be a final lifting up, after which there will be no more caſting down for ever, Rev. vii. 16. When we get a lifting up in time, we are apt to imagine fondly we are at the end of our trials; but we ſoon find we are too haſty in our concluſions, and the cloud returns, Pſal. xxx. 6. 7.——*In my proſperity I ſaid, I ſhall never be moved——Thou didſt hide thy face, and I was troubled.* But then indeed the trial is quite over, the fight is at an end: and then is the time of the retribution and triumph.

Laſtly, There will not be the leaſt remaining uneaſineſs from the humbling circumſtances, but, on the contrary, they will have a glorious and deſirable effect. I make no queſtion but the ſaints will have the remembrance of their humbling circumſtances they were under here below. Did the rich man in hell remember his having five brethren on the earth, how ſumptuouſly he fared, how Lazarus ſat at his gate; and can we doubt but the ſaints will remember perfectly their heavy trials? Rev. vi. 10. But then they will remember them as waters that fail, as the man recovered to health remembers his toſſings on the ſick bed; and that is a way of remembering that ſweetens the preſent ſtate of health beyond what otherwiſe it would be. Certainly the ſhore of the Red Sea was the place that, of all places, was the fitteſt to help the Iſraelites to ſing in the higheſt key, Rev. xv. 3. And the humbling circumſtances of ſaints on the earth, will be of the ſame uſe to them in heaven.

Secondly, A word to the due time of this lifting up. There is a particular definite time for it in every ſaint's caſe, which is the due time, but it is hid from us. We can only ſay in the general,

1. Then is the due time for it, when our work we have to do in this world is over. God has appointed every one their taſk, fight, trial, and work; and, till that is done, we are in a ſort immortal, John ix. 4. and xi. 9. That work is,

(1.) Doing work; work ſet to us by the great Maſter, to be done for the honour of God and the good of our fellow-creatures, Ecclef. ix. 10. We muſt be content to be doing on, even in our humbling circumſtances, till that be done out. It is not the due time for that lifting up, till we are at the end of that work, and ſo have ſerved our generation.

(2.) Suffering work. There is a certain portion of ſuffering that is allotted for the myſtical body, and the head has divided to the ſeveral members their proportions thereof; and it is not the due time for that lifting up, till we have exhauſted the ſhare thereof allotted to us. Paul looked on his life as going on in that, Col. i. 24.

2. When that lifting up comes, we will ſee it is come exactly in the due time; that it was well it was neither ſooner nor latter: for, though heaven is always better than earth, and that it would be better for us, abſolutely ſpeaking, to be in heaven than on earth; yet certainly there is a time wherein it is better for the honour of God, and his ſervice, that we be on the earth than in heaven: Philip. i. 24. *Nevertheleſs to abide in the fleſh is more needful for you.* And it will be no grief of heart to them, when there, that they were ſo long in their humbling circumſtances, and were not brought ſooner.

Use 1. Let not then the humble caſt away their confidence, whatever their humbling circumſtances be: let them aſſure themſelves there will come a lifting up to them at length; if not here, yet to be ſure hereafter. Let them keep this in their view, and comfort themſelves with it, for God has ſaid it, Pſal. ix. 18.—‘The needy ſhall not always be forgotten.’—If the night were never ſo long, the morning will come at length.

2. Let patience have her perfect work. The huſbandman waits for the return of his ſeed, the ſea-merchant for the return of his ſhips, the ſtore maſter for what he calls year-time, when he draws in the produce of his flocks. All theſe have long patience, and why ſhould not the Chriſtian too have patience, and patiently wait the time appointed for his lifting up?

Ye have heard much of the crook in the lot, the excellency of humbleneſs of ſpirit in a low lot, beyond pride of ſpirit, though joined with a high one; ye have been called to humble yourſelves in your humbling circumſtances, and aſſured in that caſe of a lifting up. To conclude, we may aſſure ourſelves, that *God will at length break in pieces the proud, be they never ſo high; and he will triumphantly lift up the humble, be they never ſo low.*

The unity of the body of Chriſt, and the duties the members owe one to another.

BEING

The Subſtance of ſeveral SERMONS

PREACHED ON

1 Cor. x. 17.

For we being many are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.

ONE great reaſon why communions do ſo little good, is, that communicants are ſo little concerned in one another for their ſpiritual welfare. And this hath its riſe from their not diſcerning, and ſeriouſly laying to heart the ſpiritual relation there is among them, by them avouched and publicly teſtified by their partaking of one bread at the communion-table. People readily have ſome notion that it is a communion with Chriſt; but few conſider that it is a communion of ſaints, and what duties flow from it as ſuch. I would therefore lay this matter before you, in order to purſue the benefit of our late ſolemn occaſion.

The ſcope of theſe words is to ſhew, That thoſe who partaked of idolatrous feaſts were by that action declared one body with idolaters. This is proven by a parity of reaſon, viz. that thoſe who partake of the Lord's table, declare themſelves one body with the ſaints. In the preceeding verſe he ſhews the nature of the ſacrament of the ſupper; it is the *communion of the body and blood of Chriſt;* a ſign, ſeal, and appointed means of our joint feeding on a ſlain Saviour, like ſo many eagles on the ſlain body. Here he ſhews the nature of the ſociety of ſaints, for whom it is appointed, viz. that they are one body, viz. the body of Chriſt; and therefore being united to him, they have certainly communion in his body and blood. *For we being many are one bread and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.*

In the words are two things.

1, The ſpiritual conjunction and communion of ſaints among themſelves aſſerted; *We, many,* &c. He ſpeaks of the whole multitude of believers. They being many particular ſaints, ſome men, ſome women, teachers, taught, weak, ſtrong, are yet ſo joined, and have ſuch intimate union and communion one with another, that they are one bread, i. e. one body repreſented by the one ſacramental bread. If ye aſk whoſe is that body? or who is the head of it? It is Chriſt's, 1 Cor. xii. 27. 'Now ye are the body of Chriſt, and members in particular.' Not his natural body, but his myſtical body: and therefore the many are not ſuch as meet at one communion-table in one congregation, but all the members of Chriſt's myſtical body through the world, for Chriſt has but one body: and as many grains do make up but one ſacramental bread, ſo they being many do make up but one body.

2. This ſpiritual conjunction and communion of ſaints among themſelves, inferred from their all partaking of that one bread; *For we being many are one bread,* &c. By that one bread is meant, that bread which is exhibited in the ſacrament, viz. both the inviſible bread, which is Chriſt himſelf, and the viſible bread which we take into our mouths, the latter the ſign of the former. Believing communicants partake of both: they partake of that bread, which is the Lord; ſo are all united to, and hold communion with the head as members, and therefore are one body among themſelves: they partake of the ſacramental bread, which is an inſtituted ſign of the other, and thereby profeſs their communion with Chriſt the head, and conſequently their communion with the ſaints, as members of the ſame body with them. And, in this laſt, hypocritical communicants join with them, by their partaking, declaring, and avouching themſelves to be of the communion of ſaints of the myſtical body of Chriſt, and binding themſelves to the duty of that communion; although in reality they are not ſo, as not partaking of the inviſible bread, which is Chriſt the Lord. The caſe is the ſame as to baptiſm. *For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles,* 1 Cor. xii. 13.

The point to be handled is this doctrine.

DOCTRINE. *There is a communion of ſaints among themſelves, as being conjoined into one myſtical body of Chriſt, declared and avouched by partakers of the ſacraments, eſpecially that of the Lord's Supper, every one for themſelves.*

There are two parts of this doctrine. One is, That there is ſuch a ſtrait and intimate communion and conjunction among the ſaints, that they are really and truly one body myſtically, however many they be. The other is, That one's partaking of the ſacrament is a declaring and avouching himſelf to be of that communion. By a communion I mean a ſociety having a common intereſt in things.

I. I ſhall [illegible] of this communion of ſaints as one body. And,

1. Who are the member of this communion——of this happy ſociety the body of Chriſt? There are two ſorts of members of it, ſome in ſhew only, ſome in reality. As to the former, I offer two things.

(1.) The openly wicked and profane, amongſt whom may be reckoned the groſsly ignorant, and all ſuch as have no form of Godlineſs, are not ſo much as viſible or apparent members of the communion of ſaints. They are excluded from the communion of ſaints above, Gal. v. 19.——21. *Now the works of the fleſh are manifeſt-- adultery, fornication,* &c.---*Of the which I tell you before, as I have told you in time paſt, that they which do ſuch things ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God.* From the communion of ſaints below, Acts xxvi. 18. 'To open 'their eyes, and to turn them from darkneſs to light--'that they may receive inheritance among them that 'are ſanctified,'---and viſibly belong to the devil's family, John viii. 44. What though they have been baptized, and are yet in the viſible church, they have in effect renounced it. Rom. ii. 25.——*But if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumciſion is made uncircumciſion.* For though they were baptized into this one body, 1 Cor. xii. 13. yet they will have no communion with that body, nor the head of it. Though they get on Chriſt's mark of baptiſm in their infancy, they have now got the devil's mark on above it. So Rom. ii. 25. therefore not to be admitted to the Lord's table, Matth. vii. 6. *Give not that which is holy unto dogs.*——

(2.) Maſked hypocrites are ſeeming viſible members of this communion, but not real members of it. They are brethren of the ſaints, but only half brethren, Cant. i. 6. falſe brethren, Gal. ii. 4. They are among them, and communicate among them, but they are not of them, 1 John ii. 19. But they want the wedding garment, and though the ſervants cannot but admit them as viſible ſaints, the Maſter will throw them out, as none of that communion in his ſight, Matth. xxii. 12.

Hypocrites belong to the myſtical body, as a branch bound up, but not knitting with the ſtock belongs to the tree, or as a tree-leg belongs to the body; but not otherways. See the caſe of theſe members in theſe three things.

1. They are uſeful for the myſtical body of Chriſt with their gifts, as the tree-leg with its ſtrength to the natural body. So was Judas and Demas, &c. Graceleſs well gifted miniſters and profeſſors, they may have a mouth to ſpeak for truth, ay and hands to act for it too, and the profit redound to the ſaints, not themſelves, who have no heart to embrace it in reality; and to adorn the communion as long as they keep green, as ſuch branches do the tree, by which God is honoured before the world, Pſal. lxxxi. 15.

2. They are under the particular care of the body, as the tree leg, ———and the branch under the gardener's inſpection. Hence they get their gifts increaſed for the good of the body, are preſerved from many ſnares they would otherways fall into if they had nothing at all to do with the communion of ſaints, as may appear from the way they go when they turn apoſtates. They fare the better they are in good company. But,

3. They are laid aſide at length, as the branch, John xv. 2. and the tree leg, if not before, yet at the time when the body goes to reſt, Pſal. cxxv. 5. Though the living leg be broken, ſo crazed that for the time it can be of no diſcernible uſe for the head, nor for the other members of the body, it is not caſt by, nor ſeparate from the body, but its weakneſs borne with, and it healed at length. But the tree leg goes for altogether.

As to the latter, there are three ſorts of theſe real members.

1. Real members in God's deſign, but not yet formed. Theſe are all the elect, who are yet to be born, or yet to be born again, and we cannot have a full view of the body without eyeing them, Eph. i. 10. *That in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of times, he might gather together in one all things in Chriſt.'*—They ſhall all of them be formed at length, all conjoined unto the body, and all belong to the perfection of the body, for carrying on of which the miniſtry is appointed, Eph. iv. 11—13. For the body of Chriſt is all the elect knit to him as the head, Eph. v. 23. 'For the huſband is the head of the 'wife, even as Chriſt is the head of the church.'

2. Real members already perfected, at leaſt as to their ſouls. Theſe are the ſaints triumphant, who are with us members, fellow members of the body of Chriſt, though glorified ones. Therefore, Heb. xii. 22, 23. *But ye are come to the general aſſembly and church of the firſt born——and to the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect.* Even they, as high as they are, are of this communion of ſaints, of the ſame family of heaven with us militant on earth, though they are in the upper rooms, and we in the lower, Eph. iii. 15.

3. Real members formed, but not perfected yet. Theſe are the ſaints on earth, even all of them upon the face of the earth, whatever particular viſible church they belong to: at whatever diſtance they are one from another, though they never ſaw, nor never will ſee one another's faces till they come to meet in glory, they are all one body, all members of that one body of Chriſt, 1 Cor. xii. 12. 'For as the body is one, and hath many 'members, and all the members——being many are 'one body, ſo alſo is Chriſt.'

Theſe laſt are they whom our text ſpeaks of, as one body partaking of the ſacramental bread, viz. the body of Chriſt, as to that part of it which is on earth; and of this we ſpeak. So there is a communion of ſaints on earth, and all the ſaints are members of it: wherever they dwell, whatever leſſer points of doctrine, worſhip, &c. they differ in, they have communion with one another, as being all conjoined into one body.

II. Wherein this communion of ſaints conſiſts; or how they are one body.

1. They have all one head, viz. the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is the head of all the ſaints, Eph. i. 22. 23. *And gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body.*—They are all united to him by his Spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 17.——'He that is joined to the Lord 'is one ſpirit.' And from him as their head, they derive vital influences, Col. ii. 19. *From which all the body, by joints and bands, having nouriſhment miniſtered, and knit together, increaſeth with the increaſe of God.* There may be great difference betwixt members, in reſpect of growth, livelineſs, and uſefulneſs; but the meaneſt have communion with the higheſt in one head, which is common to them all. So they are all under the direction, government and influence of Jeſus Chriſt, as their common head.

2. They are all animated, enlivened and actuated by one Spirit, viz. the holy Spirit of Chriſt. This Spirit dwells in Chriſt as the head, and in all the ſaints as his members, Rom. viii. 9. and unites them to the head, and among themſelves too, ſo that they are one body, 1 Cor. xii. 13. A tree-leg, though bound cloſe to the body, is no member of it, becauſe it is not animated by the ſoul and life of that body; but if there were a body of a man, whoſe head did reach the clouds, any toe of that man's foot, though defiled by the ground it toucheth, is as really a member of that body as the ſhoulders are, having communion with them in the ſame ſoul or ſpirit, which actuates the one as well as the other.

Great is the difference of the ſaints ſouls or ſpirits, as men and women; ſome are bold, ſome fearful. It is as eaſy for ſome to draw the ſword in Chriſt's quarrel, as for others to ſpeak a word for him. Some are of clear, chearful, eaſy, active ſpirits; ſome under a ſpirit of heavineſs and indiſpoſition for action; but as ſaints they have all one Spirit: whoſo could diſcern, how unanimouſly they vote Chriſt to be the king of the heart, of the church, of the world, againſt the torrent of ſollicitations from the devil, world, and fleſh; how, as with one eye, they look up to God in Chriſt as their only happineſs, and away from the world which the reſt of mankind fix their eye on; how with one heart and one ſoul they all groan under the remains of ſin, and for perfection in holineſs, though ſome louder than others; he behoved to ſay, theſe have all one Spirit of faith, holineſs, and contempt of the world, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. Num. xiv. 24.

3. One grace of faith wrought by the ſelf ſame Spirit in them all, Col. ii. 12. terminates in and knits them to one head, the Lord Jeſus, Eph. iii. 17. As all the lines drawn from the circumference meet in the centre, and there have communion; ſo the faith of all God's elect meet in Jeſus Chriſt, and thus they have communion among themſelves, Tit. i. 1.—4. Thus are they one body, as being all knit to the head, by one and the ſame ſpiritual band for kind. The ſtrong faith gripes here, the weak faith reacheth to him; though the weak hand of faith is not ſo ſteady, nor gripes ſo hard as the other, yet both knit, Cant. iv. 9. and v. 1.

4. They have all one heart and mind in reſpect of fundamentals, Eph. iv. 5. One faith, viz. of doctrine, the ſubſtance of which was and ever will be the ſame, Heb. xiii. 8. Whatever be their different ſentiments as to inferior truths, they all agree in the main, Acts iv. 12. 'Neither is there ſalvation in any other: for there 'is none other name under heaven given among men, 'whereby we may be ſaved.' Thus, according to the promiſe, Jer. xxxii. 39. they have 'one heart and one 'way;' for they are all partakers of that one unction, which teacheth all things neceſſary to ſalvation, 1 John ii. 20. 'But ye have an unction from the holy One, 'and ye know all things.' For they are all taught of God: and that doctrine which contradicts the experience of the ſaints, and reliſhes not with diſcerning ſouls exerciſed to godlineſs, is juſtly to be ſuſpected, Matth. xi. 19.——'Wiſdom is juſtified of her children.'

5. They are united to one another in love, Col. iii. 14. Eph. iv. 16. This is a powerful cement. Love cements hearts and ſouls, and ſo knits faſt. They love one another, though they never ſaw others faces, if they do but know there are ſuch perſons in the world. They love them for the common image of God which they bear; and in all the company of ſaints this love will break over all the differences in leſſer matters among them; ſo that it is made a mark of a member of that communion, 1 John iii. 14. *We know that we have paſſed from death unto life, becauſe we love the brethren.*

Laſtly, They have a communion in one another's gifts and graces, as the caſe ſtands in the natural body, Eph. iv. 16. There is a diverſity of gifts and offices in the common body of ſaints; ſome are teachers, ſome taught; rulers, ruled. Some excel in one gift or grace, ſome in another; ſome perhaps cannot be ſaid to excel their fellow ſaints in any things; but all theſe are for the common advantage of the body, 1 Cor. xiii. 27. and the glory of the head. And, wherever they are, they belong to the whole body, as the light that is in the eye, the ſtrength in the arms, the ſwiftneſs in the legs, belong to, and are for the good of the whole body, 1 Cor. iii. 22. 23. 'Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, 'or the world, or life, or death, or things preſent, or 'things to come; all are yours, and ye are Chriſt's.' And every the meaneſt member and gift has its own uſe and neceſſity. See 1 Cor. xii. 13. and downwards.

Use. Here is a fellowſhip ye may all partake of, and I invite you all to the communion of ſaints, 1 John. i. 3. *That which we have ſeen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye may alſo have fellowſhip with us.* Many are ruined with their love of that they call good-fellowſhip. What fellowſhip deſerves that name? Not the communion of ſinners ruining one another under the influence of Satan and their luſt; not the fellowſhip of drunkards and revellers, whoſe common profit and pleaſure goes away like the crackling of thorns,—only that it leaves a ſtink behind; not the fellowſhip of the men of this world, in advancing ſome temporal gain; but the communion of ſaints, the pleaſanteſt, richeſt, beſt fellowſhip in all the world. O! leave the communion of ſinners for this; come out from among them, and be ſeparate, joining yourſelves to this communion.

III. The properties of this communion.

1. It is a moſt honourable communion, for it is a communion with the holy Trinity, 1 John i. 3.—*And truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt.* And,

(1.) The Father is the head and Father of the communion, Eph. iv. 6. 1 Cor. xi. 3. He is Father Creator of all men, Acts xvi. 29. But of the communion of ſaints he is Father by a ſpecial, gracious ſaving relation. So that they are all his children, John i. 12. 2 Cor. vi. 17. 18. And they have communion with him, and union through the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſince he and the Father are one.

(2.) The centre of this communion is the Son, the bleſſed Mediator. In him all meet, 1 Cor. xi. 3. The ſaints meet in Chriſt as their head, and in him the Father meets with them, 2 Cor. v. 19.——'God was in 'Chriſt reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them.'——Chriſt preſents all believers through the world unto his Father, ſaying, 'Behold, I, and the children which God has given me,' Heb. ii. 13. So, being the Mediator's, they become his, John xx. 17. In this reſpect Chriſt is called the way to the Father, John xiv. 6.——'I am the way, and 'the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.'

(3.) The holy Spirit is the internal original bond of this communion, knitting all the members to Chriſt, and among themſelves, Eph. iv. 4. He brings them together into Chriſt, and to his Father, fixes and holds them there by his infinite power, that they can never be broken off again. So believers members of this communion, have communion with the Father and the Son, 1 John i. 3. and the Holy Ghoſt, 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

2. It is a moſt rich communion. There are ſocieties and companies this day joining ſtocks together, to advance worldly wealth; but the richeſt of them have nothing but trifles in compariſon with the company or communion of ſaints. The communion of ſaints is the company trading to heaven, and their wealth is paſt reckoning. For a view of it, conſider only theſe two things.

(1.) They have communion with Chriſt, a common intereſt with him who is Heir of all things, ſo that they may ſet their name under his, on all that is his. They have communion with him in his perfect righteouſneſs, Iſa. xlv. 24. Hence they are all fair, Cant. iv. 7. clear as the ſun, Cant. vi. 10. In his active obedience, ſo that they have obeyed in Chriſt, as they ſinned in Adam, Rom viii. 3. 4. In his ſufferings and death, Gal. ii. 20. In his reſurrection and aſcenſion, Eph. ii. 6. and glory. Compare Heb. vi. 20. They have a common intereſt in all his purchaſe, and, as poor as ſome of them ſit, they want nothing, but are complete, Col. ii. 10. 'And ye are complete in him.'

They have a real participation of Chriſt himſelf, Heb. iii. 14. Of his death and his reſurrection, Rom. vi. 4. 5. Of his Spirit, Philip. ii. 1. Of the divine nature, 2 Pet. 4. Of his offices; they are prophets, Pſal. cv. 15.; prieſts and kings, Rev. i. 6. And of his fulneſs, John i. 16.

(2.) They have communion with God; for ſo runs the covenant, 'I will be your God.' And Pſal. cxliv. 15. God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, is theirs. All his attributes are theirs; the power of God to protect them, the wiſdom of God to guide them, &c.; and with him all things, ſince all is his, and he is theirs, 1 Cor. iii. 21. 22. 23.

Behold the riches of this company. And (1.) None of the ſaints bring any thing with them to put into the ſtock; but they are admitted freely. (2.) Not only is a part for every one, but each one has all; and ſo it may be, ſince the ſtock is infinite.

3. It is a moſt extenſive communion. And it extends,

(1.) Over the earth; and ſo is called the Catholic or univerſal church, 1 Cor. i. 2. Though vaſt tracks of land and huge ſeas interpoſe betwixt them; though they have different languages, ſo that ſome of them cannot underſtand what others ſay, and their cuſtoms are very different; yet none of theſe hinder their being members of one and the ſame body.

(2.) To the heavens. The ſaints above belong to the communion of ſaints, Heb. xii. 23. Ay, and the holy angels too, in the ſame ſenſe, ver. 22; for the head of the ſaints is the head of angels too, Col. ii. 10.

Laſtly, It is a holy communion. It is a fellowſhip of ſaints, Eph. ii. 19.——*Ye are no more ſtrangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the ſaints, and houſehold of God.* The head, centre, and bond, and members of this communion, are all holy. They are a ſociety ſet apart for God, drawn out of the world lying in wickedneſs, walking in the way of holineſs, with diſplayed banners towards the holy land.

SECONDLY, That one's partaking of the ſacrament is a declaring and avouching himſelf to be of that communion. By partaking of baptiſm we have all done it once; and by the Lord's Supper it is done as oft as we communicate in it. By the former in our infancy, it is done with our virtual conſent; by the latter with our expreſs conſent. This point will be clear, if we conſider the relation the ſacrament has to the communion of ſaints.

1. It is a ſign and badge of the communion of ſaints. *We are one bread*, ſays the text. The one bread ſignifying, that we are one body; and by receiving the ſign, and wearing the badge of the ſociety, we declare two things according to the nature of a diſtinguiſhing ſign.

(1.) That we are no more of the communion of the world lying in wickedneſs, which is the oppoſite ſociety, 1 Cor. x. 21. *Ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and the table of devils.* That we have left our Fathers houſe and people, and are no more to ſhare with them in their way and manner of life. It is the putting on the ſign of Zion's King, that we may be diſtinguiſhed from thoſe that belong to the enemy.

(2.) That we are henceforth of the communion of ſaints, and not neutrals, Rev. xiv. 1. That we have joined ourſelves to that bleſſed ſociety of ſaints, the head of which is Jeſus Chriſt, to take part with them for better and worſe. We have ſaid to them as Ruth to Naomi, Ruth i. 16.——*Whither thou goeſt, I will go: and where thou lodgeſt, I will lodge: thy people ſhall be my people, and thy God my God.*

2. It is a ſeal of the communion of ſaints, and ſeals it effectually to all thoſe that do ſincerely take hold of the covenant, Rom. iv. 11. The righteouſneſs of faith is the poſſeſſion of the ſociety of ſaints, and the ſacrament ſealing that to a man, ſeals his being of that communion. A believer may be ſore preſſed with that queſtion, *How ſhall I put thee among the children?* But the ſacrament, to put it out of doubt, ſeals and confirms his being put among them. Their being one body, is ſealed by their partaking of one bread. So 1 Cor. xii. 13.

3. The ſacraments are the external bonds of this communion, whereby they are viſibly embodied into one ſelect ſociety, 1 Cor. xii. 13. And hence it is that the uncircumciſed under the Old Teſtament were to be cut off from their people. The church of God makes a viſible ſociety in the world; and it is not the hearing of the word that is the bond of it, for that is left common to any who will; but the ſacraments, which are not to be given but to viſible believers.

4. It is an engagement to the duties of this communion of ſaints. 'I therefore the priſoner of the Lord, 'beſeech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation 'wherewith ye are called, with all lowlineſs and meekneſs, with long ſuffering, forbearing one another in 'love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit 'in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one 'Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptiſm, Eph. iv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Whoſoever is embodied into a regular ſociety, by his entering into it, is obliged to walk by the rules of it. And ſo the ſacrament is an engagement or oath to walk by the rules of holineſs, which are the rules of the communion of ſaints.

Now, whoſoever does receive the publick ſign, ſeal, bond, and engagements of a ſociety, does thereby publicly declare and avouch himſelf to be of that ſociety; but, by partaking of the ſacrament, the partakers do take on the publick ſign of the communion of ſaints, therefore, &c.

USE. I draw ſome practical inferences from this doctrine.

I. There is a very near and ſpecial particular relation amongſt the partakers of the ſacraments, viſibly conſtitute by their joint partaking of them. They do thereby declare themſelves to be of one body, the head whereof is Jeſus Chriſt: even baptiſm alone conſtitutes this ſpecial relation, 1 Cor. xii. 13. for by that holy ſign, the baptized are diſtinguiſhed from thoſe without the viſible church, and have all given up their names to Chriſt. Much more does the receiving of the Lord's ſupper alſo, as ſaith the text.

As for the inviſible real members of the communion of ſaints, i. e. the real members of the inviſible church, God alone certainly knows them in particular. But the viſible members of it are ſaints by profeſſion, not viſibly contradicted by their habitual practice, Rom. i. 7. 1 Theſſ. v. 5. *Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night nor of darkneſs.* Amongſt theſe there is a ſpecial relation, as one viſible body of Chriſt; thoſe who are only baptized, though they may be complete members of the inviſible body, being only incomplete members of the viſible; and ſuch as partake of the ſacrament of the ſupper, complete ones, as admitted unto all external privileges of the communion of ſaints, even the higheſt of them, which is that of the Lord's table. And therefore there is a more full relation amongſt communicants than others. Hence I would ſay,

1. Ye who are baptized, yet openly wicked and profane, or groſsly ignorant of the fundamentals of religion, being come to years, are apoſtates in effect, having by your way viſibly cut off yourſelves from the communion of the ſaints. For in your infancy ye were baptized into that body; but now by your unholy lives, ye openly declare yourſelves to be none of it, and have taken on the devil's mark, and declare yourſelves to be of the world lying in wickedneſs, Rom. ii. 25. To you I ſay,

1*ſt*, Have ye not thus openly rejected communion with God, that ye may maintain communion with the world? If you will have nothing to do with the family of heaven, do ye not renounce the Father of it for your Father? If you will be none of Chriſt's myſtical body, do ye not refuſe him for a head? Yea, ſure, 1 John i. 3.

2*dly*, Had it not been better for you, if ye repent not, to have lived and died among Pagans, where the name of Chriſt was never heard, than to have been baptized into one body with the ſaints, and yet caſt off all by your openly profane life? 2 Pet. ii. 21. *For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteouſneſs, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.*

2. Ye who are ſaints by profeſſion, yet only baptized, not partakers of the Lord's table, why do ye continue ſo? Who is there that values a communion or ſociety, and does not endeavour to partake of all the privileges thereof, that may be of uſe to them? And, if ye have any value for the communion of ſaints, why do ye not

lay out yourſelves to be one bread with them? Siſt your conſciences before the Lord, and it will not be excuſed from contempt of communion with Chriſt; with his myſtical body, and the means thereof.

3. Ye who are ſaints by profeſſion, and both baptized and partakers of the Lord's table, your external privilege is great; ye ſtand viſibly related to the communion of ſaints, as viſible members thereof. What a ſad miſs will it be, if you fail of real memberſhip, and all your intereſt in it be but ſhew and pretence, as it will be, if ye be not real ſaints? it will be a poor plea at the great day, Luke xiii. 26.—*We have eaten and drunk in thy preſence, and thou haſt taught in our ſtreets.*

1ſt, The ſociety ye are viſible apparent members of, is the myſtical body of Chriſt, enriched with the higheſt ſpecial privileges of communion with the Holy Trinity to their eternal happineſs. It will be a ſad matter for you to cheat yourſelves with a ſhew and ſemblance only of partaking with them; with the empty name, while ye have nothing of the thing, Gal. vi. 3. *For if a man think himſelf to be ſomething, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himſelf.*

2dly, Ye are not very far from the kingdom of God. Will ye loſe it for not going forward the other ſtep, the main ſtep? Ye have gone through the ſeveral gates of the outer court of religion, the door of the inner ſtands open to you. Will you not enter in there where the great glory of the houſe lies? 2 Tim. iii. 7. The form of godlineſs will carry you all the length ye have gone in theſe externals; but the power of it is neceſſary to evidence you a real member of that body.

3dly, Ye will loſe your good company ere long, if ye get not a ſurer holding than mere viſible memberſhip; if ye be not bound up with them by the Spirit of holineſs dwelling in you, as in them, the external bands of ſacraments will not do, John xv. 2. 'Every branch 'in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away.' (1.) Ye may fall, 2 Tim. ii. 18. 19. out from among them, while you live, by apoſtacy, loſing your fair leaves of a profeſſion, as well as fruit, 1 John ii. 19. *They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us.* (2.) Ye will certainly be ſeparated from among them, at death, Pſal. cxxv. 5. and at judgment, Matth. xxv. 32.

4. Ye who are real ſaints, baptized with the Holy Ghoſt, and partakers of the inviſible bread, as well as of the viſible bread in the Lord's ſupper, and the outward baptiſm, happy are ye in the thorough relation ye have with the communion of the ſaints. Ye are members of it to all intents and purpoſes, true and real members of the myſtical body of Chriſt. Who can expreſs the happineſs of this privilege! I name only theſe.

1ſt, Ye have paſſed the gulph as to condemnation, Rom. viii. 1. Ye are ſet beyond the reach of the condemning law; the curſe is removed, and ye have got your Father's bleſſing, and ye ſhall be bleſſed for time and eternity.

2dly, Ye are moſt honourably related, of the blood-royal of Heaven, ſince ye are of the myſtical body of Chriſt. Chriſt's Father is your Father, John xx. 17.—'I aſcend unto my Father and your Father, to my God 'and your God.' Himſelf is your head, Eph. i. 22. 23. His Spirit is the bond of your myſtical union with him, Eph. iv. 4. The church is your mother, and ye are her true and genuine children, Gal. iv. 26. The glorified ſaints are your grown brethren, come to their full ſtature, and ye are the little ones of the ſame family, Eph. iii. 15. Ay, and the angels too are ſo, Rev. xix. 10. All theſe fall to you by that memberſhip.

3dly, Ye are infinitely enriched; for on that ſociety, whereof ye are members, all things are ſettled by the God of all, 1 Cor. iii. 21.——'All things are yours.' The purchaſe of the head belongs to the members, and they have a title to all, and poſſeſs all, in their head, Col. ii. 10. So ye are heirs of the world to come, heirs of glory, Rom. viii. 17. The covenant is your charter, the ſacraments are the ſeals of it.

4thly, Ye are perfectly ſecured, ye ſhall never periſh, come what will come, John iii. 16.——*God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.* Chriſt's natural body ſaw no corruption, even in a grave, and Chriſt's myſtical body cannot periſh, nor any member of it, John xiv. 19.——'Becauſe I 'live, ye ſhall live alſo.' Ye are ſecured againſt,

(1.) Falling off. The tree-leg may fall off from the body, but the live-leg cannot: ſo hypocrites may fall away totally and finally; but the believer cannot, becauſe a living member of Chriſt's body, John x. 28. ——'I give unto them eternal life, and they ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any pluck them out of my 'hand.' A ſaint may fall down in a mire, he may fall back, but never fall off, nor fall away.

(2.) Cutting off. It is true, a child of God, as to his ſpiritual ſtate, may be ſick and ſore; he may be bruiſed, wounded, and broken at ſuch a rate; that he is of little or no uſe for the head, or for the body, but paining and bringing grief to both; and ſo think he is cut off, Pſal. lxxxviii. 16. 'Thy fierce wrath goeth over me, thy 'terrors have cut me off.' But no man will ever yield to the cutting off a member of his body, while it is in his power to cure it: and therefore, foraſmuch as no caſe of a ſaint is beyond the reach of the great Phyſician's ſkill, be their caſe what it will, they ſhall be [illegible] at length, but never cut off.

(3.) Dying off. Spiritual death can never overtake them again; the infinite Spirit, the bond of the union, will always preſerve the communication betwixt the head and members, John xiv. 19. And temporal death cannot diſſolve the union; though it ſeparate betwixt ſoul and body, each of them ſtill remains united to Chriſt, 1 Theſſ. iv. 14. All theſe things are ſealed by the ſacrament.

II. The ſacramental declaration is a matter of ſuch weight, as deſerves the deepeſt impreſſion on one's ſpirit, and the tendereſt regard in one's life, for all time thereafter. What that is ye have already heard, viz. a ſolemn declaration made by one's partaking, that he is of the communion of the ſaints, joined with them into one myſtical body of Chriſt. This is the declaration ye made by your act of partaking; and this is what, I ſay, deſerves the deepeſt impreſſion, &c. This will be clear, if ye conſider,

1. The ſubject-matter of that declaration, which is moſt important. It concerns the myſtical body of Chriſt and their joining themſelves unto it. Is it poſſible that one can have a weightier matter than that in hand? Does not eternity depend upon it? heaven or hell hang upon it to thy ſoul? Can any rational man think that to be a matter for one to play with, not to be in deepeſt earneſt about it?

2. The parties to whom it is made, God and all the ſaints. The Lord has erected the ſaints into a ſociety under Chriſt the alone head; they have their patent in heaven, and God has endowed them with the richeſt privileges. He ſends out the goſpel proclamation, inviting all to join them, and offering them admiſſion into it freely, withal making the partaking of the ſacraments to be their declaration of entering into it, 1 Cor. xii. 13. So it is evident the partaker, by his action, ſays unto God, Iſa. xliv. 5.—*I am the Lord's*,—and to all the ſaints, Zech viii. 23. *We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.* If ye think light of making that declaration to them, do but conſider, the day when the Lord, and all his ſaints, ſhall judge the world, and call you to an account of the declaration made to themſelves.

3. The nature of that declaration. It is not indeed verbal, but real; not by words, but by an action, but that inſtituted by Chriſt, and ſo interpreted by him, as importing what it was deſigned to ſignify. As it is ſacramental, it is of the nature of an oath, wherein God

is invocated as judge and witneſs of the ſincerity of your declaration. So that ye have in effect ſworn yourſelves of the communion of ſaints: and that is weighty.

4. The ſolemnity of it. It was not a buſineſs huddled up in ſecret, but done openly. The ſacraments are public actions of their own nature: and therefore our church has wreſtled againſt private baptiſm and private communion. Ye were, I ſuppoſe, baptized in preſence of the church, a leſſer or greater number preſent. Ye did communicate in the Lord's ſupper in the face of the ſun, and before many witneſſes in a ſolemn manner. It was a very ſolemn covenanting betwixt God and Abraham, Gen. xv. 9.——18. And your covenant declaration was over the broken body and ſhed blood of Chriſt, repreſented in the ſacrament. What greater ſolemnity could there be?

Laſtly, The amount of it. If ye do not ſincerely cleave to it, but in your practice caſt it behind your back, it will amount to a lie made to God himſelf, and to all his ſaints, in a matter of the utmoſt weight, with the greateſt ſolemnity, yea, to the guilt of perjury in effect. Ananias and Sapphira were ſtruck dead for a lie made in the matter of the price of their land: what will be the puniſhment of a lie made with ſuch ſolemnity to God, over the broken body of his Son? Matth. xxiv. 46. ‘ He ſhall cut him aſunder, and appoint him ‘ his portion with the hypocrites’—Compared with Jer. xxxiv. 18.—20.—‘ I will give the men that have tranſ‘ greſſed my covenant,—which they had made before ‘ me, when they cut the calf in twain, and paſſed be‘ tween the parts thereof.——I will even give them in‘ to the hands of their enemies, and into the hands of ‘ them that ſeek their life.'—Wherefore,

1. Reflect on, and ſeriouſly conſider what ye have avouched ſolemnly in partaking of the ſacraments. Think on the action deeply, and the import of it, and impreſs it on your ſpirits. Look back all of you to your baptiſm.

Conſider that in your baptiſm ye were given up to Chriſt to lay hold on him by faith, Acts xix. 4. That therein ye declared and avouched your putting on Chriſt, Gal. iii. 27. ‘ For as many of you as have been baptized ‘ into Chriſt, have put on Chriſt.' Your dying to ſin, and living to righteouſneſs, Rom. vi. 3. 4. ‘ Know ye ‘ not, that ſo many of us as were baptized into Jeſus ‘ Chriſt, were baptized into his death? Therefore we ‘ are buried with him by baptiſm into death: that like ‘ as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead——even ſo we ‘ alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life.' Your being of the myſtical body of Chriſt, 1 Cor. xii. 13. ‘ For by ‘ one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.——If people would ſeriouſly conſider the import of their baptiſm, they who think themſelves looſe by their not being communicants, would ſee they are bound already; and that they do but cheat themſelves in thinking, by the neglect of the ſupper, to keep off theſe bands, which they are already firmly under: the which if they regard not, they will hear of it afterwards to their coſt.

Look back, communicants, to your partaking. Conſider what ye have done. Ye have declared yourſelves well pleaſed with the device of ſalvation through a crucified Chriſt, your taking of him to be your head and ruler, your joining yourſelves to him by faith as lively members of his myſtical body: that you are no more henceforth to be of the communion of the world lying in wickedneſs, but for the Lord only, wholly and for ever; to take your part with the ſaints in the world, whatever your lot be, Pſal. xlv. 10. Ye have ſaid all this, and in effect ſworn it, over the broken body, and ſhed blood of Chriſt, before angels and men.

Ye would do well to take ſome time alone to reflect on this, and to revive the impreſſions. We find the ſaints making ſuch reflections and putting themſelves in mind of what they have done in ſuch a caſe, Pſal. xvi. 2. *O my ſoul, thou haſt ſaid unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord.* And Pſal. cxix. 57. 106. *I have ſworn and I will perform it—that I will keep thy righteous Judgments.*

2. Never forget it, Jer. l. 5. People uſe not to forget their marriage day, and the tranſactions of it. But alas! the declared marriage conſent to Chriſt is often forgotten, notwithſtanding of the ſolemnity at it, Jer. ii. 32. *Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number.* They are men of proſtituted conſciences, who forget their oaths, and have wrought themſelves clean of the impreſſions of them. But, alas! there are many, who ſometimes made this ſolemn declaration, who ſeem to have quite forgot it, and the impreſſions are razed. But have ye forgot it? God hath ſworn he will never forget it, Amos viii. 7. ‘ The Lord hath ſworn by the ‘ excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of ‘ their works.' See Jer. ii. 2.

3. Remember it afreſh on particular occaſions, and awe your ſpirits with it, when temptations offer to cauſe you to go againſt it. Remember it as Jephthah did his vow, Judges xi. 35. *I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back.*

(1.) When your old luſts come back, and fawn on you. No doubt they will come, but deny them, 1 Pet. i. 14. *As obedient children, not faſhioning yourſelves according to the former luſts, in your ignorance.* Remember ye have ſolemnly declared againſt them of your own accord, and to go back to them muſt be to go over the belly of God's bands on you.

(2.) When your old companions in ſin would draw you aſide with them, then ſay, as Joſeph, Gen. xxxix. 9.—‘ How can I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin ‘ againſt God?' Remember ye are not of their communion, but have ſolemnly renounced it, and have embodied with the ſaints. Is it not a very good reaſon not to ſerve the devil with men, becauſe ye are not of the communion of his ſervants and ſociety?

4. Do not retract it. It is too ſolemn and weighty a buſineſs to eat it in again, Prov. xx. 25. *It is a ſnare to the man to devour that which is holy, and after vows to make enquiry.* Eccleſ. v. 5. *Better is it that thou ſhouldſt not vow, than that thou ſhouldſt vow and not pay.* Some poor wretches expreſsly retract and renounce their ſacramental vows, giving themſelves to Satan. Many practically retract their ſacramental declaration, particularly, (1.) By ſlighting the renewing of it, when the Lord puts an occaſion of it in their hands. Thus many baptized perſons never ſet themſelves to partake of the Lord's table: ſome that have partaked of it ſome time leave it off again. Does not this plainly ſay, that if they had that to do which is done in that matter, it ſhould not be done for them now? And is it not that retracting practically? Luke ix. 62.——‘ No man having ‘ put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit ‘ for the kingdom of God.' Lot's wife's rueful looking back was dear to her. (2.) By living a looſe and licentious life, as if one had never come under bonds to be the Lord's, Tit. i. 16. The language of the converſation of many is, ‘ Let us break their bands,' &c. O that ſuch would conſider——Heb. x. 38.—*If any man draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him.*

Laſtly, Beware of every thing unſuitable to it. Ye have declared yourſelves of the communion of the ſaints, do nothing unſuitable to that communion, and your own ſolemn declaration. Let not the way of God be evil-ſpoken of through your unſuitable walk, Rom. ii. 24. Always remember your character as profeſſed members of the communion of ſaints, and walk accordingly.

III. Separation from the men of the world lying in wickedneſs, and fixed ſtanding off from the communion of ſinners, is the neceſſary duty of all ſaints by profeſſion, and particularly of communicants, Numb. xxiii. 9.—‘ The people ſhall dwell alone, and ſhall not be rec‘ koned among the nations.' 2 Cor. vi. 14. 15.—17. ‘ Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: ‘ for what fellowſhip hath righteouſneſs with unrighte

‘ ouſneſs ? and what communion hath light with darkneſs ? and what concord hath Chriſt with Belial ? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel ?——Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye ſeparate, ſaith the Lord.’

Firſt, Whereto this holy ſeparation extends itſelf.

1. *Negatively*, It doth not extend,

(1.) To the caſting off the duties of natural affections, and relations to them, 1 Cor. vii. 12. 13.——*If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and ſhe be pleaſed to dwell with him, let him not put her away*, &c. Religion doth not weaken, but purify and ſtrengthen natural affection, Rom. ix. 3. And the nearer that ſinners ſtand related unto ſaints, they will have, and ought to have the greater concern for them, both for their ſpiritual and temporal good.

(2.) Not to the caſting off civil converſe with the men of the world, according as one has the call of providence thereto, 1 Cor. v. 9, 10. *I wrote unto you—not to company with fornicators. Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters ; for then muſt ye needs go out of the world.* The ſaints are not ſhut up in a corner of the world by themſelves, and therefore muſt needs have civil ſociety with the men of this world. Neither doth religion diveſt Chriſtians of humanity, or give them a liberty to be rude and indiſcreet to others ; but obliges them to *live peaceably with all men*,——Rom. xii. 18. to *honour them*, 1 Pet. ii. 17. to be courteous, Chap. iii. 8. 9.

(3.) Nor to the hindering of us to do them all the good we can. Nay, religion obligeth us to ſeek their good, 1 Tim. ii. 1. *I exhort therefore, that—ſupplications, prayers, interceſſions, and giving of thanks be made for all men* : and to do good to their ſouls and bodies, as we have opportunity, Gal. vi. 10. *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good to all men.*

(4.) Nor to the refuſing to ſerve God, and worſhip him with them according to his own inſtitution. This our Saviour himſelf did, Luke iv. 16. *And he came to Nazareth, and, as his cuſtom was, he went into the ſynagogue on the ſabbath day, and ſtood up for to read.* Thus did the apoſtles alſo with the Jews. Thus, in all congregations of ſaints in the world, there are readily found ſome who have no appearance of ſaintſhip, whom yet they do not ſo ſhun as to refuſe to worſhip God with them in his own way.

2. *Poſitively*, It extends to, and conſiſts in,

(1.) Shunning all unneceſſary ſociety and familiarity with them, Pſal. xxvi. 4. 5. *I have not ſat with vain perſons, neither will I go with diſſemblers. I have hated the congregation of evil doers ; and will not ſit with the wicked.* They are not to be choſen for our companions of converſe, or friendſhip, far leſs for our companions of life, where we can have a choice ; but we are to be companions of thoſe that fear the Lord. The company of ſinners has been fatal to many, Prov. xiii. 20. ‘ He that walketh with wiſe men ſhall be wiſe, but a companion of fools ſhall be deſtroyed.’ Men of the ſame employment, or that are going to one place, draw together ; and ſhould not Chriſtians draw to Chriſtians? It is ſad to make Chriſtian congregations and families, like Noah's ark, a receptacle for clean and unclean, 1 Cor. xv. 33. *Be not deceived : evil communications corrupt good manners.*

(2.) Non-conformity to the world, Rom. xii. 2. *And be not conformed to this world : but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.*——Ye muſt have another manner of life and converſation than they, if ye be of the communion of ſaints. It is a diſgrace to religion, for the men of the world to have it to ſay of a ſaint by profeſſion, ‘ Behold, the man is as one of us.’ Make them not your rule, your example. nor do you think to ſtamp an offenſive way into a lawful one, by the authority of the multitude. For the multitude is in the way to deſtruction, Matth. vii. 13. ‘ Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leads to deſtruction, and many there be which go in thereat :’ and their principles are lax, and their practices licentious ; they look on tenderneſs as niceneſs and preciſeneſs, and wonder that you cannot take the ſame liberty they do, 1 Pet. iv. 4. *Wherein they think it ſtrange that you run not with them to the ſame exceſs of riot, ſpeaking evil of you.* But look you to God's word for your way, and ſee yourſelves obliged to ſeparate from them in your manner of life. See the general rule, Philip. iv. 8. ‘ Finally, brethren whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praiſe, think on theſe things.’

(3.) Refuſing communion with them in ſin, Prov. i. 10. ‘ My ſon, if ſinners entice thee, conſent thou not.’ Every man is for his own maſter's intereſt, and therefore they are for bringing you over into the ſervice of the devil their maſter, as you will be for bringing them to Chriſt, if you be real Chriſtians. Beware of fellowſhip with them in ſin, Eph. v. 11. *And have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs, but rather reprove them.* Do not homologate their ſinful courſes by approving or conſenting any manner of way thereto, far leſs by actual joining with them in their ſin, Pſal. l. 18. It is an affront to Heaven, but a pleaſure to hell, to ſee Chriſt's ſheep and the devil's goats yoked together in one ſinful courſe. Nay, communicant, thou ſhouldſt be like the ermine, that will by no means paſs over the mud, that would ſtain its precious furr.

(4.) Refuſing communion with them in the worſhip of God, in a falſe way, or even in a right way upon ſinful terms. The ſaints muſt ſeparate from all falſe worſhip, that is, worſhip which is not inſtituted by God himſelf wholly, but is mixed with human inventions and ordinances, Rev. xviii. 4. Nay where the worſhip is pure, but ſome ſinful thing is impoſed upon you as a term of communion with the worſhippers, you muſt refuſe communion with them in worſhip on theſe terms, Rom. iii. 8. In theſe caſes ſeparation is not only lawful, but a neceſſary duty. And could I perceive either of theſe this day, in our caſe, in the communion of this church, I ſhould not only think it my duty to ſeparate, but alſo to preſs you to it. But though our mother has gone far back, ſhe has not gone that length yet.

Secondly, Reaſons of this ſeparation. Becauſe,

1. The communion of ſaints and the communion of ſinners are oppoſite ſocieties, 1 John v. 19. ‘ And we know that we are of God, and the world lieth in wickedneſs.’ So that joining to the one particularly infers ſeparation from the other. You may as well imagine to bring eaſt and weſt together, to make fire and water agree ; as to make God's family and the devil's to agree ; the ſeed of the woman and ſerpent. Wherefore having joined to the communion of ſaints, ye muſt needs ſeparate from the communion of ſinners, Matth vi. 24. *No man can ſerve two maſters : for either he will hate the one and love the other : or elſe he will hold to the one and deſpiſe the other. Ye cannot ſerve God and mammon.*

2. The communion of ſaints is gathered out of the world lying in wickedneſs ; ſo that ſeparation from the world is wrapt up in the very conſtitution of the ſociety of ſaints, 2 Cor. vi. 17. 18 ‘ Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye ſeparate, ſaith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing ; and I will receive you.’— The myſtical body of Chriſt is made up of thoſe that were ſometimes limbs of the devil : the branches ingrafted into the true vine were all broken off from our natural ſtock, the old Adam, that degenerate, dead, and killing ſtock : Chriſt's family of mankind is wholly made up of runaways from the devil's family, Pſal. xlv. So that if ye be ſaints at all, ye are ſeparatiſts.

3. The deſign of erecting a communion of ſaints is that they may be a ſeparate ſociety by themſelves, under Chriſt their head, to his honour, Numb. xxiii. 9. Eph.

v. 25.——27. They are a peculiar people, 1 Pet. ii. 9. How will they anſwer the deſign of their erection, and the honour of their head, if they be not thus a ſeparate people? Our Lord Chriſt has appointed badges of this communion, viz. the ſacraments to be external ſigns of diſtinction, betwixt his and the world; and can it be thought but they will diſtinguiſh themſelves by their practice?

4. The profeſſion of ſaintſhip is the profeſſion of this ſeparation, 1 Cor. xii. 13. Let baptized perſons and communicants be aſhamed to ſay they do not pretend to be ſaints. If ye pretend not to be ſaints, renounce your pretenſions to heaven, for none other can come there, Heb. xii. 14. *Follow peace with all men, and holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord.* If ye pretend not to be ſaints, ye muſt own yourſelves apoſtates, that have renounced and caſt off the communion of ſaints. And, communicants, if ye pretend not to be ſaints, how durſt you adventure to ſit down at the Lord's table? Well, in ſo far as ye were baptized, and communicated, ye profeſſed yourſelves members of Chriſt's body, ſaints, and ſo ſeparate from the world; therefore ye muſt live ſeparate from them.

Wherefore, I ſay, unto all ſaints by profeſſion, and particularly communicants,——'Save yourſelves from 'this untoward generation,' Acts ii. 40. 2 Cor. vi. 17. 18. Shun all unneceſſary ſociety with thoſe of the world lying in wickedneſs, conform not to their ways, have no communion with them in ſin, nor in the ſervice of God on ſinful terms. Remember ye have ſolemnly declared yourſelves of another communion than with them.

Motive 1. Conſider the authority of God that binds this upon you. Eph. v. 7, 8. 11. *Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were ſometimes darkneſs, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of the light. And have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs, but rather reprove them.* The men and women of the world are ſeparated from God, Eph. ii. 12. They are walking contrary to him; and therefore he will have you to ſeparate from them, and be as a people dwelling alone, in the midſt of the world's throng, becauſe they are not of your communion.

2. The proof of the ſincerity of your pretenſions to ſaintſhip depends very much on it, Pſal. xvi. 2. 3.—*My goodneſs extendeth not to thee; but to the ſaints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.* See alſo, Pſal. xxvi. 4. 5. and xv. 4. It is evident men will chuſe ſuch company as is moſt agreeable, in their opinion, to their own temper and diſpoſition.—And ſo one may very well gueſs at the diſpoſition of a perſon, by the company he chuſes and delights in. And if thou art inclined to be a companion of the graceleſs, rather than of the gracious, it is a ſhrewd ſign of a graceleſs heart.

3. The honour of God lies at ſtake here, Rom. ii. 24. If thou doſt wear Chriſt's badge, and yet will not ſeparate from the communion of ſinners, but go with them in their way, religion will be wounded through thy ſides, and expoſed to the mockery of profane men. And there are particularly three communions of ſinners I would warn you againſt, as ye would not ſtab religion to the heart.

(1.) The communion of drunkards. O how unlike is that to the communion of ſaints at the Lord's table! For the Lord's ſake, communicants, when ye have the temptation, remember that word, 1 Cor. x. 21. 22. *Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils. Ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and the table of devils. Do we provoke the Lord to jealouſy? are we ſtronger than he?*

(2.) The communion of harlots. That is a communion of ſinners, in an eminent manner, moſt inconſiſtent with the communion of ſaints, from which the apoſtle argues againſt it, 1 Cor. vi. 15. 16. 17. 'Know 'ye not that your bodies are the members of Chriſt? 'Shall I then take the members of Chriſt, and make 'them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What, 'know ye not that he who is joined to an harlot is one 'body?—But he that is joined to the Lord is one ſpi'rit.'

(3.) The communion of unjuſt men, in ſinful diſhoneſt ways of getting gain. Solomon ſpeaks of this, Prov. i. 14. 15. It is dear bought that is got at the rate of God's diſpleaſure.

Laſtly, If ye ſeparate not from them, ye will periſh with them, Rev. xviii. 4. If ye partake of their ſins, ye muſt partake of their plagues.

IV. There are certain duties of the communion of ſaints lying on all the members of it, by virtue of their memberſhip: the which duties all ſaints by profeſſion, and eſpecially communicants, are ſolemnly engaged unto by their partaking of the ſacraments.

To clear the firſt part of this inference, conſider,

1. Every relation wherein one ſtands brings along with it a train of duties with reſpect to one's relatives. Relations are the joints of ſociety, whereby perſons are joined together for mutual uſefulneſs; and their union is the ground of this debt they owe to one another. This holds in all relations, natural relations, and voluntary ones too made by conſent. If one be a father of children, there are paternal duties lying on him by virtue of that relation; if he be a child of ſuch parents, he owes a duty to them. If one become a member of a family, a kingdom, or any corporation, his memberſhip lays him under ſuch and ſuch duties: wherefore it is not to be doubted, but, in as much as one is a member of the communion of ſaints, he is under obligations to the duties of that ſociety.

2. There is a certain connection between privilege beſtowed on a man, and duty required of him. If one be admitted to the privilege of any ſociety, he muſt with the honour receive the burden of duty belonging to it. If we receive the privilege of ſons of God, we muſt be obedient children; 'not faſhioning ourſelves according 'to the former luſts in our ignorance, 1 Pet. i. 14. If we are members of the holy ſociety whereof Chriſt is the head, we muſt be holy as he is, ver. 15, 16. 'But as he 'who hath called you is holy, ſo be ye holy in all man'ner of converſation. Becauſe it is written, Be ye holy, 'for I am holy.' If we be advanced to be of the communion of ſaints, we muſt carry as becomes ſaints.

3. The principle of ſelf-preſervation, natural to all men, evidences this. If one be taken with a pain in his foot, all the members of the body will do their beſt to recover it; for if one member ſuffer, all ſuffer by reaſon of the union among them; and the evil, if not removed, creeps from one to another. So the apoſtle will have the ſaints in Corinth to take heed to a corrupt member, and uſe the means to recover him, from this principle of ſelf preſervation, 1 Cor. v. 6. They who dwell together find themſelves obliged to take heed every one to his neighbour's houſe, leſt, when the neighbour's houſe is on fire, the flames alſo catch hold of their own: wherefore, whoſoever is a member of the communion of the ſaints, muſt ſee a duty lying on him as ſuch.

To clear the ſecond part of the inference, conſider,

1. By partaking of the ſacrament one declares himſelf to be of the communion of ſaints, and conſequently declares his being engaged to the duties of that communion, 1 John ii. 6. He voluntarily takes on the yoke, while he yokes himſelf with thoſe who bear it. If one pretends to the privilege, he cannot in reaſon ſhake himſelf looſe of the duty. 'And why call ye me Lord, 'Lord, and do not the things which I ſay? Luke vi. 46.

2. The ſacraments are the external bands of our union with Chriſt the head, and the members, 1 Cor. xii. 13. Thereby we are ſacramentally joined with the ſaints into one body, one bread. What is the partaking of them, then, leſs than ſolemnly, as it were, by

oath, engaging ourſelves to the duties of the communion of ſaints?

Wherefore, all ye who are ſaints by profeſſion, particularly communicants, as ye are one viſible body of Chriſt, a viſible communion of ſaints, I would preſs on you the duties which lie upon you as ſuch. And they are of three ſorts.

Firſt, There are duties ye owe to the head. Chriſt is the head of this body, the communion of ſaints, Eph. i. 22. 23. Ye are the profeſſed members of Chriſt, and of his body; conſider and conſcientiouſly practiſe your duty to your head.

1. Acknowledge not, nor own any other for head of the church or communion of ſaints, but Jeſus Chriſt, Eph. v. 23. Men may diſtinguiſh as they will; but, as a body with more heads than one is a monſter in nature, the ſcripture is plain, the communion of ſaints, which is the church, is no ſuch monſter, Eph. iv. 5. 'One 'body, one Lord.' The Roman Antichriſt has long blaſphemouſly arrogate to himſelf the headſhip and ſupremacy, and, at the lame reformation of England, it was taken from the Pope there, but not reſtored to the royal Mediator, but made a part of their king's royal dignity. And in the days of Scotland's apoſtacy from their covenanted God, it was ſacrilegiouſly uſurped over this church by the powers then reigning, but contended againſt by the ſufferings of many of this church, the Lord having made the Mediator's alone headſhip and ſupremacy a peculiar piece of this church's teſtimony, for which, alas! the preſent generation has not been duly jealous, the which has helped to bring this church into the miſerable paſs ſhe is at this day. But why ſhould any pretend to be head of the body of Chriſt? to be her head, while they cannot communicate life or ſpirit to her? This is Chriſt's peculiar prerogative, communicable to no mortal.

2. Depend by faith on Jeſus Chriſt, as your head, for all. He is conſtitute the head of that ſociety whereof ye are members, and by virtue of his headſhip their life lies in him, the direction and care of them lies on him.

1ſt. Depend on him for vital influences, Col. ii. 19. ——'From which all the body by joints and bands, 'having nouriſhment miniſtered, and knit together, in'creaſeth with the increaſe of God.' The believer's life lies in him, Col. iii. 3. 'Your life is hid with Chriſt 'in God.' Therefore it cannot be loſt, John xiii. 9. *Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo.* The church is liable to great decay: ſhe may be under a ſpiritual conſumption, her pulſe may beat very low, yet the ſickneſs cannot be unto death, becauſe there is ſtill life in the head, which will be communicate more abundantly to the members. It is our buſineſs to live by faith, and draw virtue from him, and not to live on our inherent ſtock of life and grace, 1 Tim. ii. 1. Two things are here to be obſerved,

(1.) That there is a fulneſs lodged in Chriſt as the head of the body, to be communicated to all the members, Col. i. 19. A fulneſs of a fountain, which has not only enough for itſelf, but for thoſe that come to draw. There is a fulneſs of merit in him, for the life of pure pardon and comfort, and refreſhment for the ſoul ſlain with a ſenſe of guilt: a fulneſs of Spirit for the life of ſanctification; and ready acceſs to it for all the members, John i. 16. 'And of his fulneſs have all we re'ceived, and grace for grace.'

(2.) The promiſes are the conduit pipes, by which influences of grace run into us, and faith is the drawing grace by which they are brought into the ſoul, Gal. ii. 20. The ſettled method of the diſpenſation of grace is that, *According to thy faith, ſo be it unto thee.* Faith believes and applies the promiſes, and ſo life more abundantly is conveyed, Hoſ. xiv. 7.

2dly, Depend upon him for direction, Prov. iii. 5. 6. 'Truſt in the Lord with all thine heart: and lean 'not to thine own underſtanding. In all thy ways ac'knowledge him, and he ſhall direct thy ſteps.' The direction of the whole body belongs to the head, and the direction and guidance of all the members of Chriſt to him, by virtue of his headſhip. Therefore,

(1.) Take not the guiding of yourſelves upon yourſelves, truſt not to your own wit and ſkill. If ye do, it is an uſurping of Chriſt's prerogative, Iſa. lv. 5. and ye will not proſper in it, but ſtumble at noon-day. Where are the eyes but in the head? And therefore ſince Chriſt is the head of all the ſaints, he is appointed of the Father to be eyes to them in the wilderneſs. And the way of carnal wit has ay been ruining to churches, and particular members. The end of the way, pointed out by it, is always miſery.

(2.) Look to him, and truſt him for direction in all caſes, Prov. iii. 3. God brings his people into a thicket of perplexities, and they are at their wits end, that faith may begin, and wait for a way when they can ſee none, Iſa. xlii. 16. Then he leads them by his word, providence, and Spirit. He is the pilot of the ſhip bound to Emmanuel's land, with all the heirs of glory as paſſengers; their guide through the wayleſs wilderneſs, and they muſt keep their eye on him.

3dly, Depend on his care, 1 Pet. v. 7. 'Caſting 'all your care upon him, for he careth for you.' The care of the whole communion of ſaints lies on Chriſt as their head, 1 Pet. ii. 25. The Father has given them to him, devolved the care of them upon him, in ſuch ſort that he is to be anſwerable for them, that none of them be loſt, John vi. 39. 'And this is the Father's will 'which hath ſent me, that of all which he hath given 'me, I ſhould loſe nothing.'——Thus the hearts of his people may ſafely truſt in him.

(1.) For proviſion. He, as their head, ſees to the proviſion for their ſouls, providing them green paſtures, and ſtill waters, Pſalm xxiii. 2. He provides for their bodies, Iſ. xxxiii. 16. 'Bread ſhall be given him, his 'waters ſhall be ſure.' The faith of Chriſt's headſhip might ſtill all anxious thoughts about one's throughbearing in any caſe whatſoever; for, come what will come, ſurely the head will ay ſee to the proviſion of the members.

(2.) For protection, Eph. v. 23. The ſaints have many enemies without and within; but being ſettled under ſuch a head, they may be ſure of protection in all dangers. They will ay be ſafe, if not from trouble, yet in it, John xvi. 33. 'Theſe things have I ſpoken unto 'you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world 'ye ſhall have tribulation; be of good cheer, I have o'vercome the world.' From the ſting of it, that it ſhall do them no real harm, 1 Pet. iii. 13. 'And who is 'he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which 'is good?'

The ſaints are oft-times in a mighty ſtir, having great cares on their heads: but O how happy would they be, if they would lay their cares all on their myſtical head, and be at their duty, and leave them all on him! *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and ſupplication—let your requeſts be made known unto God*, Philip. iv. 6.

3. Subject yourſelves wholly to his government, as to your head, Eph. v. 22. 23. 24. The head muſt rule the body, and Chriſt muſt rule you, if you be his members. Coming into the communion of ſaints, ye reſign yourſelves to the head of that ſociety, for good and all, for ever.

(1.) Be obedient to his commands, Luke vi. 46. Our Lord Jeſus has freed the members of his myſtical body from the law as a covenant of works, but with his own hands he binds on them the yoke of obedience to the commands thereof as his own command, 1 Cor. ix. 21. *Being not without law to God, but under the law to Chriſt.* —What confuſion would there be in the natural body, for the head to be directing and pointing out one way, and the members going another? if Chriſt be your head, be ruled by him, renouncing your own will, and making his your law.

(2.) Reſign yourſelves to the diſpoſals of his providence, 1 Sam. iii. 18. 2 Sam. xv. 25. 26. The members of Chriſt have good reaſon for an abſolute reſignation of themſelves and all their concerns to the Lord. The ſovereignty of their head may ſilence them; the wiſdom and love of their head to his own members may ſatisfy them, that whatever he does with them is beſt done. Their intereſt is his own, as that of the members is the intereſt of the head.

4. Let the intereſts of Jeſus Chriſt, as your head, be your intereſt, his honour and glory be dear unto you, Pſal. lxix. 9. *For the zeal of thine houſe hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.* All the members of the body are concerned for the head, as the head is for the members, and whoſo are not touched with the care of Chriſt's honour in the world, give ſhrewd evidences they are none of his members. Then,

(1.) Act for the honour of your head, in every capacity ſeeking to advance his glory, Pſal. xlv. 17. *I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations.*—— There is a party in the world oppoſite to Chriſt, and they act againſt him. He has been going among us, ſaying, Who is on my ſide? And ye, by profeſſing your ſubmiſſion to him, and declaring yourſelves ſacramentally to be of the communion of ſaints, have ſolemnly gone over to his ſide. Then act for him, his truths and ways; act for him in your families, in your neighbourhoods, wherever ye have acceſs, whoever they are that act againſt him.

(2.) Be ready to ſuffer for him, as he may call you. Remember the communion of which ye have declared yourſelves members, is, in this world, like a lily among thorns, which will be uneaſy to them; and ye were warned of what is expected of all the members, Luke xiv. 26. In ſuch a long time of peace, it is no wonder many limbs of the devil have got in among Chriſt's members, and many a hollow hearted ſinner is externally got into the communion of ſaints, and the ſaints by this time, are much the worſe of their company: and between fooliſh virgins, and ſleeping wiſe ones, the intereſt of Chriſt and religion is going to decay, So that the caſe of the church, in the common courſe of providence, ſeems to preſage ſuch a trying ſtroke as will awake living members, and make many dead lifeleſs members fly off. But if Chriſt be your head, ye will be ſo minded as to ſuffer for him in his ſtrength: ye know nothing is more natural, than, when a ſtroke is directed againſt one's head, to lift up one's arm to ward off the blow from the head. The rage of enemies is againſt Chriſt himſelf; and to quit Chriſt, and go over to their ſide, is the way many take in ſuch a day. But the real members of Chriſt's body take not that way, more than a man will put out his head to keep off a ſtroke deſigned againſt his arms, the head being that which all the members will take a ſpecial care of. In the mean time,

(3.) Suffer with him, Pſal. lxix. 9. If the members ſuffer, the head ſuffers with them; and if the head be pained, all the body ſuffers with it; ſuch is the ſympathy. If Chriſt's members ſuffer, he ſympathizeth with them, Acts ix. 4. And it is reaſonable that they who think to reign with Chriſt after, ſuffer with him now. This is a day wherein the glorious head of the myſtical body is ſuffering egregiouſly amongſt us, and wherein all his members are called to mourn as ſuffering with him, Pſal. cxix. 136. *Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, becauſe they keep not thy law.* Our head ſuffers from his open enemies, is wounded in the houſe of his friends, is ſuffering from profeſſors and profane, miniſters and people of all ranks. Happy they who ſhall be found mourning for the diſhonours done to his name, truths, ways, &c. They are like to be hid in the day he riſes up to reſent the affronts.

Laſtly, Take care of yourſelves for the ſake of your head. The follies of a wife reflect diſhonour on her huſband. Men will take care of their feet, for that, if, they catch cold in them, it will fly up to their head. O ſaints by profeſſion, communicants, remember that from the day you give up your names to Chriſt, and declare yourſelves of the communion of ſaints, the honour of Chriſt is concerned in your walk at another rate than ever before. Your ſins have a peculiar aggravation in them of diſhonour to your head, Rom. ii. 24. *For the name of God is blaſphemed among the Gentiles through you.*—Therefore, if ye have any reſpect to the honour of Chriſt, take heed that your converſation be as becometh the goſpel.

Secondly, There are duties ye owe to the body in general, the myſtical body of Chriſt, which is the church or communion of ſaints, Eph. i. 22. 23. Ye are profeſſed members of this body, whereof Chriſt is the head, and this body is not confined to one particular church, but is made up of all the churches of Chriſt, and particular ſaints through the world, united to Chriſt by his Spirit dwelling in them. Conſider, and practiſe the duties of this body, lying on you by virtue of your memberſhip.

1. Sympathize with the body, as being yourſelves of it, 1 Cor. xii. 26. 'And whether one member ſuf-'fer, all the members ſuffer with it.'—The concerns of the church of Chriſt through the world ſhould be the concern of every member. Diſtance of place, and differences in leſſer things among thoſe of the myſtical body of Chriſt ſhould not take away this concern. Whoſoever are allowed a place in Chriſt's myſtical body, ſhould have room allowed them in our hearts.

(1.) Mourn with the body under its affliction and evils. Such a kindly member was Nehemiah, chap. ii. 3. The diſtreſſes of foreign churches, as well as of our own, require our cordial ſympathy; and the ſaints are naturally led to it, as knit with them to one common head.

(2.) Rejoice with it in its proſperity, 1 Cor. xii. 26. 'And whether one member be honoured, all the mem-'bers rejoice with it.' The thriving of the kingdom of Chriſt, in any place through the world, ſhould be refreſhful to all the members of Chriſt, and fill their mouths with praiſes. To bear a part in the joys and moans of the church of Chriſt every where, is the natural duty of all the members.

2. Pray continually for the welfare of the body, Pſal. cxxii. 6. *Pray for the peace of Jeruſalem: they ſhall proſper that love thee.* Iſ. lxii. 6, 7. 'Ye that make 'mention of the Lord, keep not ſilence; and give him 'no reſt till he eſtabliſh, and till he make Jeruſalem a 'praiſe in the earth.' The apoſtle is expreſs for all ſaints, Eph. vi. 18. *Praying always with all prayer and ſupplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perſeverance and ſupplication for all ſaints.* Confine not your prayers to your own private caſe, but in all earneſtneſs extend them to the church of Chriſt in the land where you live, and through the world. Prayer is a duty wherein all the members of Chriſt on earth can have actual communion; they meet at the throne of grace who never ſaw one anothers face. It is the joint petition of all the ſaints, *Thy kingdom come.* Pray for the building up, increaſe, peace, and purity of the church univerſal.

3. Take your lot with the body in foul or fair weather. Ye have ſaid in effect, to this happy ſociety, as Ruth i. 16. Sometimes there is a ſtorm on the church of Chriſt, when the world lying in wickedneſs enjoys a calm. This occaſions many naughty members to change ſides, to deſert the communion of ſaints, and to fall in with the communion of ſinners, 2 Tim. iv. 10. *Demas hath forſaken me, having loved this preſent world.* Ye know not how ſoon ye may be tried in this point; but do ye reſolutely adhere to the myſtical body. To move you to which, conſider theſe three things.

(1.) It is ſafer to be with the ſaints in their loweſt condition, than with ſinners in the higheſt pinacle of proſperity: for the darkeſt night with the former will have a joyful morning, Pſal. xcvii. 11. while the faireſt day with the latter will iſſue in a black and fearful night, Eccleſ. vii. 5. 6.

(2.) The trial of ſincerity of members is one of the great ends of the Lord's bringing trouble on the body, to try who are wiſe and fooliſh builders. It is true, when the natural body being ſick is laid a-bed, the tree-leg is laid by, but all the living members of the body go with it. So, &c.

(3.) Backſliding is dangerous, and ſpeaks one not fit for the kingdom of God, Luke ix. 62.—*No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God*: it expoſes one to the fearful diſpleaſure of God, Heb. x. 38.—'But if any man draw 'back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him;' and makes their caſe worſe than if they had never ſet heavenward.

4. Strive in all lawful ways to maintain and advance the intereſts of the body; for the intereſt of the church is the intereſt of Chriſt, and dear therefore to every member. The truths of God are a ſacred truſt committed to the church, the pillar of truth; and they require our deep concern for the defence thereof, againſt the aſſaults of error, Jude 3.—*Contend earneſtly for the faith which was once delivered unto the ſaints.* Chriſt's ordinances and inſtitutions, and the ſeveral privileges thereof, which Satan and the world ſeek to deprive her of, and corrupt, they are Chriſt's purchaſe for his myſtical body, and therefore they are to be held faſt, and the purity of them contended for, refuſing to ſubject them or ourſelves to the luſts of men, Gal. v. 1. 1 Cor. vii. 23. This will always require doing of us, holding hand to the maintenance of the precious intereſts of the myſtical body, Pſal. xlv. 17. and ſometimes ſuffering, Heb. xii. 3. 4. It is a debt we owe to Chriſt, to the church, to poſterity, and to our own ſouls.

Laſtly, Be tender of the unity of the body, Eph. iv. 3. 4. *Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*, 1 Cor. xii. 24. Schiſms, rents, and diviſions in the church, are like wounds, cuts, and breaking of bones in the natural body, which exceedingly weaken it, and mar its beauty. They are the ſin and judgment of a church, bringing diſhonour to the Lord Jeſus, marring the ſucceſs of the goſpel, and ruining the church at length: they bring much grief to tender ſouls, and expoſe religion to the mockery of enemies. The renting of the body of Chriſt, has ſo much of horror about it, as may make it frightful to ſerious members. We muſt ſeparate from none farther than they ſeparate from Chriſt. We muſt not go into ſin with members of the myſtical body, more than with the world, under the pain of the diſpleaſure of the Head: but we may lawfully ſerve the Lord in his own ordinances with ſinful members; even as though when one foot is in a mire, the other muſt not go into the mire with it, yet there is no neceſſity of renting the one leg from the other, but the one may ſtill walk with the other on clean ground.

Thirdly, There are duties ye owe to the members in particular, as ye are fellow-members with them of the ſame body, 1 Cor. xii. 25. 'That there ſhould be no 'ſchiſm in the body; but that the members ſhould have 'the ſame care one for another.' It is not in your power to know certainly and infallibly who are real members of this body, as others cannot know the ſame concerning you: but the viſible body of Chriſt is made up of ſaints by profeſſion, not openly contradicted by their habitual practice, 1 Cor. i. 2. and as ſuch they are admitted to the Lord's table, upon their deſire.

So there is a particular viſible relation among all ſaints by profeſſion, and particularly among communicants, as viſible members of the ſame myſtical body of Chriſt. And therefore, though they owe a duty to all men, of love, good will and beneficence, yet they are in a particular manner engaged to dutifulneſs to one another, as members of the viſible communion of ſaints, ſeparate from the world.

Of this viſible body or communion there are two ſorts of members, official and ſimple ones; the former bearing office in the body, the other not ſo, but private perſons; both members of the one body.

Firſt, The official members are the office bearers in the church, which is the body, and thoſe are paſtors, teachers, ruling elders, and deacons. Theſe are in the myſtical body, as in man's natural body are the ſtomach, bearing the office of proviſor for the whole body, the legs of ſupporters, the eyes of lights to the whole body. And,

1. The duty of the official members to the reſt may be ſummed up in theſe two, as they are, Acts xx. 28. viz.

1ſt, That they take heed to themſelves. They muſt take heed to their feet, that they walk as becomes the goſpel, and their office and character: to their tongues, that their doctrine and inſtructions be ſound: and to their hearts, that theſe be upright, that ſo both word and walk may be holy. This I reckon a duty they owe to the reſt of the members, as well as to themſelves: becauſe their holy tender walk is an ordinance of Chriſt for edifying the body, as well as ſound doctrine, 1 Tim. iv. 12.—'Be thou an example of the believers, 'in word, in converſation, in charity, in ſpirit, in faith, 'in purity,' 1 Pet. v. 3. 'Neither as being lords over 'God's heritage, but being enſamples unto the flock.' And a ſcandalous untender practice, in a church-officer, wounds not only his own conſcience, but does a ſingular miſchief to the church; as a hurt in the eye does not only wrong it, but the whole body.

2dly, That they take heed to the reſt of the members over whom they are overſeers, conſcientiouſly following the duties of their reſpective offices in the body. It is not enough that they be good men in their private capacity; but that they be good miniſters, elders, &c. in their public capacity. If the ſtomach have never ſuch a good diſpoſition, yet if it keep all the nouriſhment to itſelf only, the body would go to ruin: ſo, if church-officers ply not their official duty, the church ſuffers by them; they are uſeleſs, and worſe than uſeleſs in the place they have in the body.

2. There is alſo a ſpecial duty that the reſt of the members owe to the official members in the body. And this alſo may be ſummed up in two things.

1ſt, A peculiar concern for them, Gal. iv. 15.—*For I bear you record, that, if it had been poſſible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.* It is evident nature itſelf teacheth a peculiar concern for thoſe members which are of the moſt diffuſive uſefulneſs in the natural body, by virtue of their office. Who would not take many thruſts through the leg ere he received one through the heart? Who will put a toe in the balance with an eye? So, in the myſtical body, however ſelfiſh many are, yet tender conſidering Chriſtians will have peculiar concern for the official members.

(1.) This ſhould proceed from a reverential eſtimation of them for their works ſake, 1 Theſſ. v. 12. 13. *And we beſeech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admoniſh you; and to eſteem them very highly in love, for their works ſake.*—Their work is great; if they have the honour, they have the burden with it. Their work is for the honour of the head, and the profit of the body; and many a time they are like the candle, which, giving light to others, waſtes itſelf. The Maſter has put an honour on them, and a reverend regard to them as his officers, is a duty acceptable to God in Chriſt; yet this reſpect to them is but civil reſpect, though the motive is ſacred.

(2.) It ſhould vent itſelf in theſe.

[1.] Praying for them ſeriouſly, 2 Theſſ. iii. 1. 'Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the

'Lord may have free courſe and be glorified.'—As their work is great, their needs, temptations, and trials are many. The better it fares with them, it is like to fare the better with you: on the contrary, the worſe it fares with them, the worſe it will fare with you. So much is your own caſe wrapt up in theirs. Pinch the ſtomach with hunger, the plump members of the body will ſoon fall; let the diſorders of it be cured, and the reſt of the body will ſoon feel the good of it. The devil ſtrikes at them, that in them he may ſtrike at the whole congregation. And miniſters get not only comforts, but afflictions from the hand of God, for the good of the people, 2 Cor. iv. 5. 6. Then even help them by your prayers that bear the burden.

[2.] Supporting of them cordially, 2 Tim. i. 16. 'The Lord give mercy to the houſe of Oneſiphorus, 'for he oft refreſhed me.' Encourage them in their work, which will be a lightning under a heavy burden. Ye ſhould ſupport their credit, and caſt a veil over their infirmities, Gal. iv. 14. *And my temptation which was in my fleſh, ye deſpiſed not, nor rejected: but received me as an angel of God, even as Chriſt Jeſus;* and not make molehills in them mountains, as many do, who delight to blacken thoſe of that character; unlike a kindly member of the body, which will not ſpread, but endeavour to cure the weakneſs of an official member. And by divine right the reſt owe them a competent maintenance according to their ability, 1 Cor. ix. 14. *Even ſo hath the Lord ordained, that they who preach the goſpel ſhould live of the goſpel.*

2*dly*, A ready compliance with them in the work of their office, as the body goes whither the eyes direct, and the legs carry. An implicit faith and blind obedience is due to no man; but the mind of the Lord, held out by official members to the reſt, is to be readily complied with, as they would not incur the diſpleaſure of the head, 1 Theſſ. ii. 13. *For this cauſe alſo thank we God without ceaſing, becauſe when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh alſo in you that believe.*

(1.) Imitate them, and follow their ſteps ſo far as they follow Chriſt. 'Be ye followers of me, even as I alſo 'am of Chriſt,' 1 Cor. xi. 1. 'Brethren, be followers 'together of me, and mark them which walk ſo, as ye 'have us for an enſample,' Philip. iii. 17. It is a part of the work of their office, to be examples to the flock: and if that be a divine ordinance, for the edification of the church, ſurely the reſt of the members are obliged to follow the example; and if they do not, their practice, ſo far as it is holy, as well as their doctrine, will be a witneſs againſt them. This is a point but little regarded. Many will tell how church officers ſhould walk, that never once look on themſelves as obliged to follow their ſteps in the ways of holineſs: but the way of holineſs is but one to miniſters and people, although many are ready to make two of them, and take the broadeſt to themſelves.

(2.) Submit to their inſtructions, admonitions, exhortations, &c. Heb. xiii. 17. *Obey them that have the rule over you, and ſubmit yourſelves: for they watch for your ſouls, as they that muſt give account.*—What confuſion would be in the natural body, if the members would not be guided by the light of the eye, or refuſe the nouriſhment prepared by the ſtomach? So unnatural is it for the members of the myſtical body, to be refractory to the official members in the diſcharge of their duty, to refuſe their wholeſome inſtructions, and to be ſatisfied without receiving benefit of ordinances diſpenſed by them.

O learn to look on miniſters, and other church officers, as ſtanding in this capacity and relation to the body, whereof ye are members. Conſider them as members of the ſame myſtical body with yourſelves, and as official members, in whoſe welfare, and regular diſcharge of their office, your own welfare is wrapt up. This would,

(1.) Make you modeſtly and Chriſtianly concerned that they may do their duty to the edification of the body, Pſal. cxxxii. 9. For people to treat their miniſters imperiouſly and diſreſpectfully, and ſupercilliouſly to dictate to them how to behave in the exerciſe of their office, as many do, and value themſelves upon it, is an argument of pride and emptineſs, of mens forgetting themſelves, and regardleſſneſs of that order which Chriſt the head has appointed in his myſtical body. But for people, in a modeſt, ſerious and Chriſtian way, to excite their miniſters to their duty, to inform and adviſe them of what may contribute to their carrying on the Lord's work moſt ſucceſsfully, as the Lord's word gives them warrant to do it, Col. iv. 17. and their own ſoul's intereſt in the matter gives them a right to it; ſo a godly miniſter would bleſs God for having ſuch an advantage. Are not all the members concerned for the eye, ſtomach, &c. in the natural body? But do they fall a beating of them, or overcharging them, that they may do their office? No, but with all tenderneſs to them they endeavour to enable them to do their reſpective offices.

(2.) It would put you on to a conſcientious performance of your duty to them, your own ſoul's intereſt engaging you thereto, 1 Theſſ. v. 12. The fable of the members conſpiring againſt the belly, to pinch it by withholding of food, and being forced to give it over by reaſon that they themſelves ſuffered by that means, may repreſent to us, as in an emblem, the folly of a people undutiful to their miniſters, to their own ſouls great loſs. The relation is ſo very near, that undutifulneſs on either hand muſt be hurtful to both.

Secondly, The ſimple members are ſuch as are not office-bearers in the body, but private Chriſtians. Theſe owe a duty one to another, as members of the ſame myſtical body. They are the viſible members of the body of Chriſt, and ſo obliged to a native care for one another. 1 Cor. xii. 25.----*That the members ſhould have the ſame care one for another.* This extends to all ſuch Chriſtians, through the world, as we have occaſion to do this duty towards; but in a ſpecial manner it is to be exerciſed towards thoſe with whom we live in actual church communion: and partakers of the Lord's ſupper together are in a ſpecial manner under this obligation. As ye are one bread and one body, ſo I would exhort you to make conſcience of the duties you owe to one another as ſuch.

Communicants are a ſeparated body from others, diſtinguiſhed from others, by the moſt ſolemn badge of the Chriſtian profeſſion: O if they would carry themſelves as a people ſeparated from the world to Jeſus Chriſt, and joined together for him in one body, then would we ſee the benefit of communions, to the honour of Chriſt, the ſucceſs of the goſpel, and the good of their own ſouls.

The church is a ſociety gathered out of the world, viſibly joined together by the uſe of the ſacraments; though they are in the world, they are not of it; and all the members of it ſhould be a people dwelling alone, though in the midſt of others, not reckoned among the nations. The truth is, there are many baptized in their infancy, who openly go over to the world's ſide; but all ye who are ſaints by profeſſion, and particularly communicants, as ye profeſs yourſelves to be of one body, and owe a Chriſtian duty to them that are without; ſo I would lay before you the duties ye owe to one another, by virtue of your being viſible members of one and the ſame body.

1. Love one another affectionately and ſincerely, John xv. 12. 'This is my commandment that ye love one 'another as I have loved you.' To walk rightly in Chriſtian communion, we muſt walk in love, Eph. v. 2. Ye ought to love all men, being ready to deſire their good, and do them all the good ye can; but ye owe brotherly love to all the viſible members of Chriſt's body, which is ſo often recommended to the followers of

Chriſt, 1 Theſſ. iii. 12. *And the Lord make you to increaſe and abound in love one towards another, and towards all men, even as we do towards you.* Rom. xii. 10. *Be kindly affectionate one to another, with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another.* O what an inconſiſtency is there in ſitting down at the Lord's table together, the table of love, and the hearts of the partakers never united in love!

Object. *There are ſome ſo naughty in their way and manner of life, that it is hard to love them with brotherly love.*

Anſ. The decay of love among the profeſſors of Chriſtianity is moſt viſible at this day; and I muſt ſay, I deſpair of ſeeing due love among church members reſtored, as long as the church among us is ſo mixed with, and ſo little ſeparated from the world, and until the church be more diſtinguiſhed from the nation, for as fond as we have been of a national church. God ſeparated them in the late times by the fire of perſecution, and then this love flamed amongſt them: peace being reſtored, the church even mixed again with the world lying in wickedneſs, and that love died out of courſe. And while all are acknowledged as church members, few, very few are loved as ſuch. The New Teſtament churches, though there were many hypocrites in them, yet they ſeem to have been conſtituted of viſible ſaints, ſaints by profeſſion, not viſibly contradicted by their practices, Rom. i. 7. 1 Cor. i. 2. 1 Theſſ. v. 5. But more directly to the objection,

It is plain that brotherly love is to be proportioned to the decrees of the divine image diſcernable in any. And therefore, (1.) where nothing of it appears, but people are openly wicked, we owe not this brotherly love to them: and every member of the church, private Chriſtians as well as church-officers, ſhould endeavour that they partake not of that one bread in the ſacrament. But, (2.) ſince the beſt are not free of evils hanging about them, even to the diſcerning of others, we ought not to refuſe brotherly love to any in whom any lineaments of God's image appears, though they have ſeveral things in their way altogether unlovely. It is the work of grace here to pick the pearl of grace out of a dunghill of ſinful qualities, and to love the perſons for it, drawing a veil over many ſins, 1 Pet. iv. 8. 'And 'above all things have fervent charity among yourſelves; 'for charity ſhall cover a multitude of ſins.' And not to aggravate the ills about them, ſo as to hide their good from our eyes. Wo unto us if God ſhould treat us ſo, yea, or the ſaints; wherefore love one another.

Motive (1.) It is the principle of the duties of church communion, therefore called the bond of perfectneſs in the church, Col. iii. 12, 13, 14. In the primitive church they were moſt dutiful one to another; ſee the ſource of it, Acts iv. 32. *And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one ſoul.*——Where it prevails, it will make every one concerned for the good of his fellow-Chriſtian, as for his own: where it is not, people, though in church-communion, will be ready to ſay, "Am I my brother's keeper?" So the want of it turns all looſe.

(2.) It is a badge of ſincerity. *We know that we have paſſed from death unto life, becauſe we love the brethren,* 1 John iii. 14. And without it we cannot prove ourſelves true Chriſtians, neither to ourſelves, nor to the world of onlookers, John xiii. 35. 'By this ſhall all 'men know that ye are my diſciples, if ye have love 'one to another.' For love to God will produce love to all thoſe who bear his image.

(3.) It is the moſt natural reſult of the love of Chriſt to us, John xiii. 34.——*As I have loved you, that ye alſo love one another.* Never was there ſuch love as that of Chriſt to his people in his dying for them: this ſhed abroad in the heart muſt needs make a loving diſpoſition to him, and all that belong to him, for his ſake.

Laſtly, The near relation in which the followers of Chriſt ſtand to one another, pleads for it. They are fellow-members of the ſame body, joined together under one head, are members of one heavenly family, ſhall dwell together for evermore in heaven, and are joint objects of the world's hatred.

2. Bear with one anothers weakneſſes, failures, and infirmities. This has many branches, ſee Col. iii. 12, 13. 'Put on therefore (as the elect of God holy and 'beloved) bowels of mercies, kindneſs, humbleneſs of 'mind, meekneſs, long ſuffering; forbearing one an'other, and forgiving one another, if any man has a 'quarrel againſt another: even as Chriſt forgave you, 'ſo alſo do ye.' Be of a meek, patient, forbearing and forgiving temper, as to all men, ſo particularly to the members of the body of Chriſt, your fellow-members, and that becauſe they are ſo. When we come to heaven we will have nothing to bear with; but till we come there, we will have occaſion to exerciſe this grace towards others, and others towards us, ſince every one has their own imperfections, and there is not one that can caſt a ſtone at another on this ſcore.

It is ſad to ſee how eaſily profeſſors are brought to caſt at one another, how they cannot bear the leaſt provocation, cannot forgive nor forget injuries; yea, many there are who rejoice in the failures of others, and are glad when they get an ill tale of them, or ſee ſome falſe ſtep made by them, which they improve to run them down, and to the judging of their ſtate. But conſider, I pray you,

(1.) How the Lord bears with you, Eph. iv. 32. *And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Chriſt's ſake hath forgiven you.* O what would come of us, if God would bear no more with us than we can bear with our fellow-ſervants! Dreadful would the meaſure be, if God ſhould mete to us as we often do to our fellow-Chriſtians. Does the Spirit of the Lord ſuffer us long, and will not we learn long ſuffering? Are we forgiven talents, and will not forgive a few pence?

(2.) How the Lord bears with them. He over-looks many things in his people, though he does not approve of them. Shall not his example draw us to imitation?

(3.) Do not we ourſelves ſtand in need of forbearance and forgiveneſs from others? Ecc. vii. 21, 22. 'Alſo 'take no heed unto all words that are ſpoken, leſt thou 'hear thy ſervant curſe thee. For oftentimes alſo thine 'own heart knoweth that thou thyſelf likewiſe haſt cur'ſed others.' And are every day in hazard of being led aſide with temptation, Gal. iv. 1. 'Brethren, if a man 'be overtaken in a fault, ye who are ſpiritual reſtore 'ſuch an one in the ſpirit of meekneſs, conſidering thy'ſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted.' Why ſhould we then ſo forget ourſelves, as not to allow others what we need from them?

Laſtly, Is not your intereſt in the matter, ſince you are of the body with them? When one hand labours under any ſore, does not the other tenderly dreſs it, and even 'thoſe members of the body, which we think 'leſs honourable, do not we beſtow abundant honour 'on them? 1 Cor. xii. 23. So ſhould we be ready to caſt a veil of love over the infirmities of our brethren.

3. Watch over one another, Heb. x. 24. *And let us conſider one another, to provoke to love, and to good works.* And xii. 15. *Looking diligently, leſt any man fail of the grace of God: leſt any root of bitterneſs, ſpringing up, ſhould trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.* This is one of the principal duties of church-communion, and if duly managed, would be of notable uſe for the honour of the head, and good of the body. It is true the Lord has appointed ſome watchmen, by office, in his church, among the members of the myſtical body; and the appointment of the head, makes alſo every one watchman over another.

I mean not to encourage men to a cenſorious prying into other mens matters, malicious ſearching into the hidden faults of others, to get ſomething whereupon to make them odious. There are abundance of theſe who are ſpies from the devil's camp, improving their diſcoveries, fancied or real, to the diſhonour of religion, and wounding the reputation of the brethren. But that with an eye of love, you would obſerve one another's walk, for your mutual advantage, to imitate what is lovely in one another, and endeavour to amend what is amiſs, or to prevent it. I take in under this theſe following things.

1ſt, Excite and ſtir up one another to a holy tender walk, in the ſeveral parts or duties of it, Heb. x. 24. Every member of the body ſhould be a ſpur to another, to quicken his pace in the way of duty: ſo far ſhould they be from being hindrances to, and clogs upon one another. All of us have a principle of ſloth in us, which diſpoſes us to flag and ſink in our endeavours after holineſs; and happy they who have a fellow-Chriſtian to quicken them by word and example, Prov. xxvii. 17. 'Iron ſharpeneth iron, ſo a man ſharpeneth the countenance of his friend.'

2dly, Warn one another of ſnares in your way, as fellow-travellers towards Zion, 1 Theſſ. v. 14. *Now, we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly.*—One may ſee a ſnare before another, which he is not aware of that is in the greateſt hazard of it; and it is a piece of Chriſtian duty to warn one of it. This is to blow the trumpet as a watchman, the trumpet of private warning, the which if he does not, he is guilty of the ſin his brother falls into, as not preventing it.

3dly, Confirm the ſtaggering, and labour to bear up him who is ready to fall, 1 Theſſ. v. 14.——'Comfort 'the feeble-minded, ſupport the weak.'——O what a ſubſtantial kindneſs did Abigail to David, in preventing the ſin he was ſlipping into! An enemy is to be helped to raiſe up his aſs lying under a burden, Exod. xxiii. 5. that he may not loſe it: how much more, when one ſees his brother under a weight of temptation, is he to help him above it? like to be carried away with the ſtream, is he to catch hold of him, and do his beſt to draw him out?

Laſtly, Admoniſh and reprove one another, in a ſpirit of meekneſs, for what is amiſs, Rom. xv. 14. 2 Theſſ. iii. 15. Eph. v. 11. The infirmity cleaving to the beſt, with the variety of ſnares lying in our way, occaſions every one ſometimes to go wrong: and though it is eaſy to ſtep aſide, it is not ſo eaſy to recover, and come into the way again. This makes admonition neceſſary. There is a corrupt principle of ſelf-love in us, that we are apt to look on our own faults with an eye prejudged in favours of them; therefore God has appointed this ordinance of mutual reproof and admonition, that each one holding the glaſs to his neighbour's face, he may ſee his ſpots, and wipe them off.

There is an authoritative admonition and reproof administered by church-officers, in virtue of their office, not only to hearers promiſcuouſly, in the preaching of the word, but to perſons particularly by themſelves, in the way of diſcipline, 1 Tim. v. 20. 'Them that ſin 'rebuke before all, that others alſo may fear.' Or privately, as Nathan did to David. See 1 Theſſ. v. 12. *And we beſeech you, brethren, to know them*——*which are over you in the Lord, and admoniſh you.* The which, though privately adminiſtered, is public, in reſpect of the public perſon who giveth it. But of this we ſpeak not.

There is a charitable admonition and reproof belonging to private perſons, in virtue of the law of charity or love, which makes them monitors of, and reprovers to one another. This, in reſpect of the objects of it, is twofold.

1. General; common to all men within or without the church, whether viſible members of the myſtical body or not, [illegible] as the holy law carries love to our neighbour. We are not to confine our charitable admonitions and reproofs to ſaints by profeſſion, more than our love of benevolence and beneficence to them. We owe this duty, even to them of the world lying in wickedneſs, Eph. v. 11. *And have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs, but rather reprove them,* compare with ver. 8. 12. and ought to do it, if ſo we may contribute to the plucking of the brands out of the burning.

It is true there are ſome arrived at ſuch a daring pitch of wickedneſs, that there is not the leaſt hope of doing them good by admonition or reproof: but, on the contrary, they are hazard of being the worſe of them. Concerning ſuch our rule is, Matth. vii. 6. 'Give not 'that which is holy unto the dogs, neither caſt ye your 'pearls before ſwine, leſt they trample them under their 'feet, and turn again and rent you.' But we ſhould take heed that we do not raſhly put men in this claſs: they may be the worſe of a reproof at one time, who may be bettered by it at another time. And beſides, a teſtimony againſt ſin may be neceſſary, even in the caſe of ſuch a one, in reſpect of others, witneſſes thereto. But neither is it of this ſort of admonition and reproof we ſpeak. But,

2. Fraternal or brotherly admonition and reproof, competent to the viſible members of the myſtical body among themſelves, 2 Theſſ. iii. 15. Though we owe this duty and kindneſs to all men, yet it is plain there are ſpecial obligations to it on ſaints by profeſſion towards one another, and eſpecially on communicants, who ſit at one table of the Lord together. They are one body; they owe more than a common, viz. a brotherly love to one another; therefore, as in the natural body, one hand waſhes the other by ſpecial duty: ſo let all communicants, and all ſaints by profeſſion, know that they are obliged in conſcience to mutual brotherly admonition and reproof, as they are one body, and members one of another, Rom. xii. 5. And the ſacraments, whether baptiſm or the Lord's ſupper, much more both, bind them thereto.

This ordinance and ſpecial duty of church-communion, which would be of exceeding uſefulneſs, if rightly managed, as it is, alas, very little in uſe in our degenerate age, is often ſo marred, when it is uſed, that matters are made worſe thereby, and the diſeaſe takes ſtrength from the remedy. Peoples minds are alienated one from another; grudges are raiſed betwixt the parties; and ſo it is an occaſion of evil. This ariſeth from two cauſes.

Firſt, The indiſcreet management of the reprover, who often miniſters his remedy in ſuch a manner as that it is apt to irritate the corruption of his brother, inſtead of exciting his grace or goodneſs, as it ought. To rectify this, and remove this grand hindrance of benefit by this duty, I lay before you theſe following things.

1. Look upon this duty of fraternal admonition and reproof as an ordinance of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt appointed by him, in his viſible myſtical body, for the ſpiritual good of the body. It is as really ſo, as preaching, prayer, ſacraments, &c. are, Matth. xviii. 15. *Moreover, if thy brother ſhall treſpaſs againſt thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he ſhall hear thee, thou haſt gained thy brother.* It has a bleſſing annexed to it, Prov. ix. 8.—'Rebuke a wiſe man, and 'he will love thee.' The conſideration of this might influence men to go about it with awful ſolemnity, and to fear its being marred in their hands.

2. Begin at home, in thy own life and converſation, to purge it, Matth. vii. 3. 5. *And why beholdeſt thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and conſidereſt not the beam that is in thine own eye?*——*Firſt caſt out the beam out of thine own eye; and then ſhalt thou ſee clearly to caſt out the mote out of thy brother's eye.* A man, who attempts to reprove his brother, and is guilty in the ſame or the like offence, is like a profane miniſter reproving profanity, who cannot expect ſucceſs, but to have it caſt up to him, 'Phyſician cure thyſelf.' And this may let one ſee the miſchief that his untenderneſs does, not only involving him in perſonal guilt, but in the guilt of his neighbour's ſin too, whom he puts himſelf out of the capacity to do good to.

Queſt. *Is one in ſuch a caſe free from this duty then? Anſw.* No, by no means; one's own ſin can never free him from his natural duty. His buſineſs is to ſet about the work, removing the impediment of the ſucceſs by repentance before the Lord; and to accuſe himſelf, and profeſs reſolution to amend, in the firſt place, to his brother, and then to admoniſh him of his fault.

3. Be not precipitant and raſh in your reproofs, but proceed on knowledge of the offence, in which ſo much moral certainty is required, as one cannot be juſtly blamed for raſhneſs in thinking his brother to have offended ſo and ſo. The too ready crediting every thing that is ſpoken to our brother's diſadvantage, or judging a thing to be an offence, which may be is none; a readineſs to take other mens actions by the wrong handle, when there is a right one, and thereupon to reprove them, will more argue the want of that charity, 1 Cor. xiii. 7. than prudent zeal for God's honour and our brother's good; yet, in doubtful matters, it will often be found duty prudently to inſinuate that there is a ſuſpicion, and what way he ought to remove it, 1 Theſſ. v. 22. 'Abſtain from all appearance of evil.'

4. Let love to God's honour, and your brother's good, be the principle from which your admonition or reproof proceeds, and let it appear ſo, as much as may be, to his conviction, 2 Theſſ. iii. 15. *Yet count him not as an enemy, but admoniſh him as a brother.* 2 Cor. ii. 4. *For, out of much affliction and anguiſh of heart I wrote unto you with many tears, not that ye ſhould be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.* So little of this appears in the reproofs of many, that they ſeem to the reproved rather reproaches than reproofs, and to ſhew more contempt of the offender than love to him; and ſo the benefit by them is marred.

5. Be ſure to found your admonitions or reproofs on the word of God, and convey them to your brother in a word of the holy ſcripture, the proper vehicle of a medicine for the ſoul or conſcience. Col. iii. 16. 'Let 'the word of Chriſt dwell in you richly, in all wiſdom, 'teaching and admoniſhing one another.' How elſe can you think to reach his conſcience? The word is the inſtrument wherewith the Spirit works, and upon which we have ground to expect the bleſſing. And happy is he in whom the word dwells richly for this end.

6. Let it be managed with meekneſs, Gal. vi. 1.— 'Reſtore ſuch an one in the ſpirit of meekneſs.' Zeal and meekneſs are very conſiſtent; they are the fruits of the ſame holy Spirit. Beware of mixing your own paſſions with this duty; that is to bring common fire to God's altar, which mars the acceptance of the ſacrifice with God, and is ready to mar the ſucceſs of it with your brother, James i. 20. 'For the wrath of man 'worketh not the righteouſneſs of God.' O it is hard to hold off ſplitting on this rock! Moſes daſhed on it, though the meekeſt man of earth, Numb. xx. 10. 'Ye 'rebels.—Which ſhould make us jealous of ourſelves upon ſuch an occaſion. Happy is that man who, when he declares God's wrath, can beſt hold down his own. In a ſpecial manner uſe mildneſs when the offence is a perſonal injury againſt yourſelves. Men who are like lions in their own cauſe, and lambs in the cauſe of God, are ſelfiſh naughty men. They who are like lions in their own cauſe, and in God's too, owe their pretended zeal to their own ſpirits, not to the Spirit of God; but they who are as lambs in their own cauſe, but as lions in God's cauſe, leave convictions, in the breaſts of others, that they are acted by God's Spirit.

7. Be patient and continue at the duty as occaſion offers, though the fruit do not ſoon appear, or though one and the ſame perſon may give frequent occaſion, 2 Pet. i. 13. 'Yea I think it meet, as long as I am in 'this tabernacle, to ſtir you up, by putting you in re'membrance.' Luke xvii. 3. 4.—'If thy brother treſpaſs 'againſt thee, rebuke him, and if he repent, forgive 'him: and if he treſpaſs againſt thee ſeven times a day, 'and ſeven times in a day turn again to thee, ſaying, 'I repent, thou ſhalt forgive him.' Thus the Lord deals with us with long-ſuffering: ſo ſhould we with our brethren. We ſhould hold on as long as there is any hope of doing good by it.

Queſt. *What ſhould we do, when all we can do appears to be fruitleſs, and to no purpoſe? Anſw.* Our Lord's directions are very plain in this caſe, though very little practiſed, Matth. xviii. 15. 16. 17. 'More'over if thy brother ſhall treſpaſs againſt thee, go and 'tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he 'ſhall hear thee, thou haſt gained thy brother: but if 'he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two 'more; in the mouth of two or three witneſſes, every 'word ſhall be eſtabliſhed: and if he ſhall neglect to 'hear them, tell it unto the church, but if he ne'glect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an 'heathen man, and a publican.'

Laſtly, Be ſure to take the fitteſt ſeaſon for diſcharge of this duty. Every thing is beautiful in the ſeaſon thereof, and there is a ſeaſon for reproof, Eccleſ. iii. 7. The Spirit of the Lord takes notice of Abigail's obſerving it with her huſband, 1 Sam. xxv. 36. 37. And of the bleſſed man it is ſaid, he brings forth fruit in his ſeaſon, Pſal. i. 3. Unſeaſonable reproofs rarely do good, but often do much harm.—

Secondly, An undue entertainment of it by the reproved. God has preſcribed, in his word, how admonitions and reproofs are to be taken, as well as how to be given. They are to be received, (1.) with love and eſteem of the party that does us that good office, 1 Theſſ. v. 12. 13. As we eſteem the phyſician that would cure us of bodily blemiſhes, ſo him that endeavours to cure us of ſpiritual blemiſhes much more. (2.) With humbleneſs of mind, ſuffering ourſelves to be told of our faults, in order to our amendment, Heb. xiii. 22. *And I beſeech you, brethren, ſuffer the word of exhortation.* So David, Pſal. cxli. 5. *Let the righteous ſmite me, it ſhall be a kindneſs; and let him reprove me, it ſhall be an excellent oil, which ſhall not break my head.* (3.) With a practical anſwering of the end of it. This our Lord calls hearing of our brother, Matth xviii. 15. Compare Prov. xv. 31. 32. *The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wiſe.—He that heareth reproof getteth underſtanding.*

But where are they to be found who thus entertain admonitions and reproofs? Nay, the moſt part cannot endure to be reproved or admoniſhed of any thing amiſs in their way. Inſtead of giving a Chriſtian entertainment to admonition or reproof, their proud hearts riſe in paſſion againſt him that dares tell them their fault; they will defend their deed, which in calm blood their own conſcience condemns; and if they can gather any dirt againſt the reprover, right or wrong, they will be ſure to fling it in his face on that occaſion. This deſerves to be lamented with tears of blood, if we could command them. To this I would ſay,

1. Admonition and reproof is an ordinance of Chriſt appointed by him in his church among the viſible members of his body, Matth. xviii. 15. and downwards, 1 Tim. v. 20. Why are ye angry at your brother for doing his duty he is obliged to do, under the pain of the Lord's diſpleaſure? Why will ye be reckoned members of Chriſt's family, and will not ſubmit to the ordinances and laws of his houſe? Is it fit the church of Chriſt ſhould be as when there was no king in Iſrael, every one doing that which is right in his own eyes?

2. It is that which thy brother has a ſpecial intereſt in, and a right to ſee to, as being a member of the body. Nothing more ordinary than, What are you concerned? The eye might as well queſtion the concern of the hand in drawing a mote out of it, or the face in wiping a ſpot off it. *And the eye cannot ſay unto the hand, I have no need of thee,*—1 Cor. xi. 21. His concern is plain, he is a viſible member, of the ſame body with you, and

your faults which give offence, affect him and the body too. In a corporation of tradeſmen, every member has a right to quarrel what is done againſt the laws of the corporation. In a neighbourhood of huſbandmen, every one has a right to quarrel what is done againſt the laws of the neighbourhood. Yet, in a ſociety of Chriſtians by profeſſion, one may not be allowed to reprove another for what is done againſt the laws of Chriſtianity, ‘ Be aſtoniſhed, O ye heavens.’

3. It is thy own intereſt, and the advantage of thy ſoul, to be admoniſhed and reproved for thy faults, Prov. vi. 23.——‘ Reproofs of inſtruction are the ways of life.’ It is a real kindneſs done thee, Pſal. cxli. 5. Why wilt thou be angry with thy mercy? Many are ruined through the want of a faithful friend to admoniſh them of what is amiſs in their way. Men do not readily eſpy their own faults in full light; and when they have none to ſay it is ill they do, they are apt to flatter themſelves in their iniquity to their own ruin. But admonition and reproof is the way to repentance and reformation.

4. The trial of thy ſtate, whether thou art a real Chriſtian or not, depends more on the way of entertaining admonition and reproof than thou art aware of, Prov. ix. 8. *Reprove not a ſcorner, leſt he hate thee: rebuke a wiſe man, and he will love thee.* It is a good ſign of a gracious ſoul, to entertain it in a Chriſtian way, Prov. xv. 5.——‘ He that regardeth reproof is prudent.’ It ſpeaks a humble ſoul, one ready and willing to know his faults and amend them, to whom conſcience is dearer than credit, and the approbation of God than the applauſe of men. But, on the contrary, it is a very black mark in one not to be able to bear admonition and reproof, Prov. xii. 1. ‘ Whoſo loveth inſtruction, loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutiſh;’ and chap. xv. 12. See how the Spirit of God deſcribes a wicked generation. Iſ. xxix. 21. *That make a man an offender for a word, and lay a ſnare for him that reproveth in the gate*—Amos v. 10. *They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and abhor him that ſpeaketh uprightly.* This temper of ſpirit ſpeaks a man to be unwilling to ſee his ſin, and therefore unwilling to part with it, to be a lover of darkneſs rather than light; a lover of his own credit more than God's honour; to be proud, ſelfiſh, without due regard either to God or his brother. It is true, a good man may, at a time, take juſt reproof very ill, as Aſa, 2 Chron. xvi. 10. but it is not the habitual diſpoſition of his ſpirit.

Laſtly, Not taking with admonition and reproof is a forerunner of ruin, Prov. xv. 10.——‘ He that hateth reproof ſhall die;’ and xxix. 1. ‘ He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, ſhall ſuddenly be deſtroyed, and that without remedy.’ As it is a high pitch of ſin, and runs up the offence to a height, ſo it is a preſage of the approach of a heavy ſtroke—*Let no man ſtrive, nor reprove another: for thy people are as they that ſtrive with the prieſt. Therefore ſhalt thou fall in the day, and the prophet ſhall fall with thee in the night,* ——Hoſ. iv. 4. 5. They who will not take an admonition or reproof from their brethren, may expect God will reach them one from heaven, that they ſhall not get ſhifted. It is a terrible remark made on Eli's ſons their not taking with reproof, 1 Sam. ii. 25.——‘ They hearkened not to the voice of their father, becauſe the Lord would ſlay them.’ See Prov. v. 12. The ſum of what is ſaid, you may find, Prov. xxv. 12. *As an ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold: ſo is a wiſe reprover upon an obedient ear.* Let the reprover manage wiſely, and the reproved entertain it obediently, ſo ſhall it be profitable to both. The impediments thus removed, I would preſs this duty of brotherly admonition and reproof among all the viſible members of the myſtical body, all ſaints by profeſſion, and communicants particularly. Admoniſh and reprove one another, for what ye diſcern to be offenſive in one another's way. Make conſcience of this duty.

Mot. 1. For the ſake of the head, that is, for Chriſt's ſake. The ſins of profeſſors and communicants do, in a ſpecial manner, reflect diſhonour on Jeſus Chriſt, 2 Sam. xii. 14. And therefore, while we ſee the viſible members of that body diſhonouring their head, our hearts ſhould ſtir within us for that diſhonour. Here is a fair occaſion to vent our zeal for Chriſt, to declare our ſympathy with him, Pſal. lxix. 9.——‘ The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.’ And, in ſuch a caſe, ye are upon your trials as to what regard ye have to his honour.

2. For the ſake of the body. The welfare of the myſtical body lies in the welfare of the members: it cannot be right while the members are wrong. Conſider the offending party as a member of the body, and thou wilt ſee the body of Chriſt is concerned in his not walking with a ſtraight foot, which may ſtir thee up to admoniſh him. Scandalous practices or offenſive ſteps in a member, reflect diſhonour on the whole body, Eccleſ. ix. 18. Yea, and the contagion, if not timely prevented, is apt to creep from one member to another, and ſo to annoy the whole body, Heb. xii. 15.——*Leſt any root of bitterneſs ſpringing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.* For this cauſe Paul openly reproved Peter, Gal. ii. 14.

3. For the ſake of the offending member. It is one of the greateſt offices of love thou canſt do to his ſoul, to admoniſh him of his offence, James v. 19. 20. *Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth the ſinner from the error of his way, ſhall ſave a ſoul from death, and ſhall hide a multitude of ſins.* Thou wilt thereby do him a double kindneſs. (1.) Remove ſin from off him, which is a load ſo much the more dangerous, as he is not aware of it, Lev. xix. 17. It is hating of him, in God's account, not to rebuke him, as it would be not to draw him out of a mire, when he is ſticking in it. If he had disjointed a leg or arm, wouldſt thou not ſet it again if thou couldſt? Such harm do wrong ſteps in a Chriſtian's way to his ſoul; therefore——*if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are ſpiritual reſtore ſuch an one in the ſpirit of meekneſs.*—Gal. vi. 1. (2.) Prevent his ſinning more in that way. One wrong ſtep, if not righted, makes way for another; and much guilt is contracted by one's not being told of his fault, being in that caſe, *like a ſon left to himſelf, who brings his father to ſhame:* whereas a faithful reproof might prevent the repeating of the ſame folly. And as it would thus be a kindneſs to him in reſpect of the putting away of ſin, ſo conſequently in preventing ſtrokes from the hand of the Lord.

4. For your own ſake. God has laid this duty upon you, under the pain of his diſpleaſure; ſo your own intereſt is engaged here. As ye would not partake of other mens ſins, make conſcience of this duty, without which the guilt will creep over on your own ſouls, and the puniſhment thereof with it, Eph. v. 11. And why ſhould one by the neglect of this duty, adopt other mens ſins, defile his own conſcience, and mar his peace with God? Better diſpleaſe all the world than make a breach betwixt God and our own ſouls.

5. For the ſake of the common badge of the viſible myſtical body of the Chriſtian profeſſion, the holy ſacraments, 1 Tim. vi. 1. Is it not cutting to hear men ſay, Take up your profeſſors, your communicants? O that profeſſors would conſider the Chriſtian profeſſion to be of that dignity, and ſo tender a point, that they might tremble to think of bringing a ſtain upon it by their looſe walking! O that communicants would remember, that though the partaking of the Lord's table is in itſelf a paſſing action, yet it is an abiding holy ſign, whereby they are externally diſtinguiſhed for Chriſt; and that they would beware of ſuch practices as may render their badge mean and deſpiſed in the eyes of the world. Or if ſome will be ſo untender as not duly to regard it, that others would be ſo tender thereof as to check them for their offenſive carriage, out of a regard

to the holy badge of the Chriſtian profeſſion, the holy ſacraments.

Laſtly, For the ſake of thoſe who are not of the body, but of the world lying in wickedneſs. It is a piece of Chriſtian duty to regard theſe, Col. iv. 5. *Walk in wiſdom toward them that are without.*——God writes his impartiality in his judgments, in not paſſing by the offences of thoſe called by his own name, Iſa. xlii. 4. And it would much contribute to commend religion to thoſe who are ſtrangers to it, and impreſs them with honourable thoughts of the communion of ſaints, if the members of it were faithful to check every thing among themſelves, Acts v. 1. and downwards, compare with ver. 13. otherwiſe ſnares and ſtumbling-blocks are laid before the blind world.

4. Walk holily and tenderly, ſo as your converſation may be exemplary and edifying to one another, Matth. v. 16. Heb xii. 14. Rom. xiv. 19. The church, in ſcripture-language, is often called Heaven, and every member thereof ought to be as a ſhining light there, and not paſtors only, Phil. ii. 15. 16. *That ye may be blameleſs and harmleſs, the ſons of God, without rebuke, in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe nation, among whom ye ſhine as lights in the world: holding forth the word of life.*—This is the moſt effectual way of edifying one another, viz. by a holy example. And it is one great advantage of church-communion, whereby one's ſoul is edified, while the members labour ſo to walk. For underſtanding of this, two things are to be marked.

1*ſt*, There is a holineſs of heart, and a holineſs of converſation, Pſal. xxiv. 3. 4. The former is the ſpring of the latter; the former lies in the inner man, the latter lies in the outward. Holineſs of heart is a perſonal duty, which not the church, but God and one's own conſcience can take notice of directly; therefore I ſpeak not of it, while treating of the duties of the members of the body one to another. Holineſs of converſation is a relative duty, in ſo far as our fellow members ought to ſee it in us all, and may ſee it where it is to their own edification: and we owe it as an indiſpenſible duty to the body whereof we are members, viz. that our converſation be exemplarily holy and tender, Cant. i. 8. For we are not only to know Chriſt, and ſpeak of him, but to live unto him, Phil. i. 21. *For me to live is Chriſt.*—This is the holineſs and tenderneſs I ſpeak of.

2*dly*, Though it is great hypocriſy to do good works to be ſeen of men, that we may gain their applauſe; yet it is not only lawful, but a neceſſary duty of Chriſtianity, and particularly of church-communion, to walk ſo as your walk may be exemplary, and to have an eye to the edification of others, in walking tenderly before them, Matth. v. 16. *Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.* 2 Theſſ. iii. 9. Though our internal religion lies only betwixt God and us, yet our outward acts are apt to be copied by our brethren; therefore we ſhould endeavour to get the copy fair, chiefly to pleaſe God, and next to edify our brethren.

Now this exemplary, tender, holy walking, required of every viſible church-member, for edifying the fellow-members of the body, hath many branches, being as broad as the whole law of God on the outward man. I ſhall reduce them to theſe two general heads.

1. Be exemplarily holy and tender with reſpect to the doing part of religion and a holy life, Luke i. 6. The members of Chriſt are not to be idle, but active, dying to ſin, and living unto righteouſneſs. Be exemplarily holy and tender.

(1.) With reſpect to duty, Eccleſ. ix. 10. *Whatſoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.* Let your converſation be filled up with the performance and conſcientious diſcharge of every duty required at your hands, that it may be uniform. 'Then ſhall I not be aſhamed 'when I have reſpect unto all thy commandments.' Pſal. cxix. 6. Let your duty to God be conſcientiouſly performed in all the parts of it; ſince he is your Creator and Redeemer, refuſe him no piece of required ſervice, for ye are wholly his, Acts xxvii. 23. Be conſcientious in your duty to man, for God's ſake, and ſo join in your practice what God has joined in the commandment, Acts xxiv. 16. Neglect not perſonal duty which lies betwixt you, Tit. ii. 12. and have a ſpecial regard to the duties of your ſtation, and the relation wherein ye ſtand, if ever ye would have your converſation edifying. God has ſet every one of us in ſome ſtation and relation, and the conſcientious practice of the duty of our reſpective ſtations makes a man or woman ſhine, however low a ſphere they move in, 1 Tim. vi. 1. 'Let as many ſervants as are under the yoke, 'count their own maſters worthy of all honour, that 'the name of God and his doctrine be not blaſphemed,' 1 Pet. iii. 1. 2. There is no perſon who may not this way edify the body of Chriſt, and be an uſeful member for their own and others good.

(2.) With reſpect to ſin, Jude 23. O the miſchief done by the ſinful liberty church-members take to themſelves! They fearleſsly break down and go over the holy hedge, and others, ſeeing them before, do follow after, and ſo they prove ruining to themſelves and others too, Matth. xviii. 7. Think no ſin little, ſince it is an offence againſt a great God, and makes way for greater, not only in yourſelves, but in others too. For the ſake of the head, and the reſt of the members, abhor it as hell, Rom. xii. 9. 1 Theſſ. v. 22.

(3.) In the practice and uſe of indifferent things. There the apoſtle's rule ſhould take place, Rom. xv. 1. 2. *We then that are ſtrong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to pleaſe ourſelves. Let every one of us pleaſe his neighbour for his good to edification.* It is not enough that the thing is in itſelf lawful; ye are alſo, in reſpect of your brother, to conſider if it be expedient, 1 Cor. vi. 12. What is in itſelf indifferent, may in its circumſtances be rendered unlawful to you, in ſo far as ye cannot do it without the ſcandal of your brother, Rom. xiv. 20. The neglect of this is one of the crying ſins of this day. Men conſider their own ſelves, without regard to others, and hence fearleſsly lay ſtumbling blocks before others. The ſenſe of the duties of church communion is much loſt among all parties in this church this day; in the natural body a thing will be refuſed, though it be good for the ſtomach, if it be ill for the head, &c. But, in this degenerate generation, the members of the viſible myſtical body are grown ſo ſelfiſh, that to pleaſe themſelves they can drive over others, without any regard to their good or hurt.

2. Be exemplarily holy and tender in the ſuffering part of religion. And be ſo for the edification of the body. Others have been ſo for our good, Heb. xii. 1. ſo ſhould we be for the good of others. What croſſes and afflictions the Lord may be pleaſed to lay on you, bear Chriſtianly, with patience, ſubmiſſion, and reſignation, bringing forth the fruit of them, Rom. xii. 12. *Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing inſtant in prayer.* They are trials, and in them we ought to carry ſo, as God may be honoured, and our brethren edified, while we are by divine providence brought upon the ſtage to undergo our reſpective trials. Conſider here,

(1.) God, in laying afflictions on ſome of his people, has an eye to others good, as well as that of the afflicted party; even as blood is let out of the arm or foot, not for the good of the arm or foot only, but the good of the whole body; though it is only one member that gets the wound, yet the deſign is for the reſt of the members too, 2 Cor. i. 6. *And whether we be afflicted, it is for your conſolation and ſalvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the ſame ſufferings which we alſo ſuffer: or whether we be comforted it is for your conſolation and ſalvation.* As when one is examined the reſt are inſtructed; when one of the children of a family is chaſtiſed, the reſt are thereby bettered; ſo our gracious God often teaches many at the expence of one only.

(2.) A Chriſtian behaviour under trouble is one of the moſt influential points of Chriſtian practice, likely to have the greateſt efficacy on others, ſpectators of it and witneſſes to it, or to whoſe knowledge it may come, Heb. xii. 1. 2. 3. Hence the blood of the martyrs was ſaid to be the ſeed of the church: and the cauſe of the goſpel never loſt by perſecution, while the perſecuted were honeſtly carried through. Doing well is ready to influence others, but ſuffering well is far more ſo. A croſs carried evenly and Chriſtianly has a certain force to draw others to imitation, as it is moſt admired.

(3.) Thoſe who, by reaſon of their afflictions, ſeem to themſelves to be laid by as uſeleſs, are miſtaken; they have a moſt precious opportunity put into their hand, to be ſerviceable to Chriſt and the members of his body, Col. i. 24. 'Who now rejoice in my ſufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Chriſt in my fleſh, for his body's ſake.' God has brought them forth on the ſtage, to take trial of their ſuffering graces, for the inſtructing, exciting, ſtrengthening and edifying others. Job was a man who did much for God in his day; but the ſuffering part of his life has been of the greateſt uſe in all ages ſince, and will be to the end. The Pſalmiſt David complains, Pſal. xxxi. 12. that he was like a broken veſſel; but every ſherd of that broken pot has been of good uſe to the church of Chriſt ſince, and has helped to heal many.

(4.) Wherefore Chriſtians under their afflictions ought to conſider that they ſuffer as members of the body, bearing that part allotted for them of the ſufferings appointed for myſtical Chriſt; for the ſufferings of Chriſt perſonal are at an end, but the ſufferings of Chriſt myſtical are but yet a filling up, Col. i. 24. This would arm them with patience, as conſidering their particular trials to be, in ſome ſort, a common cauſe for the good of others, as well as their own; and may excite them, in the blackeſt lines of providence, to caſt ſuch a fair copy as others may write after.

To preſs this duty of church-communion, conſider.

1. The intereſt of God's name and honour in it, John xv. 8. *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; ſo ſhall ye be my diſciples.* The fruitfulneſs of thoſe who are planted in the houſe of the Lord, brings much glory to the maſter of the houſe; and their barreneſs brings much diſhonour to him before the world. And ſhould not the one be vigorouſly purſued, and the other guarded againſt, by all thoſe whom he has *called into the fellowſhip of his Son.*

2. The intereſt of your fellow-members in it. It is a dark world; they are the moſt uſeful in the communion of ſaints, who moſt ſhine as lights. Every action of yours, every piece of your carriage, being in church-communion, is apt to be copied. By your tender example you may do good to many; by your untenderneſs you may prove ſtumbling-blocks to others.

3. The intereſt of the goſpel in it, Tit. ii. 9. 10. *Exhort ſervants to be obedient to their own maſters——not purloining, but ſhewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of our God and Saviour in all things.* It is the glory of the goſpel, that the power thereof appears in the lives of the profeſſors thereof, ſtamping holineſs and tenderneſs upon every part of their own walk: and, on the other hand, it brings great ſcandal on the doctrine of Chriſt, that the profeſſors of it are unholy in their lives.

Laſtly, Your own intereſt is in it for time and eternity. As ye ſow ye will reap, both for kind and quantity.

5. Bear one anothers burdens, afflictions, croſſes, temptations and trials, Gal. vi. 2. 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and ſo fulfil the law of Chriſt.' Heb. xiii. 3. 'Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them: and them which ſuffer adverſity, as being yourſelves alſo in the body.' 1 Cor. xii. 26. 'and whether one member ſuffer, all the members ſuffer with it.' This is a natural duty of the members of one body. That part of the communion of ſaints, which is above, is got quite beyond theſe; but thoſe of them who are yet in the world, are in the place of trial, where the clouds return after the rain. But not being ſtanding each one by himſelf, but in the body with other fellow-members, bearing their part of the ſufferings allotted for the body, there is all reaſon that the afflicted's lot ſhould be looked on as a common cauſe, and each one ſhould help to bear the burden with them; their burden of ſimple affliction, or burden of temptation. And,

1. Have a cordial ſympathy with them, and hearty concern in their afflictions and temptations; and ſo expreſs it as they may know it, Rom. xii. 15. Let your hearts be touched with fellow-feeling of the diſtreſſes of your brethren; and therefore 'put on bowels of mercy,' &c. Col. iii. 12. and lay aſide ſelfiſhneſs and unconcernedneſs with the caſe of others. It is a mortified member that is not touched with the pain of other members of the body; and he who has no kindly ſympathy with the ſaints, in their troubles and temptations ſeems not to partake of the ſpirit of that communion, Amos vi. 1. 6. *Wo to them that are at eaſe in Zion, ———that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themſelves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joſeph.* And let them know it: for what comfort can it afford them, though your bowels yearn towards them, if they underſtand it not, if they ſee it not, it is all a caſe to them as if it were not.

2. Bear their burden as it affects them, and not always as it would affect yourſelves, Rom. xv. 1. Many weigh the afflictions and temptations of others in their own balance, ſo find them very light; and therefore paſs them as unworthy of their concern, Job xii. 5. 'He that is ready to ſlip with his feet, is as a lamp deſpiſed in the thought of him that is at eaſe.' But the true way of judging of the weight of theſe things is, as they are apt to affect the afflicted party, and with that weight we ſhould bear them, 2 Cor. xi. 29. *Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?* One mote will diſturb the eye, when a hundred of them lying on the hand will create no trouble, no hazard. Shall the hand then be unconcerned to pluck it out? That may make a heavy affliction and dangerous temptation to one, which would be a very light one, and perhaps none at all to another. And it may be a greater act of Chriſtian obedience in one to make his way through a temptation or affliction in itſelf ſmall, than in another through one ten times greater; as the widow's throwing in her mite was more than all the gifts of the rich men, Luke xxi. 1. 2. 3.

3. Let your mouths be open to enquire into their griefs, as far as Chriſtian prudence will allow, and your hearts open to receive their moans, Col. iv. 7, 8. *All my ſtate ſhall Tychicus declare unto you—whom I have ſent unto you for the ſame purpoſe, that he might know your eſtate, and comfort your hearts.* If any member of the natural body be ſore and wounded, how natural is it for the hand tenderly to uncover and open it up, the eye to pry with compaſſion on the ſeveral parts of the ſore, &c. even when they cannot remove the trouble? Such is the caſe of human nature in its preſent ſtate of weakneſs, that there is a kind of relief, though but a ſorry one, in venting of their grief into the boſom of one where it may be entertained with ſympathy. The want of which makes afflictions and temptations often like a fire ſhut up, prying on one's ſpirits, Pſal. xxxix. 3. and has made the beſt of men complain heavily, Mic. vii. 1. 5. and downwards.

4. Comfort, encourage, adviſe, and direct them ſuitable to their caſe, 1 Theſſ. iv. 18. This is all that is within the compaſs of one's power to do for their afflicted brethren, in ſome caſes, Matth. xxv. 36. And thus may one by a word fitly ſpoken, be a happy inſtrument to refreſh the bowels of the afflicted, and blunt

the edge of a temptation, 2 Tim. i. 16. Job xvi. 5.—*I would ſtrengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips ſhould aſſuage your grief.* And here a ſpecial tenderneſs is required; and, with a due regard to the circumſtances of the afflicted, all harſhneſs is to be evited, leſt one add affliction to the afflicted; which was the rock Job's friends ſplit upon, and cauſed him to make that affecting reſentment, Job xvi. 4. 5.

5. What can you in conſcience and reaſon ward off, or carry off of their burden, do it, for ye are members one of another, Rom. xli. 5. Philip. ii. 4. *Look not every one on his own things, but every man alſo on the things of others.* So ye are to give all your ſpiritual or temporal aſſiſtances to the leſſening or removing of their trial in a way of duty. This ſhould particularly appear in ſhielding one another's reputation, which is often blaſted by venomous tongues and open ears, which together lay a heavy burden on the ſuffering party, Prov. xxv. 23.

6. In troubles, and temptations from men, ſupport and ſtand by the oppreſſed for their deliverance, eſpecially in the cauſe of Chriſt and religion, 2 Tim. iv. 16. 'At my firſt anſwer no man ſtood with me, but all men 'forſook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their 'charge.' And chap. i. 16. 17. *The Lord give mercy unto the houſe of Oneſiphorus; for he often refreſhed me, and was not aſhamed of my chain; but, when he was in Rome, he ſought me out very diligently, and found me.* We are not born for ourſelves, but for God's honour, and the good of our brethren. And the leaving of thoſe helpleſs, on whom, by the divine providence, the ſtorm of the trial or temptation falls, is a forſaking and being aſhamed of the cauſe of Chriſt in the world. Thus ought we to bear one another's burden, as members of the body of Chriſt. To ſtir you up to which neceſſary duty, conſider,

Laſtly, Earneſt prayer is to be made to God for our brethren under their trials, that they may be ſupported, refreſhed, and delivered, according to the will of God; and this whether their trials be from the immediate hand of God or man, Acts xii. 5. 'Peter therefore 'was kept in priſon; but prayer was made without ceaſ-'ing of the church unto God for him.' 2 Theſſ. iii. 1. 2. 'Finally, brethren, pray for us—that we may be de-'livered from unreaſonable and wicked men.'——This is a ſpecial way of bearing one another's burdens, to bear them before the throne of grace, and to wreſtle with God for them there. This is one of the great advantages of the communion of ſaints, viz. a communion of prayers, that when any known weight lies upon a member, the reſt cry unto the head on behalf of it. And here I offer four things.

(1.) It is much to be wiſhed that Chriſtians praying together, when occaſionally meeting, were more in uſe. And particularly that thoſe who are in diſtreſs would not only require miniſters or elders to pray with them, but even fellow-Chriſtians viſiting them, and that ſuch ſhould readily comply with ſuch a deſire, both obſerving circumſtances ſo as to diſcern when and in what caſes it may be to edification. It is very agreeable to the communion of ſaints, and to that love and ſympathy which ought to be among the members of Chriſt.

(2.) As it is a commendable practice in the church, to require public prayers on behalf of the ſick or thoſe otherwiſe afflicted; and as the miniſter is the mouth of the congregation, ſo ye would conſider that ye ought affectionately to join in theſe prayers, as parties nearly concerned, and whoſe prayers for the afflicted are deſired, foraſmuch as the prayers deſired are the prayers of the congregation, and not the miniſter's only. The language of theſe prayers is, 'Brethren, pray for us.' And therefore, I beſeech you, let not this be a matter of mere form to you, in which you may only notice what is begged for them; but let your hearts go along with the words, even the length of the throne, for a brother or ſiſter in diſtreſs.

(3.) Carry home with you the caſe of thoſe to your family and ſecret prayers, and confine not your concern for them within the walls of the church. If the afflictions of others do touch your hearts as they ought, you may carry a copy of the paper home with you on your ſympathizing hearts, to mind you to put up petitions for them in your families and in ſecret. If ye have neglected this formerly, mind it in time to come, and, when ye have done it, know ye have done no more than what was your duty, Heb. xiii. 3. *Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them: and them which ſuffer adverſity, as being yourſelves alſo in the body.*

(4.) Some caſes of others in affliction may require of you extraordinary prayer, by ſetting ſome time apart for that very end, either yourſelves alone, or in conjunction with fellow-Chriſtians. So David in the caſe of the child——'faſted and went in and lay all night on the 'earth,' 2 Sam xii. 16. And in the caſe of others too, Pſal. xxxv. 13. 14. And ſo in the caſe of Peter in priſon, Acts xii. 12.——*Many were gathered together in the houſe of Mary, praying.* The ſerious conſideration of the kind of the affliction, and of the perſon under it, with reſpect to the honour of God, the good of the church, and your own particular intereſt depending thereon, muſt determine theſe caſes.

I will add, by the by, that where prayers are deſired for thoſe in affliction, the affliction being removed, thankſgiving ſhould likewiſe be deſired. It is but the prevalency of an unallowable cuſtom, to give up notes for praying for the ſick, and yet to give none for thankſgiving for the recovery of the party when recovered. If the congregation weep with them, it is reaſonable they have occaſion to rejoice with them too; if to petition for the mercy, to give thanks for it too, Luke xvii. 17. 18.

Motive 1. Conſider it is the ſpecial command of your head, Gal. vi. 2. it is a 'fulfilling of the law of Chriſt,' viz. the law of love. Our Lord Jeſus loved his people ſo as to die for them, therefore he requires them particularly to love one another. His compaſſion to them was without a parallel, therefore he will have them full of bowels towards each other; he bare the burdens of the whole, the burden of guilt, and curſe due to them for ſin, therefore he will have them bear one another's burdens. Here is the ſpecial reaſon why it is called the law of Chriſt.

2. Ye have the example of the head for it, John xiii. 15. 'For I have given you an example that ye ſhould 'do as I have done to you.' He is touched with all their afflictions, Iſa. lxiii. 9. If any annoy them, he reckons himſelf perſecuted, Acts ix. 4. A moſt tender ſympathy he has with them—*for he that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye*, Zech. ii. 8. And as for their temptations, he is not unconcerned about them, Heb. iv. 15. Imitate your head, O members of the body: ſympathize with them whom Chriſt ſympathizes with, leſt ye pour contempt on thoſe whom Chriſt honours, and forget the afflictions of thoſe whom he tenderly remembers.

3. The trials and diſtreſſes of others are deſigned for your good as was ſaid before. Our merciful Father, in compaſſion to the reſt, teaches them at the expence of one. Does it not then require your ſympathy, that others are afflicted for your ſake? Col. i. 24. Should not ye anſwer the deſign of providence, in exerciſing of thoſe duties and graces which providence lays afflictions and temptations on others to bring forth into exerciſe on you? he lays the rod on your fellow-members, to bring you and many others to the throne of grace.

4. What is thy brother's caſe to day may be thine to morrow. Is he under affliction now? Thou mayſt be in the ſame hereafter, or in another as hard to bear as it is for him now to bear his. Is he under temptation? As faſt as thou ſeemeſt to ſtand now, thou mayeſt be as low under the ſame or a worſe, to-morrow, as

he is to-day, Gal. vi. 1. 1 Cor. x. 12. Refuſe him not that help of thee, which thou mayeſt need of him ere long. There is no trouble, no temptation, which befals one member of the body, which another can certainly ſecure himſelf from.

Laſtly, It is neceſſary to evidence thy being of the body, 1 Cor. xii. 26. Col. iii. 12. How can it be accounted a live member, that has not ſympathy with the reſt in pain? but that Chriſtian ſympathy of bearing one another's burdens ſpeaks union with the members of the head. That hardneſs, ſelfiſhneſs, and careleſſneſs about the trials and temptations of others, which is found in many, cannot but darken the evidences of good people, ſo far as it prevails, and caſt them as naught in whom it reigns.

6. Edify one another by Chriſtian conference, Eph. iv. 29. *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the uſe of edifying, that it may miniſter grace unto the hearers*, 1 Theſſ. v. 11. *Wherefore comfort yourſelves together, and edify one another.* In ſo far as the body is made up of ſeveral Chriſtians, they ought to have ſuitable conference, for the edification of one another as members, as they are brought together by divine providence. It is the duty of joint members of any lawful ſociety, to treat among themſelves of the intereſts of it and its concerns. Fellow-travellers to one place are to be uſeful this way to one another. Chriſtians are a ſociety by themſelves, the communion of ſaints, they are fellow-travellers towards Zion; Chriſtian conference is the native reſult of the relation. I ſhall branch out this in theſe things.

1. Thoſe who by providence are caſt together ordinarily, whether in a family or neighbourhood, ſo as they muſt ordinarily converſe together, ſhould labour to be uſeful to, and edify one another by their communication, Heb. iii. 13. *But exhort one another daily while it is called to-day; leſt any of you be hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin.* Religion ſhould be carried by us into all our relations, and however we be poſted in particular ſocieties, we ſhould always remember our general calling and relation, as viſible members of the myſtical body, that we converſe together as becometh ſaints.

2. Occaſional meetings of Chriſtians together ſhould be thus improven. There is a commandment 'to ſpeak of thoſe things while men walk by the way together,' Deut. vi. 7. We find the two diſciples going to Emmaus thus exerciſed, and a happy iſſue of their conference, Luke xxiv. 14. 15. Were mens ſpirits habitually heavenly, even occaſional encounters would produce ſomething of this ſort betwixt fellow Chriſtians.

3. Chriſtians meeting together on holy and ſpiritual ſacred occaſions ſhould, in a ſpecial manner be thus improven, as on Sabbath-days, and at ſermons. Then it is the day calls for it, and the Lord's word and ordinances miniſter matter of Chriſtian conference. Days have been, when people going to or coming from ordinances, have been ſweetly employed this way, Pſal. lv. 14. and, between ſermons, either went alone for prayer and meditation, or gathered together for Chriſtian conference. But alas! this is much decayed, and among none more perhaps than among us. I often ſee people ſtanding buſy ſpeaking together, after the public worſhip is begun, and with my eye or voice, muſt labour to break off the conference, the which if it were not worldly, would ſurely be broken off by the beginning of the public worſhip. The worldly diſcourſe in our church yard has been, and is an offence and ſtumbling-block to ſtrangers, and is like to turn the reproach of the place, whereby God is highly diſhonoured. This is a horrid profanation of the Lord's day, an open contempt of it and his ordinances, which ſpeaks the goſpel ſapleſs and taſteleſs to you, and is a preſage of a ſtroke, Neh. xiii. 18. Alas! how think ye one ſhould preach to people making ſuch preparation for hearing? How ſhall ye profit by preaching after ſuch communications? Iſ. lviii. 13, 14. How ſhall we pray for God's bleſſing on your labours and ſubſtance, or look to be heard, when ye ſacrilegiouſly rob God of his own day at this rate? I beſeech you, for the Lord's ſake, and your own ſouls ſake, and as you would not provoke the Lord to leave me as an idol-ſhepherd among you, who ſhall have no power to profit your ſouls, reform this practice, and either go by yourſelves for prayer and meditation, or converſe like Chriſtians.

4. Fellow Chriſtians ſhould communicate their caſes one to another, as far as Chriſtian prudence will allow and ſtrengthen, inſtruct, and edify one another, Pſal. lxvi. 16. The wiſe man obſerves, that *two are better than one; for if the one fall, the other will lift him up*, Eccleſ. iv. 10. And happy are they who thus have a friend in need. How many might have inſtruction in what they know not, the edge of temptations blunted, their hearts warmed, and their ſouls bettered, by a mutual communication of caſes, troubles, temptations, and experiences?

Laſtly, Appointed private meetings of ſeveral Chriſtians together, for prayer and Chriſtian conference for their mutual edification, provided it mar not family-worſhip, nor be improven to the prejudice of publick ordinances, as they are warranted by the word of God, ſo might be of good uſe (if rightly improven) to the advancement of religion, Acts xii. 12. Mal. iii. 16. Col. iii. 16. By this means Chriſtians might improve both in gifts and grace, in knowledge and love, and they have been bleſſed of God to theſe holy ends unto many: and ordinarily, in pariſhes where the goſpel begins to thrive, they are ſet up almoſt as naturally as the birds draw together in the ſpring: and, where the goſpel work is going back, they decay; owing their fall, either to coldriſeneſs in God's matters creeping in, or the fiery heat of diviſion.

Motive 1. The neceſſity and uſefulneſs of it is great. It is neceſſary and uſeful for the honour of God, 1 Pet. ii. 9. for the good of our brethren, Rom. xiv. 19. and for our own good, Prov. xi. 25. The tongue is called our glory, becauſe it is the inſtrument of glorifying God, and ſo doing good to others; and, without this, men are chargeable with laying up their talents in a napkin, hiding their light under a buſhel.

2. The thriving or decay of religion goes hand in hand with it. Look to the times wherein religion proſpered, and you will find that *they who feared the Lord ſpoke often one to another*; and as that wore away, ſo religion decayed. Neareſt the heart neareſt the mouth. Where the fire is burning on the hearth, the ſmoke is going forth of the chimney. Where religion is lively in the heart, it will appear in mens converſe.

Laſtly, Times of abounding ſin and approaching wrath is a ſpecial ſeaſon for it, and calls the fearers of God to ſet about it, Mal. iii. 16. Such is the day in which we live, 'wherein iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxeth cold.' God is removing the pillars, and his judgments are abroad in the world, and leſſer ſtrokes are ſent as forerunners of greater.

7. and *laſtly*, Be ready to aſſiſt the needy members, and to communicate of your worldly goods to the poor in the body, 1 John iii. 17. 18. *But whoſo hath this world's good, and ſeeth his brother have need, and ſhutteth up his bowels of compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.* Rom. xii. 13. *Diſtributing to the neceſſity of ſaints, given to hoſpitality.* It is much to be regretted, that many of the poor, eſpecially the vagrant ones, have no ſemblance of piety or memberſhip in the body of Chriſt. Yet even theſe have a right to ſupply from us, becauſe they are God's creatures. But the poor ſaints have a double right to it, not only as God's creatures, but as members of Chriſt, and therefore the church is bound particularly to ſee to them, Gal. vi. 10. 'As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, eſpecially unto them who are of the houſhold of faith.'

The Lord in his wiſdom has ſeen it meet to make ſome of his members poor in the world, not only for their own trial, but the trial of their brethren, who are obliged to ſupply them, Deut. xv. 11. ‘For the poor ſhall never ceaſe out of the land: therefore I command thee ſaying, Thou ſhalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in the land.’ Matth. xxvi. 11. This duty I branch out in five particulars.

1. Seaſonably act towards the relief of thoſe members who are fallen into decay in the world, as ye have opportunity, Lev. xxv. 35. *And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fall in decay with thee, then thou ſhalt relieve him, yea, though he be a ſtranger or ſojourner, that he may live with thee.* As the keeping of a man that is ſtumbling from quite falling down, is much alike with helping him up when he is fallen; ſo the relieving of a man at the brink of poverty, is much alike with relieving him in it. This duty I take to be aimed at, Luke vi. 35. ‘But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again.’——And if it were more exerciſed, there would be fewer poor than there are.

2. Abound in private diſtributions towards the poor members, at your houſes, or otherwiſe, as you have occaſion, Matth. vi. 3. Heb. xiii. 16. *But, to do good, and to communicate, forget not, for with ſuch ſacrifices God is well pleaſed.* Occaſions of this nature are ordinary, which try what ſort of ſtewards we are of the good things of this life which providence has put into our hand. It was Job's comfort in his poverty, that when he was wealthy, he communicated of what he had to the poor, Job xxxi. 19. and downward.

3. Conſcientiouſly give in to the Sabbath's collections, to be diſtributed by the church. God has appointed theſe, and the Lord Jeſus has appointed church officers for taking care of the poor in the church, Acts vi. 1, 3. And what they are to give out is to come into their hand by the church-collections, 2 Cor. xvi. 2. *Upon the firſt day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in ſtore, as God hath proſpered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.* So this matter of the Sabbath day's collections is not to be looked upon as a buſineſs of mere faſhion, but as a divine ordinance in the church which ſhould make people, out of conſcience towards God, to give into it, a ſuitable proportion to the ſubſtance God has put in their hands.

4. Grudge not extraordinary diſtributions, towards the relief not only of thoſe of other congregations, but of other churches, whom you never ſaw, nor will perhaps ſee in the face, Rom. xv. 26. ‘For it hath pleaſed them of Macedonia and Achaia, to make a certain contribution for the ſaints which are at Jeruſalem.’ This is a duty of the communion of ſaints; for all the churches and congregations of ſaints in the world make but one body of Chriſt, and they who are at the greateſt diſtance from you are your brethren. Why ſhould any then think themſelves unconcerned with their diſtreſs?

Laſtly, Be ready to give of your ſubſtance for pious uſes, towards the advancing of the good of the body, which is the church, Prov. iii. 9. There are ſeveral occaſions people have of laying out money for pious uſes, which want of due conſideration makes them to do grudgingly. But if thou haſt an occaſion put into thy hand, by this money to honour God, to bring about good for the ſouls of others, to contribute to the good of the church, thou art to look on it as a ſpecial duty of the communion of ſaints, and an occaſion of beſtowing it to a noble uſe.

As to what one is to give, every one muſt conſcientiouſly determine that for himſelf; but here is the general rule, viz. that people are to give in a proportion to the neceſſity of their brethren, and their own ability, Rom. xii. 13. 1 Cor. xvi. 2. One is to eye,

1. The neceſſity of their brethren: for that may be too little for ſome, which may be more than enough to others whoſe ſtraits are not ſo great. And withal, in weighing this their neceſſity, it is to be noticed, if the poor walk ſuitable to their condition; for neither religion nor reaſon requires us to foſter them in voluntary idleneſs, or in living beyond the bounds of their condition, 2 Theſſ iii. 10. 11.

2. Their own ability. What one gives muſt be his own, and not another's, for God hates robbery for burnt-offering. Thoſe to whom God has given much, of them much is required; thoſe who have little, the leſs is required. Our own ſtrait condition does not altogether excuſe from it. The widow's two mites were required and accepted; yea, people are bound to labour for that they may have what to give to the poor, Eph. iv. 28. *Let him that ſtole ſteal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.* And whatever is in their power to do for them, they are obliged to do, Acts iii. 6.

Motive 1. Conſider our Lord Chriſt looks on what is given to his poor members as given to himſelf, and will make honourable mention of it at the great day, Matth. xxv. 35. 36. ‘For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirſty, and ye gave me drink: I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was ſick, and ye viſited me: I was in priſon, and ye came unto me.’ Chriſt is in them, his image upon them, they and he are one, and ſhall not their fellow-members regard them as ſuch, in ſupplying of their neceſſities? We are to part with our all to him at his call. Sometimes he requires it by perſecutors, and then we are to give it up at his call for his ſake: ſometimes by his needy members; and then alſo it is given to him, *Lent to the Lord.*

2. We are not abſolute maſters of our ſubſtance, but ſtewards of it, accountable to the Lord for our management. The church is God's houſehold, and Chriſt has ſecured, by the covenant, neceſſaries for this life to all that are his, Iſa. xxxiii. 16.—*Bread ſhall be given him, his waters ſhall be ſure.* Only he has put the portion of the poor members in the hands of others, to give it out to them, according to their neceſſity, and what of it is in their hand, Luke xvi. 10. 11. 12. Therefore we ſhall be unfaithful ſtewards, if we diſtribute not to the neceſſities of the ſaints.

3. They are fellow-members of the ſame body with you, and fellow-heirs of the ſame inheritance, Gal. vi. 10. *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, eſpecially unto them who are of the houſehold of faith.* The ſpiritual relation that is betwixt us and them challengeth it as a debt of love. Have we not all one Father, one elder Brother, one Spirit knitting us to one Head, and one heritage for ever, to which men are admitted without reſpect of perſons? Suppoſe ſeveral men were travelling together into a far country to receive a common inheritance, would not thoſe who have abundance of ſpending money ſupply thoſe who are run ſhort in the way? So ſhould we do with the poor ſaints.

4. It tends much to the honour of God, and the credit of the goſpel and of the church. Every ſociety looks on themſelves as obliged to ſee to the ſupply of the wants of their members? and ſhould not the communion of ſaints be exemplary therein, conſidering the moſt ſtraits ties among them? By our Lord's own verdict, ‘Giving is a more bleſſed thing than receiving,’ Acts xx. 35. therein we do in a ſpecial manner appear in likeneſs to the Lord, Luke vi. 35. 36. And O ſhould we not honour with our ſubſtance him, *who, for our ſakes, became poor, that we might be rich?* 2 Cor. viii. 9.

Laſtly, It has a reward of grace annexed to it, being rightly performed. It is the beſt way to ſecure a through-bearing for us and ours, Prov. xxviii. 27. ‘He that giveth to the poor ſhall not have lack.’——What we have is liable to many accidents; but laying out for God is better ſecurity, than laying up what God calls for at our hand, Eccleſ. xi. 1. ‘Caſt thy bread upon the wa-

‘ ters : for thou ſhalt find it after many days.’ What is thus laid out brings in to the giver, Prov. iii. 9. 10. ‘ Honour the Lord with thy ſubſtance, and with the firſt-fruits of all thine increaſe ; ſo ſhall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy preſſes ſhall burſt out with new wine.’ Solomon obſerves the accompliſhment of it, Prov. xi. 24. ‘ There is that ſcattereth, and yet increaſeth.’——And though our good works do not merit either the temporal or eternal reward of glory ; yet even the eternal reward will be according to our works, and that is an eternal truth, 2 Cor. ix. 6. *But this I ſay, He which ſoweth ſparingly ſhall reap alſo ſparingly ; and he which ſoweth bountifully ſhall reap alſo bountifully.*

V. Admiſſion to the Lord's table is a matter of the greateſt weight and concern, to be managed and gone about with all ſolemn ſerioufneſs and caution. Whoſo conſiders that, being one bread, we declare ourſelves thereby one body of Chriſt, muſt needs ſee this ; and that there is great need to take heed to our feet in entering on that holy ground. And, conſidering that the church is a communion of ſaints in profeſſion, whereof Chriſt is the head, there is need to look well who be admitted thereto as complete members of the viſible body. And here it is evident,

1. That there ought not to be a promiſcuous admiſſion to the Lord's table, which ſome have contended for. It is not only contrary to our Lord's expreſs command, Matth. vii. 6. *Give not that which is holy unto the dogs,* ——but contrary to the nature, uſe and ends of that ordinance. It is a diſtinguiſhing ſign, to put a viſible difference betwixt the communion of ſaints and communion of ſinners ; and therefore cannot be common to both. Shall the badge of the members of Chriſt be put upon thoſe who bear Satan's mark on their foreheads ? Shall they be declared of the body of Chriſt, who are, to the conviction of the church, of the world lying in wickedneſs ?

2. Admiſſion to the Lord's table is an act of church power and government : for, if the church be a body or ſociety by itſelf, and the Lord's table the ſpecial privilege of that body, whereby one is declared and allowed to be of that body, there can be no lawful admiſſion thereto, but in the way of church power and government. For what corporation is there, whereinto one may be admitted without an act of the governing part of it ? Our Lord has appointed governors in his church, 1 Cor. xii. 28. who have a power to admit to, and debar from the ſacrament, Matth. vii. 6. ; and this belongs not to the miniſter alone, but to the ſociety of ruling church-officers, that is, the miniſter and elders ; for the keys of government, to which admiſſion belongs, are not given to one, but to the unity of church-officers, 2 Cor. ii. 6.

3. There ought to be a due trial of thoſe who are admitted to the Lord's table, that it may be ſeen, whether or not thoſe who ſeek to be admitted are qualified according to the laws of the viſible kingdom of Chriſt, leſt ſuch be brought in as may bring a ſtain on the ſociety, and corrupt and defile them, inſtead of edifying them. This alſo flows from the nature of the church as a ſeparate ſociety, and a communion of ſaints. For, to bring in hand over head, without conſideration of the perſons, is much a caſe with throwing open the doors of the ſanctuary, that any who pleaſes may enter. It is true, ſince God only knows the heart, no doubt hypocrites and naughty perſons may be let in as honeſt-hearted Chriſtians ; the devil's goats may come in by their likeneſs to Chriſt's ſheep ; but if their out-ſide be promiſing, that is all the church can judge of, other things are left to God's judgment.

4. The whole matter is of the greateſt weight and deepeſt concern ; and that,

1ſt, To the admitters, who are, as it were, the porters of the Lord's houſe, and ſhould look well whom they admit to the Lord's table, that it be not profaned through their default. There are two things requiſite to give one a right, before the church, to the Lord's table. (1.) A competent meaſure of knowledge ; without this people cannot examine themſelves, nor rightly diſcern the Lord's body, 1 Cor. xi. 28. 29. and they are declared none of the Lord's people, Iſa. xxvii. 11.—*It is a people of no underſtanding ; therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will ſhew them no favour.* The miniſter, whoſe office it is to teach, is the moſt competent, tho' perhaps not the only judge in this point. (2.) A blameleſs life, not ſcandalous and profane, Matth. vii. 6. Theſe cannot be fit gueſts at the holy table, whoſe converſation is openly wicked. And miniſters and elders who are, by their office, overſeers of the manners of the people, are to enquire into this. And whoſo duly conſiders it, will find it a moſt weighty piece of work.

2dly, To the church, and every member thereof. Is it not the concern of every one in the ſociety, who be admitted as fellow-members of the body, to partake of the greateſt privileges of the church ? It is the duty of all to do what in them lies, that God's ordinance be not profaned, that the communion of ſaints, which is one bread, receive not harm by the bringing in thereto ſuch as will ſtain and defile it, and that they be not partakers of other mens ſins, 1 Cor. v. 6. 7. *Your glorying is not good : know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump ? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Chriſt our paſſover is ſacrificed for us.*

Queſt. *What can and ought private Chriſtians to do in this caſe ? Anſw.* If the caſe or offence of the party being ſuch as renders him unworthy to be admitted, cannot be removed by private admonition, either through the party's obſtinacy, or the publickneſs of it, in that caſe they ought to bring it to the church officers, in order to ſtop the admiſſion, Matth. xviii. 15. If they do not this, they partake of the guilt ; if they do, they have delivered their own ſouls, though the church officers do not their duty, and may partake with a good conſcience.

3dly, To the party himſelf. It is the taking on of the external public badge of the communion of ſaints, a ſolemn declaration of his being one body with the members of Chriſt, the which muſt needs be of great concern to any one who duly conſiders how ſolemn and awful an action this is. To go about this work ignorantly, indeliberately, and raſhly, without due preparation, is a taking of God's name in vain with a witneſs. Wherefore,

(1.) Let thoſe who have a hand in admiſſion to the Lord's table, be careful and conſcientious to approve themſelves to God in this weighty matter. (2.) Let the whole communicants be concerned to ſee to it as they have opportunity. (3.) Let perſons looking that way duly conſider the weight of the matter.

Thoſe who have been once orderly admitted, may at every occaſion thereafter claim their privilege in caſe they have kept free from public ſcandal. But as for thoſe who have not been yet orderly admitted, they ought to make it a matter of time, that there be no hurry in their admiſſion. I have often complained, that ſome never ſhew their deſire of admiſſion, till there be little time left either for themſelves or us to conſider of that weighty buſineſs. I have endeavoured to prevent that by giving intimation ſome weeks before, but almoſt ſtill in vain as to ſome. May we be helped to take ſome method hereafter that may effectually prevent it. Is it not highly reaſonable, that thoſe who by office are to ſee to this, be ſatisfied both as to the knowledge and converſation of thoſe they muſt admit ? And why ſhould people be ſo conceited of themſelves as not to allow a competent time for this ? Let all conſider,

1. The honour of Chriſt, how it is concerned in this matter, that that be not ſaid concerning us, Rom. ii. 24. ——‘ The name of God is blaſphemed among the Gentiles through you.’—The comely order of the Lord's houſe is for his ſake to be carefully obſerved.

2. The ordinance is in hazard of profanation, and all are in hazard of being guilty of it. The admitters bring guilt on themſelves when they are negligent in this matter, Ezek. xliv. 7. *In that ye have brought into my ſanctuary ſtrangers uncircumciſed in heart, and uncircumciſed in fleſh, to be in my ſanctuary to pollute it, even my houſe, when ye offer my bread.*—The whole church when they are not in their duty, Lev. v. 1. and the party, Ezek. xxiii. 39.

3. The church is in hazard of being defiled, Heb. xii. 15.—'Leſt any root of bitterneſs ſpringing up 'trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.' Some profane leaven brought in, may ſoon leaven the whole lump.

4. The party who comes unwarrantably runs a terrible riſque, 1 Cor. xi. 29. *For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himſelf, not diſcerning the Lord's body.*

Laſtly, The ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper is to be highly prized, and the partakers of it to walk worthy of their character and privilege.

1. Let all thoſe who are come to the years of diſcretion duly value this high privilege, and timeouſly prepare themſelves to partake of it. They muſt needs be under mighty prejudices, or very untender perſons, who without much ado, live without this ordinance time after time.

2. Let thoſe who are partakers remember their character, as declared viſible members of the body of Chriſt, and walk towards the Lord, and towards one another, as thoſe who are the Lord's by perſonal dedication, and live in church communion.

Thus have I ſhewn you what a ſociety profeſſors and communicants are, and what lies upon them by virtue of their being thus joined in church-communion.

The End of the Sermons on the CROOK *in the* LOT, *and Nature of* CHURCH-COMMUNION.

AN

EXPLICATION

Of the firſt part of the

ASSEMBLY's SHORTER CATECHISM,

In continued diſcourſes on each queſtion.

QUEST. 1. WHAT *is the chief end of man?*

ANSW. Man's chief end is, to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.

EXPLICATION.

By man's chief end is meant, the end which man was chiefly made for, and which he ſhould chiefly ſeek to reach unto. It conſiſts of two parts, his chief duty, and his chief happineſs. Man's chief duty is to glorify God, 1 Cor. x. 31. Man glorifies God, by thinking, ſpeaking, and living, to his glory; and this is man's chief and laſt or fartheſt end. Man's chief happineſs is to enjoy God as his God, Pſal. lxxiii. 25. 26. 27. 28. and this is man's chief ſubordinate end. A ſinner can never glorify God, untill firſt he enjoy him as his God, Eph. ii. 12. Gen. xvi. 1. Exod. xx. 2. 3. Now he can attain to the enjoyment of God, only through Jeſus Chriſt, John xiv. 6. and one may get a ſaving intereſt in Chriſt, by faith. Moreover, they who enjoy God as their God, are enabled to glorify him, by the Spirit of Chriſt dwelling in them as members of Chriſt, Rom. viii. 26. Wherefore, none that are out of Chriſt, reach the chief end of man; but they make themſelves their chief end. Howbeit, believers do reach it; and they reach it, in ſo far as they ſhall, from the firſt moment of their believing, for ever enjoy and glorify God, imperfectly indeed here, but perfectly in heaven.

QUEST. 2. *What rule hath God given to direct us, how we may glorify and enjoy him?*

ANSW. The word of God, which is contained in the ſcriptures of the Old and New Teſtament, is the only rule to direct us, how we may glorify and enjoy him.

The end wherefore the ſcriptures are given, is to be a *rule to direct us, how we may glorify God, and come to the enjoyment of him as our God.* And they are the only rule to direct us in theſe matters. Withal, they are a certain and infallible rule: and that, becauſe they are the word of God. It appears, that they are the word of God, by the holineſs and efficacy of their doctrine, and the miracles wrought to confirm it: and this, although for the moſt part they were written by men, becauſe, *all ſcripture is given by inſpiration of God,* 2 Tim. iii. 16. The word *ſcriptures* ſignifies *writings*; but the church had not always the written word, till about Moſes's time. Howbeit they were ſupplied while they wanted it, by extraordinary revelations; and it is the ſame doctrine, that was then ſo revealed, which we have now in the ſcripture. Nevertheleſs, the ſcripture is altogether neceſſary for the church now; and that, becauſe extraordinary revelation of doctrine is ceaſed, and God hath bound us to the ſcripture as the teſt or touchſtone of doctrine, Iſ. viii. 20. Neither will God ever give us another rule: for the ſcripture is a teſtamentary word of God. Now a teſtament is the laſt will of a dying perſon. So the ſcripture is Chriſt's teſtament, confirmed by his death: and as a teſtament, it declares the laſt will of God, concerning man's ſalvation and duty. Chriſt's teſtament is twofold: namely, the Old Teſtament, and the New Teſtament. The books beginning with Geneſis, and ending with Malachi, are Chriſt's Old Teſtament: theſe beginning with Matthew, and ending with the Revelation, are Chriſt's New Teſtament. Theſe two Teſtaments are one and the ſame for ſubſtance: for in both, Jeſus Chriſt is the Teſtator; eternal life is the legacy; ſinners of mankind are the legatees; and faith in Jeſus Chriſt is the way of claiming and obtaining the legacy, 1 John v. 11. 12. Prov. viii. 4. But they differ in circumſtances; the New being more clear and full, than the Old one. Howbeit, neither the one nor the other can be ſavingly underſtood, without an inward illumination of the mind by the Spirit of Chriſt, 1 Cor. ii. 10.

QUEST. 3. *What do the ſcriptures principally teach?*

ANSW. The ſcriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

Principally to teach, is chiefly to teach. The things that the ſcriptures teach chiefly, are theſe two, faith and obedience, 2 Tim. i. 13. The faith which the ſcriptures teach, is, *what man is to believe concerning God*: the obedience, which the ſcriptures teach, is *what duty God requires of man*. Nothing can be an article of faith neceſſary to be believed, nor a duty neceſſary to be done, but what is taught in the ſcriptures. Howbeit, not or-ly what is found in ſcripture, in expreſs words, but alſo what ariſeth therefrom, by neceſſary conſequence, is to be reckoned taught therein, Matth. xxii. 32.

QUEST. 4. *What is God?*

ANSW. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wiſdom, power, holineſs, juſtice, goodneſs, and truth.

No creature can fully comprehend what God is, Job ii. 7. But he has revealed ſo much of himſelf in the ſcriptures, as is neceſſary for us to know. For his ſort of being, he is a Spirit; and a ſpirit is an immaterial ſubſtance, without fleſh or bones: he hath not then a body, nor any bodily parts, John iv. 24. Luke xxiv. 39. Then eyes, ears, and ſuch like bodily parts aſcribed to him in ſcripture, are not to be underſtood properly; but by them we are to underſtand an infinite perfection of theſe powers, which thoſe members ſerve for in us. So the eyes of God ſignify his infinite power of diſcerning objects, as by the eyes: his ears ſignify his infinite power of diſcerning voices, as by the ear. Moreover God cannot be ſeen with bodily eyes; no not with the eyes of glorified bodies in heaven, 1 Tim. i. 17. and vi. 16. but with the eyes of the mind, enlightened with the light of grace here, and the light of glory in heaven, Eph. 17. 18. Finally, there is nothing which God is like unto, Iſ. xl. 18. So we may not form any imagination of him in our minds, as we can do of an abſent man. Now there are other ſpirits beſides God: and theſe are angels and the ſouls of men. But the difference betwixt God and them, lies here, that God is an infinite, eternal, and unchangeable Spirit, and they are not ſo. The attributes of God, or perfections of the divine nature, are of two ſorts, incommunicable, and communicable. His incommunicable attributes, whereof there is no veſtige in the creature, are his infinity, eternity, and unchangeableneſs. God is infinite, in that he is, without any bounds or meaſure, Job ii. 7. He is eternal, in that he is without beginning and without end, Pſal. xc. 2. He is unchangeable, in that he is, and cannot but be, always the ſame, without any alteration whatſoever, Jam. i. 17. He is then ſaid to repent, not in reſpect of the affection of repentance, but the effect of it, Numb. xxiii. 19. in that without any change of his own nature, mind, or will, he changeth his diſpenſations towards the creatures, and makes changes on them, Gen. vi. 7. His communicable attributes, whereof there are ſome ſcantlings in the creature, are his being, wiſdom, power, holineſs, juſtice, goodneſs, and truth. The difference between theſe perfections, as they are in God, and as they are in the creature, lies here, that they are all infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in God, but in the creature not ſo, the being of God is that perfection whereby he is, and is what he is, Exod. iii. 14. His wiſdom is that whereby he knows himſelf, and all things elſe, with the way how to diſpoſe of them to the beſt, Pſal. cxlvii. 5. His power is that whereby he can do all things not inconſiſtent with his nature, Jer. xxxii. 17. His holineſs is the perfect purity of his nature, whereby he delights in his own purity, and in the reſemblance of it in the creature, Hab. i. 13. His juſtice is the perfect rectitude of his nature, whereby he is juſt in himſelf, and in all his ways towards the creature, Deut. xxxii. 4. It is not conſiſtent with his nature, to let ſin paſs unpuniſhed, 2 Theſ. i. 6. with Gen. xviii. 25. His goodneſs is that whereby he is good in himſelf, and the author of all good to be found in or about the creature, Matth. xix. 17. His goodneſs is conſiſtent with his ſeverity againſt the wicked, in that it is the property of goodneſs, to hate and puniſh ſin, Exod. xxxiii. 19. with chap. xxxiv. 7.; and with the afflictions laid on his own people, in that they flow from his goodneſs, Job. xii. 6. and tend to their good, Pſal. cxix. 71. His truth is that whereby he is perfectly faithful and free from all falſehood, Tit. i. 2.

QUEST. 5. *Are there more Gods than one?*

ANSW. There is but one only, the living and true God.

God is called the living God, to diſtinguiſh him from dead idols: and the true God, to diſtinguiſh him from all falſe gods, 1 Theſſ. i. 9. He is the living God, in that all life is in him, and from him, 1 Tim. vi. 13. To be true God, is to be God truly and really, and not in name only, or in the opinion of men. Now there is but one true God, 1 Cor. viii. 4. And reaſon teaches, that there can be no more than one, in that there can be but one moſt perfect Being. So the gods many, mentioned 1 Cor. viii. 5. are gods in name only, or in the opinion of their blinded worſhippers.

QUEST. 6. *How many perſons are there in the Godhead?*

ANSW. There are three perſons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt: and theſe three are one God, the ſame in ſubſtance, equal in power and glory.

By the Godhead is meant the divine nature. A perſon in the God is the Godhead diſtinguiſhed by perſonal properties. The Godhead is one only in number: but the perſons in the Godhead are three; and they are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, 1 John v 7. Jeſus Chriſt is the ſecond of theſe perſons, namely, the Son. And the Father is true God: the Son is true God: and the Holy Ghoſt is true God. Yet they are not three Gods, but one God, 1 John v. 7. Howbeit, the Godhead neither is, nor can be divided into parts: but each of the three perſons hath the one whole indiviſible Godhead. They are not then of a like ſubſtance only, but the very ſame in ſubſtance. But they are diſtinguiſhed by their perſonal properties: and it is the perſonal property of the Father, to beget the Son, Heb. i. 5.; and of the Son, to be begotten of the Father, John i. 14.; and of the Holy Ghoſt, to proceed from the Father and the Son, John xv. 26. Gal. iv. 6. The Son and the Holy Ghoſt are not below the Father, but equal with him: they are equally powerful and glorious. So the perſonal properties make no inequality among them; foraſmuch as theſe properties are not temporary and accidental, but eternal and neceſſary, and could not but be: and every one of the three perſons is the eternal, the ſupreme, the Moſt High God. This appears, in that to the Son and the Holy Ghoſt, as well as to the Father, is aſcribed the peculiar name of the true God, the Moſt High, Iſa. vi. 3. John xii. 41. Acts xxviii. 25. 26. Pſal. lxxxiii. 18. together with his attributes, Rev. i. 8. Pſal. cxxxix. 7. his works, John i. 3. Matth. xii. 28. and his worſhip, Heb. i. 8. Matth. xxviii. 19.

QUEST. 7. *What are the decrees of God?*

ANSW. The decrees of God are his eternal purpoſe, according to the counſel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath fore-ordained whatſoever comes to paſs.

By the decrees of God is meant his purpoſe fore-ordaining what ſhould come to paſs. God hath foreordained in his decrees, whatſoever comes to paſs, Eph. i. 11. Even the moſt free acts of the creature, and the moſt caſual things are foreordained of God, Prov. xxi. 1. and xvi. 33. Yea, evil actions, as well as good ones, fall within the compaſs of his decree, Acts ii. 23.: but with this difference, that he decreed his effecting of good, and his permitting of ill. Now, whatſoever God hath foreordained, infallibly comes to paſs: and his decrees are unchangeable, Iſa. xlv. 10. Yet men have no excuſe from their ſin, from the decree of God, Acts ii. 23.; for they ſin out of free choice, without the leaſt knowledge of, or force upon them from the decree, Acts xiii. 27 The deſign and end of God's decrees is his own glory, Rom. ii. 36. : and therefore, he will certainly get glory of whatſoever comes to paſs, Iſa. xlvi. 10. As to ſinful actions, he will get either the glory of his mercy in pardoning of them, or elſe the glory of his juſtice in puniſhing of them. For the date of God's decrees, they are all eternal ; and he makes no new decrees in time, Acts xv. 18. The way he decreed all things, is according to the counſel of his own will, Eph. i. 11. His decrees are ſaid to be according to his own counſel, as being all laid in the depth of wiſdom, which, among men, is the reſult of counſel, Rom. xii. 33. But taking counſel even in himſelf, is not competent to God in a proper ſenſe : becauſe his infinite underſtanding comprehends all things perfectly at once. They are ſaid to be according to the counſel of his will, as depending on nothing without himſelf, Rom. ii. 34.

Queſt. 8. *How doth God execute his decrees?*

Anſw. God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence.

God's executing his decrees, means his bringing to paſs what he hath decreed : and he does that, in the works of creation and providence. And nothing falls out in either of them, but what was decreed ; nor otherwiſe than as it was decreed, Eph. i. 11. Zech. vi. 1.

Queſt. 9. *What is the work of creation?*

Anſw. The work of creation is, God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the ſpace of ſix days, and all very good.

The world was not eternal, but had a beginning, Gen. i. 1. It will alſo have an end : and it will end by fire, being burnt up, 2 Pet. iii. 10. ; and that, in virtue of the curſe lying on it for man's ſin, Gen. iii. 17. God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt made the world, 1 Cor. viii. 6. John i. 3. Pſal. xxxiii. 6. He made it in the beginning of time, but a few thouſand years ago, Gen. i. 1. He then made all things : and there was no perſon, nor thing, before that, but God himſelf, Col. i. 16. So he made them of nothing ; and that by the word of his power, commanding them to be, Heb. ii. 3. Now all things were made in the ſpace of ſix days, Exod. xx. 11. And the works of the firſt day were, the higheſt heavens, Gen. i. 1. with the angels, the inhabitants thereof, Job. xxxviii. 4. 7. the ſhapeleſs maſs of earth and water, and the light. The works of the ſecond day were, the firmament, and the dividing thereby betwixt the upper and lower waters. The works of the third day were, the ſeas, and the dry land, herbs, and trees. The works of the fourth day were, the ſun, moon, and ſtars. The works of the fifth day were, fiſh, and fowl. The works of the ſixth day were, firſt the beaſts of the earth, and then laſt of all, man, male and female : Gen. i. throughout. The goodneſs of God ſhines forth in this order of the creation, in that the places were prepared before the dwellers, the food before the eaters, and all neceſſary for the uſe of man before man himſelf. As for the caſe all things were made in, they were made all very good, Gen. i. 31. ; that is to ſay, very fit for the ends and uſes for which they were made. Wherefore, the angels were all made holy and happy. And ſome of them did continue in that ſtate, 1 Tim. v. 21. but others of them ſinned, and fell, and became devils, Jude 6. 2 Pet. ii. 4.

Queſt. 10. *How did God create man?*

Anſw. God created man male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteouſneſs, and holineſs, with dominion over the creatures.

By male and female is meant man and woman. The man was firſt made, and then the woman, 1 Tim. ii. 13. And the woman was made to be a help to the man, Gen. ii. 18. Adam and Eve were the firſt man and woman : and from them all mankind is deſcended, Acts xvii. 26. The parts whereof man conſiſts are a ſoul and a body. The body of the man was made of the duſt of the ground, Gen. ii. 7. Which conſideration may be of uſe to us, to be a curb to our pride, a memorial of our death, and an emblem of our reſurrection. The woman's body was made of rib and fleſh taken out of the man's ſide, Gen. ii. 23. and that to the end they might be one fleſh, verſe 24. The ſoul is of a ſpiritual and immortal nature, Eccleſ. xii. 7. Their ſouls were made within them, of nothing, Gen. ii. 7. Zech. xii. 1. But Moſes gives no ſeparate account of the making of their ſouls, as of the making of their bodies, becauſe their ſouls were not of a different make, but only their bodies. Neither are the ſouls of men ſince that time, generated by the parents, but created of God within their formed bodies in the womb, Heb. xii. 9. Now man was created in a holy and happy ſtate ; which appears, in that he was made ſo far like God, that he was after his very image, Gen. i. 26. And this was not peculiar to the man only, but common to the man and the woman, verſ. 27. The image of God, wherein man was made like him, conſiſted in knowledge, righteouſneſs, and holineſs, and dominion over the creatures, Col. iii. 10. Eph. iv. 24. Gen. i. 26. The parts of the image of God, impreſſed on his ſoul, were knowledge on his mind, righteouſneſs on his will, and holineſs on his affections. His knowledge was a ſufficient underſtanding of what was neceſſary to make him completely happy, Gen. i. 26. with Col. iii. 10. His righteouſneſs was a perfect conformity of his will to the will of God ; and his holineſs was the perfect purity of all his affections, Eccleſ. vii. 29. That part of the image of God impreſſed on the whole man, was dominion over the creatures. The creatures he had dominion over, were the beaſts of the earth, the fowls of the air, and the fiſhes of the ſea, Gen. i. 26. The dominion he had over them, was a right and power ſoberly to uſe them for God's glory and his own comfort. His charter for this right to the creatures, was the covenant of works, Gen. ii. 16. 17. with chap. i. 28. And in theſe things man bore the image of God, as in them he faintly reſembled God himſelf, who is infinitely knowing, righteous, and holy, and ſupreme Lord of the creatures. Now Adam bore this image, as a public perſon, to propagate it to his poſterity, Eccl. vii. 29. but it was loſt to himſelf and all mankind, by his fall, 1 Cor. xv. 22. and that even to the forfeiting of the dominion over the creatures ; an evidence of which is, beaſts proving unruly and hurtful to man. The only way to recover the image of God, is to unite with Jeſus Chriſt by faith, 1 Cor. xv. 22. For he is the image of the inviſible God, and to him as a ſecond Adam is the dominion over the creatures reſtored, Col. i. 15. Pſal. viii. 6. 7. 8. with Heb. ii. 7. 8. 9. And he repairs it on all that believe on him. The reparation of the loſt image of God in their ſouls, is begun in their ſanctification in him, and perfected in their glorification, Col. iii. 10. Heb. xii. 23. The reparation of the loſt dominion over the creatures, is begun in their getting a new right to them in their union with him, and perfected in their being put in full poſſeſſion of the dominion at the laſt day, Rom. iv. 13. Heb. xxi. 7. Pſal. xlix. 14. Their charter for this new right to the creatures, is the covenant of grace, Rom. iv. 13. But they that are out of Chriſt, have no covenant right to the creatures, but only a providential right : and that is ſuch a right, as a condemned man hath to his food, untill his execution. The management that men now have over the beaſts, is far ſhort of the original dominion over them, Gen iii. 19. But ſuch as it is, it is owing to a new grant made after the fall, for the neceſſities of human life; which new grant is found recorded, Gen. ix. 2.

QUEST. 11. *What are God's works of providence?*

ANSW. God's works of providence are, his moſt holy, wiſe, and powerful preſerving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.

There is a divine providence about the creatures. That appears from their entire dependence on God as their firſt cauſe, and from the exact accompliſhment of ſcripture prophecies, Acts xvii. 25. 28. Iſa. xlvi. 9.

The object which providence is employed about, is all the creatures and all their actions, Pſal. ciii. 19. Even devils, and wicked men, are under the providence of God, Matth. viii. 31. And evil actions, as well as good, are within the verge of it, Gen. xlv. 7. Yea, there is not any thing whatſoever, be it ever ſo ſmall or caſual, that falls out without the providence of God, Matth. x. 29. 30.

The works of providence about the creatures, are the preſerving of them, and the governing of them and their actions. Providence preſerves the creatures, ſuſtaining them in being, and providing for their ſupport, Heb. i. 3. Pſal. cxlv. 15. 16. No creature whatſoever could keep itſelf in being one moment; but, upon God's withdrawing the upholding hand of his providence, it would immediately return to nothing, Heb. i. 3. Providence governs the creatures and their actions, diſpoſing of them according to the divine purpoſe, Prov. xxi. 1. Eph. i. 11. Providence governs ſinful actions, permitting them, bounding them, and over-ruling them to good, Acts xiv. 16. Pſal. lxxvi. 10. Gen. l. 20.

The properties of the works of providence are theſe. They are moſt holy, wiſe, and powerful, Pſal. cxlv. 17. and civ. 24. Dan. iv. 35. Wherefore, God is not the author of ſin, no more than he who rides a crooked horſe is the cauſe of his halting, Jam. i. 13. All diſpenſations of providence are wiſely ordered, Deut. xxxii. 4. And providence cannot miſs of its deſigns, and ends, Iſa. xlvi. 10.

The rule of the works of providence, is the decree of God; whereof they and the works of creation, are an exact accompliſhment, Eph. i. 11.

QUEST. 12. *What ſpecial act of providence did God exerciſe towards man in the eſtate wherein he was created?*

ANSW When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.

The ſpecial act of providence towards man newly created was God's making a covenant of life and happineſs with him. There are two covenants for life and happineſs to man: and they are the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace, Gal. iv. 24.

The firſt covenant was the covenant of works. It was made in paradiſe; and before the fall. The parties contracting in it, were God and Adam, Gen. ii. 17. But Adam repreſented all mankind, as the parties contracted for, Gen. ii. 17. with Rom. v. 12. There was no mediator of this covenant; for as yet there was no breach by ſin betwixt God and man.

The condition of the covenant of works, was perfect obedience, Gal. iii. 12. And it was to be perfect, in reſpect of parts, degrees, and continuance, Gal. iii. 10. Matth. xxii. 37. So the leaſt failing in any part, or degree of obedience, or for never ſo ſmall a time, would have broken this covenant. The law that was the rule of this obedience, was the law of the ten commands, and the law forbidding to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, Gal. iii. 10. Gen. ii. 17. That tree grew in paradiſe, Gen. ii. 9. There was no virtue in it to improve men in knowledge, Gen. iii. 5. with John viii. 44. But that name was put upon it, to intimate, that by eating of it, man would know to his ſad experience, the vaſt difference between good and ill: wherefore that tree with that name was of uſe, to be a warning-piece to man, to beware of evil. Now Adam knew the law of the ten commands, as they were impreſſed on his heart, in his creation, Rom. ii. 15. He knew the law of the forbidden tree, by revelation, Gen. ii. 17. And he had ſufficient ability for the perfect obedience required, Eccleſ. vii. 29.

The *promiſe* of the covenant of works was a *promiſe of life*, Gen. ii. 17. The life promiſed was twofold; namely, one to be afforded him, during the courſe of his probationary obedience; another to be afforded him at the perfecting of it. The life to have been afforded to man, during the courſe of his probationary obedience, was natural life continued in vigour and comfort, and ſpiritual life continued in favour and fellowſhip with God, Gen. ii. 17. This was the reward of obedience, in hand. The life to have been afforded him, at the perfecting of his courſe, was eternal life in conſummate happineſs, Matth. xix. 16. 17. And this was the reward of obedience, in hope. Adam, if he had continued obedient, could have claimed that life, upon his obedience: yet not in the way of proper merit; becauſe his perfect obedience was no more than what was due from him by the law of his creation, before he entered into that covenant, Luke xvii. 9. 10. The only way he could have claimed it, was by compact, namely, in virtue of the covenant-promiſe made to his work.

The penalty of the covenant of works was death, Gen. ii. 17. The death threatened was alſo two-fold; namely, one accompanying ſin at its firſt entrance; another following after as its full reward. The death accompanying ſin at its firſt entrance, was temporal death in the loſs of the vigour and comfort of natural life; and ſpiritual death in the loſs of the image of God, with his favour and fellowſhip: and Adam died this death, according to the threatening, that very day he ſinned, Gen. iii. 7. 8. 9. 10. The death following after as the full reward of ſin, was the natural death of the body with the ſting in it, and eternal death in the conſummate miſery of ſoul and body for ever, 1 Cor. xv. 55. Matth. xxv. 41. And this was comprehended in the expreſs threatening of death to accompany ſin, inaſmuch as the one was a ſure pledge of the other, natively iſſuing therein.

QUEST. 13. *Did our firſt parents continue in the eſtate wherein they were created?*

ANSW. Our firſt parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the eſtate wherein they were created, by ſinning againſt God.

Our *firſt parents* were Adam and Eve. The ſtate wherein they were created, was a holy and happy ſtate: but they fell from it; and that, by *their ſinning againſt God*, Gen. iii. 6. 7. 8. 10. The firſt that ſinned was the woman, 1 Tim. ii. 14. And it was the devil that enſnared her, Gen. iii. 13. The woman having ſinned, enſnared Adam, ver. 6. But their being tempted to ſin did not excuſe them; becauſe, it was not of their own free will that they ſinned. Freedom of will is a power in the will, whereby it doth of its own accord, without force upon it, chooſe or refuſe what is propoſed to it by the underſtanding. And man hath this freedom of will in whatever ſtate he be. But this power of the will is not of the ſame extent in all ſtates. In the ſtate of innocence, it extended both to good and evil; that is to ſay, man had a freedom of will, whereby he could wholly turn, either to the one ſide or the other, to good or evil, propoſed by his underſtanding: and that man was created thus mutable, was ſuitable to the ſtate of trial. Now the ſpecial act of providence about the fall of our firſt parents, was, *that God left them to the freedom of their own will*: and the uſe they made of that, was, that they went freely of their own accord, to the ſide of ſin. But in the ſtate of corrupt nature, the power of the will extends only to evil, Gen. vi. 5. In the ſtate of grace, it extends partly to good and partly to evil, Rom. vii. 23. And in the ſtate of glory, it extends only to good, Heb. xii. 23.

QUEST. 14. *What is ſin?*

ANSW. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or tranſgreſſion of the law of God.

By *ſin* is meant *tranſgreſſion of the law of God*: and therefore nothing can be ſin, but what one way or other is a tranſgreſſion of ſome law of God, 1 John iii. 4. *Tranſgreſſion of the law of God*, is any *want of conformity* to it whatſoever, 1 John iii. 4. firſt part of the ver. So the leaſt coming ſhort of the perfection required by the law, is ſin; becauſe, ſo far there is a want of conformity to the law, Matth. v. ult. with 1 John iii. 4. Now the law of God requires a twofold conformity to it, in the reaſonable creatures: namely, a conformity of their natures to it, and a conformity of their lives to it, Pſal. xxiv. 3. 4. Hence there are two general kinds of ſin; namely, original ſin, and actual ſin: and each of them is a want of conformity to the law of God. Original ſin is a want of conformity of our natures to the law of God. Actual ſin is a want of conformity of our lives to the law of God, whether by omiſſion or commiſſion. The chief evil of ſin lies in the filthineſs of it. The filthineſs of ſin is its being the quite contrary of God's holineſs expreſſed in his law; whence it is in the ſight of God, the object of his greateſt loathing and abhorrence, Jer. xliv. 4.

QUEST. 15. *What was the ſin whereby our firſt parents fell from the eſtate wherein they were created?*

ANSW. The ſin whereby our firſt parents fell from the eſtate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.

The ſin whereby man fell, was the *eating of the forbidden fruit*, Gen. iii. 7. There was no evil in the fruit itſelf, for which it was forbidden, Gen. i. ult. The evil of the matter lay, in man's eating it againſt the expreſs command of God. God forbade it to be eaten, for the trial of man's obedience. And the fitneſs of taking trial of man by that mean, appears in that ſo it was taken in an external thing, in itſelf indifferent, wherein man's obedience behoved to turn preciſely upon the point of the will of God. This ſin was then in effect, man's practical declaration that he would not be ruled by God's will, but by his own: and therefore, it was not a little ſin, but a breaking of the whole law at once, Jam. ii. 10. 11.

QUEST. 16. *Did all mankind fall in Adam's firſt tranſgreſſion?*

ANSW. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himſelf, but for his poſterity, all mankind deſcending from him by ordinary generation, ſinned in him, and fell with him, in his firſt tranſgreſſion.

Adam did not fall alone in his tranſgreſſion; but *all mankind deſcending from him by ordinary generation*, were involved with him in the ruins of his fall: and theſe are all his poſterity, except the man Chriſt, 1 Cor. xv. 22. Chriſt as man did indeed deſcend from Adam, Luke iii. 23. with laſt verſe, but not by ordinary but extraordinary generation. That which was extraordinary in Chriſt's generation, was, that he was *born of a virgin*, Matth. i. 18.

All the reſt of Adam's poſterity fell with him: they fell with him, from the ſtate of holineſs and happineſs, both which they had in hand, and which they had in hope from the promiſe of the covenant of works; and ſo fell by *his firſt tranſgreſſion*, Rom. v. 18. 19. His firſt tranſgreſſion was *his eating of the forbidden fruit*. His *eating of that fruit*, is called his *firſt tranſgreſſion*, becauſe by it, his ſin and apoſtacy begun in his heart, was completed, Gen. iii. 6. Now that tranſgreſſion caſt him and them down, from theſe ſtates of holineſs and happineſs, inaſmuch as by it the covenant of works was broken, Gen. ii. 17. with chap. iii. 10. 11. 12. The reaſon why they fell with him by that tranſgreſſion, was, that in it they ſinned in him: ſo that ſin whereby the covenant was broken, was our ſin as well as his, Rom. v. 12. 19.

It came to be our ſin, becauſe he was our covenant-head and repreſentative in the covenant of works; that is to ſay, *The covenant was made with him, not only for himſelf, but for his poſterity*, 1 Cor. xv. 45. The man Chriſt was not included in that repreſentation, which Adam made as head of the covenant of works, 1 Cor. xv. 22. 45. and that, becauſe Chriſt came not in virtue of the bleſſing of fruitfulneſs, given while the covenant of works ſtood entire, but in virtue of a ſpecial promiſe made after it was broken, Gen. i. 28. and iii. 15. Adam's ſin could not be imputed to the man Chriſt, ſince Adam did not repreſent him in the covenant. But Adam repreſented all the reſt of mankind in it, Rom. v. 12. It is true, we did not chooſe him for our repreſentative, but God chooſed him for us: and he was the moſt fit choice for that end, Eccleſ. iii. 14. in regard he was the natural head of mankind, endowed with ſufficient ability, Acts xvi. 26. Eccleſ. vii. 29.

Now, man did not become free from the covenant of works, upon his breaking of it; for his breaking of it could never free him, and the honour of the law barred his diſcharge, till the breach of it ſhould be made up, Iſa. xliii 21. Matth. v. 18. And man himſelf was utterly unable to make up that breach, Rom. v. 6. All men then by nature are under the broken covenant of works, Rom. iii. 19.

QUEST. 17. *Into what eſtate did the fall bring mankind?*

ANSW. The fall brought mankind into an eſtate of ſin and miſery.

The natural ſtate of mankind now, under the covenant of works, is a ſtate of ſin and miſery; and we were brought into it by the fall, Rom. v. 12. We were all born or conceived in that ſtate, Pſal. li. 5. Eph. ii. 3. There is no true holineſs attainable in that our natural ſtate; for it is a ſtate of ſin. There is no ſalvation from wrath attainable in it; for it is a ſtate of miſery. The ſtate we muſt be brought into, out of our natural ſtate under the covenant of works, if we would be ſaved, is the ſtate of grace, in the covenant of grace, Rom. vi. 14. Theſe that are brought out of their natural ſtate, from under the covenant of works, into the ſtate of grace are all that are in Chriſt, converted perſons, Rom. viii. 1. Theſe that are ſtill in their natural ſtate, under the covenant of works, are all that are out of Chriſt, unconverted, Eph. ii. 12. The power that the covenant of works hath over ſuch perſons, is a commanding, curſing, and condemning power. It commands them perfect obedience under pain of the curſe: it curſeth and condemneth them for every the leaſt failure, Gal. iii. 10. Rom. iii. 19.

Quest. 18. *Wherein conſiſts the ſinfulneſs of that eſtate whereinto man fell?*

Answ. The ſinfulneſs of that eſtate whereinto man fell, conſiſts in the guilt of Adam's firſt ſin, the want of original righteouſneſs, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original ſin, together with all actual tranſgreſſions which proceed from it.

The ſtate whereinto man fell is our natural ſtate: and that is both a ſinful and a miſerable ſtate. Our natural ſtate is a ſinful ſtate in reſpect of original ſin, and in reſpect of actual tranſgreſſions.

Original ſin, in its full extent, *is the guilt of Adam's firſt ſin, the want of original righteouſneſs, and the corruption of the whole nature.* All and every one of Adam's natural race are born or conceived in it, Rom. v. 12. Pſal. li. 5. It is derived to us from Adam, the origin of mankind, and it is conveyed to us by natural generation, Job xiv. 4. Pſal. li. 5. Even holy parents convey it to their children; becauſe they procreate their children after their own natural image, Gen. v. 3. Now, our natural ſtate is a ſinful ſtate in reſpect of original ſin, inaſmuch as original ſin, being a fountain of ſin, remains entire in its guilt, filth, and power, on every man, as long as he is in that ſtate. Original ſin conſiſts of three parts.

The firſt part of original ſin, is the guilt of Adam's firſt ſin. Adam's firſt ſin was his eating of the forbidden fruit, whereby the covenant of works was broken. The guilt of that ſin is an obligation to puniſhment for it. And that guilt lies on all men by nature, Rom. v. 18. Now this guilt of Adam's firſt ſin, is original ſin imputed. The only remedy for it is in Jeſus Chriſt, 1 Cor. xv. 22. and that from his blood, which removes it in juſtification, Eph. i. 7. Rom. iii. 24.

The ſecond part of original ſin, is the want of original righteouſneſs. Original righteouſneſs is that righteouſneſs wherein man was created in the image of God. And all men by nature are under the want of that, Rom. iii. 23. The want of original righteouſneſs, includes the want of that knowledge in the underſtanding, that righteouſneſs in the will, together with that holineſs in the affections, wherewith man was endowed at his creation, and all men by nature are under theſe wants, Job ii. 12. Eccleſ. vii. 29. Rom. vii, 18. Now, the want of original righteouſneſs is a ſin; foraſmuch as it is a want of conformity to the law of God, Matth. v. ult. with 1 John iii. 4. It can be our ſin, who never had that righteouſneſs in our own perſons, becauſe we had it and loſt it in Adam, ſinning in him: and we are juſtly left under the want of it, for our guilt of Adam's firſt ſin, Eccleſ. vii. 29. Rom. v. 12.

The third part of original ſin, is the corruption of the whole nature; and this is what is commonly called original ſin, as being the worſt part of it. The corruption of nature is that vitious quality inbred in us, whereby our nature is utterly diſabled for, and oppoſite to, all ſpiritual good, and prone to the contrary evils continually, Rom. v. 6. and viii 7. Gen. vi. 5. And one may know his own nature to be corrupt, by the backwardneſs to do good, and forwardneſs to do evil, he may find in himſelf. Now, man's nature, in his natural ſtate, is not corrupted in part only, but wholly corrupted in every part, Eph. ii. 1. 2. 3. Tit. i. 15. For the caſe the underſtanding is in, it is utterly darkened in point of ſpiritual diſcerning, 1 Cor. ii. 4. The will, it is quite oppoſite to the will of God. Rom. viii. 7. The affections, they are wholly carnal, Rom. vii. 14. and viii. 5. The body, and its members, they are inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs, and ſervants to iniquity, Rom. vi. 12. 19.

The want of original righteouſneſs, and the corruption of the whole nature, are original ſin inherent, which the ſcripture expreſſeth both in negative and poſitive terms, Eph. iv. 18. Rom. viii. 7. The only remedy for original ſin inherent, is in Jeſus Chriſt, 1 Cor. xv. 22.; and that from his Spirit, who begins the removal of it in regeneration, or quickening of the dead ſoul, carries it on in ſanctification, and perfects it in glorification, John vi. 63. 1 Cor. vi. 11. Rom. viii. 23.

Actual tranſgreſſions are breaches of God's law, by omiſſion or commiſſion, in thoughts, words, or deeds. The fountain which they all proceed from in us, is the corruption of our nature, Matth. xv. 19. Our natural ſtate is a ſinful ſtate, in reſpect of actual tranſgreſſions, inaſmuch as all the actions of a natural man are actual tranſgreſſions; and the guilt and filth of them all, and of all his omiſſions of duty, bide faſt on him, as long as he is in that ſtate, Gen. vi. 5. Eph. ii. 1. A man in his natural ſtate cannot do any thing truly good, becauſe his nature is wholly corrupt, Matth. vii. 18. His natural actions, ſuch as eating and drinking, are ſin, Zech. vii. 6. His civil actions, ſuch as ploughing and ſowing, are ſin, Prov. xxi. 4. And his religious actions are ſin, Prov. xv. 8.

Quest. 19. *What is the miſery of that eſtate whereinto man fell?*

Answ. All mankind, by their fall, loſt communion with God, are under his wrath and curſe, and ſo made liable to all miſeries in this life, to death itſelf, and to the pains of hell for ever.

Our natural ſtate is a miſerable ſtate too. And all mankind is in that miſerable ſtate by nature. That comes to paſs, by their fall in Adam, Rom. v. 12. Our natural ſtate is a miſerable ſtate, in reſpect of what loſs man ſuſtains, what he lies under, and what he is liable to, in it.

The loſs which man ſuſtains in his natural ſtate, is the loſs of communion with God. Communion with God is a friendly intercourſe between God and a ſoul, ariſing from a peculiar intereſt in one another, Cant. ii. 16. Man had ſuch communion with God before the fall; and that, without a Mediator, Gal. iii. 20. But he loſt it, by the fall, Gen. iii. 8. And none attain to it again, as long as they are in their natural ſtate, whatever duties of worſhip they go about, Eph. ii. 12. It is recovered only in the way of union with Jeſus Chriſt, ver. 13.

What man lies under in his natural ſtate, is God's wrath and curſe. The wrath of God he lies under is revenging wrath: and all men in their natural ſtate are under that wrath, Eph. ii. 3. John iii. ult. The curſe he lies under, is the ſentence of the broken law, binding over the ſinner to revenging wrath, to the full: and all men in their natural ſtate are under it, Gal. iii. 10.

What man is liable to in his natural ſtate, is, all miſeries in this life, death itſelf, and the pains of hell for ever, in virtue of the curſe. The miſeries in this life the natural man is liable to, are all inward and outward miſeries of life, laid on in virtue of the curſe, Lam. iii. 39. The inward miſeries of life he is ſo made liable to, are ſpiritual plagues, ſuch as, blindneſs of mind, hardneſs of heart, vileneſs of affections, horror of conſcience, and the like, Eph. iv. 18. Rom. ii. 5. and i. 26. Iſa. xxxiii. 14.

The outward miſeries of life he is ſo made liable to, are ſuch as befal the outward man, as ſickneſs, poverty, diſgrace, and the like, Deut. xxviii. 15. to the end. The death the natural man is liable to, is the diſſolution of the ſoul and the body, in virtue of the curſe, Rom. vi. 23. That kind of death, is ſtinged death, 1 Cor. xv. 56. It is true, believers in Chriſt alſo are liable to miſeries in this life, and to death itſelf: but they are not ſo made liable to them, not by the curſe, not with the ſting in them, 1 Cor. xv. 55. Howbeit, if man had not ſinned, he would never had died, Gen. ii. 17. The miſeries in this life, and death itſelf, are to believers in Chriſt, marks of God's diſpleaſure with the ſin in them, while yet he loves their perſons in Chriſt, Pſal. xcix. 8. Gen. iii. 15. 17. 18. 19.

The pains of hell that natural men are liable to, are the pain of loſs, and the pain of ſenſe. The pain of loſs in hell, is total and final ſeparation from God, Mat. xxv. 41. That ſeparation from God, is not a local ſeparation from him, as if God ſhould not be in the place where they ſhall be, Pſal. cxxxix. 8. But it is a relative ſeparation, in an eternal blocking up of all comfortable communication between God and them: and the effect of that will be, a total eclipſe of all light of comfort and eaſe whatſoever, of body and mind, in the damned, Matth. xxiii. 13. Hoſ. ix. 12. The pain of ſenſe in hell, is unſpeakable torment, both in ſoul and body, without intermiſſion, Matth. xxv. 41. Mark. ix. 43. 44. And theſe pains of hell will never have an end with them, Matth. xxv. 41.

QUEST. 20. *Did God leave all mankind to periſh in the eſtate of ſin and miſery?*

ANSW. God having out of his mere good pleaſure from all eternity, elected ſome to everlaſting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the eſtate of ſin and miſery, and to bring them into an eſtate of ſalvation by a Redeemer.

The *ſtate of ſin* and *miſery*, is a ſtate wherein all muſt periſh, who are left of God in it, Eph. ii. 12. becauſe it is beyond the reach of all created help, Iſ. lxiii. 5. But God doth not leave all makind to periſh in it. Theſe whom he doth not not leave to periſh in it, are the elect, Rom. viii. 13.

The elect are ſome certain perſons of mankind, whom God hath choſen to everlaſting life, paſſing by others, Acts xiii. 48. Jude verſe 4. This election or choice was made from eternity, Eph. i. 4. And it infallibly ſecures their eternal ſalvation, with all the means leading thereto, Rom. viii. 30. Nothing foreſeen in the creature, neither faith nor good works, was the cauſe of election; but only God's mere good pleaſure was the cauſe of it, Eph. i. 6.

Now the way that God provided the relief, was, that he entered into a ſecond covenant, the covenant of grace. The deſign of the covenant of grace, was, *to deliver the elect out of the eſtate of ſin and miſery, and to bring them into an eſtate of ſalvation by a Redeemer.*

The covenant of grace then was made with Jeſus Chriſt, as the ſecond Adam, Party contractor, Pſal. lxxxix. 3. with 1 Cor. xv. 45. Rom. v. 15. to the end Gal. iii. 16. And Chriſt, in this covenant, repreſented all the elect, as his ſpiritual ſeed, the parties contracted for, Gal. iii. 16. Iſa. liii. 10. 11. Then the covenant of redemption, and the covenant of grace, are not two diſtinct covenants, but two names of one covenant, under different conſiderations. That appears, in that the number of the covenants in ſcripture, is but two, whereof the covenant of works is one, Gal. iv. 24. By a *covenant of redemption* is meant a bargain of buying and ſelling; and the ſecond covenant was ſuch a covenant to Chriſt only, 1 Pet. i. 18. 19. By a *covenant of grace* is meant, a bargain whereby all is to be had freely; and it is ſuch a covenant to poor ſinners only, Iſ. lv. 1. The covenant of grace was made from eternity, Tit. i. 2. Yet is it the ſecond covenant, in reſpect of the order, and manifeſtation to the world, though it was firſt in being.

The condition of the covenant of grace, is Chriſt's fulfilling all righteouſneſs, Matth. iii. 15. That righteouſneſs was ſtated from the broken covenant of works, Rom. ii. 31. The righteouſneſs that the broken covenant of works inſiſts on as the neceſſary condition of eternal life to a ſinner, is perfect holineſs of nature, righteouſneſs of life, and ſatisfaction for ſin, Rev. xxi. ult. Matth. xix. 17. Heb. ix. 22. It juſtly ſo inſiſts for holineſs of nature, becauſe that was given to man at firſt, and by the condition of the covenant, he was obliged to keep it, Eccleſ. vii. 29. It juſtly ſo inſiſts for righteouſneſs of life, for that was the expreſs condition of it, Gal. iii. 12. And it juſtly ſo inſiſts for ſatisfaction, in virtue of the penalty incurred by the breaking of it, Gen. ii. 17. But neither Adam, nor any of his fallen offſpring, was able to perform that condition of life, Rom. v. 6. There is no ſalvation by the covenant of works, Rom. iii. 20. and viii. 3. But Jeſus Chriſt did accept of that condition, as the condition of the covenant of grace, Pſal. xl. 7. And it was made the condition of the covenant of grace, that his ſpiritual ſeed might be ſaved, and the covenant of works fully ſatisfied for them, Rom. viii. 3. 4. And Jeſus Chriſt did fully perform it, in that, as a public perſon, he was born perfectly holy, lived perfectly holy, and made complete ſatisfaction by his death, 1 Cor. xv. 45. Luke i. 35. Philip ii. 8.

The promiſe of the covenant of grace, is a promiſe of a glorious reward to Chriſt himſelf, and eternal life to his ſpiritual ſeed, Iſa. xlix. 4. to the 10th verſe. Tit. i. 2. The eternal life promiſed in the covenant of grace included in it all things neceſſary to make a ſinner happy, in ſoul and body, for time and eternity, Rom. x. 5. with Hab. ii. 4. Even the promiſe of eternal life to Chriſt's ſpiritual ſeed, was made to Chriſt himſelf immediately, and to them mediately in him, Tit. i. 2. Heb. viii. 10. 2 Tim i. 9. Gal. iii. 16.

It is neceſſary to the ſalvation of a ſinner, that he perſonally enter into the covenant of grace, Eph. ii. 12. Accordingly the adminiſtration of the covenant is committed unto Jeſus Chriſt the head of it, Iſ. xlix. 8. And all the benefits of the covenant are lodged in his hand, Col. i. 19. And he is impowered to adminiſter the covenant to ſinners of mankind indefinitely, John iii. 17. Prov. viii. 4. Iſa. lv. 2. 3. That can very well be, though he repreſented the elect only in it: for the Father is ſo well pleaſed with the performance of the condition thereof, that Chriſt crucified is made the ordinance of God for ſalvation to ſinners of mankind indefinitely, according to the promiſe of the covenant to him, he being in himſelf ſufficient thereto, John iii. 14. 15. 16. Matth. xxii. 4. 1 John iv. 14. with Iſa. xlix. 6. 8. Accordingly, Chriſt actually offers the covenant of grace to ſinners of mankind indefinitely; and that in the goſpel, Mark xvi. 15. 16. And a ſinner is perſonally and ſavingly inſtated in the covenant of grace, by faith in Jeſus Chriſt, Acts xvi. 31. The nature then of perſonal covenanting, in order to obtain ſalvation by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, lies in taking hold of God's covenant of grace, by believing in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, Iſa. lvi. 4. and lv. 3. John x. 9. Eph. iii. 17. And believing in Chriſt enters us into the covenant of grace, to partake of all the benefits thereof, as it unites us to Chriſt the ſecond Adam, the head of the covenant, Eph. iii. 17. Rom. ii. 17.

One cannot, in reſpect of the ſtate of his ſoul before God, be under the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, at one and the ſame time, Rom. vi. 14. Therefore believers that moment they enter into the covenant of grace, are fully ſet free from the covenant of works, Rom. vi. 14. and vii. 4. And they are lawfully ſet free from it, foraſmuch as faith gives it full count and reckoning, pleading and counting up to it that righteouſneſs which Chriſt fulfilled, Rom. ii. 31. and viii. 3. 4.

The effects of perſonal entering into the covenant of grace, are, deliverance out of the eſtate of ſin and miſery, and being brought into a ſtate of ſalvation. The bands of ſin and miſery are looſed in the covenant of grace, through our being ſet free from the covenant of works, Rom. vii. 5. 6. 1 Cor. xv. 56. 57. And we are ſettled in a ſtate of ſalvation in the covenant of grace, through our being married to Chriſt, Rom. vii. 4. Col. ii. 9. 19.

Now, God thus brings his elect out of the eſtate of ſin and miſery, into a ſtate of ſalvation, by a Redeemer. A *Redeemer*, in ſcripture ſenſe, is one who delivers another by price or by power, Lev. xxv. 51. Exod. vi. 6. And ſuch a Redeemer was neceſſary for the elect, as ſhould redeem them, both by price and power. It was neceſſary that they ſhould be redeemed by price, becauſe they were debtors to juſtice, and criminals in law, Heb. ix. 22. It was neceſſary that they ſhould be redeemed by power, becauſe they were in bondage to ſin and Satan, Luke i. 74. And ſuch a Redeemer was provided for the elect, in the covenant of grace, Pſal. lxxxix. 19.

Quest. 21. *Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?*

Answ. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and ſo was, and continueth to be God and man, in two diſtinct natures, and one perſon, for ever.

The *Redeemer of the elect* is the head of the covenant of grace, *the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*. And there is no other Redeemer beſides him; he is the only Redeemer, Acts iv. 12. The firſt part of his name, to wit, *the Lord*, ſignifies *Jehovah, the true God, the Moſt High*, Iſa. xlvii. 4. and xlix. 17. 1 Cor. xii. 3. But the titles *our Lord, one Lord*, and the like, denote his *dominion*, Acts x. 36. The ſecond part of his name, to wit, *Jeſus*, ſignifies a *Saviour*. And he is ſo called, becauſe he ſaves his people from their ſins, and conſequently from wrath, Matth. i. 21. 1 Theſſ. i. 10. The third and laſt part of his name, to wit, *Chriſt*, ſignifies *anointed*. And he is ſo called, becauſe he was anointed by the Father with the Holy Ghoſt, Acts x. 38. That is to ſay, the Father ſolemnly deſigned him, and withal furniſhed him for his office, by the Holy Ghoſt remaining on and in him, John i. 33. and iii. 34. The true interpretation then of the name of our Redeemer, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, is, *Jehovah, the Saviour, the anointed One*. He was the fit perſon to mediate between God and man, becauſe of his common relation to both, peculiar to himſelf. His relation to God was, that he was the eternal Son of God; and that, by eternal generation of Jehovah the Father, Heb. i. 5. His relation to us was, that he was our near Kinſman, Heb. ii. 11. He is then our Kinſman-redeemer, who redeems by right of kin, Job xix. 25. with Ruth iii. 12. Now, the eternal Son of God came to be our Kinſman, inaſmuch as he became man, Gal. iv. 4. By his becoming man, he was both God and man, Matth. i. 23. And he will continue to be God and man for ever, Heb. vii. 24, 25.

Our Redeemer then hath two natures, namely, the nature of God, and the nature of man, Rom. ix. 5. He was God from all eternity; but not man, till he came in the fleſh, about the four thouſandth year after the creation of the world, Mic. v. 2. Matth. i. 17. The divine and human natures were in no wiſe turned into one nature, in Chriſt becoming man; but they remain for ever two diſtinct natures, having each of them their own diſtinct properties, 1 Pet. iii. 18. Yet are they not divided neither; but they are united in his perſon. Jeſus Chriſt our Redeemer is not then two perſons, but one only, Eph. iv. 5. 1 Tim. ii. 5. It was neceſſary, that our Redeemer ſhould be man, that he might be capable to ſuffer death, in our nature who had ſinned, Heb. ii. 14. 1 Cor. xv. 21. It was neceſſary he ſhould be God, that his ſufferings might be of infinite value, 1 John i. 7. It was neceſſary he ſhould be God and man in one perſon, that what of the work was done by either of the natures might be reckoned the deed of the perſon of our Redeemer, Acts xx. 28. John ii. ult.

Quest. 22. *How did Chriſt, being the Son of God, become man?*

Answ. Chriſt the Son of God became man, by taking to himſelf a true body and a reaſonable ſoul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, in the womb of the virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without ſin.

Chriſt had a being before he was man. He was the Son of God by eternal generation, Heb. i. 5. Prov. viii. 22, 23. His becoming man, was a voluntary action in him, wherein himſelf was willingly active, Pſal. xl. 6, 7. Heb. ii. 16. *He became man, by taking to himſelf a true body, and a reaſonable ſoul.* But he did not thereby take to himſelf a human perſon; for then ſhould he have been two perſons: but he did thereby take to himſelf an entire human nature; for a ſoul and a body are the two parts whereof it conſiſts.

Chriſt's body was not the appearance only of a body, but a real human body, of fleſh, blood, and bones, as our bodies are, Heb. ii. 14. Luke xxiv. 39. His divine nature was not inſtead of a ſoul to him; but he had alſo a human reaſonable ſoul; which was a created ſpirit, Matth. xxvi. 38. In Chriſt then there were two underſtandings, and two wills, namely, an infinite underſtanding and will as he was God, and a finite underſtanding and will as he was man, John xxi. 17. and x. 28, 29, 30. Mark xiii. 32. Luke xxii. 42.

He was without father, as he was man; he was without mother, as he was God, Heb. vii. 3. But the mother of Chriſt as man, was the virgin Mary, Matth. i. 18. 22, 23. She was a woman of the ſeed of Abraham, the tribe of Judah, and family of David, Luke iii. 23. 31. 33, 34. He was conceived in her womb, Luke i. 31. But his conception was altogether miraculous; and was effected by the power of the Holy Ghoſt: and the work of the Holy Ghoſt in that matter, was, that he formed the body of Chriſt in the womb of his mother, Luke i. 35. Not of any ſubſtance ſent down from heaven; but of her ſubſtance, Gal. iv. 4. Gen. iii. 15. Which was neceſſary, that he might be of the ſame human nature with us, who had ſinned, Heb. ii. 11. Now, the forming of the body of Chriſt of the ſubſtance of a virgin, was an act of creating power, Jer. xxxi. 22. with Gen. ii. 7. 22. and i. 27. He was born and brought forth of her, at the uſual time after conception, Luke ii. 6, 7. But yet he was conceived and born without ſin, Heb. iv. 15. and vii. 26. For though he was a ſon of Adam, by conception and birth, yet he came not of him in the way of natural generation.

Quest. 23. *What offices doth Chriſt execute as our Redeemer?*

Answ. Chriſt, as our Redeemer, executeth the offices of a Prophet, of a Prieſt, and of a King, both in his eſtate of humiliation and exaltation.

Chriſt redeems his people by price and by power, Hoſ. xiii. 14. He hath redeemed them by price, giving himſelf a ranſom for them, in his holy birth, righteous life, and bloody death, and other ſufferings, 1 Tim. ii. 6. Gal. iv. 4, 5. Philip ii. 7, 8. But that redemption by price is, in ſcripture, ſometimes attributed to his blood, as the completing part of the ranſom, including the reſt, even as one ſays, he has paid the utmoſt farthing, John xix. 30. He redeems them by power, reſcuing them by ſtrength of light, and by ſtrength of hand, out of the hands of their enemies, Luke i. 68. 71. 73, 74. That redemption by power is begun in their converſion, and perfected in their glorious reſurrection at the laſt day, Col. i. 14. Rom. viii. 23. 1 Cor. xv. 26.

To execute an office, is to do or perform what belongs to the office. And Chriſt as our Redeemer, hath and executeth three offices, namely, the office of a Prophet, of a Prieſt, and of a King, Acts iii. 22. Heb. i. 2. Pſal. ii. 6. The relation of thoſe offices of Chriſt, to the covenant of grace, is that, in his prieſtly office he performed the condition of the covenant, in his prophetical and kingly offices he adminiſters the covenant, Heb. vii. 22, 23. Mal. iii. 1: Iſa. lv. 3, 4. It is neceſſary for our redemption, that he ſhould execute all theſe offices: and it is neceſſary, in reſpect of the ignorance, guilt, and bondage in our caſe, 1 Cor. i. 30.

True juſtifying faith receives Chriſt in all his offices, 1 Cor. i. 30. with John i. 12. But as juſtifying, it eyes him particularly in his prieſtly office: for there only can a convinced ſinner ſee an atonement, a ranſom, and a righteouſneſs for his juſtification, Rom. iii. 25. and v. 11. And the life of faith lies in a daily uſe making of Chriſt in all his offices, Gal. ii. 20. with Col. ii. 6.

The ſtate of our Redeemer is twofold, namely, his ſtate of humiliation, and his ſtate of exaltation. Philip ii. 8, 9. He was in his ſtate of humiliation, when he was on the earth; he is in his ſtate of exaltation now, when he is in heaven. He did execute all theſe offices in his ſtate of humiliation on earth, Rom. xv. 8. Eph. v. 2. Matth. xxi. 5. And he doth ſtill execute them all now when he is heaven, Heb. xii. 25. and vii. 24, 25. Luke i. 33. Yea, he did execute them all under the Old Teſtament, before he came in the fleſh, 1 Pet. iii. 19. Zech. i. 12. Cant. i. 4.

QUEST. 24. *How doth Chriſt execute the office of a Prophet?*

ANSW. Chriſt executeth the office of a Prophet, in revealing to us, by his word and Spirit, the will of God for our ſalvation.

The office of Prophets was to reveal the will of God to men, Heb. i. 1. And the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as our Redeemer, is a Prophet, Acts iii. 22. The difference betwixt him and the other prophets, lay here, that Chriſt was the fountain-head of prophecy, revealing by his own Spirit: whereas they were but inſtruments by whom he ſpake, through his Spirit coming on them at times, 1 Pet. i. 11.

The office of a prophet belongs to our Redeemer, as a Redeemer by power, Pſal. cx. 2. with Iſ. ii. 4. And in it he redeems or reſcues by ſtrength of light. And he executes it, by *revealing to us the will of God for our ſalvation.* By the will of God for our ſalvation, which Chriſt reveals, is meant the whole will of God in all things concerning our edification and ſalvation, John xv. 15. Acts xx. 32. John xx. 31. We could never of ourſelves, have diſcovered the will of God for our ſalvation, John i. 18. and iii. 13. But our Redeemer was fit to reveal it to us, in that, as he was God, he was from eternity privy to the whole counſel of God, and as he was man, the Spirit who ſearcheth the deep things of God, reſted upon him, John i. 18. Iſa. ii. 2. 1 Cor. ii. 10. He reveals to us the will of God for our ſalvation, externally by his word, and internally by his Spirit, John xx. 31. and xiv. 26. And by his ſo executing his prophetical office, he redeems or reſcues us from the power of ſpiritual darkneſs or ignorance, Col. i. 13. Acts xxvi. 18. So Chriſt hath redeemed none by power, but theſe who are reſcued from the power of their natural darkneſs, Matth. iv. 16. Eph. v. 8. His word is the ſcripture of the Old and New Teſtament, Col. iii. 16. And the ſcripture is his word, in that it was written by the inſpiration of his Spirit, 1 Tim. iii. 16. 1 Pet. i. 11. He reveals to us the will of God for our ſalvation, externally by the word, giving us the ſcripture, wherein we may ſee it, and the preaching of the word, wherein we may hear it, John v. 29. Rom. x. 18. We ought then to look upon our having of the Bible among us, and the preaching of the word to us by his ſervants, as Chriſt's executing his prophetical office among us, Heb. xii. 25. Col. iii. 16. Luke x. 16. But the external revelation of the will of God for our ſalvation, by the word, is not ſufficient to redeem or reſcue us from the power of our ſpiritual darkneſs, Deut. xxix. 4. 2 Cor. ii. 16. and iii. 6. becauſe when it is externally revealed, we cannot ſavingly know it, without an internal illumination, 1 Cor. ii. 14. 1 Acts xxvi. 18. Chriſt then doth redeem or reſcue us from the power of our ſpiritual darkneſs, by joining an internal revelation by his Spirit, with the external revelation by his word, 1 Cor. ii. 10. 12. 2 Cor. iii. 6. 17.

We are to receive Chriſt as our prophet, renouncing our own wiſdom, and wholly giving up ourſelves to him, to be taught in all things, by his word and Spirit, Mat. xvi. 24. Acts iii. 22. We are to make uſe of him, as our prophet, daily applying and truſting to him, for light, inſtruction, and direction, in all things, Pſal. cxix. 18. Prov. iii. 5, 6.

QUEST. 25. *How doth Chriſt execute the office of a prieſt?*

ANSW. Chriſt executeth the office of a prieſt, in his once offering up of himſelf a ſacrifice, to ſatisfy divine juſtice, and reconcile us to God; and in making continual interceſſion for us.

The office of prieſts was to offer ſacrifice, and pray for the people, Heb. v. 1. Numb. vi. 23.—26. with Mal. i. 9. And the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as our Redeemer, is truly and properly a prieſt, Heb. viii. 3. The difference betwixt him and the other prieſts, lay chiefly here, That they and their prieſthood were the types and ſhadows, whereof Chriſt and his prieſthood were the ſubſtance, really accompliſhing what they ſhadowed forth, Heb. x. 1. 9, 10. Eph. i. 3. Our Redeemer was qualified for ſuch an efficacious prieſthood, by the infinite dignity of his perſon, and his real untainted holineſs, Heb. iv. 14. and vii. 26. 28.

The *office of a prieſt* belongs to our Redeemer, as a Redeemer by price, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. And the parts of his prieſtly office are two; namely, his oblation, and interceſſion. Accordingly, he executes his prieſtly office, in *his offering a ſacrifice for us*, and *making interceſſion for us.*

The firſt part of Chriſt's prieſtly office, is his oblation. His oblation is *his once offering up of himſelf a ſacrifice, to ſatisfy divine juſtice, and reconcile us to God.* The ſacrifice he offered to God, was himſelf, Heb. ix. 14. And he himſelf was the ſacrifice, not in his divine nature, but in his human nature; for the divine nature was not capable of ſufferings properly ſo called, Mal. iii. 6. But his whole human nature, ſoul and body, was the ſacrifice, Heb. x. 10. Iſ. liii. 10. His divine nature was in that caſe, the altar that ſanctified the gift, to its neceſſary value and deſigned effect, Heb. ix. 14. with Mat. xxiii. 19. John xvii. 19. He offered up himſelf to God, a real ſacrifice in his human nature, willingly yielding himſelf without any ſpot of ſin, natural or accidental, to ſuffer for ſin to the utmoſt, Heb. ix. 14. He was without any natural ſpot of ſin, in that he was born perfectly holy; he was without any accidental ſpot of ſin, in that he lived perfectly holy; and he ſuffered for ſin to the utmoſt, Rom. viii. 32. and that, both in ſoul and body, Matth. xxvi. 38. and xxvii. 46. 50. He did ſo offer himſelf a ſacrifice, only once, Heb. ix. 28. And that once offering of himſelf a ſacrifice, was begun from his incarnation in the womb, continued through his whole life, and completed on the croſs, and in the grave, Heb. x. 5. 7. Iſ. liii. 2, 3. 2 Cor. v. 21. The holineſs then of his nature, and the righteouſneſs of his life, were parts of the price of our redemption, as well as his ſufferings, Gal. iv. 4, 5. And his ſufferings through his whole life, leſſer or greater, were parts of the price, as well as his ſufferings on the croſs, and his lying in the grave, 1 Pet. ii. 21. Chriſt offered himſelf a ſacrifice but once, becauſe by that once offering, the price of our redemption was fully paid out, Heb. x. 14. And thereby he redeemed or ranſomed us from guilt, and all evils following it, Heb. ix. 14.

The end wherefore Chriſt offered up himſelf a ſacrifice, was, *to ſatisfy divine juſtice, and reconcile us to God*, Heb. ix. 28. and ii. 17. There was need of reconciling us to God, becauſe by ſin we were ſet at enmity with God, Iſa. lix. 2. God had a legal enmity againſt us, ſuch as a juſt judge hath againſt a malefactor, whoſe perſon he may love notwithſtanding, Matth. v. 25. We have naturally a real enmity againſt God, inconſiſtent with love to him, Col. i. 21. And there could be no reconciliation between God and us, without a ſatisfaction to divine juſtice for our ſin, Heb. ix. 22, 23. We ourſelves could in no wiſe make that ſatisfaction, Rom. v. 6. for we could neither make ourſelves holy, nor bear the infinite puniſhment due to our ſin. But Jeſus Chriſt did, by offering up himſelf a ſacrifice, make that ſatisfaction truly and really, Matth. xx. 28. Heb. ix. 14. and that fully and completely, Heb. ix. 14. for, though Chriſt's ſufferings were not infinite in continuance, yet they were infinite in value. What made them ſo, was the dignity of his perſon, he being God, the Moſt High, Acts xx. 28. Philip ii. 6, 7, 8. The ſufferings then of believers in Chriſt, are not laid on them, to ſatisfy God's juſtice for their ſins, in whole or in part. Pſal. ii. *ult.* but they are laid on them for their trial and correction, 1 Pet. i. 6, 7. Heb. xii. 5. Now the ſtate of the buſineſs of our reconciliation with God, as ſoon as Chriſt's offering up himſelf was over, was, that then it was purchaſed, the price of it fully paid, John xix. 30. Col. i. 20. Actual reconciliation between God and us is made, as ſoon as we are juſtified by faith, Rom. v. 1. And we are not actually reconciled to God, untill we believe in Chriſt, becauſe till then we do not receive the atonement, Rom. v. 11. with John i. 12.

Now our Lord Jeſus Chriſt cannot fall ſhort of his deſign and end in offering up himſelf a ſacrifice, Iſa. liii. 11. John vi. 37. Wherefore Chriſt hath not redeemed any by price, who are not, ſooner or later, actually reconciled to God, Rev. v. 9, 10. John xvii. 12. And theſe are all the elect, and they only, Acts xiii. 48. John x. 15. 26, 27, 28.

The ſecond part of Chriſt's prieſtly office, is his interceſſion, Rom. viii. 34. By his making interceſſion for us, is meant, his pleading our cauſe in the court of heaven. And none making interceſſion for us there, but Chriſt only, John xiv. 6. Rom. viii. 34. The Spirit makes interceſſion for us in our own hearts; and that, helping us to pray for ourſelves, Rom. viii. 26. The difference then between Chriſt's interceſſion, and the Spirit's interceſſion, is ſuch as is between one that draws a poor man's petition, and another that preſents it to the king, and gets it granted to him: the firſt of theſe the Spirit does for us; the laſt is done by Chriſt only.

Now Chriſt intercedes for us, not as a ſupplicant on mere mercy, but as an advocate pleading law and right, 1 John ii. 1. John xvii. 24. The ground in law, upon which he pleads for us, is his fulfilling the condition of the covenant of grace, by offering up himſelf a ſacrifice for us, John xvii. 4. Therefore, he intercedes for theſe only, for whom he offered up himſelf a ſacrifice, John xvii. 9. 20. 42. His interceſſion is always effectual, John ii. 24. And he will continue in it for ever, Heb. vii. 25. Accordingly, he is called a prieſt after the order of Melchizedeck, becauſe he is and will be a prieſt for ever, Pſal. cx. 4.; not a ſacrificing prieſt for ever, but an interceeding prieſt for ever, Heb. vii. 24, 25. He will be an interceeding prieſt, even after the reſurrection, for ever, eternally willing the continuance of the perfect happineſs of the ſaints, on the ground of the eternal redemption obtained for them, by ſacrifice of himſelf, Heb. ix. 12. John xvii. 24. 1 Theſſ. iv. 17.

We are to receive Chriſt as our prieſt, renouncing our own righteouſneſs, and wholly truſting in him, to be ſaved by his ſacrifice of himſelf, and interceſſion, Philip. ii. 3. Heb. x. 21, 22. And we are to make uſe of him as our prieſt, daily applying to him, and truſting in his alone merit and interceſſion, for the removal of our guilt, and the ſupply of all our needs ſpiritual and temporal, 1 Cor. i. 30. Gal. ii. 20.

QUEST. 26. *How doth Chriſt execute the office of a king?*

ANSW. Chriſt executeth the office of a king, in ſubduing us to himſelf, in ruling and defending us, and in reſtraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

Chriſt hath a twofold kingdom; namely, an eſſential kingdom, as he is God, and a mediatory kingdom, as he is our Redeemer. His eſſential kingdom is the whole creation, Col. i. 15, 16. His mediatory kingdom is the church, Col. i. 18. Zech. ix. 9. Now it is his mediatory kingdom, that his kingly office relates to.

The office of kings, whom God anointed and ſet over his ancient people, was to ſave them by ſtrength of hand from their enemies, and to rule them as their head, 2 Sam. iii. 17, 18. 1 Chron. ii. 2. And Chriſt, as our Redeemer, is ſuch a king, Iſa. xxxiii. 22. Zech. vi. 13. The difference betwixt him, and theſe other kings, lay here, that their kingdom was but a temporal kingdom, for the temporal ſafety of their people, Chriſt's kingdom is a ſpiritual and eternal kingdom, for the eternal ſalvation of his, John xviii. 36. Luke i. 33. Iſa. xlv. 17. Our Redeemer was qualified for ſuch a kingdom, by his infinite wiſdom and power, and the Father's committing the kingdom of providence, throughout the whole world, into his hand, Iſa. ix. 6. Eph. i. 22. 1 Cor. ii. 3. Matth. xxviii. 18. with 19. John v. 22, 23. with Iſa. xliii. 14, 15. compare 2 Sam. viii. 1. 6. 14, 15. and Pſal. xviii. 43. He had a right to his mediatory kingdom, by his own purchaſe, and his Father's grant, Acts xx. 28. Pſal. lii. 16.

The office of a king belongs to our Redeemer, as a Redeemer by power, Pſal. xlv. 1. 3. And in it he redeems or reſcues, by ſtrength of hand, Iſa. xl. 10. Pſal. xxiv. 8. Theſe whom he redeems or reſcues by ſtrength of hand, are they whom he hath redeemed by the price of his blood, Zech. ix. 11. He redeems or reſcues them, from all his and their enemies, Luke i. 69. 71. His and our enemies are ſin, death, the devil, and the world, Heb. xii. 4. 1 Cor. xv. 26. Matth. xii. 39. Jam. iv. 4. Theſe are Chriſt's enemies, in that they are oppoſite to his kingdom, though they can hurt him no more. They are our enemies, in that they tend to our deſtruction.

He begins our reſcue from them, reſcuing us from their bondage and dominion, Col. i. 13. We are, by nature, under the bondage and dominion of ſin, death, the devil, and the world, Rom. v. 21. 27. Acts xxvi. 18. 1 John v. 4, 5. He reſcues us from their bondage and dominion, by ſubduing us to himſelf, Acts xv. 14. Pſal. cx. 3. There is need of his ſubduing us by ſtrength of hand, becauſe by nature we are utterly averſe from coming away from them, and ſubmitting to him, Luke xix. 14. Prov. viii. ult. He ſubdues us to himſelf, by the ſword of his word in the hand of his Spirit, Rev. i. 16. Eph. vi. 17. The word ſo managed by the Spirit, operates as a ſword, piercing the ſoul, and conquering our obſtinacy, and making us willing to yield, Heb. iv. 12. Pſal. cv. 3. He opens the houſe of our bondage, and breaks their yoke from off our neck, by his Spirit applying to us his ſatisfaction, Zech. ix. 11. The applying of Chriſt's ſatisfaction to us, hath that effect, inaſmuch as thereby the law hath full ſatisfaction, as to us; and the law being ſatisfied, the ſtrength of ſin is broken; the ſtrength of ſin being broken, the ſting of death is taken away; the ſting of death being taken away, the devil loſeth his power over us; and his power over us being loſt, the preſent evil world, his kingdom, loſeth its power over us too, 1 Cor. xv. 56, 57. Heb. ii. 14, 15. 2 Cor. iv. 4. The ſtate then, that all whom Chriſt hath redeemed by power are in, with reſpect to ſin, death, the devil, and the world, is that they are reſcued from the bondage and dominion of them all, Rom. vi. 14. John v. 24. Acts xxvi. 18. Gal. i. 4. with 1 John v. 19.

He ſecures us from going back of our own accord, to their bondage and dominion, by ruling us, Mic. v. 2. 4. He ſo rules us in the capacity of *Head of the church*, Eph. v. 23. Hoſ. i. ult. The church is the ſociety of us whom he hath called unto himſelf, out of the world wherein ſin, death, and the devil reign, Acts xv. 14. And the ſupremacy and headſhip over the church, is competent to no man nor angel, but Chriſt himſelf alone, Col. i. 18. Eph. iv. 5. 1 Cor. viii. He rules us, as he is head of the church, both externally and internally. He rules us, as head of the church, externally, giving us laws and ordinances, and officers to ſee to our obſerving of them. His laws are the laws of the ten commands, Iſa. xxxiii. 22. with Exod. xx. 2, 3.——17. His ordinances are the ordinances of worſhip, and of diſcipline and government, 1 Cor. ii. 2. 23. Matth xviii. 17, 18. 1 Cor. xii. 28. His officers are paſtors, teachers, ruling-elders, and deacons, Eph. iv. 11. 1 Tim. v. 17. and iii. 10. He rules us, as head of the church, internally, by his Spirit within us, writing his laws in our hearts, and making us obedient, Ezek. xxv. 27. Heb. viii. 10. He carries on his rule over us, in this life, graciouſly rewarding our obedience with his royal favours, and correcting us for our ſins, Pſal. xix. 11. Rev. iii. 19. He conſummates his rule over us, in the life to come by making us perfectly holy and happy, 2 Tim. iv. 8.

He ſecures us from being carried back, by the force of his and our enemies, to their bondage and dominion again, by defending us, and reſtraining them, Pſalm lxxxix. 18. and lxxvi. 10. We need his defence, becauſe they war againſt us continually, and we are unable to defend ourſelves againſt them, 1 Pet. v. 8. 2 Cor. iii. 5. Chriſt's defence againſt them, is extended to the whole church, and to every particular believer. He defends the church againſt them, ſo far that they ſhall never prevail ſo, but there ſhall be a church, while the world ſtands, Matth. xvi. 18. and xxviii. ult. He defends every particular believer againſt them, ſo far that not one of them ſhall ever periſh, John x. 28. He defends the church, and every particular believer, by the communication of his grace to them, and the working of his providence for them, 2 Cor. xii. 9. Zech. iii. 9. He reſtrains all his and our enemies, bounding them by his power, as to the kinds, degrees, and continuance of their attacks on us, Job. ii. 6. 1 Cor. x. 13. Rev. ii. 10.

He completes our reſcue, by conquering all his and our enemies, 1 Cor. xv. 25. They will be fully conquered at the laſt day, Rev. xx. 14. The enemy, that will longeſt keep the field againſt us, is death, 1 Cor. xv. 26. For, when the ſoul is in heaven, free from ſin, the devil, and the world, the body lies in the grave under death. But our King will fully reſcue us from death too, by the glorious reſurrection at the laſt day, 1 Theſſ. iv. 16. 1 Cor. xv. 52.

We are to receive Chriſt as our king, renouncing the dominion of ſin, death, the devil, and the world, and wholly giving up ourſelves to him, to be ruled by him as our head, Iſa. xxvi. 13. Pſal. ii. ult. We are to make uſe of him, as our king, daily applying and truſting to him, for life, ſtrength, and defence, and victory over our enemies, 2 Tim. ii. 1. 2 Cor. i. 10.

QUEST. 27. *Wherein did Chriſt's humiliation conſiſt?*

ANSW. **Chriſt's humiliation conſiſted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miſeries of this life, the wrath of God, and the curſed death of the croſs; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.**

Chriſt's humiliation belonged to the condition of the covenant of grace, performed by himſelf; and it was then a voluntary thing in him, Philip. ii. 7, 8. He humbled himſelf, that he might execute his offices, eſpecially his prieſtly office, Luke xxiv. 26. And he humbled himſelf, putting himſelf in a ſtate of humiliation, and humbling himſelf in that ſtate.

Chriſt God-man put himſelf in a ſtate of humiliation, emptying himſelf of his glory, and taking upon him the form of a ſervant, Philip ii. 7. The form of a ſervant he took upon him, was the form of a bond-ſervant, Pſal. xl. 6. marg. with Exod. xxi. 6. He took upon him the form of a bond-ſervant, being made under the law, Gal. iv. 4, 5. He was made under the law, as a bond-ſervant, to redeem us that were under the law as bond-ſervants, Gal. iv. 4, 5. 7. He did then transfer our ſtate of ſervitude under the law upon himſelf, Iſa. xlix. 3. And what lay upon him as ſo made under the law, was, to to give it that perfect obedience in holineſs of nature and life, that it required of us for life, and under the curſe of it to bear our puniſhment, Matth. iii. 15. Gal. iii. 13. His obedience then, as well as his ſuffering, was a part of his humiliation, Philip. ii. 8. foraſmuch as he gave it in the form of a bond-ſervant. But his ſtate of humiliation is now over, and at an end; and it ended at his reſurrection, Rom. xiv. 9.

Chriſt humbled himſelf in that ſtate, performing the obedience, and bearing the puniſhment, that it required. He humbled himſelf, performing the obedience which that ſtate required, inaſmuch as, in the form of a bond-ſervant, he was conceived and born of a woman, perfectly holy, and lived perfectly righteous, Pſal. xl. 6. marg. with Heb. x. 5. Gal. iv. 4. Philip. ii. 7, 8. His very being conceived and born of a woman, was a notable piece of humiliation in him; and that becauſe he was the Son of God, Gal. iv. 4. Philip. ii. 7. He humbled himſelf, bearing the puniſhment which that ſtate required, inaſmuch as, all along from his conception to the grave, he ſubmitted to the effects of the curſe transferred from us on him, Gal. iii. 13.

He ſo humbled himſelf in his conception, being conceived of a woman of a mean and low ſtate, Luke i. 48. An evidence of the mean and low ſtate of the mother of our Lord, is her being eſpouſed to a carpenter, Matth. i. 18. with chap. xiii. 55.

He ſo humbled himſelf in his birth, being born in a low condition. The low condition he was born in, was, that he was born in the ſmall town of Bethlehem, in the ſtable of an inn, and laid in a manger inſtead of a cradle, becauſe there was no room for them in the inn, Mic. v. 2. Luke ii. 7.

He ſo humbled himſelf in the courſe of his life, undergoing the miſeries of this life. The kind of life that Chriſt had in the world, was a poor, ſorrowful, deſpiſed, tempted, and toiled life, in which he felt wearineſs, hunger, and thirſt, 2 Cor. viii. 9. with Matth. viii. 20. Iſa. liii. 3. Pſal. xxi. 6. Luke iv. 3. Acts xi 38. with Mark iii. 20. John iv. 6. Matth. iv. 2. with chap. xxi. 18.

He ſo humbled himſelf to an extremity, in reſpect of his ſoul and his ſpiritual life, undergoing the wrath of God, Iſa. liii. 10. Pſal. lxix. 1. and xviii. 5. The wrath of God did operate on his ſoul, filling it with trouble, ſore amazement, heavineſs, and exceeding ſorrow, and caſting him into an agony, even to his ſweating great drops of blood, and at length bringing over it a total eclipſe of comfort, and as it were melting it within him, John xii. 27. Mark xiv. 33, 34. Luke xxii. 44. Matth.

xxvii. 46. Pſal. xxii. 14. That was a ſpiritual death, ſuch as a holy ſoul was capable of. Now the wrath of God could juſtly fall upon Chriſt, a perſon perfectly innocent, inaſmuch as he ſtood ſurety for ſinners, Heb. vii. 22. with Prov. v. 1, 2. 2 Cor. v. ult.

He humbled himſelf to an extremity, in reſpect of his body and his natural life, *undergoing the curſed death of the croſs*, Philip. ii. 8. He did really die, and not ſeem to die only, Mark xv. 44, 45. His death was real, in that his ſoul was ſeparated from his body, Luke xxiii. 43. 46. Yet neither was his ſoul nor his body ſeparated from his divine nature, in his death, Luke xxiii. 43. John xx. 13. The death he died, was the death of the croſs, Philip. ii. 8. The death of the croſs was a painful, ſhameful, lingering, and curſed death. Chriſt's death on the croſs was a *painful* death, in that his body was fixed to the tree, by nails driven through his hands and his feet, Luke xxiii. 33. Pſal. xxi. 16. It was a *ſhameful* death, in that he hung on the croſs ſtript of his cloathing, Matth. xxiii. 35. Heb. xii. 2. What that ſhameful hanging on a tree had a particular eye to, was our naked firſt parents ſinning, by eating the fruit of a tree. It was a *lingering* death, in that the wounds being in the extreme part of his body, he was alive on the croſs from the third hour to the ninth hour, Mark xv. 25. 34. It was a *curſed* death, inaſmuch as it was written in the law, *Curſed is every one that hangeth on a tree*, Gal. iii. 13. with Deut. xxi. 23. The curſe denounced in the law, on theſe hanged on a tree, was a ceremonial curſe, not hindering the ſalvation of penitents, Luke xxiii. 33. 43. But the curſe that lay on Chriſt in his humiliation, was a real and ſubſtantial one, whereof the tree of the croſs was but the ſign and badge, Gal. iii. 13. The inſtruments of the cruel death, Chriſt was put to, were the Jews and Romans, Acts iv. 27. But every point of it was determined before, in the eternal counſel between the Father and the Son, for the ſalvation of ſinners, verſe 28. with Zech. vi. 13. Howbeit, the wicked inſtruments had no eye to that, in what they did, Acts xiii. 27. Neither did it excuſe them, from the guilt of moſt horrid murder, in their crucifying the Lord of glory, Acts ii. 23. and vii. 52.

He ſo humbled himſelf after his death, in reſpect of his body, being buried, 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. He was buried in a garden, John xxi. 41, 42. What his being buried in a garden had a particular eye to, was man's firſt ſinning in a garden.

He ſo humbled himſelf after his death, in reſpect of both ſoul and body, *continuing under the power of death for a time*, Rom. vi. 9. He continued under the power of death for a time, in ſo far as for a time, he continued in the ſtate of the dead, his ſoul and his body remaining ſeparate, Acts ii. 31. That is expreſſed in the Creed, in theſe words, *He deſcended into hell.* The place where his ſoul was, during its ſeparate ſtate, was paradiſe, Luke xxiii. 43. The time he continued under the power of death, was three days, Matth. xii. 40. Yet not three days complete, Matth. xvi. 21. with John ii. 19. but only a part of the firſt day, the whole ſecond, and a part of the third, Luke xxiii. 54. 56. and xxiv. 1. 6.

The hardeſt and ſharpeſt of all theſe ſteps of Chriſt's humiliation, was his undergoing the wrath of God in his ſoul, Prov. xviii. 14. The loweſt of them was his continuing for a time, under the power of death, in the ſtate of the dead, Pſal. xxii. 15.

QUEST. 28. *Wherein conſiſteth Chriſt's exaltation?*

ANSW. Chriſt's exaltation conſiſteth in his riſing again from the dead on the third day, in aſcending up into heaven, in ſitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the laſt day.

Chriſt's exaltation belongs to the promiſe of the covenant of grace to be performed to him by the Father, Iſa. lii. 13, 14. Philip. ii. 8, 9. Chriſt's exaltation was neceſſary, that he might fully execute his offices, eſpecially his kingly office, Luke xxiv. 26. Philip. ii. 9, 10, 11.

The firſt ſtep of Chriſt's exaltation was his *riſing again from the dead*, 1 Cor. xv. 4. That Chriſt roſe again from the dead, appears from the ſcripture propheces of it, and the teſtimony of hundreds, who ſaw him with their eyes accordingly riſen again, 1 Cor. xv. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. The raiſing of Chriſt from the dead, is in the ſcripture aſcribed to the Father, to himſelf, and to the holy Spirit, Eph. i. 20. John ii. 19. Rom. viii. 11. It is aſcribed to the Father, as the Judge diſcharging him from priſon, as having fully paid the debt he was laid up for, Acts ii. 24. 1 Tim. iii. 16. A legal evidence of his being by the authority of heaven, diſcharged from the priſon of the grave, was, an angel's deſcending from heaven, and opening the priſon door, by rolling away the ſtone, Matth. xxviii. 2. It is aſcribed to Chriſt himſelf, foraſmuch as he, by his own divine power, calling back his ſoul into his body, took his own life again, and came forth of the grave, John x. 18. with chap. ii. 17. Mark xvi. 6. It is aſcribed to the holy Spirit, inaſmuch as by him Chriſt's ſoul and body were re-united, 1 Pet. iii. 18. He roſe the third day after his death, 1 Cor. xv. 4. That day was the firſt day of the week, and he roſe about the dawning of the day, Matth. xxviii. 1, 2. He roſe in the very ſame body he laid down in the grave, Luke xxiv. 39. John xx. 27. And it had not been corrupted there, in the leaſt, Acts xiii. 37. The change made on Chriſt's body in its reſurrection, was, that it roſe immortal and glorious, Rom. vi. 6. 1 Cor. 20. 43.

The ſecond ſtep of Chriſt's exaltation, was, his *aſcending up into heaven*, Eph. iv. 8. 10. The time of his aſcenſion was forty days after his reſurrection, Acts i. 3. He tarried ſo long on earth, after his riſing from the dead, to aſcertain the truth of his reſurrection; he aſcertained it in that time, by his *frequent* appearing to, and converſing with his apoſtles, during that time; and in theſe converſations with them, he taught them the things concerning his own kingdom, Acts i. 3. It was in his human nature, that Chriſt aſcended, from earth into heaven; not in his divine nature, becauſe it is always every where preſent. The place of earth from which he aſcended, was the mount of Olives, Acts i. 11, 12. It is obſervable concerning that place, that there Chriſt's humiliation began to come to an extremity, Luke xxii. 39. The heaven he aſcended into was the higheſt heaven, Eph. iv. 10. Chriſt's ſoul and body then are now no more on earth, but in the higheſt heaven, Acts iii. 21. with Eph. iv. 10. He aſcended in a viſible and triumphant manner as a conqueror, Acts i. 9. Pſal. xlvi. 5. The action of the Father, in that ſtep of Chriſt's exaltation, was the *receiving him up into heaven*, Mark xvi. 19.

The third ſtep of Chriſt's exaltation, is his *ſitting at the right hand of God the Father*, Mark xvi. 19. God the Father hath neither right nor left hand properly ſo called, as men have; for he is a moſt pure Spirit, without body or bodily parts. But by Chriſt's ſitting at the right hand of God the Father, is meant, his being, as Mediator, God man, exalted on the higheſt dignity and power, over all creatures, in fulneſs of joy and glory, Philip. ii. 9, 10. 1 Pet. iii. 22. Acts ii. 28. with Pſal. xiv. ult. John xvii. 5. And that his ſitting at the right hand of God will endure for ever, Heb. x. 12. The action of the Father, in this ſtep of Chriſt's exaltation, was, his *ſetting him at his own right hand*, Eph. i. 20.

Now, Chriſt roſe from the dead, aſcended into heaven, and ſitteth at the right hand of God, in a public character, as our head and repreſentative, the ſame in which he died, was buried, and continued under the power of death for a time, Eph. ii. 6. Heb. vi. 20. Eph.

iv. 20. Theſe ſteps then of Chriſt's exaltation are, for his people, ſure pledges of their ſpiritual and bodily reſurrection, their aſcenſion into heaven, and ſitting for ever with him in heavenly places, 1 Cor. xv. 22. Eph. ii. 6.

The laſt ſtep of Chriſt's exaltation will be, his *coming to judge the world at the laſt day*, Acts i. 11. with chap. xvii. 31. Chriſt will come again, a *ſecond time*, Heb. ix. ult. He will come the ſecond time, in the character of *Judge of the world*, Acts xvii. 31. John v. 22. 27. That coming of Chriſt will be at the laſt day, 2 Pet. iii. 10. He will come, in the full manifeſtation of his own and his Father's glory, Luke ix. 26. His attendants will be all the holy angels, Matth. xxv. 31. The awful ſound he will deſcend from heaven with, will be a ſhout, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, 1 Theſſ. iv. 16. Chriſt's coming to judge the world, will not diſcontinue or interrupt his ſitting at the right hand of God, but will manifeſt it to all, Matth. xxvi. 64. And that his coming will be a part of his exaltation, inaſmuch as he will then appear and act in the fulneſs of his kingly power, Matth. xxv. 34. The action of the Father in this ſtep of Chriſt's exaltation, will be, his ſending him again, in fulneſs of glory, clothed with his authority, to judge the world, Acts iii. 20. Luke ix. 26. John x. 27.

Quest. 29. *How are we made partakers of the redemption purchaſed by Chriſt?*

Answ. We are made partakers of the redemption purchaſed by Chriſt, by the effectual application of it to us by his Holy Spirit.

The *redemption purchaſed by Chriſt*, is deliverance from ſin, death, the devil, and the world, into a ſtate of holineſs and happineſs for ever, Tit. ii. 14. Hoſ. xiii. 14. Heb. ii. 14, 15. Gal. i. 4. Heb. ix. 12. To be made *partakers of that redemption*, is, to be made ſharers of it in our own perſons, John xiii. 8. Acts xxvi. 18. And till we are in our own perſons made ſharers of it, we are ſtill in a ſtate of bondage, under ſin, death, the devil, and the world, though it may be purchaſed for us, Eph. ii. 12. We are made ſharers of it in our perſons, *by the effectual application of it to us in particular*: and the application of it to us, that is effectual, is the applying it to us, unto the actual delivering of us, as priſoners out of the pit, Zech. ix. 11.

The effectual application of Chriſt's purchaſe to ſinners, in their own perſons, belongs to the promiſe of the covenant of grace, made to Chriſt for the elect, Iſa. liii. 10, 11. And it is begun here, and perfected hereafter, Eph. i. 7. 14. and iv. 30. As the purchaſing of redemption was the work of Chriſt; ſo the effectual application of it to us, is the work of his holy Spirit, Tit. iii. 5, 6. And the cloſeſt application of it made to any, in the goſpel offer, without the applying work of the Spirit, will be an ineffectual application of it; that is to ſay, the priſoners will ſtill remain in the pit, undelivered, John i. 11, 12.

Now, the Spirit applies the redemption to all theſe for whom Chriſt hath purchaſed it, Eph. i. 13, 14. John vi. 37. 39. And the purchaſe and application of redemption are of the very ſame extent, John x. 15. 27, 28.

Quest. 30. *How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchaſed by Chriſt?*

Answ. The Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchaſed by Chriſt, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Chriſt, in our effectual calling.

The applying of Chriſt's purchaſe to us is not the work of the Spirit without us, but the work of the Spirit within us, Ezek. xxxv. 27. Rom. viii. 9. We are made partakers of the Spirit himſelf, by the communication of him to us by Jeſus Chriſt, John xx. 22. Acts ii. 33. We come to be made partakers of ſo great a benefit as the Spirit himſelf, for applying Chriſt's purchaſe to us, becauſe the Spirit is a part, and the leading part of Chriſt's purchaſe, as well as the applier of it, Luke xxiv. 39. Acts ii. 33.

The Spirit entering within us, applies Chriſt's purchaſe to us, by uniting us to Chriſt, 1 Cor. xxi. 13. with Eph. v. 23. The union we have with Jeſus Chriſt by his Spirit in us, is that whereby being joined to Chriſt as our head, we are made one with him ſpiritually, 1 Cor. vi. 17. Eph. v. 23. That union is not a metaphorical, nor mere relative union, but a moſt real and proper union, Eph. v. 30. 32. with Col. i. 27. John vi. 56. and xvii. 21. And being once made, it can never be diſſolved, Jer. xxxii. 40. 1 Theſſ. iv. 14. It extends ſo far, in reſpect of the parties united to Chriſt, that the whole man, body as well as ſoul, is united to whole Chriſt in his divine and human nature, 1 Cor. vi. 15. Col. i. 27. Eph. v. 30. Chriſt's purchaſe comes by that means to be applied to us, becauſe in union with Chriſt, we have communion with him in his purchaſe, Philip. iii. 9. Col. iii. 9, 10. And there is no effectual application of his purchaſe to us, without union with himſelf, 2 Cor. iii. 5. Now, our union with Chriſt is by the Spirit, inaſmuch as it is made by the communication of the Spirit to us when dead in ſin, and by the agency of the Spirit in us, when quickened by that communication.

The communication of the Spirit to us when dead in ſin, is the Spirit from Chriſt the head, his entering into us dead ſinners, as a Spirit of life, 1 Cor. xv. 45. Rom. viii. 2. We are united to Chriſt by that communication of the Spirit from him, inaſmuch as Chriſt thereby apprehends us, and knits with us, Philip. iii. 12. 1 John iii. 24. Gal. ii. 20. We neceſſarily become one with Chriſt, by means of that communication of the Spirit from him, becauſe ſo the man Chriſt and we do both live ſpiritually by the ſelf-ſame Spirit indwelling in both, Rom. viii. 2. Col. iii. 3, 4. And the diſtance between Chriſt the head, in heaven, and us on earth, hinders not the indwelling of the ſame Spirit in both, and our union thereby, in regard the Spirit is an infinite Spirit.

The agency of the Spirit in us, when quickened by that communication, is his *working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Chriſt*, Col. ii. 12. with 2 Cor. iv. 13. Eph. ii. 17. It is not the habit of faith, but actual believing, by which the Spirit unites us to Chriſt, Gen. xv. 6. John i. 12. The Spirit worketh in us that actual believing, producing it in us immediately out of the ſpiritual life given us by that communication of himſelf to us, Philip. ii. 13, John v. 25. with chap. i. 12, 13. And by that actual believing alſo we are united to Chriſt, inaſmuch as thereby we apprehend Chriſt, and knit with him, Philip. iii. 12. John i. 12. Eph. iii. 17. But as for elect infants, idiots, and others, through want of the exerciſe of their reaſon, incapable of actual believing, what comes of them in that caſe, is, that they are united to Chriſt by the communication of the Spirit to them, and Chriſt's purchaſe is effectually applied to them thereupon, Luke i. 15. with 1 Cor. xii. 13.

The bonds then of the ſpiritual union, betwixt Chriſt and actual believers, are the Spirit on Chriſt's part, and faith on their part, 1 John iii. 24. Eph. iii. 17. And that work of God about us, in which the Spirit works faith in us, and unites us to Chriſt, is our effectual calling.

Quest. 31. *What is effectual calling?*

Answ. Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our ſin and miſery, enlightening our minds in the know-

ledge of Chriſt, and renewing our wills, he doth perſuade and enable us to embrace Jeſus Chriſt, freely offered to us in the goſpel.

An effectual calling in the general is, when the party called comes upon the call. The call whereby ſinners are invited to partake of the redemption purchaſed by Chriſt, is the call of the goſpel, 2 Theſſ. ii. 14. Even the goſpel-call itſelf is not given to all and every one in the world, Rom. x. 14, 15. but it is given to all to whom the word of God comes, whether written or preached, John v. 39. Rom. x. 17.

Sinners are, by the goſpel-call, called to come out from the world lying in wickedneſs, 1 John v. 19. with 2 Cor. vi. 17. And they are called to come to Jeſus Chriſt, in union and communion with him, Matth. xi. 28. and xxii. 4. By that coming to Jeſus Chriſt, is meant, embracing him freely offered to us in the goſpel. Chriſt offered in the goſpel is embraced by believing on him, John i. 12. There is need of calling us to come to Chriſt, in union and communion with him, becauſe by nature we are far from God, and faſt aſleep in ſin, Eph. ii. 13. with Jam. iv. 8. Eph. v. 14.

The goſpel-call, to whatever ſinner of mankind it comes, is accompanied with a ſufficient warrant for his coming to Chriſt, in union and communion with him. That warrant is the free offer of Chriſt to us in the goſpel, Prov. viii. 4. Mark xvi. 15, 16. Chriſt is offered in the goſpel freely to us mankind ſinners, in that any of us may, though none but truly ſenſible ſinners will, come to him, and unite with him, John iii. 16. Rev. xxii. 17. and iii. 16.

The calling of ſinners by the goſpel, is ineffectual on many. It is ineffectual on them, in that they come not to Chriſt, upon the call, Prov. i. 24. But it is effectual on the elect, Rom. viii. 30. Acts xiii. 48. It is effectual on them, in that, ſooner or latter, they certainly come to Chriſt upon the call, John vi. 37.

Our effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, 1 Theſſ. i. 4, 5. John vi. 63. And thereby he doth perſuade and enable us, to embrace Jeſus Chriſt freely offered to us in the goſpel. The Spirit renders the goſpel-call effectual on us, powerfully determining us, and putting us in a capacity, to anſwer the call by embracing Chriſt. He determines us to anſwer the goſpel-call, by perſuading us effectually to embrace Chriſt, Gen. ix. 27. John vi. 44, 45. Philip. ii. 13. He puts us in a capacity to anſwer the goſpel-call, by enabling us to embrace Chriſt, John vi. 44, 45. Philip. ii. 13. There is need of the Spirit's calling us effectually, by perſuading and enabling us to come to Chriſt, in union and communion with him, becauſe, being in ourſelves dead in ſin, we are neither willing nor able to come, John v. 25. with Pſal. cx. 3. Philip. ii. 13. John vi. 44.

The Spirit perſuades and enables us to embrace Jeſus Chriſt freely offered to us in the goſpel, by convincing us of our ſin and miſery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Chriſt, and renewing our wills. The work of the Spirit for perſuading and enabling us to embrace Chriſt, is threefold; namely, conviction, ſaving illumination, and the renewing of the will. But conviction is not a work of the Spirit of the ſame kind with the other two.

Conviction is a work of the Spirit acting as *a Spirit of bondage* upon us, Rom. viii. 54. The Spirit, acting as a Spirit of bondage, convinceth us of our ſin, and miſery, John xvi. 8. Acts ii. 37. The effect of the Spirit's work of conviction upon us, is, ſight of our ſins as heinous in the ſight of God, and of his wrath due to us for them, filling us with remorſe, terror, and anxiety, John xvi. 8. Acts ii. 37. and xvi. 29. He convinceth us of our *ſin* by it, bringing home on our conſciences the commands of the law, as of divine authority, and binding on us in particular, Rom. vii. 7. with Exod. xx. 1. He convinceth us of our *miſery*, by it, bringing home on our conſciences the curſe of the law, as the curſe of the Lord himſelf, binding on us in particular, Gal. iii. 10. with Rom. iii. 19. Mal. iii. 9. That law-work doth not iſſue in faith and converſion, in all whom it is wrought upon, Matth. xxvii. 3, 4, 5. Acts xxiv. 25. Neither is it of the ſame meaſure, in all that are converted Luke xix. 6. with Acts ix. 9. But ſo much of it is neceſſary, as brings the ſoul to ſee an abſolute need of Chriſt, and to deſpair of relief by any other way, Gal. iii. 24. Luke v. 48. The part of this law-work of the Spirit hath in the perſuading and enabling us to embrace Jeſus Chriſt, is, that it begins the perſuaſion, urging us with our loſt and undone ſtate, and our need of a Saviour, Gal. iii. 23. Exod. xx. 18, 19. But it neither perfects the perſuaſion, nor enables us to embrace Chriſt, Rom. viii. 3. Heb. vii. 19.

Saving illumination, and the renewing of the will, are the works of the Spirit acting as a Spirit of life within us, 2 Cor. iv. 6. with John viii. 12. Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. The Spirit of life from Chriſt the head, is conveyed into us, in the word, John vi. 63. Not in the word of the law, but in the word of the goſpel, Gal. iii. 2. 2 Cor. iii. 7, 8. The goſpel is the word of the glad tidings of ſalvation to ſinners, through Jeſus Chriſt, Acts xiii. 26. Luke ii. 10, 11.

The work of the Spirit, in effectual calling, acting as a Spirit of life within us, is a quickening work, giving life to the dead ſoul, Eph. ii. 5. with John vi. 63. In his ſaving operation then, on the mind and will, bringing ſinners to Chriſt, he acts irreſiſtibly, yet without the leaſt violence done to their will, Jer. xxxi. 18. Cant. i. 4. Now that quickening work is the ſame with regeneration, taken ſtrictly for the beginning of the new creature, John i. 12, 13. with chap. iii. 6.

The quickening or regenerating work of the Spirit on our minds, is ſaving illumination, or enlightening, John i. 4. and viii. 12. Eph. v. 14. Saving illumination is a quickening work of the Spirit, inaſmuch as it is a renewing of our minds, by nature under the darkneſs of death, in point of true ſaving knowledge, Rom. xii. 2. 1 John v. 20. Matth. iv. 16. Eph. iv. 18. 1 Cor. ii. 14. The effect of ſaving illumination on us is the knowledge of Chriſt, by way of ſpiritual ſight, Eph. i. 17, 18. John vi. 40. The ſight we get of Chriſt, by ſaving illumination, is a ſight of him, in the tranſcendent glory of his perſon and offices, offered to us in particular, 2 Cor. iv. 6. John i. 14. 1 Theſſ. i. 5. It is in the word of the goſpel, that Chriſt is ſo ſeen ſpiritually, 2 Cor. iii. 18. with Rom. x. 6, 7, 8. We come ſo to ſee Chriſt in the goſpel, in the work of ſaving illumination, becauſe in it the Spirit clears and demonſtrates the goſpel to us, for a ground of our believing in particular, 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5. The Spirit clears and demonſtrates unto us the goſpel to be the infallible word of God, and his word to us in particular, 1 Theſſ. ii. 13. and i. 5. And that is an internal atteſtation of the word of the goſpel unto us, diſtinct from the cleareſt external or miniſterial atteſtation of it, John xv. 26, 27.

The quickening or regenerating work of the Spirit on our wills, is the renewing of them, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. The effect of the Spirit's renewing our wills, is their being made pliable to the goſpel-call, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Pſal. cx. 3. That is a quickening work of the Spirit, inaſmuch as our will is, by nature under the bands of death, ſo as it hath no power to comply with the call of the goſpel, John v. 25. and vi. 44. Eph. ii. 1, 5.

The part that ſaving illumination, and the renewing of our wills, have in the perſuading and enabling us to embrace Jeſus Chriſt, is, that thereby the perſuaſion is perfected, and we are enabled to embrace him accordingly, John vi. 45. and i. 12, 13. And thereby the Spirit infallibly produceth in us actual coming to Chriſt, and embracing him by faith, John vi. 45. Philip. ii. 13.

And that our coming to Chriſt by faith, infallibly iſſues in converſion, 1 Pet. iii. 18. Converſion is a ſinner's turning again unto God, from whom he turned away in Adam, Acts xxvi. 20. It is brought about, through our coming to Chriſt by faith, in that we come unto God by Chriſt, and by him only, Heb. vii. 25. John xiv. 6.

QUEST. 32. *What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?*

ANSW. They that are effectually called, do, in this life, partake of juſtification, adoption, ſanctification, and the ſeveral benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.

They that are effectually called into union and communion with Chriſt, do, in communion with him, partake of the reſt of the benefits of his purchaſe, Eph. i. 3. Howbeit, theſe benefits are not communicate to them in their own perſons, all at once; but they get ſome of them in this life, more at death, and the whole at the reſurrection. But the root benefit, from which they all ſpring unto them, and on which they all depend, is their union with Chriſt, 1 Cor. i. 30. Rev. xiv 13. 1 Theſſ. iv. 14. with Col. i. 27. The chief of theſe benefits, which the effectually called do, in communion with Chriſt, partake of, in this life, are juſtification, adoption, and ſanctification, Rom. viii. 30. Eph. i. 5. 1 Cor. i. 30. And there are ſeveral other benefits, which, even in this life, do either accompany theſe chief ones, or flow from them: and they partake of them alſo accordingly, in this life, 1 Cor. i. 30. Eph. i. 30.

QUEST. 33. *What is juſtification?*

ANSW. Juſtification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our ſins, and accepteth us as righteous in his ſight, only for the righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

All who are effectually called, are juſtified, Rom. viii. 30. The juſtifying of a perſon doth never, in the ſcripture-ſenſe of the word, ſignify, *to make one righteous with inherent righteouſneſs or holineſs*; but commonly and ordinarily it ſignifies, *to declare one righteous*, Exod. xxiii. 7. with Rom. iv. 5. Prov. xvii. 15. Iſa. v. 23. And ſometimes *to ſhew one righteous*, Job xxxiii. 32. and xxxii. 2. Gen. xliv. 16. Luke xvi. 15. Rev. xxii. 11. Now, ſince God's juſtifying a ſinner cannot be a ſhowing him righteous in his ſight, it muſt be a declaring him righteous in his ſight. Wherefore our juſtification is not a change of our nature, but of our ſtate.

The ſtate a ſinner is brought out of, in his juſtification, is the ſtate of condemnation, Rom. viii. 33, 34. with ver. 1. All men, before they are juſtified, are in a ſtate of condemnation, John iii. 18. with Rom. v. 1. And they are ſo, in virtue of the curſe of the law ſtill lying on them, Gal. iii. 10. with Rom. iii. 1. 9. But ſinners are in their juſtification, delivered from the curſe, Gal. iii. 13. with Rom. viii. 33, 34. And it never returns upon them thereafter, Rom. viii. 1. Iſa. liv. 9.

Juſtification is not a work carried on by degrees, but an act perfected in an inſtant, John v. 24. with Rom. i. 17. A ſinner is juſtified, in the firſt inſtant of his believing on Chriſt; and not before, Rom. v. 1. and iii. 28. John iii. 18.

Juſtification is the act of God himſelf; and in it he acts in the character of a *Judge*, Rom. viii. 33, 34. with Deut. xxv. 1. The throne of judgment, on which God juſtifies a ſinner, is his throne of grace, Heb. iv. 16. And he is to be found on that throne, only in Chriſt, 2 Cor. v. 19. The ſinner is brought, for juſtification, unto the throne of grace, by the Spirit in effectual calling, 1 Cor. vi. 11. The poor ſinner comes unto the throne of grace, on that occaſion, a guilty, ſelf-condemned, and law-condemned creature, Ezra ix. 15. Rom. iii. 19. 23, 24. A law-condemned ſinner can be juſtified by a holy God there, by an act of free grace.

Our juſtification is *an act of God's free grace*: and by God's free grace is meant, his free favour and good-will. Howbeit, it is an act of free grace, not in reſpect of Chriſt, but in reſpect of us, Rom. iii. 23, 24. It is purely an act of free grace to us, inſomuch that we are juſtified, before we have done any good work at all, Rom. iv. 5.

The parts of the act of our juſtification, paſſed by God the righteous Judge, are two; namely, his *pardoning all our ſins*, and his *accepting us as righteous in his ſight*.

Pardon of ſin is the freeing of the ſinner from the guilt of his ſin, Matth. vi. 12. The guilt of ſin, that lies upon us, till ſuch time as we are juſtified, is the guilt of revenging wrath, John iii. 18. 36. The pardon, then, given to a ſinner in juſtification, is the freeing him from the guilt of the revenging wrath of God, formerly lying on him, Job xxxiii. 22. 24. John v. 24. And the ſinner once juſtified, can never fall under the guilt of revenging wrath again, Rom. viii. 1. 33, 34. John v. 24. Iſa. liv. 9. Now in our juſtification, God pardons us all our ſins, paſt and preſent, Mic. vii. 19. Col. ii. 13. Rom. iv. 7. And the ſtate we are put into, with reſpect to after-ſins, is, that God will not impute them, as to the guilt of revenging wrath, Rom. iv. 6. 8. The procuring cauſe of the direct pardon of the one, and of the not-imputing of the other, is, the righteouſneſs of Chriſt upon us, Rom. iii. 22. with Gal. iii. 13. The guilt, which the juſtified do incur, by their after-ſins, is, the guilt of fatherly anger, Pſal. lxxxix. 30, 31, 32, 33.

Acceptance with God in juſtification, is not the acceptance of our works, but of our perſons, Eph. i. 6. with Rom. iii. 28. No work of ours can ever be accepted of God, in point of juſtification, Gal. ii. 16. Nor can any work of ours be accepted in any caſe, till once we are juſtified, Heb. xi. 6. Gen. iv. 4, 5. with Heb. xi. 4. God's acceptance of our perſons, in juſtification, is his accepting us unto eternal life, adjudging it to us, Rom. v. 17, 18. Tit. iii. 7. Hab. ii. 4. He accepts us unto eternal life, as perſons righteous in his ſight, Rom. v. 17, 18, 19. 21. Gal. iii. 19. with ver. 11. By the righteous in God's ſight, is meant, perſons truly righteous in law, in the view of his piercing eye, Gen. vii. 1. 2 Cor. v. 22. And, they are perſons truly righteous in law, who have a righteouſneſs fully anſwering the demands of the law for righteouſneſs, Philip. iii. 9. Rom. viii. 3, 4.

As to what we are juſtified for, we are juſtified *only for the righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed to us, and received by faith alone.* One coming unto the throne of grace, a law-condemned ſinner, is capable of being juſtified there, pardoned and accepted, as truly righteous, inaſmuch as uniting with Chriſt there, Chriſt's righteouſneſs is his, and upon him that moment, Philip. iii. 9. Rom. iii. 22.

That for which God juſtifies us, is not any thing wrought in us, or done by us, Tit. iii. 5. Eph. i. 7. But it is *the righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed to us*, Philip. iii. 9. with Rom. iv. 6. And it is his righteouſneſs only, without any mixture of righteouſneſs inherent in us, Rom. v. 18, 19. The righteouſneſs of Chriſt for which we are juſtified, is not his eſſential righteouſneſs, which he had from eternity, but his mediatory righteouſneſs, which he fulfilled in his ſtate of humiliation, Mat. iii. 15. The parts, whereof that righteouſneſs of Chriſt conſiſts, are the complete holineſs of nature, righteouſneſs of his life, and ſatisfaction of his ſufferings, Heb. vii. 26. Rom. v. 19. Philip. ii. 7, 8. And, in our juſtification, it is imputed to us, in all the parts thereof, Rom. viii. 3, 4. with chap. iv. 6.

The party imputing Chriſt's righteouſneſs to us, is *God the Judge*, Rom. iv. 6. God's imputing it to us, is, his reckoning it ours, Rom. iv. 10, 11. and v. 19. Jer. xxiii. 6. God cannot reckon Chriſt's righteouſ-not ours, becauſe it is ours, before he reckon it ſo, Rom. ii. 2.

The righteouſneſs of Chriſt becomes ours, through *faith*, Philip. iii. 9. Rom. iii. 22. It is ours through faith, by right of free gift, and right of communion with Chriſt himſelf. The believer poſſeſſeth it as his by right of free gift, inaſmuch as Chriſt's righteouſneſs being made over, in the goſpel, as heaven's free gift to ſinners, he hath received it by faith, Rom. i. 17. and v. 17. He poſſeſſeth it as his by right of communion with Chriſt himſelf, inaſmuch as, being united to Chriſt, he hath a common intereſt or communion with him, in his righteouſneſs, Eph. iii. 17. 1 Cor. i. 9. Philip. iii. 9. Chriſt's righteouſneſs, then, is not therefore ours, becauſe it is imputed to us; but therefore it is imputed to us, becauſe it is ours, Rom. ii. 2. and iv. 24.

The righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed to a law-condemned ſinner, is a good ground for his juſtification, pardon and acceptance, as a perſon truly righteous, inaſmuch as thereby the commanding and condemning law is judicially found, at the throne of grace, to be fully ſatisfied in all its demands for righteouſneſs, that it had upon him, Rom. iii. 31. and viii. 3, 4. and x. 4. and vii. 4. with chap. viii. 1.

As to what we are juſtified by, we are juſtified by *faith alone*, Gal. ii. 16. To be juſtified by faith alone, is to be juſtified by faith, and not by works, in whole, nor in part, Rom. iii. 28. Paul's doctrine, *That we are juſtified by faith alone*: and the doctrine of James, *That we are juſtified by works, and not by faith only*, Jam. ii. 24. do not diſagree, 2 Pet. i. 21. and that, inaſmuch as they ſpeak of very different ſubjects. What Paul ſpeaks of, is God's juſtifying us by an act of his, declaring us to be righteous, Rom. iv. 6, 7, 8. What James ſpeaks of, is but our juſtifying ourſelves, by a courſe of life, ſhewing us to be righteous, Jam. ii. 18. 21. Now a man juſtifies or ſhews himſelf righteous, by faith in the ſight of God, by good works, Jam. ii. 21. 25. John xv. 14. Rom. vi. 14. For though we are juſtified of God by faith alone, yet faith is not alone, without good works in the juſtified, Jam. ii. 17. 26. Rom. viii. 1. Nevertheleſs faith is alone, without good works in juſtification, Rom. iv. 5. That appears inaſmuch as no man can do a good work, till once he is juſtified by faith, 1 Tim. i. 5. Luke vii. 47. Rom. vii. 4. And that, becauſe till then he is under the curſe of the law, Rom. vii. 5, 6. The act of believing, whereby we are juſtified, cannot be reckoned a good work done by us, before we are juſtified, foraſmuch as it is the effect of a quickening or creating act of God in us, by which we paſs, from under the curſe, into a ſtate of juſtification, Eph. i. 19, 20. John v. 24.

We are not juſtified by faith, as the righteouſneſs itſelf for which we are juſtified, Rom. v. 18, 19. But it is, according to the ſtile of the ſcripture, ſaid to be *counted to us for righteouſneſs*, (Gen. xv. 6. Rom. iv. 3.) Not that God judgeth it to be our righteouſneſs, but becauſe he treats it as if it were ſo; Job xix. 15. and xiii. 24. and xxxiii. 10. with chap. x. 7. God treats faith as if it were our righteouſneſs in his ſight, in that immediately upon our act of believing, he juſtifies us. But we are juſtified by faith, as the alone inſtrument or mean of our juſtification, John i. 12. Rom. iii. 28. and v. 1. Faith juſtifies us inſtrumentally, as it receives the gift of righteouſneſs, and unites us with Chriſt whoſe righteouſneſs it is, Rom. v. 17. Philip. iii. 9.

It is in juſtification, that we obtain reconciliation with God, 2 Cor. v. 19. James ii. 23. The ſtate we are brought out of in our reconciliation, is the ſtate of wrath, Rom. v. 9, 10. The ſtate we are brought into, is a ſtate of peace and friendſhip with God through Chriſt, Rom. v. 1. Iſa. xxxii. 17. Jam. ii. 23.

QUEST. 34. *What is adoption?*

ANSW. Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the ſons of God.

All who are effectually called, are adopted into the family of God, 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. Adoption in the general, is a legal act, whereby one doth, to all intents and purpoſes in law, become wholly the child of another than him whoſe child he was by nature. Adoption then, is not a change of our nature, but of our ſtate. Neither is it a work carried on by degrees, but an act perfected in an inſtant, 1 John iii. 2. But the full enjoyment of the benefits coming thereby unto us, will not be, till the laſt day, Rom. viii. 23. We are adopted into the family of God, in that inſtant, wherein, believing in Chriſt, we are juſtified and reconciled to God, John i. 12. Gal. iv. 4, 5. Eph. ii. 16. 19.

Our natural father, out of whoſe family we come, is the devil, John viii. 44. Matth. xiii. 38. and xxiii. 15. The devil's family is the world lying in wickedneſs, 1 John v. 19. with 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. Pſal. xlv. 10. The Father who adopts us into his family, is God himſelf, 2 Cor. vi. 18. The perſon of the glorious Trinity, whoſe act in a peculiar manner our adoption is, is the firſt perſon, the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, Eph. i. 3. 5. and iii. 14, 15. 1 John iii. 1. His act of adopting us into his family, is an act of free grace, 1 John iii. 1. It is an act of free grace, in that there is nothing in us moving him thereto, Eph. i. 5, 6. But it is conſiſtent with the honour of God, to adopt into his family, us who are by nature children of the devil, in that he adopts us in Chriſt, as being in him, Eph. i. 5, 6. Gal. iii. 26, 27. Heb. ii. 11. It is conſiſtent with his juſtice, in that he adopts us for Chriſt, as redeemed by him, Gal. iv. 4, 5.

We are dignified by adoption, in that we are thereby received into the number of the ſons of God, Jer. iii. 19. John i. 12. The dignity then which we are by it advanced to, is ſonſhip to God, Eph. i. 5. 2 Cor. vi. 18. Theſe that make up that number, into which we are received by adoption, are our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, the holy angels, and the ſaints in heaven and earth, Heb. ii. 11. and xii. 22, 23. Eph. iii. 15. All theſe are the ſons of God. Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God, by eternal generation, Pſal. ii. 7. John i. 14. The holy angels are the ſons of God, by creation in his image, which is confirmed on them, Job xxxviii. 7. with Eph. i. 10. The ſaints are the ſons and daughters of God, by ſpiritual marriage with Chriſt, by adoption, and by regeneration, Pſal. xlv. 10. Eph. i. 5. 1 John iii. 9, 10. And by adoption we are made ſons of God too, Eph. i. 5. Gal. iv. 4, 5.

The peculiar dignity of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, among that number is, that he is *the firſt-born*, the eldeſt brother, Rom. viii. 29. Col. i. 18. The pre-eminence he has among his brethren, as he is the firſt-born, is that his is the dominion and headſhip of the family, the prieſthood, the bleſſing, and the double portion, Heb. iii. 6. and ii. 17. Pſal. xlv. 2, 7. The bleſſing is peculiarly his, though all his brethren are bleſſed too, inaſmuch as he is the prime receptacle of the bleſſing, from whence it is conveyed unto his brethren, who are all bleſſed only in him, Gen. xii. 2, 3. with Gal. iii. 8. Eph. i. 3. Philip. ii. 9, 10. with Eph. i. 10.

The advantage we have, by the dignity of ſonſhip to God, is, that thereby we have a right to all the privileges of the ſons of God, Rom. viii. 17. The privileges of the ſons of God, are, acceſs to him as a Father, his fatherly pity, protection, proviſion, and correction, and the eternal inheritance, Eph. iii. 12. with Matth. vi. 9. Pſal. ciii. 13. Prov. xiv. 26. Matth. vi. 30. 32. Heb. xii. 6. Rom. viii. 17. Our right to theſe privileges by adoption, is not our only right to them: we have another right to them alſo, by our juſtification, Hab. ii. 4. Tit. iii. 7. Rom. v. 1, 2. The difference between theſe two rights to theſe privileges, lies here, that our right to them by juſtification is our fundamental right, our right to them by adoption is an honorary right of inheritance ſupperadded thereto, Rom. v. 18, 19. John i. 12.

The earneſt of the eternal inheritance, which God gives to his adopted children, till they come to the full poſſeſſion of it, is *the Spirit of adoption*, Rom. viii. 15. with Eph. i. 13, 14. The Spirit of adoption is, the Spirit of his Son, ſealing them with the Son's image, and working in them a ſonlike diſpoſition and affection towards God, Gal. iv. 6. with Eph. i. 13, 14. and 2 Cor. iii. 18. And that is done, on and in them, in their ſanctification, 2 Cor. i. 21, 22. and iii. 3, 18.

QUEST. 35. *What is ſanctification?*

ANSW. Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto ſin, and live unto righteouſneſs.

All who are effectually called are ſanctified: and the effect of their ſanctification on them, is real holineſs in their own perſons, 1 Theſſ. v. 23, 24. *Sanctification* then is not a mere change of our ſtate, but a change of our nature, 2 Cor. iii. 18. and v. 17.

It is not an act done in an inſtant, but a work carried on by degrees, 2 Cor. iv. 16. And it is never perfected in this life, 1 John i. 10. Philip. iii. 12. Sanctification then doth differ from regeneration taken ſtrictly for the beginning of the new creature: for regeneration ſo taken, being the quickening of the dead ſoul, is done in an inſtant, Eph. ii. 5. with John v. 24. But it differeth not from, but is the ſame with regeneration, taken largely for the forming and advancing of the new creature in all its parts, Tit. iii. 5, 6. with Eph. v. 26. 2 Cor. v. 17.

No man, without real *holineſs* in his own *perſon, ſhall ever ſee the Lord*, Heb. xii. 14. Howbeit, no unſanctified perſon can, by any endeavours of his, work his own ſanctification, or make himſelf holy, Jer. xiii. 23. John xv. 5, 6. Tit. i. 15, 16. Our ſanctification then is *the work of God* only, 1 Theſſ. v. 23.

It is a work of God's *free grace*, Eph. i. 4. And it is ſuch a work, in that there is no perſonal worth in us, moving him thereto, Tit. iii. 5. Wherefore the worſt and vileſt of ſinners may be ſanctified, 1 Cor. vi. 11.

The perſon of the glorious Trinity, whoſe work, in a peculiar manner, our Sanctification is, is the holy Spirit, 2 Theſſ. ii. 13. Tit. iii. 5.

They whom the Spirit ſanctifies, are, believers united to Chriſt, juſtified, reconciled, and adopted into the family of God. Our ſanctification depends on our faith, in that it is by faith, as the inſtrumental cauſe, that we are ſanctified, Acts xxvi. 18. and xv. 9. It depends on our union with Chriſt, in that it is in Chriſt we are ſanctified, as members of his body, 1 Cor. i. 2. Eph. ii. 10. It depends on our juſtification, in that we are ſanctified immediately, through the efficacy of the blood of Chriſt ſprinkled on our conſciences, Heb. ix. 14. 1 Pet. i. 2. with 1 John i. 7. The blood of Chriſt ſprinkled on our conſciences hath a ſanctifying efficacy on us, inaſmuch as removing the curſe of the law, and the guilt of ſin, it breaks the ſtrength of ſin, and the dominion of it, 1 Cor. xv. 56. with Rom. vi. 14. John xix. 34. with Heb. x. 22. Gal. iii. 13, 14. It depends on our reconciliation, inaſmuch as the ſanctifying virtue of the blood of Chriſt, ſprings from its atoning virtue, Heb. ix. 14. 1 Theſſ. v. 23. Rom. v. 10, 11. with Matth. i. 21. It depends on our adoption, in that being adopted into the family of God, we receive the Spirit of his Son conforming us to his image as our elder brother, and ſo ſanctifying us, Rom. viii. 29. with Gal. iv. 6. and 2 Cor. iii. 18.

The work of ſanctification is twofold; namely, *habitual ſanctification*, producing in us habitual holineſs, and *actual ſanctification*, producing in us the acts and duties of holineſs.

Habitual ſanctification is the work of the Spirit, *whereby we are renewed in the whole man, after the image of God.* Sanctification is not a bare amending of our life; but it is alſo a renewing of our nature, Eph. iv. 23, 24. In ſanctification, we are renewed in the *whole man*; that is to ſay, in our whole perſon, ſoul and body, 1 Theſſ. v. 23. The ſoul is renewed, not in reſpect of its ſubſtance, but in reſpect of its qualities of the mind, will, and affections, Eph. iv. 23, 24. The body is renewed, in communion with the renewed ſoul, whereby its members become inſtruments of righteouſneſs, 1 Theſſ. v. 23. with Rom. vi. 13. The reſult of that renewing in the whole man, is the new creature; or new man of grace on us, 2 Cor. v. 17. Eph. ii. 10. and iv. 24.

The new creature is formed *after the image of God.* And the image of God reſtored in ſanctification, conſiſts in the new qualities of knowledge in the mind, righteouſneſs in the will, and holineſs in the affections, Col. iii. 10. Eph. iv. 24. But that reſtored image is expreſſed on us immediately, from Jeſus Chriſt the ſecond Adam, who is the image of the inviſible God, Gal. iv. 19. 1 Cor. xv. 49. with Col. i. 15. compare 1 Cor. xi. 7. with Gen. i. 26, 27.

The difference between the renewing in effectual calling and the renewing in ſanctification, lies here, that in the former new vital powers, in the latter new qualities and habits of grace, are infuſed into us, John v. 25. with 2 Cor. v. 6. Heb. viii. 10, 11, 12. Theſe new qualities and habits of grace, are the ſeeds of repentance unto life, and of all other ſaving graces, making an entire new creature, or new man, 1 John iii. 9. Acts xi. 28. 2 Cor. v. 17. Eph. iv. 24. They are derived to us from the all-fulneſs of grace in the man Chriſt, Col. i. 19. with John i. 16. And they are communicate from Chriſt unto us, by his Spirit, John xvi. 14, 15. The effect of that communication is, that we are ſealed with the image of Chriſt, receiving grace for grace in Chriſt, as the wax doth point for point in the ſeal, Eph. i. 13. with 2 Cor. iii. 18. and John i. 16. Gal. iv. 19. And by that means, our union with Chriſt iſſues in our being one ſpirit with Chriſt, as really as Eve was one fleſh with Adam, being formed of him, 1 Cor. vi. 17. with Eph. v. 30, 31, 32. Now, to be one ſpirit with Chriſt, is to be of one and the ſame ſpiritual nature with him, as his ſpiritual ſeed, Heb. ii. 11. with John iii. 6. and Iſa. liii. 10.

But though in ſanctification, we are renewed in the whole man, yet we are not wholly renewed in any part: but there are remains of corruption ſtill indwelling in every part, Rom. vii. 18, 23, 24. Eph. iv. 22. That is to ſay, there are remains of corruption ſtill in the mind, will, and affections, and in the body by way of communion with the unrenewed part, 1 Cor. xiii. 9. Gal. v. 17. Rom. vii. 14. Philip. iii. 21.

What enſues on theſe two contrary principles of grace and corruption, being together in every part of the renewed man, is, the continual combat between the fleſh and the Spirit, Gal. v. 17. The difference betwixt that combat, and the ſtruggle againſt ſin, ſometime found in the unregenerate, lies here, that in the former, the conflict is between the fleſh and the Spirit in one and the ſame part; in the latter, it is between the fleſh in one part luſting, and the fleſh in another part fearing, Rom. vii. 15, 16. 2 Pet. ii. 15. with Numb. xxii. 18. The immediate iſſue of the combat between the fleſh and the Spirit, is, that neither the one principle, nor the other, carries the action to the perfection it tends unto, Gal. v. 17. And in that combat, the remaining corruption may prevail much for a time, Rom. vii. 23. But the renewed part overcomes, Rom. xvi. 14. 1 John v. 4.

The ſtate we are in, with reſpect to ſin and righte *ouſneſs*, by means of the renewing in ſanctification, is, a ſtate of death unto ſin, and of life unto righteouſneſs.

The ſtate of death unto ſin, for the kind of it, is ſuch a ſtate of death as a crucified man is in, who being nailed to the croſs, ſhall never come down till he breathe out his laſt, Rom. vi. 6. Gal. vi. 14. And we are, by the renewing in ſanctification, put into ſuch a ſtate of death unto ſin, inaſmuch as thereby the dominion or reigning power of the whole body of ſin is deſtroyed, and the pollution or defilement of ſin is purged away from off the whole man, though not perfectly in any part, Romans vi. 6, 14. Titus iii. 5. with John xiii. 10. The dominion, or reigning power of ſin, is deſtroyed in us, by means of the renewing in ſanctification, in that a contrary reigning principle of grace is thereby ſet in us, Romans vi. 14. 1 John iii. 9. The pollution or defilement of ſin is purged away by the ſame means, inaſmuch as the reſtored image of God in us, makes us really pure and clean in the ſight of God, as far as it goes, Titus iii. 5. with Coloſſians iii. 10. And we are in that ſtate of death unto ſin, in reſpect of our renewed part. Galatians vi. 14. with Romans vi. 6.

The ſtate of life unto righteouſneſs, for the kind of it, is ſuch as a man is in, who, being not only quickened, but riſen and come forth of the grave, is in an immediate diſpoſition for the common actions of life, Rom. vi. 4. Col. iii. 1. with Matth. xxviii. 6. John xi. 44. And we are, by the renewing in ſanctification, put into ſuch a ſtate of life unto righteouſneſs, inaſmuch as thereby we are endued with infuſed habits of grace, the immediate principles of gracious actions, Deut. xxx. 6. Heb. viii. 10. 2 Pet. i. 4. We are in that ſtate of life unto righteouſneſs, in reſpect of our renewed part, Gal. ii. 20. with Rom. vii. 17.

Actual ſanctification is the work of the Spirit, *whereby we are enabled more and more to die unto ſin, and live unto righteouſneſs.* Actual holineſs, proceeding from that ſtate of death and life, conſiſts, *in more and more dying unto ſin, and living unto righteouſneſs*, Gal. vi. 14. Rom. vi. 4. 6. with Prov. iv. 18.

Dying unto ſin more and more, lies in our mortifying of ſin, untill it die out, Rom. viii. 13. Col. iii. 5. The ſins which true mortification is aimed againſt, are, *the whole body of the ſins of the fleſh*, Col. ii. 11. Gal. v. 24. We mortify them, by refuſing compliance with them, and acting the contrary graces, Gal. v. 16, 17. Tit. ii. 12. They are mortified that way, becauſe in that way, they are ſtarved, and grace is ſtrengthened, Rom. xiii. 14. Heb. v. 14.

Living unto righteouſneſs more and more, lies in our practiſing of acts of holy obedience, or good works, untill we arrive at perfection therein, 1 Pet. iv. 2. Prov. iv. 18. Philip. iii. 12. 14. And that practice of obedience extends to the whole known will of God, Acts xiii. 22. Col. iv. 12. and i. 10.

A good work, or act of holy obedience, is any thought, word, or deed, agreeable to the will of God, and pleaſing in his ſight, Philip. iv. 8. Heb. xiii. 21. And ſuch works are theſe which are commanded in God's word, done in faith, and directed to his glory, Matth. xv. 9. Rom. xiv. 23. with Heb. xi. 6. 1 Cor. x. 31. Wherefore, no works whatſoever, of an unſanctified man, are truly good or pleaſing in the ſight of God, John xv. 5. Tit. i. 5. Rom. viii. 7. And that, becauſe though the matter of them may be good, yet they are not done in a right manner, nor to a right end, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. Matth. vi. 2. Zech. vii. 5, 6. The good works of ſanctified perſons are, none of them, perfectly good, or free from ſinful mixture, Iſa. lxiv. 6. Gal. v. 17. Howbeit they are accepted of God, for the ſake of Chriſt, being fruits of the branches in him, 1 Pet. ii. 5. Gen. iv. 4. with Heb. xi. 4. 1 Cor. ii. 15. There is a difference then between the two covenants, in the point of acceptance with God. The method of acceptance with God in the covenant of works, is, that firſt the work be accepted for its own perfection, and then the perſon for his work's ſake, Gal. iii. 12. The method of acceptance in the covenant of grace, is, that firſt the perſon be accepted for Chriſt's ſake in juſtification, and then his work, for Chriſt's ſake too, in point of ſanctification, Eph. i. 6. Heb. xi. 4. Rev. vii. 14. Wherefore God's accepting the will for the deed, or any work that is not perfect, is the peculiar privilege of thoſe who are in the covenant of grace by true faith, 2 Cor. viii. 12. with verſe 7. And God will accept of no work, at the hand of an unbeliever, and that becauſe he is under the covenant of works, and his work is not perfect, Galatians iii. 10. with Romans iii. 19.

Our ability for acts of mortification and obedience, wherein we die unto ſin, and live unto righteouſneſs, is not at all of ourſelves, John xv. 4. When we are put in a ſtate of death unto ſin, and life unto righteouſneſs, through the habits of grace infuſed into us by the Spirit, even then we are not able of ourſelves, for acts of mortification or obedience, 2 Cor. iii. 4, 5. Even of our gracious ſelves we can do nothing, or bring forth no fruit of grace, John xv. 4, 5. But we are enabled to the ſeveral acts of mortification and obedience, by the Spirit, Romans viii. 13. Philip. ii. 13. The Spirit enables us to them, by exciting, encreaſing, and ſtrengthening our inherent graces thereto, Canticles i. 4. Col. i. 10. Eph. iii. 16. The Spirit excites, increaſeth, and ſtrengtheneth our inherent graces to acts of mortification and obedience, by communicating new ſupplies of grace to us from Chriſt our head, Coloſſians ii. 19. 2 Cor. xii. 9. Philippians i. 18, 11. with John xv. 4, 5. Wherefore every gracious act, or good work, done by us, is a fruit of the Spirit, produced by him in us, Gal. v. 22, 23. Epheſians v. 9. Gal. v. 17. with verſe 16. 18. and Romans viii. 26. And the way how we derive ſupplies of grace from Chriſt, through the Spirit, is by faith truſting on him, in the word of promiſe, Galatians ii. 20. Jer. xvii. 7, 8. Pſalm xxviii. 7. 2 Peter i. 4.

The ſpring of all grace to us, from Chriſt, for our ſanctification, habitual and actual, is our communion with Chriſt in his death and reſurrection, by virtue of our union with him, Coloſſians ii. 11, 12. Romans vi. 4, 5, 6. There is a power or virtue, in the death and reſurrection of Chriſt, for ſanctifying of his members, applied to them by the Spirit, Galatians vi. 14. Philippians iii. 10. with John xvi. 15. That power or virtue, is, a power or virtue whereby his members are made conformable to him, in his death and reſurrection, to the ſanctifying of them effectually, Philippians iii. 10. with Romans vi. 5, 6. We are made conformable to him in his death, dying unto ſin, as Chriſt died for ſin, a violent death, lingering and painful, yet voluntary, Galatians vi. 14. with chap. v. 24. We are made conformable to him, in his reſurrection, riſing from our ſins to a new manner of life, continued during our abode in the world, and perfected in glory, as Chriſt roſe from the dead, to a new manner of life, continued till his aſcenſion, Romans vi. 4. 2 Corinthians v. 17. Now, in applying of that power and virtue of Chriſt's death and reſurrection unto us, there muſt be a communication of habitual and actual grace from him unto us; and that, becauſe without it we cannot be ſo conformed to him in his death and reſurrection, John xv. 4, 5. The death and reſurrection of Chriſt come to have ſuch a conforming virtue and power on his members, inaſmuch as he died and roſe again as a public perſon, their head, and merited this their conformation to his image, Rom. vi. 4. to ver. 12. Wherefore, as there is in Adam's ſin and death, a virtue conforming his natural offſpring unto him therein, to their defilement; ſo there is in Chriſt's death and reſurrection, a virtue conforming his members unto him in them, to their ſanctification, 1 Corinthians xv. 22. 47, 48, 49. Gal. ii. 20.

QUEST. 36. *What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from juſtification, adoption, and ſanctification?*

Answ. The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from juſtification, adoption, and ſanctification, are, aſſurance of God's love, peace of conſcience, joy in the Holy Ghoſt, increaſe of grace, and perſeverance therein to the end.

These benefits accompany or flow from juſtification, adoption, and ſanctification, with this difference, that ſome of them may proceed on the mere reality of grace, others of them require alſo the evidence of grace.

Theſe of them that require the evidence of grace, are *aſſurance of God's love, peace of conſcience,* and *joy in the Holy Ghoſt.*

The *aſſurance of God's love,* that accompanies or flows from juſtification, adoption, and ſanctification, is, that whereby a true believer is certainly aſſured of God's love of complacency in him, and that he is in the ſtate of grace, and ſhall perſevere therein, Romans v. 1, 2. 5. 1 John iii. 14. and v. 13. A believer may attain unto this aſſurance, in the uſe of ordinary means, without extraordinary revelation, 2 Peter i. 10. Hebrews vi. 11. And the ſpecial means for that end, are cloſe walking with God, ſelf-examination, and the right uſe of the holy ſacraments, John xiv. 21. 2 Corinthians xiii. 5. Romans iv. 11. with Acts viii. 39. and 1 Corinthians x. 16. The grounds from whence a believer may raiſe this aſſurance, are the infallible truth of the word of grace to him, in the ſcriptures, and the evidence of grace in his own heart, 1 John v. 13. and iii. 14. 18, 19. And he is enabled to diſcern theſe grounds of aſſurance, ſo as to be aſſured upon them, by the Spirit's ſhining in his heart on the word of grace, and on the work of grace there, Luke xxiv. 45. 1 Corinthians ii. 12. For ſo the Spirit atteſts, and he ſees, the one to be the Spirit's own infallible word to him, and the other his gracious work in him, Romans viii. 16. with John ii. 22. and 1 Cor. ii. 12. True aſſurance diſtinguiſhes itſelf from preſumption, by its humbling the ſoul, making the conſcience tender, and the heart heavenly, Galatians ii. 20. Canticles ii. 7. Galatians vi. 14. And it is a neceſſary duty to ſeek it, 2 Pet. i. 10. The excellency of it in the Chriſtian life, is, that it fits men to live moſt uſefully for God, and moſt comfortably for themſelves, Pſalm cxix. 32. and iv. 6, 7. But there may be true faith, juſtification, adoption, and ſanctification, without this aſſurance, 1 John v. 13. Iſaiah l. 10.

Howbeit, there is ſome aſſurance in juſtifying faith itſelf, 1 Theſſalonians i. 5. Hebrews x. 22. Jeremiah iii. 19. Hoſea ii. 23. Romans iv. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. The aſſurance which is in juſtifying faith itſelf, is that whereby, in believing on Chriſt for ſalvation, the party is perſuaded, in greater or leſſer meaſure, of God's love of good-will to him, and that Chriſt will ſave him from ſin and wrath, 1 John iv. 14. 16. and v. 10, 11. John iii. 16, 17. with 1 Theſſalonians i. 5. Acts xv. 11. Jam. i. 6, 7. The ground from whence this aſſurance is raiſed, is the word of the goſpel allenarly, demonſtrated by the Spirit in the work of ſaving illumination, 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5. There may be doubting of God's good-will and of ſalvation, where this aſſurance of them hath place, Matth xiv. 31. And that may be, inaſmuch as they are contraries, capable of various degrees, the one weakened as the other gathers ſtrength, Mark ix. 24. 1 Theſſ. i. 5. Matthew xiv. 31. But where doubts are reigning to the barring of any aſſurance of theſe things at all, true faith is barred too, James i. 6, 7. Iſaiah l. 10. Hebrews vi. 11. 1 John v. 10, 11.

True peace of conſcience is, the calm that enſues in the conſcience purged from guilt by the blood of Chriſt, Iſaiah xxxiii. ult. Hebrews x. 2. and ix. 14. The ground of it is peace with God, Romans v. 1. with Coloſſians iii. 15. It is diſcerned from falſe peace, in that it is ſtrengthened by the light of the word, and not maintained without warring againſt ſin, John iii. 20, 21. Pſalm cxix. 165. with Galatians v. 17.

By *joy in the Holy Ghoſt* is meant ſpiritual joy, whereof the Holy Ghoſt is the author, Romans xiv. 17. with Galatians v. 22. Pſalm xlv. 7. with John iii. 34. The ſpring of it is, ſenſe of grace received, and hope of glory, Iſaiah lxi. 10. Romans v. 2. It is diſcerned from the deluſive joy of hypocrites, in that victory over ſin, felt and hoped for, is a chief ſpring of it; ſpirituality and vigour in duties of obedience are the effects of it, 1 Pet. i. 8, 9. 1 Corinthians xv. 55, 56, 57. with Revelation v. 9, 10. Philip. iii. 3. Neh. viii. 10. with Pſal. cxix. 32.

None can have true peace of conſcience, nor joy in the Holy Ghoſt, but true believers, Iſaiah lvii. ult. And when they have attained them, they may loſe them again, Pſal. li. 8. But the ſeed of them, from whence they may be revived, cannot be loſt, but abide with believers in all caſes, Pſalm xcvii. 11. with 1 John iii. 19. The abiding ſeed of peace of conſcience in believers, is their ſtate of peace with God, Jeremiah xxxii. 40. The abiding ſeed of joy in the Holy Ghoſt in them, is their ſaving intereſt in the fulneſs of Chriſt, 1 John i. 3, 4. And out of theſe they may recover their peace of conſcience, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt, by the renewed actings of faith and repentance, Romans xv. 13. Matthew v. 4. with Pſalm cxxvi. 5. And they may maintain and preſerve them, by a holy tender walk, and the daily exerciſe of faith and repentance, Acts xxiv. 16. with 2 Corinthians i. 12. John xiii. 10. Pſalm xix. 12.

The benefits flowing from juſtification, adoption, and ſanctification, which may proceed on the mere reality of grace, without the evidence of it, are, *increaſe of grace,* and *perſeverance therein to the end.*

It is of the nature of grace, as of a ſeed, or the morning-light, to increaſe or grow, till it come to perfection, 1 John iii. 9. with Mark iv. 26, 27. Proverbs iv. 18. John iv. 14. Epheſians iv. 15. And it doth grow accordingly, Proverbs iv. 18. Nevertheleſs it doth not therefore grow at all times, but is liable to decays, Revelations ii. 4. The actual increaſe or growth of it, depends on ſupplies of grace from Chriſt the head, communicate to us by the Spirit, Hoſ. xiv. 5. with Iſa. xliv. 3, 4. John xv. 5. Howbeit, it is our duty to grow in grace, 2 Peter iii. 18. A Chriſtian ſhall grow in grace, by exerciſing it, and uſing the means of it diligently, Matthew xxv. 29. Pſalm xcii. 13. The graces, the exerciſe whereof doth eſpecially influence the growth of all the reſt, as well as their own, are, firſt faith, and then love, Galatians ii. 20. 2 Corinthians v. 14, 15. 1 Timothy i. 5. True ſpiritual growth is diſcerned from falſe growth, in that it is proportionable in all the parts of the new creature; and reſts at no pitch attained, till it come to perfection, Epheſians iv. 15. Philippians iii. 13, 14.

By *perſeverance in grace to the end,* is meant, a conſtant continuance in grace, all along till death, Coloſſians i. 23. Matthew x. 22. All who are once endued with true grace, ſhall infallibly perſevere in it to the end, notwithſtanding of Satan's temptations, the world's ſnares, and their own corruptions, John x. 28, 29. 1 Peter i. 5. 1 John iii. 19. and iii. 9. They may loſe the evidence, and much of the meaſure and exerciſe of their grace, Iſaiah l. 10. Revelations ii. 4, 5. Canticles v. 2, 3. But they can never fall away from grace finally, ſo as never to recover it, 1 Peter i. 5. John vi. 39. and viii. 35. Nor can they fall away from it totally, ſo as to loſe it altogether, for ſhorter or longer time, 1 John iii. 9. Jeremiah xxxii. 40. Theſe then who fall away totally and finally from the faith or holineſs of the goſpel they ſometimes ſeemed to have, are ſuch as never had true grace, 1 John ii. 19. This perſeverance of the ſaints doth not ariſe from the nature of grace itſelf implanted in them; for of itſelf it would wither away and die out, if it were not fed, Iſaiah xxvii. 3. John xv. 5, 6. But it ariſeth from their unſeparable union with

Chriſt, the perpetual indwelling of his Spirit in them, the continual interceſſion of Chriſt for them, and the nature of the covenant of grace, and decree of election, 1 Cor. i. 8, 9. 2 Tim. ii. 19. The ground in law, on which this privilege of perſeverance is thus ſecured to them, is, that Chriſt the ſecond Adam hath perfectly fulfilled the condition of the covenant, Gal. iii. 13.

Quest. 37. *What benefits do believers receive from Chriſt at death?*

Answ. **The ſouls of believers are, at their death, made perfect in holineſs, and do immediately paſs into glory; and their bodies, being ſtill united to Chriſt, do reſt in their graves till the reſurrection.**

Death came into the world by ſin, Romans v. 12. They who, being out of Chriſt, die in their ſins, die in virtue of the curſe of the broken law or covenant of works, Gen. ii. 17. And the ſtate their ſouls are in, from death until the reſurrection, is that being caſt into hell, they remain there in torments and utter darkneſs, Luke xvi. 23, 24. The ſtate their bodies are in, in the grave, is, that they are kept there as in their priſon.

They that are effectually called into union and communion with Chriſt, do not die in virtue of the curſe of the broken law or covenant of works, Romans vii. 4. But they die, in conformity to Chriſt their head, that as death came in by ſin, ſin may go out by death, Rom. viii. 29. Death then doth not ſtop the courſe of their partaking of the benefits of Chriſt's purchaſe, but opens it further.

Both the ſouls and bodies of believers, or them that are effectually called, juſtified, adopted, and ſanctified in their life, do receive or partake of more benefits of Chriſt's purchaſe at their death.

The benefits of Chriſt's purchaſe, that their *ſouls* receive at death, are, that then *they are made perfect in holineſs, and do immediately paſs into glory*, Heb. xii. 23.

The begun work of ſanctification, in the ſouls of believers, is perfected at death; ſo that their ſouls are, upon their ſeparation from the body, made perfect in holineſs, Heb. xii. 23. Sanctification perfected in the ſouls of believers at death, is the work of God's free grace, whereby they are wholly renewed in every part, after the image of God, to the utter aboliſhing of the remains of ſin in them, and are enabled eternally to live unto righteouſneſs in perfection, Rev. vii. 14, 15. 1 Cor. xiii. 8, 9, 10. It is the ſame Spirit of Chriſt who begins and carries on their ſanctification in life, that perfects their ſanctification at death, Philip. i. 6. The Spirit wholly renews the ſouls of believers in every part, after the image of God, to the utter aboliſhing of the remains of ſin in them, by communicating to them from Chriſt their head, a fulneſs of grace for grace in Chriſt, to the perfecting of his image on them, Eph. iv. 13. The Spirit enables them eternally to live unto righteouſneſs in perfection, eternally communicating to them, from Chriſt their head, ſupplies of grace in full meaſure, Rev. vii. ult. It appears, that there ſhall be ſuch an eternal communication of ſupplies of grace, from Chriſt to the ſaints, by the Spirit, in that they continue for ever members of Chriſt; and members cannot act, but by continued communication of influences from their head, John xiv. 16, 17.

The glory that the ſouls of believers paſs into, at death, is, a glorious ſtate, a glorious place, and a glorious ſociety. The glorious ſtate they paſs into, is a ſtate of ſhining in the perfect purity of the divine image, 2 Cor. iii. 18. The glorious place they paſs into, is the higheſt heavens, Philip. i. 23. And they are carried into it by angels, Luke xvi. 22. The glory of that place they are carried into, is the glory of God, and of the man Chriſt, ſhining in it, Rev. xxi. 23. But they are made perfect in holineſs, before they enter there, not after they are entered, Rev. xxi. 27. The glorious ſociety they paſs into, is the ſociety of God and Chriſt there, and of the holy angels and glorified ſaints, 2 Cor. v. 8. And that their paſſing into glory, is immediately after death, Luke xvi. 22. and xxiii. 43. There is no middle ſtate then, between believers their dying in Chriſt, and their paſſing into glory, 2 Cor. v. 8.

The benefits of Chriſt's purchaſe, that the *bodies* of believers receive at death, is, that *being ſtill united to Chriſt, they reſt in their graves till the reſurrection.* The grave is a place of reſt to the bodies of believers; and they reſt in their graves, otherwiſe than the wicked do in theirs, in that they reſt in them, as in their beds, perfumed by Chriſt's lying in the grave, Iſaiah lvii. 2. That the grave is ſuch a reſting place to the bodies of believers, while it is a priſon to others, is from their being ſtill united to Chriſt, Iſ. lvii. 2. The diſſolving of their bodies into ſmalleſt duſt, ſcattered here and there, doth not diſſolve the union between Chriſt and their bodies in that caſe, 1 Theſſ. iv. 14. And that, becauſe the bond of their union with him, is his infinite Spirit every where preſent, Rom. viii. 11. And they are to reſt ſo in their graves, till the reſurrection, Job xix. 27.

The dead will riſe again, Acts xxiv. 15. And the reſurrection of the dead will be at the laſt day, when Chriſt comes again to judgment, 1 Theſſ. iv. 15, 16. Some will be then found alive, as at this day. And they ſhall not die and riſe again; but inſtead of dying and riſing again, they ſhall be changed, 1 Cor. xv. 51. They that ſhall riſe again, are, all the dead, ſmall and great, juſt and unjuſt, John v. 28. The dead will be raiſed by the power of God, 1 Cor. vi. 14. God will not make them new bodies, but they ſhall riſe again with the ſelf-ſame bodies that were laid in the grave, 1 Cor. xv. 53. The poſſibility of ſuch a reſurrection of the dead appears from the omniſcience and almighty power of God, Rev. iv. 8. The concern that the omniſcience of God hath in the reſurrection of the dead, is, to diſcern every one's duſt from another's, and from the common duſt of the earth. And that is all the odds, between the firſt forming of man's body, and the forming it anew at the reſurrection: for man's body was originally duſt, lying here and there on the ground. The concern that the almighty power of God hath in it, is, to bring together all the duſt of the ſame body, from it again into a body, and reunite the ſoul thereto. The certainty of ſuch a reſurrection appears from the truth and faithfulneſs of God, who has ſaid it, John v. 28. 29. Dan. xii. 2. The raiſing of the dead, and the changing of theſe then alive, will be done in a moment, at the ſound of the laſt trumpet, 1 Cor. xv. 52. with 1 Theſſ. iv. 16, 17. And the raiſed and the changed bodies will differ from what they were before, during this life, in their qualities, though not in their ſubſtance, 1 Cor. xv. 52, 53.

Quest. 38. *What benefits do believers receive from Chriſt at the reſurrection?*

Answ. **At the reſurrection, believers being raiſed up in glory, ſhall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly bleſſed in full enjoying of God to all eternity.**

Believers, or they that are effectually called, juſtified, adopted, and ſanctified in their life, ſhall receive or partake of the whole benefits of Chriſt's purchaſe, at the reſurrection. And they ſhall then receive the whole by theſe degrees, to wit, ſome in the reſurrection itſelf, more in the judgment, and the completing benefit after the judgment.

The benefit of Chriſt's purchaſe, they ſhall receive in the reſurrection itſelf, is, that they ſhall be *raiſed up in glory*, 1 Cor. xv. 43. The way how they will be raiſed, is that Chriſt will raiſe them as his own members, by his Spirit dwelling in them, even as one walking draws his limbs to him, Rom. viii. 11. The likeneſs in which their bodies ſhall be faſhioned anew, in the reſurrection, is the likeneſs of the glorious body of the ſecond Adam, 1 Cor. xv. 49. They will be raiſed incorruptible, glorious, ſtrong, and ſpiritual bodies, 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, 44.

But the wicked ſhall be raiſed in diſhonour: and the way how they will be raiſed, is by the power of Chriſt as an offended Judge, John v. 28.

Immediately after the reſurrection, will follow the general judgment, Rev. xx. 13.

There will be a day of general judgment, Acts xvii. 31. The man Chriſt will be the Judge, Acts xvii. 31. And he will be ſeen with the bodily eyes of all, Rev. i. 7. At his coming to judgment, the world will be going on in their ordinary courſe and buſineſs of life, Matth. xxiv. 40, 41. The parties that ſhall be judged, are men and devils, Jude 6. The ſummons will be given to the quick and the dead, by the ſound of the laſt trumpet, 1 Theſſ. iv. 16, 17. The effect of that will be, that the dead ſhall be raiſed, and theſe that are alive changed, 1 Cor. xv. 52. They will be gathered from all places unto the place of judgment, by the miniſtry of angels, Mark xiii. 27. The righteous will meet the Lord Chriſt the Judge, in the air, 1 Theſſ. iv. 17. And he will ſeat himſelf for the judgment, on a glorious throne, Matth. xxv. 31. The parties will be placed before him, the righteous on his right hand in the air, the wicked on his left upon the earth, Matth. xxv. 33. What men muſt give an account of then, is their thoughts, words, deeds, done in the body, 1 Cor. iv. 5. And judgment will be given on men, according to their works, good or bad, Rev. xx. 12. Howbeit, the good works of the righteous will not be conſidered, in the judgment, as the ground of their right to heaven; but as the evidences of it, Eph. ii. 8, 9. But the ill works of the unrighteous will be conſidered in it, as the juſt grounds of their damnation, Gal. iii. 10. Sentence will be pronounced on the righteous firſt, Matth. xxv. 33, 34.

The benefit of Chriſt's purchaſe, they ſhall receive in the judgment, is, that they ſhall be *openly acknowledged and acquitted.* They will be acknowledged and acquitted by Jeſus Chriſt the Judge, Matth. x. 32. He will acknowledge them to be his faithful ſervants, and the perſons whoſe names are written in his book of life, for whom he died, Matth. xxv. 23. with iii. 5. And he will acquit them from the guilt of all their ſins, Acts iii. 19. They are really ſo acknowledged and acquitted by him already, John xvii. 9, 10. But they will be acknowledged and acquitted by him in that day openly; namely, before his Father, angels, and men: and he will do it, by a ſentence pronounced and publiſhed with his own mouth from the throne, Rev. iii. 5. Matth xxv. 31, 32. 34. *Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,* Matth. xxv. 34. The ground on which they will be openly acquitted in the day of judgment, will be the very ſame on which they are acquitted now, to wit, the righteouſneſs of Chriſt upon them, Philip. iii. 9. He will ſo acknowledge and acquit them openly, to wipe off the aſperſions now caſt on them by the men of the world, Iſa. lxvi. 5. The honour to be put upon them, immediately after that acknowledgment and acquittance, is, that they ſhall join with Chriſt, as aſſeſſors, in judging devils and wicked men, 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.

It will be the lot of the wicked in the judgment, to be openly diſowned and condemned by Jeſus Chriſt. And that will be done by ſentence pronounced and publiſhed with his own mouth from the throne, Matth. vii. 23. That ſentence will be, *Depart from me ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,* Matth. xxv. 41. The grounds on which they will be condemned are their ſins and ungodlineſs, in their hearts, lips and lives, Jude 15. The evidence on which their condemnation ſhall proceed, will be clear evidence and full conviction of their own conſciences, Rom. ii. 15, 16.

The particular place and time of the general judgment are not known to men, 1 Theſſ. v. 1, 2. The time of it is kept ſecret, that men may watch, and be always ready, Matth. xxiv. 42. 44.

Immediately after the judgment, follows the full execution of the ſentences, and the end of the world by the general conflagration, Mat. xxv. ult. 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25. with 2 Pet. iii. 10. But God will make new heavens and new earth, 2 Pet. iii. 13. The party that ſhall go off firſt, from the place of the judgment, is the damned, the ſaints ſeeing all their enemies turn their backs, Mat. xxv. ult. The fearful ſentence will be put in execution againſt them, in their being caſt out from the favourable preſence of God, and the glorious fellowſhip of Chriſt, his ſaints and angels, into hell, Rev. xx. ult. with Mat. xxv. 41. and Luke xvi. 26. And they will be puniſhed there with unſpeakable torments both of body and ſoul, 2 Theſſ. i. 7, 8, 9. Theſe torments will never have an end, Rev. xx. 10. And in that their miſerable ſtate, for eternity, they will have the ſociety of the devil and his angels, Matth. xxv. 41.

The completing benefit of Chriſt's purchaſe, believers ſhall receive after the judgment, is, that they ſhall be *made perfectly bleſſed, in full enjoying of God, to all eternity.* They will go away with Chriſt, after the judgment, into heaven, the ſeat of the Bleſſed, 1 Theſſ. iv. 17. And they will be there, in a ſtate of perfect bleſſedneſs, or complete happineſs, both in ſoul and body, Matth. xiii. 43. They will be made perfectly bleſſed, or completely happy, in their being for ever freed from all ſin and miſery, want and imperfection, and filled to the brim with all their ſouls can deſire, Eph. v. 27. What ſhall make them perfectly bleſſed, or completely happy, is full enjoying of God to all eternity, Pſalm xvi. ult. They will enjoy God in heaven, by ſight of the divine glory, to the complete ſatisfying of their underſtanding; and by the experience of the divine goodneſs, to the complete ſatisfying of their will, Matth. v. 8. The ſight they will have of the divine glory, is a full and clear knowledge of God, as by ſeeing face to face, Ex. xxxiii. 18. 20. The experience they will have of the divine goodneſs is an unreſtrained partaking of the all-fulneſs thereof, Pſal. xxxvi. 8, 9.

The creature's underſtanding and experience can never, in any caſe, reach all the glory and goodneſs that is in God; becauſe it is infinite, Job xi. 7. But the glorified ſaints will enjoy him fully, enjoying him to the utmoſt of their enlarged capacities, Pſal. xvi. ult. And they will enjoy him immediately, 1 John iii. 2. Not that they will ever enjoy him otherwiſe than through the Mediator Chriſt their head, John xvii. 2, 3. But they will enjoy him without the intervention of outward means, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. And that their full and immediate enjoyment of God, will laſte to all eternity, 1 Theſſ. iv. 17.

The end for which the ſaints ſhall be made completely happy, in full enjoying of God, is God's glory, Prov. xvi. 4. And they being made perfectly bleſſed, or completely happy, in full enjoying of God to all eternity, will anſwer that end, in glorifying God, by loving, praiſing, and ſerving him perfectly to all eternity, Pſal. lxxxvi. 12, 13.

The End of the Explication of the FIRST PART *of the* SHORTER CATECHISM.

SERMONS AND DISCOURSES ON Several Important Subjects in Divinity.

And by it he being dead, yet ſpeaketh, Heb. ix. 4.

ADVERTISEMENT prefixed to the Octavo edition.

THE diſcourſes and ſermons contained in this, and the following volume, are all printed from the manuſcripts of the worthy author, my father; whom I muſt love and honour in the grave. The Miſcellany Queſtions, *and* Paraphraſe on the Epiſtle to the Galatians, *were written in his younger years, while he was miniſter of Simprin, for his own improvement, and not with any deſign of printing them: though it is hoped the publication of them now, may be for the edification of the church of Chriſt. The ſermons are alſo taken from his own notes, prepared for the pulpit only; and therefore they are not ſo full as doubtleſs they would have been, had he prepared them for the preſs. But though theſe volumes labour under the diſadvantages which commonly attend poſthumous works, there is ground to hope they may, through the divine bleſſing, be of ſingular uſe to the people of* God.

They who had the happineſs to be acquainted with the author, and have heard him preach, eſpecially thoſe who lived under his miniſtry, will eaſily obſerve, in theſe diſcourſes, that clear and diſtinct method of opening up texts, and deducing points of doctrine from them, wherein he excelled; as alſo, the occaſional opening up the ſcriptures in the courſe of his ſermons; with the cloſe and warm application of the ſeveral ſubjects to the caſes both of ſaints and ſinners; in all which he ſhewed himſelf approved unto God, a workman that needed not to be aſhamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. *He uſed to obſerve, that when he had continued for ſome time preaching on a ſubject, he ſtill got the clearer inſight into it, when he came to bring it home upon the conſciences of his hearers.*

The ſermons on Rev. x. 6. 7. *were the laſt which the author preached from the pulpit. But ſo great was his delight in his Maſter's work, and ſo earneſt his deſire to be occupied therein, when he ſhould be called hence, that he preached two or three Sabbaths from a window in the Manſe to the people ſitting without, after that he was no longer able to go to the kirk. And as the two Sabbaths, or three at moſt, in which he was, by his growing indiſpoſition, laid aſide from his public work, were heavy upon him; ſo his Maſter was pleaſed to call him home on the Saturday,* May 20. 1732, *to celebrate the eternal Sabbath in that place where* the inhabitants ſhall not ſay any more, I am ſick.

The ſubjects here handled are of the laſt importance, both to ſaints and ſinners; and therefore juſtly claim their moſt attentive conſideration. The character of the author is long ſince eſtabliſhed; and any further commendation of him, as there is no need for it, ſo neither would it be ſo decent from the pen of ſuch a near friend as his Son.

Oxnam Manſe, July 2d, 1753.

THOMAS BOSTON.

MISCELLANY QUESTIONS.

QUEST. I.

Whether or not the ſins of believers, while unrepented of, make them liable to eternal puniſhment?

THERE are two things which the children of God ought diligently to ſtudy; what they are in themſelves; and what they are, and do enjoy, in Chriſt. The conſideration of the former will ſerve to keep them humble; and the knowledge of the latter will be a ſtorehouſe of comfort againſt diſcouragement, a magazine of armour, wherewith they may reſiſt the devil in his aſſaults, and will afford unto them great matter of thankfulneſs and praiſe, which well becometh Chriſtians. For, to exalt Chriſt, is the Chriſtian's great work; and no wonder, ſeeing it is the great deſign of the goſpel to exalt him, and the riches of free grace, as the apoſtle Paul almoſt every where teacheth. Wherefore we may ſafely lay it down for a certain concluſion, and rule of doctrine, That whatſoever doth moſt exalt Chriſt and free grace, ſo as it have a native tendency to a holy walk, is a goſpel-truth; which, if duly noticed, will readily lead us unto a true anſwer to the queſtion propoſed. Now, amongſt all the privileges which believers do in their own perſons enjoy, the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made them free, is not the leaſt; which, how far it extends itſelf with reſpect to the ſins of believers, is the ſubject of the preſent inquiry. In which, that we may the more happily proceed, I ſhall premiſe theſe few things to be conſidered.

1. Sin is a relative term, and connoteth ſomewhat to which it hath a relation; and that is a law; *For where there is no law,* (ſaith the apoſtle,) *there is no tranſgreſſion;* and ſin is a deviation from the law of God, to which the creature, in point of right, is ſubject; and therefore is called *anomia,* 1 John iii. 4. Now, there are two things in the law which are here to be taken notice of; the command, which is the rule of life; and the threatening, which is a denunciation of the puniſhment the guilty doth incur. Agreeably thereto, there are two things in ſin, (beſides the action itſelf, (in ſins of commiſſion,) which may be called the *ſubſtratum,* or the το *materiale* of ſin, which is metaphyſically good,) *Firſt,* The diſconformity of the action (in ſins of commiſſion,) and of the power and principle of action (in ſins of omiſſion,) to the law of God; which may be called the το *formale* of ſin, being that which conſtitutes the action, or the power, ſinful. *Secondly,* There is the guilt of it; which is an obligation to puniſhment; and this is a conſequent of ſin, flowing both *ex natura rei, & ex inſtitutione Dei;* from the nature of ſin in itſelf, and the ſanction of the divine law.

2. The guilt of ſin may be conſidered two ways. (1.) *In actu primo.* (2.) *In actu ſecundo.* As it is conſidered under the former notion, it denotes the intrinſic demerit of ſin, whereby the ſinner, in whatſoever ſtate he be, doth indeed deſerve the wrath and curſe of God for his ſin; and that ſo much the more as the ſin is aggravated by light, mercies received, and the like. And thus believers are more guilty than others. In this ſenſe, guilt cannot be ſeparated from ſin, no more than riſibility from a man, or heat from the fire. The guilt of ſin conſidered *in actu ſecundo,* denotes an actual obligation to undergo the penalty denounced in the law, whether a remiſſion be to follow or not. There is a vaſt difference betwixt theſe two, and therefore the diſtinction is carefully to be noticed in this queſtion. The difference betwixt them is as great, as betwixt a man's deſerving a ſentence of death to paſs upon him, and the actual paſſing of the ſentence. And although guilt, under the former notion, is inſeparable from ſin, yet in this ſenſe it is ſeparable therefrom; even as the three children in the fiery furnace were *in actu primo,* combuſtible, but not *in actu ſecundo,* the fire could have no power over them. The pardon of ſin takes away the guilt of it in the laſt ſenſe, though in the former it ſtill remains. And ſo Chriſt took on our guilt in the latter, but it remains with us in the former ſenſe. Turretine calls the one potential guilt, the other actual, the one, ſays he, reſpects condemnability, the other condemnation.

3. We muſt alſo diſtinguiſh betwixt actual guilt, or the actual binding over the ſinner to puniſhment; and the execution, or actual inflicting of the puniſhment. The former may be where the latter ſhall never follow: as the elect unconverted are lying under the condemnatory ſentence of the law, though it ſhall never be executed upon them. The confounding of theſe two cannot but lead men into miſtakes. All the three do clearly appear, if we compare the caſe of a ſinner with that of malefactors committing capital crimes. The malefactor by his deed firſt deſerves death, then he is adjudged thereto, and laſt of all the ſentence is executed. All theſe are not only to be diſtinguiſhed, but they may indeed be divided; which I need not ſtand to enlarge upon.

4. Puniſhment is taken either largely or ſtrictly. Largely, it is uſed for the afflictions, or *mala triſtia,* that come upon men, whether good or bad, for their ſin, Lev. xxvi. 41. Lam. iii. 39. So the ſcripture uſeth it, ſo orthodox divines uſe it ſometimes; and therefore we may make uſe of the word in the preſent inquiry, without any imputation of heterodoxy. Strictly ſo called it reſpects only thoſe evils that are inflicted for ſin upon men, by the Lord as a juſt Judge, without any mixture of fatherly love; and ſo it is termed judicial puniſhment, in oppoſition to the evils inflicted on the children of God, flowing from fatherly love. In reſpect of the end of puniſhment, it is either correctory or vindictive. The firſt is inflicted for the correction of the offender; the other for the ſatisfying of juſtice, without reſpect to the amendment of the party; which I underſtand of God's intention ſimply; for as to the vindictive puniſhments inflicted on the reprobates, on this ſide of time in hell, the amendment of the party may be juſtly looked on as the *finis operis,* though we cannot rationally ſuppoſe it to be the *finis operantis,* ſeeing it is not effected. In reſpect of its duration, it is either temporary or eternal. Correctory puniſhments are temporary, in regard the end of them is effected, therefore are they confined within the limits of time; but the other are eternal, and never have an end, in regard men are never able completely to ſatisfy the juſtice of God.

5. *Laſtly,* The ſins of believers are of two ſorts. *Firſt,* Some ſuch as they having fallen into, do lie in, at leaſt for a time, through the growing power of corruption, not having riſen therefrom by the renewed acts of grace. In this caſe was David, when Nathan came unto him, 2 Sam. xii. *Secondly,* Some they have fallen into, but, by the influences of the Spirit upon the principles of grace in their hearts, putting grace in exerciſe, they have recovered therefrom, having renewed their faith and repentance. In this caſe find we David, Pſal. li. Theſe things premiſed, we

Aſſert. I. That the ſins of believers, whether repented of or not, in regard of their diſconformity to the law of God, make them liable *in actu primo,* not only to temporal, but to eternal puniſhment. This is ſo clear, that none who know what God is, or what ſin is, will deny it, but will chearfully ſubſcribe to the truth of it. Therefore David teſtifies, that no living can be juſtified in God's ſight, Pſal. cxliii. 2.; and when the worſt comes upon us here from our Father for ſin, we muſt ſtill ſay, *That with us he hath not dealt as we ſinned,* Pſal. ciii. 10. Therefore believers not only may, but ought to confeſs their ſins, mourn over them, condemn themſelves for them, &c. And the contrary practice is ſo far from a goſpel-ſpirit, regardleſs of the honour of God, and the purity of his law. Believers, ſo far as in them lies, by their ſins do caſt themſelves into the fiery furnace of eternal wrath, ſo that if one were not with them, like unto the Son of God, the fire ſhould actually faſten on them: wherefore they may look on themſelves, as indeed they are, brands plucked out of the fire; and ſing that ſong, *Not unto us, Lord, not to us,* &c. Pſal. cxv. 1. And the truth is, as one ſays well, in ſome reſpects the ſins of the godly are worſe than the ſins of others; for they grieve the Spirit more, they diſhonour Chriſt more, they grieve the ſaints more, they wound the name of God more, they are more againſt the love, and grace, and favour of God, than other mens ſins are.

Aſſert. II. The ſins of believers, while unrepented of, make them liable actually to the temporary ſtrokes of God's fatherly hand. So that a guilty conſcience in a believer, fearing a ſtroke from the hand of God, doth not fear where no fear is: for though God *ſees no iniquity in Jacob, nor tranſgreſſion in Iſrael,* ſo as to puniſh them in a way of vindictive juſtice, as he does the reprobate, though Papiſts would have it ſo, yet no doubt he ſees it in them, ſo as to puniſh them with the ſtroke of a fatherly hand; which is manifeſt (whatever Antinomians ſay to the contrary) from the many inſtances thereof recorded in ſcripture, as Moſes, Samſon, David, and many others, and from that plain ſcripture, Pſal. lxxxix. 30. 31, 32. 'If his children forſake my law ——'Then will I viſit their tranſgreſſions with the 'rod,' &c. of which more anon.

Aſſert. III. The ſins of believers, even while unrepented of, do not make them liable, *in actu ſecundo*, to the ſtroke of vindictive juſtice, or make them not actually liable to eternal wrath. Take it *in hypotheſi* thus; David being a gracious man, even while he lay under the ſins of murder and adultery unrepented of, though he did lay himſelf open to the temporary ſtrokes of God's paternal anger, and deſerved eternal death thereby, yet he was not actually liable to eternal wrath.

Argument I. That promiſe, Pſal. lxxxix. 30, 31, 32, 33. ſeems to carry it ſo, 'If his children forſake my 'law——Then will I viſit their tranſgreſſions with 'the rod, and their iniquity with ſtripes. Nevertheleſs, 'my loving-kindneſs will I not utterly take from him, 'nor ſuffer my faithfulneſs to fail.' Where it is evident, that by the rod and ſtripes, he means only temporary ſtrokes of his fatherly anger. This is a repetition of that promiſe, 2 Sam. vii. 14, 15. Let us inquire to whom theſe ſcriptures do relate, that it may be ſeen how they favour our purpoſe. To exclude David and his ſon Solomon here, and the continuance of David's line and kingdom, were unaccountable, eſpecially conſidering that clauſe, 2 Sam. vii. 15. *As I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.* But ſurely it looks farther than to David and his ſeed, even to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; as appears from 1 Chron. xxii. 10. He is the true Solomon, the builder of the Lord's houſe, whoſe kingdom is eſtabliſhed for ever indeed; and of him Solomon the king was a type. David himſelf teſtifieth this, while he ſhews, that theſe promiſes were to be fulfilled in him, 2 Sam. vii. 21. 'For thy Word's 'ſake, (ſays he) haſt thou done this,' compare 1 Chron. xvii. 19. 'For thy Servant's ſake haſt thou done all this.' Where it is obſerved by Witſius, and others before him, that whom he calls in the one place, the Lord's *word*, in the other place he calls the Lord's *ſervant*, meaning thereby the Meſſiah. But the apoſtle puts it beyond all doubt; when ſpeaking of Chriſt, he cites that ſcripture, and applies it to him, *I will be to him a Father, and he ſhall be to me a Son*, Heb. i. 5. From all which it ſeems to be plain, that the promiſe mentioned does belong to Chriſt's ſpiritual ſeed; that is, believers; 'who are 'born, not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of 'the will of man, but of God, John i. 12, 13. Here then is a promiſe of temporary puniſhments, which are to be merely correctory, to bring them in from extravagancies, into which, by temptation, they may fall. And I think I may call it a promiſe of the covenant; for it is much to be doubted, if the goſpel and covenant of grace knows any threatenings properly and ſtrictly ſo called. And truly this fatherly nurture is that which the children of God cannot want; yea, theſe rods and ſtripes are the peculiar privilege of thoſe who are his; and they have as good right to them by the covenant, as to any other benefit. Here we have a diſcovery of the Lord's way of dealing with his people as plainly laid down as any where elſe; yet not the leaſt hint of any actual liableneſs to eternal wrath. So that we may juſtly conclude, that their liableneſs to temporal ſtrokes, is their utmoſt hazard; which will more clearly appear, if we conſider, under what notion the Lord deals thus with them; even as they are Chriſt's ſeed, the fruit of his ſoul-travail under the pangs of death, Iſa. liii. 10, 11. in which he having taken on their guilt, they can be no more liable; only the rod of a reconciled God remains to them, called the rod of men, 2 Sam. vii. 14.

Arg. II. If the ſins of believers, even while unrepented of, do make them actually liable to eternal wrath, it muſt be by virtue of ſome law: wherefore there muſt be one found in this caſe, who may ſay of the believer, as the Jews ſaid of Chriſt, 'We have a law, and by our 'law he ought to die;' or, which is all one upon the matter, he muſt be liable to death by ſome covenant; for however God might have exacted obedience of man and threatened and inflicted puniſhment in caſe of diſobedience, merely upon the account of his ſovereignty, without making any covenant with him; yet, being pleaſed to enter into a covenant with man, he deals with him covenant-ways; which I think I need not ſtand to prove. But I ſay, there is no ſuch law, and no ſuch covenant, by virtue whereof the believer can be made actually liable to eternal wrath; for if there were any ſuch, it muſt either be the covenant of grace, or the covenant of works. I can ſcarcely think it will be ſaid, that it is the covenant of grace, by virtue whereof the believer, under ſin unrepented of, ought to die; for that were to bring in the law, with its curſing and condemning power, into the new covenant, and ſo utterly to overturn it, and make it a covenant of works. The tenor of the covenant of grace runs thus, 'Believe and thou 'ſhalt be ſaved,' but it needs not ſay, 'He that believeth not ſhall be damned,' for the covenant of works ſays that completely, and ſecures the deſtruction of thoſe that deſpiſe the covenant of grace, but *Fruſtra fit per plura*, &c. It muſt needs be ſaid then, that it is by virtue of the covenant of works, or by the law. But the ſcripture teacheth us, that believers being now under the covenant of grace, are no more under that of works; for a man cannot be under both; they are therein incompatable. We are plainly taught in God's word, that believers are 'dead to the law,' Rom. vii. 4. *Wherefore, my brethren, ye alſo are become dead to the law by the body*, (i. e. the ſufferings of Chriſt in his body,) (*Pars pro toto*, Synec.) *that ye ſhould be married to another, even to him who is raiſed from the dead*; that is to Chriſt. It ſeems then, that the apoſtle is of opinion, that a man cannot be married to Chriſt, unleſs he be dead to the law, more than a wife can be married to two huſbands at once; that is plainly, one cannot be both under the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace, at one time; for if to be married to Chriſt ſignify the bringing of the man within the covenant of grace, which I think cannot be denied, with any colour of reaſon, by thoſe that acknowledge conſent of parties, neceſſary to the making up of the covenant; the being dead to the law, muſt be freedom from the covenant of works. Now, I pray you, what is it that makes the believer liable in any caſe, to eternal puniſhment? If there be any thing, it muſt needs be the law; but we hear he is dead to it; but if dead to it, how can it have any power over him? To be dead to the law, ſays Luther, is to have nothing at all to do with it; not to be held by the law, but to be free from it, and not to know it. And ſo the orthodox teach with one conſent, that believers are free from the law, as to its curſing and condemning power; for *Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us*, Gal. iii. 13. And indeed, according to the apoſtle's reaſoning in the forecited place, the law, as it is the covenant of works, and as to its condemning power, has no more to do with believers, or no more authority over them, than a man has over her, who alive was his wife, but is now dead: and therefore the believer needs no more fear the threats of the law, nor concern himſelf with them, as directed againſt him, than a dead wife with the threatnings of him who ſometime was her huſband; for what has the law to do with him now, when death hath diſſolved the relation? The apoſtle teacheth the ſame doctrine, Rom. vi. 14. where, ſpeaking to believers, he tells them, it is their privilege, that 'they are 'not under the law, but under grace.' The law and grace, have two diſtinct dominions: therefore a man under grace is not liable to anſwer at the court of the law, he being not under the juriſdiction of the law, or covenant of works. So that the law, with its condemning power, can no more reach the believer, than the laws of this kingdom, thoſe that dwell under the great Turk. From all which I may thus argue, he that is thus divorced from the law, that lives not under its dominion, but is as a dead man unto it, cannot be condemned by it, nor by virtue of it made liable to puniſhment; but ſuch is every believer. *Ergo.* And I doubt not, but if we were as much dead to the law in point of practice, as we are in point of privilege, we would more eaſily believe this. But the truth is, that, in reſpect of practice, believers are rather dying than actually dead to the law. And it is not eaſy for a man that is exerciſed, to quit living to the law; and therefore Luther ſpeaking of this privilege of believers, has that feeling expreſſion, “Theſe things (ſays he) are eaſily ſaid, but happy he who knows them well in the conflict of conſcience; that is, who, when ſin ruſhes on him, when the law accuſeth and terrifieth him, were able to ſay, What is that to me, that thou, O law, makes me guilty, and convinces me that I have committed many ſins? That is nothing to me. Now am I deaf, I hear thee not, becauſe I am dead to thee.” This will be yet more clear and convincing, if we conſider, that the law is dead to them, as well as they to it, Rom. vii. 1. ‘Know ye not, brethren, how that the law hath dominion over a man, as long as he liveth? So our tranſlation reads it; the words in the original are, *eph' hoſon chronon ze*: and may as well be rendered, *as long as it liveth*, referring the life to the law, not to the man. And I think the context does fairly carry it this way, for all along this diſcourſe, the apoſtle ſpeaketh of the law under the notion of an huſband, even the firſt huſband to elect ſinners; and it is clear, that in the two verſes immediately following, he ſpeaks of the life and death of the huſband: ‘The woman is bound to her huſband, ſo long as he liveth; but if the huſband be dead’—ver. 2. ‘If while her huſband liveth—but if her huſband be dead,’ ver. 3. So the connection of the fourth verſe with the former, plainly appears; for having premiſed, that the law is dead to the believer, he concludes, that therefore they are dead to it, and their relation to it is now ceaſed. And thus it is read and underſtood, by ſeveral judicious interpreters, both ancient and modern. The apoſtle more clearly aſſerts this, ver. 6. ‘That being dead wherein we were held,’ *apothanontos en ho cateichometha*. The context alſo cleareth this expoſition: for the apoſtle adds, ‘that we ſhould ſerve in newneſs of ſpirit, and not in the oldneſs of the letter;’ importing ſo much, as that wherein we are held, made us to ſerve God in oldneſs of the letter, viz. of the law: which cannot be properly ſaid of the fleſh, or of ſin, for that ſtirs up, even to ſin againſt the letter of the law; but may well be ſaid of the law, with its threatenings, which forcibly ſets on even the unregenerate to outward obedience. Whereunto well agrees the term uſed by the apoſtle, ſpeaking here of the law, ‘in which (he ſays) we are held;’ the word ſignifies forcibly holden, and is uſed of thoſe who are detained in priſon and cuſtody, which the apoſtle, Gal. iii. 23. doth plainly ſpeak of, the keeping under the law;—We are kept, *ephrouroumetha*, kept as in a priſon, and ſhut up, &c. And this word held ſeems plainly to anſwer to that, ver. 2. ‘The woman is bound to her huſband.’ Now, that huſband is dead, even the law wherein we were held. Thus ſaith Luther, “The law which bound me, and held me captive, is now bound and holden captive by grace.” The law then is dead to the believer, Chriſt by his death hath been the death of the law, in point of condemning power: the law, which was the ſtrength of ſin, that is, whereby ſin had a power of binding over the ſoul to eternal wrath, is now gone by the death of Chriſt, 1 Cor. xv. 56. By his blood he hath ‘blotted out the handwriting, (Col. ii. 14.) nailing it to his croſs.’ For to the croſs two were nailed, the Son of God, and the law of God. The law nailed Chriſt to the croſs, and Chriſt would not die alone, but crucifies the law that crucified him; as Samſon at his death was the death of thoſe that were the cauſe of his death. Upon which conſideration, Luther brings in the believer inſulting over the law, with a kind of holy pride, and thus ſpeaking to the law: “I do nothing value thy terrors and threatenings, becauſe thou haſt crucified the Son of God. Therefore the ſin which thou haſt committed againſt him, is unpardonable; thou haſt loſt thy right; and now hereafter thou art not only to Chriſt conquered and ſtrangled, but alſo to me believing in him, to whom he hath gifted that victory.” Thus he. All which being conſidered, I think it will be very hard to ſhew, how a believer can be actually liable to eternal wrath.

Arg. III. Thoſe ſcriptures which declare the believer to be free from condemnation, plainly teach this doctrine which we now prove. John iii. 18. *He that believeth, is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already.* It is eaſy to ſee the meaning of this, which is ſaid of him that believeth, if we conſider the *antitheſis* in the text; *He that believeth not, is condemned already;* not that the ſentence is already executed upon, but that he is ſentenced by the law, and ſo liable, *in actu ſecundo*, to eternal wrath: ſo he that believeth is under no ſentence, or is not ſo liable as the other. So John v. 24. ‘He that believeth, ſhall not come into condemnation, but is paſſed from death to life;’ where it is plain, that the ſame thing is taught; for paſſing from a legal death, to a legal life, which is nothing elſe but the taking off of the ſentence of death, whereby the ſoul is made actually liable to eternal wrath, is oppoſed to coming into condemnation. The words in the original preſs this more ſtrongly; *eis kriſin uk erchetai, alla metabebeken ek tu thanatu*; cometh not (in the preſent time) into judgment, but hath paſſed, &c. the word *kriſis* here, and *krinomai* in the former, being ſimple words, do no doubt ſignify judgment, and to be judged, but tropically condemnation: only properly, I think the judgment or condemnation here ſpoken of, relates not only to the judgment and condemnation to come, but alſo to that which is in this life. But nothing can be more plain than what the apoſtle hath, Rom. viii. 1. ‘There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus.’ It is eaſy to ſubſume: but believers, even lying under unrepented-of ſin, are in Chriſt Jeſus; therefore there is no condemnation even to them. I ſhall not ſay with Jackſon, that the meaning is, there is no cauſe of a damnatory ſentence in them; but I ſhall ſay with judicious interpreters, that it holds forth freedom from guilt, whereby they might be bound over to eternal puniſhment; and am well content to hold by the argument from this place, which Wedelin ſays the orthodox uſe againſt the Papiſts, for the perfection of juſtification. The argument is this. “Where there is no condemnation, there is no puniſhment; but in the juſtified there is no condemnation: *Ergo.* In them there is no puniſhment: or, they are bound over to no penal ſatisfaction. The propoſition is proved, becauſe condemnation is an adjudging to puniſhment.” Thus he, how ſhall the force of this argument be invalidated? Will any ſay, that this privilege is reſtricted by the following clauſe, ‘that walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit;’ and ſo belongs not to thoſe who lie under unrepented-of guilt? This were to make two ſorts of perſons in Chriſt; ſome in Chriſt, that ‘walk after the Spirit;’ and others in him, that ‘walk after the fleſh;’ and if there be ſuch, let us no more aſk, what concord Chriſt can have with Belial, light with darkneſs? But the apoſtle plainly applies the not walking after the fleſh, but after the Spirit, to all believers, to all in whom the ‘righteouſneſs of the law is fulfilled,’ ver. 4. And the walkers after the fleſh, he makes the ſame with them that are in the fleſh, ver. 5. who cannot pleaſe God, ver. 8. have not the Spirit, and are none of Chriſt's, ver. 9. If any ſhall ſay, that the meaning is, there is no actual condemnation to them, though there want not ſomething condemnable in them; it is the truth, and the very thing we plead for, viz. that though by their ſins they deſerve to be damned, yet there is no ſentence paſſed againſt them, binding them over to eternal wrath, even though this ſentence ſhould never be put in execution. But this is not the meaning of thoſe that make this exception; but thus they underſtand it, as we commonly ſay, they ſhall never be damned; that is, the ſentence ſhall never be executed upon them; the wrath they are actually liable to by their ſins, ſhall be diverted; the antecedent being put for the conſequent, condemnation for the execution of it. But if ſo, I would fain learn of thoſe men, what the apoſtle hath done, in aſſerting this (ſeemingly at leaſt,) great privilege of believers beyond others? and why he adds this *now* to it, importing, as it would ſeem, ſomewhat which thoſe perſons had not before? Are there not thouſands out of Chriſt, that are as highly privileged as they? Are there not many that are yet enemies to Chriſt, walking after the fleſh, regardleſs of the Spirit, who ſhall never have the ſentence of condemnation executed upon them, but ſhall certainly be ſaved? Is it not as true of the elect unconverted, that the ſentence ſhall never be executed againſt them, as of believers? Yea ſurely. It muſt needs then be meant of this actual liableneſs to eternal wrath, the freedom from which is the peculiar privilege of believers.

Arg. IV. If believers under unrepented-of ſin, be actually liable to eternal wrath, or the ſtrokes of vindictive juſtice, then they are liable to pay a debt over again which hath been once already paid to the full; which is abſurd, and unworthy of the divine Majeſty, impeacheth his juſtice, as our divines ſay againſt the Papiſts, and reflects diſhonour on the merits of Chriſt's death. We believe, that by once offering Chriſt hath perfected for ever them that are ſanctified, he hath fully paid the believer's debt, and ſatisfied for all his ſins, paſt, preſent, and to come: and ſhall the believer himſelf be yet liable to pay that debt? This argument Beza hath pithily holden forth in his confeſſion of faith, "Thou "wilt ſay then, (ſays he,) that there be infinite iniqui"ties in me, which deſerve eternal death. I do grant; "but I add more to it, which thou (Satan) haſt mali"ciouſly omitted; that is, that the iniquities which "be in me, were ſufficiently revenged and puniſhed in "Jeſus Chriſt, who hath borne the judgment of God "in my ſtead. So upon this I make my concluſion "contrary to thine; that is to ſay, foraſmuch as God "is righteous, and will not be paid double, and Jeſus "Chriſt, God and man, hath, by one infinite obedi"ence, made ſatisfaction to the infinite majeſty of "God; it followeth, that my iniquities can no more "fray nor trouble me, my accounts and debts being "aſſuredly raſed and wiped out by the precious blood "of Jeſus Chriſt, who was made accurſed for me." But here it will perhaps be ſaid, that if this prove any thing it proves too much, viz. that the elect unconverted are not actually liable to eternal wrath; for Chriſt hath ſatisfied for their ſins, as for the ſins of believers. In anſwer to this, it would be conſidered, that there is a vaſt difference betwixt a man's paying of his own debt in perſon, and another's paying it for him. When he pays it himſelf, he is *ipſo facto* diſcharged of it; but when another pays it for him, the debtor is not preſently diſcharged from the debt, in regard of the ſurety, but to be diſcharged when the ſurety pleaſeth. Now, our ſins were charged on Chriſt as our ſurety, and he did pay our debt; look therefore, when he pleaſeth, we are diſcharged from them, and that (ſaith he) is upon your believing, not before, Rom. v. 1. So Bridge. It is certain, the remiſſion of ſin, which takes away actual liableneſs to eternal wrath, is not communicated but to thoſe who believe; for as Pariſienſis ſaith, as the damnation of Adam doth not paſs, but by natural generation, upon thoſe that are carnally generate of him; ſo the grace of Chriſt, and remiſſion of ſin, doth not paſs, but by regeneration, to thoſe who are ſpiritually regenerated through him. Further it is to be conſidered, that although the payment be made by the ſurety, yet the debtor is ſtill liable in law, till it be inſtructed that the debt was paid for him in particular; the ground of which is the union betwixt the cautioner and the principal debtor. Now, it is certain, that the union betwixt Chriſt and a ſoul is made by faith only; that is, when the ſoul believes, and not till then. It is true, that from all eternity there was an union betwixt Chriſt and the elect, in the deſignation and decree of God; but as ſure it is, that *decreta Dei nihil ponunt in actu.* To this purpoſe ſpeaks Mr Durham, "It is not (ſays he) "the cautioner's payment ſimply, that is ſuſtained, as "a relevant defence in judgment, till that be inſtruc"ted, and except the defence be founded thereon; for "ſo the law provideth; ſo it is not Chriſt ſuffering "ſimply, but his ſatisfaction pleaded by faith, and fled "unto, that juſtifieth." And thus I think there remains nothing in this exception to invalidate the argument; for the elect unconverted are ſtill liable to eternal wrath, in regard the time ſet by the ſurety for their perſonal diſcharge is not yet come; they are not yet Chriſt's ſeed by regeneration; they are not yet united to Chriſt; nor have they by faith pleaded his ſatisfaction before the bar of the court of heaven. But believers being united to Chriſt by faith, even then when they lie under unrepented-of ſins, cannot be liable. And therefore the believer, even in this caſe, may look the law in the face, and ſay, *It is God that juſtifieth, who is he that condemneth?* I was crucified with Chriſt, in him I obeyed, in him I ſatisfied thee, O law, in whatſoever was demanded; I am therefore no more liable to thy condemnation: and with Luther, "O law, "thou haſt no power over me, in vain doſt thou ac"cuſe and condemn me; I believe in Chriſt, he has "poured out his life moſt largely for me, beſides him "I will hear and ſee nothing." This, I ſay, a believer may do *de jure*, though he cannot *de facto*, under thoſe ſins that waſte the conſcience, and darken his ſight of his intereſt in Chriſt.

If it be alledged, that there muſt ſtill be a freſh application of the merits of Chriſt's death, before the ſoul have the benefit of them for the particular ſin, and repentance muſt be renewed for the ſame end; this is a mere begging of the queſtion. But I truly wonder how repentance comes in here; for it can have no inſtrumentality here, conſiſtent with the nature of the new covenant; for it is a giving, not a taking grace; and therefore the Lord hath made it to be of faith, not of repentance, *that it might be of grace*, Rom. iv. 16. As for that of the neceſſity of faith, it is more tolerable, and there is no doubt but it is neceſſary, in order to the attaining of the comfort of the pardon of after-ſins, as repentance may likewiſe be. But I believe, that the righteouſneſs of Chriſt is a perfect righteouſneſs; and that at the firſt moment of believing, we put on the Lord Jeſus with his perfect righteouſneſs: that the Lord ſeeing us clothed therewith, declareth us perfectly juſt; and that we remain forever, without interruption, clothed with the ſame, and are thereby kept from all liableneſs to eternal wrath *in actu ſecundo.* So that there is no need of freſh application here for this end, the thing ſuppoſed being falſe. But I would gladly underſtand what they mean by a freſh application of the merits of Chriſt's death here: for either they are applied to them before that application, or not till then, or that righteouſneſs is theirs before the freſh application, or not till it be anew applied. If they ſay the latter, then the ſtate of juſtification is interrupted by the believer's after ſins; if the firſt, then they cannot be liable to eternal wrath. This muſt only be needful for the comfort of their privilege. And this leads us to another argument: which is,

Arg. V. Believers, even in their worſt caſe, have a perfect righteouſneſs, and ſo are perfectly righteous; therefore they can never be liable to eternal wrath. The reaſon is, becauſe to be perfectly righteous, is to be conform to the law; but to be perfectly conform to the law, and yet to be liable to the condemnation of the law, is a flat contradiction. It is true, that the righteouſneſs is not originally and inherently theirs; but it is derivatively theirs, and imputed to them; which with reſpect to Adam's ſin, was ſufficient to make us actually liable to eternal flames; and why ſhall not the imputed righteouſneſs of Chriſt be ſufficient to make us free from that actual liableneſs to the revenging wrath of God? Are they not perfectly righteous? Hath the law any more to require of them than what it has got? There were but two things it could demand, according to the ſtricteſt tenor of the firſt covenant: to do and to ſuffer perfectly; and they have in Chriſt their head both done, and ſuffered accordingly, Rom. viii. 3, 4.—'That the righteouſneſs of the law might be fulfilled in us,' Rom. vi. 10, 11. Gal. iv. 4, 5. "We learn (ſays Beza) to pay by him, who ſet himſelf debtor and payer for us, who hath put himſelf in our place, and hath paid our debt, as the principal debtor, even unto the uttermoſt penny, in ſuch wiſe that the rigour of the law, which did before fear us, now comforteth us in Jeſus Chriſt; foraſmuch as life eternal is due to thoſe who have fully obeyed the law, and Jeſus Chriſt hath fulfilled the ſame for us." Now, ſurely, what Chriſt hath done for us, is as good as if we had done it ourſelves; yea, for the honour of the law, it is a thouſand times better, becauſe of the incomparable dignity of the perſon. What then ſhould make them liable at any time to eternal wrath, being at all times clothed with this perfect righteouſneſs? It cannot be, that, falling aſleep, and faith not being in exerciſe, they let the grips of it go; and therefore they are thus made obnoxious to divine vengeance. But ſurely it is not ſo eaſily made ineffectual. If inherent grace remain ſo ſecurely under the grievous backſlidings of the regenerate, that they cannot become children of the devil; much more doth the imputed righteouſneſs remain, ſo that they cannot become children of wrath, that is, actually liable thereto, Eph. ii. 2. If they cannot keep the covenant, the covenant will keep them. If any ſhall ſay, that God will not impute it to us for the covering of that particular ſin or ſins we lie under for the time, till we do anew receive it by faith for that end; it is falſe; for if a perfect righteouſneſs be at all imputed, it covereth all ſins. The ground of this opinion ſeems to be a miſtake anent the imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, as if the imputation of it were a making of it ours, and that this imputation were carried on by repeated acts, ſo as it is ſtill made anew as the ſoul ſtands in need of it falling into new ſins. That the firſt of theſe is a miſtake, appears from this, that Chriſt's righteouſneſs is ours before it be imputed, I mean not in order of time, but in order of nature. It is not ours, becauſe it is imputed; but it is imputed, becauſe it is ours. It is evident, that it is uſed in this matter forenſically, and is a judicial word and act; and is nothing elſe but a legal accounting of a thing to be ours. Now, we know, that the judgment of God is according to truth; and therefore he cannot count that to be ours which really is not ſo. And the word itſelf will import no other; for whether you underſtand the primary ſignification of it to be the caſting up of an account, and finding the total ſum, as arithmeticians do; or the concluding of a thing by reaſon and argument, as in logic; it ſtill imports the being of the thing ſo, before it be imputed; as two tens are twenty, before the arithmetician caſt up the number, and the logician finds the concluſion in the premiſſes, before he gather it out of them. So in this metaphorical ſenſe, we are ſinners in Adam, before Adam's ſin be imputed to us, or we be reckoned guilty of his ſin, and alſo righteous in Chriſt, before his righteouſneſs be imputed to us. Hence I cannot but judge, that the Weſtminſter Aſſembly, in their definition of juſtification, are much more accurate than ſeveral learned foreign divines, who make our juſtification formally conſiſt in the imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs; for indeed as they accurately give it, it is preſuppoſed to our juſtification, as the ground thereof. Now, the way how Chriſt's righteouſneſs becomes ours, is by faith, (as the aforeſaid Aſſembly teacheth,) and that as it doth make up an union betwixt Chriſt and the elect perſon; which I conceive to be the primary and immediate effect of faith. Hence iſſues a communion betwixt Chriſt and the believer; ſo that as all his ſins, wants, &c. become Chriſt's; the righteouſneſs, obedience, and death of Chriſt, becomes theirs; which ſo being, God accounts it, and judicially owns and acknowledgeth it to be theirs, as indeed it is; and therefore juſtifies them, that is, pardons their ſins, and accepts them as righteous upon the account of the righteouſneſs they appear before him clothed with. So Witſius teacheth. Now, what is it to be righteous, but to be conform to the law? and ſeeing no righteouſneſs can be ſuſtained at the tribunal of God but that which is perfect, it remains that believers, at their firſt believing, are reputed perfectly conform to the law of God; that is, to have perfectly obeyed and ſuffered; and this in regard of their union with Chriſt; and therefore, unleſs his ſtate be changed, which can never be till the union be diſſolved, which the ſcripture holds forth as conſtant and perpetual, he can never be liable to eternal wrath. Hence it follows, that the opinion of a repeated imputation is alſo a miſtake; for the imputation can no more be anew made, than the ſoul can be anew united to Chriſt Jeſus. And, as Durham ſaith, "Imputation being a judicial word and act, it ſupponeth an inſtant ſentencing of ſuch a righteouſneſs to belong to ſuch a perſon, as it were, and to be accepted for him; for if he hath not perfect right, there is no legal imputation, (to ſay ſo;) but if it be perfect, then it is an inſtantaneous act." I add, and if inſtantaneous, then it is not repeated; nor is it a continued act formally conſidered, though virtually it be; that is, the virtue of the imputation once made in the court of heaven never ceaſeth, but remains ſtill in force for all time to come.

Arg. VI. If the ſins of believers unrepented of make them actually liable to eternal wrath, the ſalvation of many of the regenerate is loſt; yea, I ſhall add, *Who then can be ſaved?* for believers may die under ſins unrepented of; and therefore, according to this principle, they muſt needs periſh, being actually bound over to the eternal wrath of God; unleſs you ſay, either that God ſaves them, and takes them into glory, while they lie under a ſentence of condemnation, or that he takes off the obligation after death: both which are abſurd. This argument is not ſo trivial as to be diſmiſſed as ſome would, with a, *What if they die not in that caſe?* But it is ſaid here, that although God, by his abſolute power, can cut off believers in this caſe, yet, by his ordinate power, he cannot; for he will not do it; he hath ſecured them in that point, that though they fall, yet they ſhall ariſe by repentance, ere they go off the world; they cannot die under ſin without repentance, becauſe they *are kept by the power of God unto ſalvation*, 1 Pet. i. 5. But this I refuſe, as what cannot be made out by the ſcriptures; and muſt needs do ſo, till I ſee a promiſe of it in God's word; for to expect a benefit not promiſed, were too great raſhneſs: but ſuch a promiſe I confeſs I have never, as I conceive, heard of, or ſeen in the word of God. The ſcripture alledged doth indeed prove, that the ſalvation of the godly is ſure, ſo that it cannot fail. That we deny not: only we judge, that the doctrine we impugn, is not the doctrine of the goſpel; becauſe it is not conſiſtent with this certainty of the ſalvation of the regenerate, which is here taught us by the ſcripture cited; but their ſalvation is ſufficiently ſure, without this renewing of the acts of repentance, though in ſome caſes at leaſt it is neceſſary to their comfort. I deny not, but there are promiſes of the influences of grace, for the renewing of repentance, made unto believers: but this I ſay, that they are no more to be extended to every time, than the promiſes of increaſe of grace; ſo that they are indefinite in reſpect of time. It is a command to *grow in grace*, and there is a promiſe thereof too, Pſal. xcii. 13, 14. as well as repentance is commanded and promiſed. And yet I ſuppoſe it will not be denied, but that the laſt days of ſome may be worſe than their firſt days, and that believers may die in a time of the decay of grace. But if we may judge of what God hath promiſed (as certainly we may) by the event, *for his counſel ſhall ſtand*, we ſhall ſoon find, that there is no ſuch thing. Let us conſider Eli ſitting by the way-ſide, and in an inſtant falling back, and breaking his neck, 1 Sam. iv. 18. Was it not his ſin, that the news of the ark of God being taken, did ſo affect him as to deſtroy nature? Though this argued much good in him, yet doubtleſs it was his ſin, ariſing from weakneſs of faith; which, if it had been duly exerciſed, would rather have ſet him on to wreſtle with God for the bringing of the ark back again; which faith could tell he was able enough to do. Yet Eli dies under this ſin unrepented of; but yet we have no reaſon to doubt his being in glory. Yea, unleſs we maintain a perfection of grace in this life, it is impoſſible to evite this: for ſuppoſe that the renewed acts of repentance were the actions of the laſt moments of our time, yet repentance itſelf is as filthy rags; there is ſtill ſin in it, when it is in the moſt lively exerciſe; ſo that either we muſt never die, or die under ſin unrepented of. It will not at all ſatisfy here to ſay, that the queſtion is not to be underſtood of ſins of infirmity, but of the more groſs ſins; that the latter is that which thus makes liable to eternal wrath. For, 1. The diſtinction is naught here, all the ſins of the godly being ſins of infirmity, Heb. iv. 15. Wherefore I cannot but differ from Mr Bridge, who, in his ſermon of the ſin of infirmity, tells us, that a great, groſs, foul, ſcandalous ſin, cannot be a ſin of infirmity. He gives the reaſon, becauſe it is a ſickneſs, not a weakneſs. If a man have ſome diſtemper in his body, and yet he bears up to meat and to his work, he is not ſick, but hath an infirmity. Thus he. Now, I think it will not be denied, but a godly man may fall into a great, groſs, and ſcandalous ſin; ſo then they fall into ſins that are not ſins of infirmity. Let none then that have fallen into groſs ſins, take any comfort of that, Heb. iv. 15. 'For we have not an high prieſt that can'not be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; 'though he was in all points tempted like as they have 'been,' even to thoſe of the groſſeſt ſort, ſelf-murder, and worſhipping of the devil. This is ſtrange divinity. The reaſon is no leſs ſtrange; becauſe it is a ſickneſs, not a weakneſs. The learned gentleman Leigh tells us, that *aſthereia*, the word put for infirmities, ſignifies *invaletudo, morbus* often, and *imbecillitas, debilitas, morbus*: for which he cites Plato, Xenophon, and Thucydides. And the apoſtle, when he would ſhew what ſickneſs, or rather death, we were under by nature, he tells us, we were infirm, ſo far were we from bearing up to work, Rom. v. 6. *onton hemon aſthenon.* But not to ſtand on words; was not Peter's ſin in denying of his Maſter a ſin of infirmity? He was reſolved againſt it; and Chriſt prayed for him, that his faith ſhould not fail; he had a principle of reſiſtance within, by the weakneſs whereof the temper gained the day: ſo that it was a ſin of infirmity indeed, yet a groſs ſin. But the foreſaid author tells us, that properly and ſtrictly, an infirmity is a ſin which a man is taken captive by, againſt his will, Rom. vii. that is, againſt the general bent and frame of his heart, which he hath not preſent ſtrength to reſiſt. So Rom. xv. 1. Thus he. And this is the very truth which the ſcripture teacheth, Rom. vii. and elſewhere; and thus it was with David, Peter, and others, in their groſs ſins. But here is the myſtery of this diſtinction, according to him, that groſs ſins committed by a believer are not *againſt his will, nor the general bent of his heart*; that there is no reſiſtance at all made to the temptation by the will, but that it goes on with full ſwing. And ſo Rom. vii. hath no reſpect to groſs ſins; and that law whereby a godly man is brought into captivity, againſt his will, to the law of ſin that is in his members, hath no reſpect to adultery, fornication, &c.; the contrary whereof the apoſtle teacheth, Gal. v. 17. 19.; and John, while he tells us, that *he that is born of God, doth not commit ſin*, 1 John iii. 9., But enough of this. The learned Zanchius teacheth more orthodoxly, in anſwer to that queſtion, "But how do the ſaints make increaſe "when they ſin daily, and ſometimes moſt groſsly?" His anſwer is, "They ſin of infirmity, and according "to the fleſh; but their minds abide right with God." But, 2. Thoſe ſins which are *quotidianæ incurſiones*, as ſome term them, and the more groſs ſins, are alike as to the point in hand; in regard it is not ſin as it is leſſer or greater, more or leſs evitable, but ſin as contrary to the law of God, that makes men liable to God's wrath, or eternal puniſhment *in actu primo*; and ſin as it is unrepented of *(ad hominem,)* that makes them liable *in actu ſecundo*; for *a qua tali ad omne valet conſequentia.*

Further, I urge, that a believer may die even under groſs ſins unrepented of; as we ſee in the patriarchs and others, their polygamy and inceſtuous marriages; which I hope will readily be reckoned groſs ſins; yet it is generally ſaid by divines, that they repented not of theſe ſins expreſsly, but virtually. Which is no doubt a firm truth. But if any ſhall make uſe of it here for an evaſion, it will be ſo far from helping them, that it is a manifeſt yielding of the cauſe; for what is virtual repentance, but actual repentance *in virtute ſuæ cauſæ*? So that the meaning is, that although they did not expreſsly and actually repent, yet they had a principle or habit of repentance in them, which, *poſitis ad agendum requiſitis*, would have broke forth into action with reſpect to that particular. But the queſtion is not of this virtual and habitual repentance; for a believer, in the caſe ſuppoſed, hath ſtill the habit of repentance, and the act is in the virtue of the cauſe, power, or habit, but it is of actual repentance, or elſe there is nothing ſaid at all. If any ſhall ſay, that this is not the virtual repentance they mean, but that it is when a man is heartily affected with ſuch a particular ſin or ſins as he knows, and for the corrupt inclination that is in him that is the ſeed of all: though there may be ſome particular which either he knows not, or is not actually in his mind; yet ſo he may be ſaid virtually to repent of the ſame; becauſe he repents of one ſin upon the account which is common to all: I anſwer, that when it comes to the arguments for it, taken from the neceſſity of confeſſion, forſaking, &c. more than all this ſeems to be pleaded for. But however, the neceſſity of actual repentance is pleaded for in the caſe of ſins known, and minded, but not in the caſe of ſins unknown or out of mind. But where find they this difference? Pſal. xix. 12. *Cleanſe thou me from ſecret ſin*, will not ground it; for that is a prayer for repentance, not repentance itſelf, otherwiſe than was ſaid before; unleſs it be ſaid, as is indeed alledged, that the actual turning from one ſin unto God is a virtual turning from all, ſufficient to bring the ſoul from under the liableneſs to eternal wrath for the, ſin, unminded and unknown: which I ſuppoſe they ſhall not eaſily prove: and, if I miſtake not, it will be found inconſiſtent with their own principles; for they will readily alledge for their cauſe, I mean the neceſſity of repentance in believers, in order to their pardon, David's caſe, ſuppoſing him to be liable to eternal puniſhment ay and untill he renewed his repentance, when Nathan came unto him; and yet I think it will be very hard to ſay, that David, all that three quarters of a year and more, never exerciſed one act of repentance for any one ſin all that time. So Joſeph's brethren remind their ſin in ſelling Joſeph, when they ſay, *We are verily guilty concerning our brother*: which our adverſaries underſtand of actual liableneſs to eternal wrath. But who can ſuppoſe, that they did not forſake one ſin by repentance all that time? But what more ordinary than for ſaints to commit ſins which they know not to be ſins for ſome time; or if they do, they ſlip out of their minds not repented of; yet ere they know that particular action to have been ſinful, or before the other come back into their minds, it may be a long time, and they may both have and loſe a tender frame, and a repenting heart, in the interval. I ſay then, in this caſe, when the ſin is known, and minded firſt before actual repentance for the ſame, the man is either actually liable to eternal puniſhment for it, or not. If it be, then the virtual repentance now pleaded for, is not ſufficient to free the ſoul from actual liableneſs to eternal puniſhment, as is alledged; if not, then actual repentance is not neceſſary for the taking off the obligation to eternal wrath by known ſin; the contrary whereof is here pleaded. Whence it appears, that this is a mere ſhifting of the thing that is in queſtion.

Moreover, it were ſurely worth their pains who ſtand ſo much for believers liableneſs to eternal wrath by their ſins, while unrepented of, ſeriouſly to conſider, whether or not all thoſe that die by their own hands, are ſet beyond a poſſibility of ſalvation; and whether or not it may be, that ſome truly godly under unrepented-of ſin, may be ſtruck with madneſs, or taken with a raging fever, and die in that caſe? and whether or not good men in a carnally ſecure frame may be killed while aſleep, and ſurpriſed with ſudden death? It may be rationally ſuppoſed that many ſuch caſes fall out in the world.

Arg. VII. Juſtification is an inſtantaneous act, and immediately perfect upon our believing, as is generally maintained by the orthodox: for, as Mr Durham ſays, "If juſtification be not immediately perfect, it muſt either be upon one's not believing in Chriſt, or becauſe of ſome defect of the righteouſneſs that faith preſenteth, and ſo faith were not a ſufficient ſhield: or it muſt be becauſe the word doth not pronounce him juſt upon the ground of that righteouſneſs; which were alſo abſurd." I ſhall not ſtand more upon the proof of this. But from thence it follows, that the after ſins of the juſtified do not make them actually liable to eternal puniſhment: which I prove thus. The ſtate of perfect juſtification is either interrupted by the after ſins of believers, or not. If ye ſay it is, then, 1. The *gifts and calling of God are* not *without repentance*. 2. A believer is ſometimes *under grace*, ſometimes *under the law*. 3. *There is condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus*: or, the after ſins of believers diſſolve the union. I ſhall ſay no more of this at the time. If ye ſay, it is not interrupted by their after ſins, then they do not make them liable to eternal wrath; for an uninterrupted ſtate of juſtification, and being actually liable to eternal wrath, are utterly inconſiſtent. And I prove the aſſertion thus.

1. To be juſtified, is to be abſolved from guilt *in actu ſecundo*. To be liable actually to eternal puniſhment, is not to be abſolved from guilt *in actu ſecundo*; which is a flat contradiction: the man is abſolved, and not abſolved; abſolved, becauſe juſtified; not abſolved, becauſe he is liable to eternal puniſhment. I know it will be ſaid, for ſolving the matter, that it is in different reſpects that the man is abſolved, and not abſolved; abſolved in reſpect of ſins repented of; not abſolved in reſpect of ſins unrepented of; he is juſtified in reſpect of his ſtate, but in reſpect of that particular ſin or ſins, he is liable to eternal wrath. But I anſwer, that this is meant either of the man's paſt ſtate, whereof he hath no benefit now, or of his preſent ſtate. If you ſay the former, then the ſtate of juſtification is interrupted, in ſuch ſort that the man muſt begin anew again, as at the firſt moment of believing: and ſo the believer, under unrepented of ſin, is in no better caſe, in reſpect of juſtification before God, than he was when unconverted; and if ſo, why is it urged here? If it be meant of his preſent ſtate, the diſtinction is not to be admitted: for the man hath no benefit of that ſtate, more than what flows from former experience of God's goodneſs, and readineſs to forgive; and ſo his ſtate is not indeed a ſtate of juſtification (call it as you will,) but of condemnation; for *bonum non niſi ex integra cauſa, malum ex quolibet defectu*; which, according to the law, is applicable here; for the curſe is pronounced on him, *that continueth not in all things written in the law to do them*, Gal. iii. 10.; and the Spirit of the Lord expreſly tells us, that 'whoſoever offends in one point is guilty of 'all,' James ii. 10; and when 'the righteous turneth 'from his righteouſneſs, and committeth iniquity, all 'the righteouſneſs that he hath done ſhall not be mentioned,' Ezek. xviii. 24. I confeſs, theſe ſcriptures hold forth the Lord's way of dealing with men according to the covenant of works, not according to the covenant of grace; which knows nothing of condemning or adjudging to eternal wrath, as was ſaid before. But if men will needs be dealt with according to the law, it is reaſonable they take their hazard of all it ſays. Should the foreſaid diſtinction be uſed (as it might be on the ſame grounds) for the comfort of a man, who having been frequently accuſed of treaſon, yet was ſtill abſolved; but now one treaſonable act being proven againſt him, and he for the ſame condemned to die; would he not think you miſerable comforters; and conclude himſelf to be in a ſtate of condemnation?

2. The apoſtle Paul makes them inconſiſtent, Rom. viii. 33, 34. *Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?* viz. thoſe of them that believe. *Symec generis*. The interrogation is a ſtrong denial. *Q. d.* None ſhall lay any thing to their charge. The word *encaleo* here uſed, ſignifies to enter action or ſuit againſt a man in ſome open court. Now, if there be none to lay any thing to their charge, yea, none ſo much as to enter action or ſuit againſt them, *de jure*, then there can no ſentence paſs upon them, making them actually liable to eternal wrath. So ſaith Luther, "Every one that believeth on him, is righteous; the law cannot accuſe "him," &c. The apoſtle goes on in his holy boaſting, 'It is God that juſtifieth; who is he that condemneth?' ſays he. Not Chriſt, he is our *Advocate*, not ſin, for Chriſt *was made ſin for us*; not the *law*, for Chriſt hath *fulfilled the law for us*; not *Satan*, for God is his judge; and if he have acquitted us, what can the jailor *do*? We ſee the ground of the apoſtle's boaſting is juſtification before God. *Q. d.* God juſtifies us; *Ergo*, None can condemn us. Now, where lies the ſtrength of this argument, if to juſtify and condemn be not inconſiſtent; or, which is all one, to be juſtified, and to be liable actually to eternal wrath? If believers may be ſo liable notwithſtanding that they are juſtified, or in a ſtate of juſtification, when the apoſtle ſays, *Who is he that condemneth?* He may have an anſwer to his queſtion. Yea, may the law ſay, I condemn him, for he lies under unrepented-of ſin, though he be a believer. *Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?* Yea, ſays Satan, I have unrepented-of ſin to lay to his charge. *But who is he that condemneth?* Why? here is the charge, his own conſcience cannot deny it. The law then muſt condemn him, yea, hath condemned already; for he is actually liable to eternal puniſhment, ſo that there remains nothing but the execution of the ſentence. If any ſhall ſay, that the apoſtle's meaning is that, howſoever the godly be condemned, reproached, &c. by the world, yet they have no ground to be diſcouraged, ſeeing God juſtifies them; I ſhall not quarrel it, ſo that it juſtle not out the other: which cannot rightly be done, as the context makes evident. See the golden chain, ver. 29, 30. what knits the links together, ver. 32. and how he goes on in that holy exultation, particularly in the two laſt verſes of the chapter. The ground of non-con-

demnation here alledged, which is the death, and reſurrection, and interceſſion of Chriſt, plainly teacheth the ſame. And indeed it had been ſmall ground of boaſting, if a man were ſtill in hazard of the judgment of God, though he needed not ſear the world's condemning him. In fine, the words are general; and it were too much boldneſs to reſtrict them. But what if God himſelf condemn them, or declare them actually liable to eternal wrath? then, I ſay, the apoſtle hath an anſwer to his queſtion. And there is not ſo great cauſe of boaſting of the privileges of believers; for if a man were freed from all hazard of angels, devils, and men, but yet liable to God's wrath, it is too great boldneſs to boaſt till that be over. But one would think, that the apoſtle had ſufficiently ſecured us againſt ſuſpicion with reſpect to God, while he tells us, ver. 31. 'If God be 'for us;' that is, ſeeing God is for us, as appears from the context, and ſo it is that God is for them; therefore they need not fear he will turn againſt them to condemn them.

If it be ſaid, Why may not the ſtate of juſtification conſiſt with a believer's being actually liable to eternal puniſhment upon the account of ſome particular ſin unrepented of, as well as a ſtate of ſanctification with the prevailing of ſome particular luſt, or as well as health and ſickneſs in the ſame body? I anſwer, the reaſon is plain: Becauſe juſtification is a legal and judicial act, makes only a relative change, is perfected in an inſtant, and admits not of degrees; but ſanctification is a phyſical or hyperphyſical work, makes a real change on a man's nature, is imperfect, and carried on by degrees. If a man be not perfectly juſtified, he is not juſtified at all; if the leaſt unpardoned ſin remain, the law condemns him for it, Gal. iii. 10. But a man may be holy, though not perfect; and in health, though not perfectly. Suppoſe a murderer to be lying in priſon, dangerouſly wounded with the ſame ſword wherewith he killed others. The libel is drawn up againſt him, conſiſting of ſeveral articles. The man hath both the phyſician and the advocate to employ. The phyſician ſets to work, and by his medicine ſo prevails, that he cures his wounds, though not perfectly as yet; but he tells him, and that truly, he is in a ſtate of health, though he goes halting, and that there is no fear of death. The advocate doth his part, and of twenty articles diſproves nineteen; but as to the twentieth article, though he ſaid much againſt it, yet he could not invalidate the proof of it; but thereupon he is condemned. He cannot ſay now to him, as the phyſician, that there is no fear of death. And the reaſon is obvious.

Object. 1. The command to repent, with reſpect to believers lying under unrepented of guilt, is prefixed to the promiſe of pardon, as is manifeſt in the church of Epheſus, Rev. ii. 4, 5. and the ground is general, Rev. iii. 19. *Whom I love I rebuke and chaſten: be zealous therefore, and repent;* where *repentance* is put in as a neceſſary mids for removing of God's rebuke and quarrel, even from thoſe whom he loveth. John keeps the ſame method, writing to believers, 1 John i. 9. *If we confeſs our ſins, he is juſt to forgive.* This is confirmed by the experience of the godly. Witneſs David, Pſalm xxxii. 3, 4, 5. 'I acknowledge my ſin—and thou for'gaveſt', &c. *Ergo.* Anſw. 1. That there is a neceſſary connection betwixt the pardon of ſin and repentance, I grant; ſo that there is no pardoned ſinner, but he is alſo a penitent; ſo that, ſooner or later, virtually or expreſsly, whatever way ſin be forgiven, it is alſo repented of. But will the objectors ſcrew up this ſo high, as that no ſin can be forgiven, unleſs it be expreſsly repented of? they cannot, ſurely, as long as that remains true, *Who can underſtand his errors?* Pſal. xix. 12. And ſo we muſt admit of virtual repentance in the firſt ſcripture, and virtual confeſſion in the two laſt. Which I ſay ſtill is beſide the queſtion. And therefore, if they mind to prove any thing here by theſe ſcriptures cited, they will prove too much, viz. That expreſs repentance is neceſſary to pardon; which is contrary to the ſcripture cited before. For if a ſin be not known, it cannot be expreſsly repented of. And yet no doubt they muſt ſay, that a ſin unknown may be pardoned. *E. g.* Jacob lives in polygamy, and that with two ſiſters: he could not expreſsly repent of it, not knowing it to be a ſin, as is commonly ſaid: yet this ſin was no doubt pardoned, and Jacob ſaved. Then virtual repentance was ſufficient, which Jacob never wanted, unleſs he loſt the habits of grace; which I hope our adverſaries will not ſay. As for the prefixing of the command to repent unto the promiſe of pardon, it can of itſelf have little weight, in regard the order of words is not always the order of the things themſelves. So Mark i. 15. *repentance* is prefixed to *faith*: though it is evident, that in order of nature, it follows the ſame, if it be underſtood of goſpel-repentance. See 2 Cor. vii. 10, 11. But of this perhaps more afterwards. But, 2. I deny the conſequence of this argument; which I conceive may be, and muſt be thus framed categorically. Repentance muſt go before pardon: but pardon is the removal of the obligation to eternal wrath: *ergo.* Now, the minor, if underſtood of the elect entering into a ſtate of juſtification, is true; but ſo it hits not the point in hand. But if underſtood of thoſe that are already juſtified, or in a juſtified ſtate, it is falſe; pardon to them being nothing elſe but either the ſenſe of pardon, or the taking off of temporal ſtrokes, or relaxation of temporary puniſhment or chaſtiſements. Which interpretation the inſtances adduced do very fairly accept of. In the church of Epheſus there were ſome under a decay of their love. What were they liable to upon the account of it? Not to hell fire, but to a famine of the word, a removing of the candleſtick; that being pinched with want, they may learn not to lothe the heavenly manna; which God threatens actually to accompliſh, unleſs they repent, and that according to the tenor of the covenant, Pſal. lxxxix. 31, 32. And what elſe mean theſe words in the objection, *Whom I love?*—where repentance is put in as a neceſſary mids for removing of God's rebuke and quarrel, and his taking off the obligation to eternal wrath; unleſs it be, that God cannot rebuke but as a judge. In that ſcripture it is plain the exhortation is to repentance: and the argument uſed to enforce it, is very plain to our purpoſe, viz. "As many as I love, I "rebuke and chaſten, unleſs they repent; but ye are "they whom I love; therefore unleſs you repent, be "ſure I will rebuke and chaſten you." As to that, 1 John i. 9. that he writes to believers, is plain, as we ſhall hear more afterwards; and it receives the ſame anſwer, viz. that they are to confeſs in order to the removal of temporary wrath.

It is evident that David's caſe, Pſal. xxxii. is thus to be underſtood, of the removal of temporary ſtrokes or chaſtiſement. The words are, *NaSATHa GNaVoN CHaTTATHI.* The word *NaSA* properly ſignifies *levavit*, to take off, or eaſe people of burdens; and ſo David ſays, ver. 4. *Thy hand was heavy on me.* The lifting off that heavy hand, which was but the hand of a father, is then the forgiving of ſin, or lifting it off. *GNaVoN* is rendered *iniquity*, according to the proper ſignification of the word; for it denotes the crookedneſs and vitioſity of the action; but it muſt be expounded of puniſhment, *metonymically*, as it is frequently uſed. So the old tranſlation reads it, *Thou forgaveſt the puniſhment*, &c. Ameſius reads it, *Suſtuliſti pœnam peccati mei.* And ſo it muſt needs be underſtood, whatever way it be tranſlated: for God never takes away the crookedneſs or vitioſity of ſin, for that were to make it no ſin; but he takes away the puniſhment. Now, this we heard before was God's hand that was heavy on him; yet the hand of a father, not of a judge. Compare Pſal. xxv. 18. 'Look upon mine affliction, and 'my pain, and forgive all my ſins.' Then, ſays Mr Rutherford, ſin here is pardoned only according to the preſent pain and grief of body and ſoul that was on David.

Object. 2. Nathan tells David, upon his confeſſion, and taking with guilt, that his ſin was pardoned, or put away, 2 Sam. xii. 13. ‘The Lord alſo hath put away thy ſin; and yet, ver. 9. 11, 12. 14. he threatens him with temporal ſtrokes. Now, this *putting away of ſin*, muſt be either as to obligation to eternal or to temporal wrath. It cannot be the latter, becauſe we ſee plainly he lies under the ſame: therefore the firſt muſt be ſaid. Now, let it be marked, when it is ſaid to be *put away*, even after his confeſſion, and taking with the guilt; therefore he was actually liable to eternal wrath before his confeſſion; and ſo believers lying under unrepented of ſin, are actually liable to eternal puniſhment. Anſ. In the firſt place, It cannot be denied, but that theſe words are the words of Nathan, declaring by the Spirit what God had done for David; and ſo they are not a formal pardon, but an intimation of pardon. Now, there is a difference betwixt theſe two. But if the concluſion be valid, it muſt be drawn from the formal forgiveneſs of ſin after confeſſion, which doth not at all appear here; and not from the intimation of it at that time: for a man may be freed *in foro Dei* from guilt, and yet not have it intimated to him, till ſome time after, and particularly till he be in the exerciſe of repentance; yet is he not therefore liable to eternal wrath before the Lord till that time. In the next place, it comes to be conſidered, in what ſenſe David's ſin is ſaid to be *put away*. In reſpect ſimply of the actual obligation to eternal wrath, ſay the objectors. Giving, though not granting it be ſo, it remains ſtill that here is the intimation of pardon only. And truly David's conſcience being now awake, and accuſing him of theſe groſs abominations of murder and adultery, it was no wonder if he loſt his ſight of his intereſt in Chriſt, and his juſtification. This being ſuppoſed, ſuch an intimation of pardon was moſt ſeaſonable, that he might have ſomewhat to keep him from deſponding. And this intimation made by the miniſtry of Nathan, with ſome meaſure of the Spirit's light illuſtrating this, though but, as it were, with a dawning light, and ſome ſecret underpropping, was ſufficient for this; though a greater influence of the Spirit was neceſſary in order to the full eſtabliſhment of his heart in this truth which the prophet told him. This then being ſuppoſed, we may thence judge his ſin to have been pardoned before. So Luke vii. 48. Chriſt ſaith to the woman, ‘Thy ſins are forgiven.’ Of this woman it is ſaid, that ‘ſhe waſhed Chriſt's feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head.’ After this, Chriſt tells her, that ‘her ſins are forgiven.’ But there is nothing elſe than an intimation of the pardon granted before her waſhing Chriſt's feet with her tears, &c. as is evident from verſ. 47. But of this more afterwards. Hemmingius ſpeaking of David in this caſe, tells us, there were in him horrible terrors, and extreme fears; for he did fear everlaſting puniſhment; but hearing this voice of the prophet by the commandment of God, *Thou ſhalt not die, the Lord hath put away thy ſin*, he turneth again unto the Lord, and repenteth; he hateth his ſin, he fleeth unto mercy by faith. Ye ſee in what order the learned man placeth David's pardon and repentance; and how he ſuppoſeth him under fear of everlaſting puniſhment. But if I miſtake not, acute Beza will not grant ſo much: for, ſays he, “When David and Peter fell ſo beaſtly, yet there is no doubt but they lamented and ſorrowed, till they felt the working of their regeneration and ſanctification; but *being in their temptation*, they *ſtayed* themſelves upon the anchor of the *teſtimony* which the *Spirit of God* brought into their conſcience; which cauſed them *not to doubt*, (notwithſtanding their fall,) but that they were the children of God, and that their *fault was forgiven* them.” Thirdly, But why muſt it needs be underſtood of putting away his ſin, touching the obligation to eternal wrath, and not with reſpect to temporary and fatherly diſpleaſure and chaſtiſements? Becauſe, ſay they, he ſtill lies under temporary wrath. Let us hear holy and learned Mr Rutherfoord's judgment in this caſe. Having laid down this aſſertion, Sins of youth already pardoned as touching the obligation to eternal wrath, may ſo riſe againſt the child of God, as he hath need to aſk forgiveneſs of them, as touching the removing of preſent wrath, ſenſe of the want of God's preſence, of the influence of his love, the cloud of ſadneſs and deadneſs, &c. he adds, enlarging on the ſame, “We may well ſay, that God pardoneth ſin, when he removeth temporary wrath. So 2 Sam. xii. 13. Nathan ſaith to David, *The Lord alſo hath put away thy ſin*. Why? *Thou ſhalt not die*. This is meant of temporal death eſpecially, as the context cleareth, ver. 10. *The ſword ſhall not depart from thine houſe*: and verſ. 14. *The child born unto thee ſhall ſurely die*. Then the Lord's putting away of David's ſin, was in looſing him from the ſword, in his own perſon, not in his houſe and children.” And herein do I chearfully acquieſce. We ſay then, that this *putting away of David's ſin* reſpects temporary wrath, though David be yet threatened with it. Now, in that temporary wrath which believers lay themſelves open to by their ſins, there are ſeveral particular ſtrokes, but none of them any way for the ſatisfying of juſtice, but for correcting the offender, the terror of others, &c. And therefore the executive pardon here is capable of degrees, and may be remitted or intended, as the Lord ſees meet. So that the alleviating of the chaſtiſement, or relaxation of the fatherly puniſhment due to David, for his murder and adultery, is that which is holden forth in theſe words, *The Lord alſo hath put away thy ſin*; not excluding, but rather including the other. And thus David's caſe herein was as of a man who by the law is puniſhable by death, but is only actually puniſhed with baniſhment. To this purpoſe the worthy author juſt now named explains it, and I think has proven it. I add, that it further appears, if we conſider and compare verſe 5. with the text. While the thing is kept *in theſi*, David himſelf pronounceth the ſentence on the guilty perſon, not knowing as yet on whoſe head it would alight: *The man that hath done this, ſhall ſurely die*. Now, when Nathan tells him flatly, that he was the man, he found, that by his own ſentence he was condemned to death; and he knowing that ſentence to be according to the law of God, in the caſe of the murderer and adulterer, it may well be ſuppoſed, that he concluded, that if men would not execute the ſentence, God himſelf would do it. Wherefore it anſwers aptly to the ſentence paſſed againſt himſelf by him, and exalts the mercy of God towards him: ‘He ſhall die,’ ſaid he, ‘Thou ſhalt not die,’ ſays Nathan. Conſider alſo the antitheſis, verſ. 13, 14. ‘Thou ſhalt not die. Howbeit——the child ſhall die:’ not an eternal, but a temporal death. There was great reaſon for both. The text tells us expreſsly the reaſon why the child ſhould die; even becauſe David by that deed had given great occaſion to the enemy to blaſpheme. Wherefore the Lord, (to ſpeak ſo) behoved to vindicate the glory of his holy name, ſhewing that ſin was diſpleaſing to him in whomſoever it be found. The other is not without great reaſon likewiſe; for God had promiſed to him, 2 Sam. vii. 12. that his ſeed, viz. Solomon, who was not yet begotten, ſhould ſit in his throne, and build the Lord's houſe: therefore he muſt not die; it was inconſiſtent with the faithfulneſs of God. That the Lord's putting away of ſin, ſhould be thus expounded of the *relaxation of temporal puniſhment*, needs not ſeem ſtrange; for ſo it is uſed elſewhere in the ſcriptures, Neh. ix. 17, 18, 19. ‘But thou art (or *waſt*) a God ready to pardon.——*How?* Thou forſookeſt them not in the wilderneſs.’ Yet who knows not what ſtrokes thoſe people met with in the wilderneſs? But herein was pardoning mercy; the Lord forſook them not, he did not caſt off his care of them, as a people peculiar to himſelf. We may ſee this yet more plainly, Numb. xiv. where let it be conſidered, what the Lord threatens that people with. It is death in the wilderneſs, ‘ I will ſmite them with the peſtilence,’ &c. verſ. 12. ‘ If thou ſhalt kill all this people as one man,’ ſays Moſes, verſ. 15. Moſes in his prayer aſks forgiveneſs for them; ‘ Pardon, I beſeech thee, the iniquity of this ‘ people,’ verſ. 19. he prevails, ‘ And the Lord ſaid, ‘ I have pardoned according to thy word.’ But mark what follows: *Becauſe——they have tempted me theſe ten times,—ſurely they ſhall not ſee the land which I ſware unto their fathers.* Now, what is their pardon they get, but the relaxation we ſpeak of? They are freed from death, but are kept out of the land of Canaan, for their ſin ſo pardoned. And David himſelf tells us of this way of the Lord's dealing with him, Pſal. cxviii. 18. *The Lord hath chaſtened me ſore, but he hath not given me over unto death.* The ſame way is that to be underſtood, Pſal. xcix. 8. *Thou waſt a God that forgaveſt them, though thou tookeſt vengeance on their inventions.* Compare Pſal. cvi. 43. 44. *They are brought low for their iniquity: nevertheleſs he regarded their affliction,* &c.

Object. 3. If believers lying under unrepented-of ſin be not liable actually to eternal wrath, what need is there of Chriſt's interceſſion? Yet John 1 epiſt. ii. 1. when he is directing believers what courſe to take for the pardon of their ſin, he tells them of an Advocate with the Father whom they are to employ; but what needs he an advocate, who is not liable to the laſh of the law? To this I anſwer, 1. The object of Chriſt's interceſſion is confined within too narrow limits, if it be ſuppoſed only to be employed for the obtaining of the pardon of ſin. Chriſt prayed for Peter, that his faith might not fail. See John xvii. *per totum.* He intercedes always for his people, in whatever caſe they be; and I think it will not be denied, but that the benefits we enjoy, moſt of them come by Chriſt's interceſſion. 2. The pardon of ſin, as it denotes the taking away of an actual obligation to temporary wrath, either in a total removal of the ſame, or a relaxation thereof, is not ſuch a ſmall thing as to be ſo overlooked. God's deſerting of the ſoul, ſhooting his arrows againſt them, are not eaſy to the godly; and that they have Chriſt to employ for the removal of theſe, is no ſmall ground of comfort. 3. There is a great fallacy in that which is ſaid, that a man not liable to eternal wrath needs not an advocate. If it be meant of liableneſs thereto *in actu primo*, it is true. But who denies that they are ſo liable? If they mean it of liableneſs thereto *in actu ſecundo*, it is falſe; for advocates uſe not to be employed for reverſing of a ſentence of death, but to hinder it from paſſing. And upon this ground I ſay, that this doctrine is very far from invalidating the neceſſity of Chriſt's interceſſion; yea, it is indeed founded on the interceſſion of Chriſt: Rom. viii. 34. ‘ Who is he that condemneth? it is ‘ Chriſt that died;——who alſo maketh interceſſion ‘ for us.’ And, if I miſtake not, this ſcripture uſed againſt us, affords us a ſolid argument againſt the doctrine of our adverſaries in this point. Which ye may take thus: Thoſe who have always an Advocate at the right hand of the Father, who hath undertaken their defence, and never fails to gain his point, their cauſe cannot go wrong in heaven; but whenever an accuſation comes in againſt them, he will undertake their cauſe, ſo that it cannot come to a ſentence againſt them; which is the only thing that can make them actually liable to wrath: but if believers ſin, they have ſuch an Advocate: *Ergo.* And it is worthy of our conſideration, that our Advocate is called *Jeſus Chriſt the righteous.* “ But “ he is not (ſays Zanchius) a juſt advocate who defends “ an unjuſt cauſe: but Chriſt defends our cauſe, becauſe “ he is our Advocate, and he is a juſt Advocate. John “ therefore teaches, that our cauſe which Chriſt de“ fends, is juſt.’ So he. Now, where lies the juſtice of the cauſe? In our repentance? No, in that Chriſt became liable for us, and hath paid the debt, and ſatisfied juſtice; and we are now one with him. And if our cauſe be juſt, how can it go to a ſentence againſt us, though it never be executed? A juſt judge will no more paſs a ſentence againſt one that has a juſt cauſe, than he will execute it. And truly it ſeems, that thoſe who will have ſuch a ſentence to paſs againſt a believer in the court of heaven, though they believe it will never be executed, do not deeply conſider Chriſt's ſitting continually at the Father's right hand, and exhibiting the merits of his death and ſufferings: for if this be, how can any accuſation that comes in againſt them proceed ſo far? For, as one ſays well, he interrupts the accuſation, and ſtrikes in for us, Heb. vii. 25. becauſe he hath not only died for us, and riſen for us, but he follows the buſineſs to the utmoſt. If he does not thus effectually ſtop ſentence paſſing againſt us, it muſt either be becauſe he cannot, or becauſe he will not. The firſt is more than abſurd; if the latter be ſaid, it is like it will be alledged, that it is becauſe we do not employ him, and ſo the oil muſt come from earth to anoint the wheels of his compaſſion towards thoſe perſons, for whom he poured out his blood while they were yet enemies. And if his interceſſion in this caſe depends upon our motion, why not in other caſes alſo? And ſo we ſhall never exerciſe faith nor repentance more: for theſe are undeniably the fruits of his interceſſion, as well as freedom from condemnation; for we cannot employ him but by faith. If any ſhall ſay, that if Chriſt's interceſſion do ſtop the ſentence of eternal wrath's paſſing, why does it not hinder the believer's actual liableneſs to temporary ſtrokes? I anſwer, The reaſon is obvious; becauſe temporary ſtrokes to believers are merely correctory, and according to God's diſpenſation, cannot be wanted, Iſa. xxvii. 6.; but eternal wrath is not ſo. And I think it is no ſolæciſm to ſay, that as the taking off of temporal ſtrokes in due time, ſo the laying them on in due ſeaſon, is a fruit of Chriſt's interceſſion.

Object. *ult.* This doctrine opens a gap to licentiouſneſs and carnal ſecurity, and therefore cannot be of God. Anſw. I take notice, that the apoſtle hath the ſame objected to him againſt this doctrine, Rom. vi. 15.; and therefore I ſay, with him, *God forbid,* &c. But, 1. In ſuch ſins as ſo waſte the conſcience, that they blind men as to their ſtate, there is no place for this objection; for then the man looks on himſelf *de facto* as liable to eternal wrath; but *de jure* he cannot ſo look on himſelf. And why ſhould this ſeem ſtrange? for *will a man ſpeak wickedly for God?* 2. Is not the ſame objection to be retorted on the adverſaries who ſide not with Arminians, &c.? Does not their doctrine upon the ſame ground lie open to this calumny? for, according to them, the puniſhment ſhall never be executed. If a man had the privilege that he ſhould never be actually liable to capital puniſhment, then you will ſay, that man may do what he pleaſeth without controul. I ſay, on the other hand, if a man be ſo privileged, as that although ten thouſand ſentences of death paſs upon him, yet they ſhall never be executed, upon the ſame ground he may do what he pleaſeth: for, at moſt, there is but *magis & minus* betwixt them, *quæ non variant ſpeciem*: and ſo they ſhall both be licentious doctrines, though the one more than the other. 3. I ſuppoſe it can ſcarcely be denied, but that temporal ſtrokes, or the fear of them, may be curbs to our licentious humours *ſuo quodam modo*; though, without reſtraining grace, the fear of ten thouſand hells will not be ſufficient to hold in a man from the purſuit of his luſts. But why may not fear of death help to keep the church from murmuring at croſs diſpenſations in life, Lam. iii. 39. and the fear of a whale's belly the ſecond time make Jonah to go to Nineveh? That which truly ſeems to be the ground of this objection, is, the not conſidering what is the extent and power of God's fatherly diſpleaſure to which believers are made actually liable by their ſins. The pondering of this aright would ſilence ſuch objectors. Temporal ſtrokes, the effects of God's fatherly diſpleaſure, are not confined to ſtrokes upon our bodies, or croſſes in our outward eſtate; though indeed ſickneſſes of ſeveral ſorts, poverty, loſſes, &c. yea, and death, are not very light things, but ſuch, as the proſpect of them may make a ſtout heart to ſtagger. But theſe ſtrokes reach the ſoul likewiſe; and ſtrokes upon the ſoul are very heavy. They may all come under the general name of *deſertion*, which ſpreads itſelf into innumerable branches, ſuch as, want of communion with God, a wounded ſpirit, yea, the arrows of the Almighty driven into the ſoul, and their poiſon drinking up the ſpirit, &c. I add, the Lord's ſuffering men to fall into one ſin, and that ſometimes a very groſs ſin, or ſins, for a correction of them becauſe of former miſcarriages; as David's ſecurity was puniſhed with his being ſuffered to fall into murder and adultery; Peter's ſelf-confidence, with denying his maſter. All theſe the godly make themſelves actually liable to by unrepented-of ſin. And it is well worth our noticing, that here is ſomething in the obligation to temporary wrath, that is more to be feared than hell, if ſo be that ſin be the greateſt evil; which I hope no ſerious ſoul will deny. I thus think, and thus will ever preach. It is more bitter to ſin againſt Chriſt, than to ſuffer the torments of hell, ſaid Chryſoſtome. Anſelm ſaid, that if on the one ſide were preſented unto him the evil of ſin, and on the other ſide the torments of hell, he would rather chuſe to fall into hell, than to fall into ſin. Now, I refer it to the judgment of any godly, if, theſe and the like things conſidered, the doctrine we maintain be chargeable juſtly with opening a gap to licentiouſneſs? I ſhall not diſpute here, whether or not the temporary wrath which is inflicted on the godly, be the ſame eſſentially with that which is poured out upon the damned. But ſure I am, David calls theſe ſtrokes that had been upon him, *the pains of hell*, Pſal. cxvi. 3. Job ſpeaks very terribly of them, Job vi. 4. *For the arrows of the Almighty are within me*, &c. Heman gives the ſame name to what was upon him, that the Pſalmiſt gives to what comes on reprobates, Pſalm lxxxviii. 16. compared with Pſalm lviii. 9. The word in both places is *CHaRON*; only the godly man Heman hath it in the plural number. *Laſtly*, We ſay, this doctrine gives true goſpel-liberty; which perhaps the contrary doth not, and it is our duty to 'ſtand faſt in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made 'us free;' which, if we will hear Zacharias in his ſong, Luke i. 74. is, 'that we being delivered from all our 'enemies, might ſerve him without fear.' And if we would know what enemies we are delivered from, the apoſtle Paul tells us, the *law* is one of them, as it *curſeth* and *condemneth* the ſinner, Gal. iii. 13. And as we anſwer Arminians, Papiſts, and other enemies of Chriſtian aſſurance, when they object, that it is a pillow of ſecurity; ſo I poſitively affirm, that this doctrine is ſo far from being juſtly chargeable therewith, that it is a moſt ſtrong inducement to goſpel obedience and a ſtrict walk with God; I mean, to a goſpel-ſpirit. So that I fear not to ſay, with Dr Preſton, He that hath the ſtrongeſt faith, he that believeth in the greateſt degree the promiſe of pardon and remiſſion of ſins, hath the holieſt heart and the holieſt life. And I think it is worthy of our obſervation, that Paul never groaned more deeply under the body of death, than in the midſt of a diſcourſe of the believer's being dead to the law, and freed from condemnation, Rom. vii. 2. 4. compared with chapter vi. 1. and viii. 1. The ſcripture is very plain in teaching us, that it was Chriſt's deſign in bringing his people from under the law, that they might be employed in new obedience, Rom. vii. 4. 6. And ſurely it doth not fail. Nothing hath greater influence on goſpel obedience than love; love is a ſtrong cord to draw ſouls to a holy walk, 2 Cor. v. 14. *For the love of Chriſt* (whether ye underſtand it ſubjectively or objectively, it is all one to the purpoſe) *conſtraineth us, becauſe we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead*; *i. e.* legally dead, as is clear from the antitheſis. Yet it cannot be meant of the actual execution of the ſentence upon us: therefore only of this actual liableneſs to death. And indeed this is the very force of the apoſtle's argument, How can that love but conſtrain us, ſeeing by him we have been freed from the obligation to eternal wrath, in which reſpect we were dead? dead juridically, ſays Mr. Pool. We were all as dead condemned perſons, becauſe he died in our ſtead. But more of this afterwards. I ſhall conclude with that ſaying of Mr Merriton, in his ſermon of Chriſt's humiliation, "Sin is done away by this blood of Chriſt, as it "binds over to wrath and puniſhment. Sin may re"main, but it ſhall not condemn. If the channel of "Chriſt's blood runs through thy ſoul, thou haſt ſhut "the guilt as to condemnation."

QUEST. II.

Whether or not all ſins, paſt, preſent, and to come, are pardoned together and at once?

THIS queſtion hath much affinity with the former; and what is already ſaid, may contribute to clear our way in anſwer to this. I mind not here to conſider the doctrine of the deluded Antinomians, who aſſert, that men are juſtified and actually pardoned from all eternity; and ſo not only before they believe, but before they are born; not diſtinguiſhing between *active* and *paſſive* juſtification. The former, being an immanent act in God, and a conſtant will to pardon ſuch perſons as he hath choſen to everlaſting life, is no doubt from eternity, and complete from that date. But the latter a tranſient act, exerciſed not only about, but terminated on the creature living and believing, whereby he is actually pardoned, and judicially declared righteous, while he ſtands trembling before the tribunal of God; and ſo cannot be from eternity.

Their doctrine in this is flatly oppoſite to the ſcriptures; which declare all men once and by nature to be children of wrath, and under condemnation, and unpardoned; and truly overturns both law and goſpel at one blow; the law, in that the caſe being ſo as they pretend, there is no need of it to accuſe, convince, condemn, and to ſtop every mouth, and to make all the world guilty before God. And no better friends are they to the goſpel, which proclaims ſalvation to loſt ſinners. Yet none greater pretenders to the purity of the goſpel than they; none ſeem to cry up free grace more, which neverthеleſs in very deed they labour to hide, while they ſet off the law altogether, without which a man ſhall never have a right taſte of the grace of God. They cry down the law and a legal walk; which is no doubt the bane of many profeſſors: but plucking up the law out of the conſcience in the matter of juſtification, and a ſinner's acceptance with God, they root it out of the heart in the matter of ſanctification. So true is it, *Dum vitant ſtulti vitia, in contraria currunt.*

But had more care been taken of preſerving pure and entire the doctrine of free grace, it would no doubt have prevented the deluſion of many ſimple and well-meaning people, and cut off the occaſion of crying down good works, and the ſtudy of holineſs, under pretence of ſacrificing all to free grace, from others led merely by their own licentious humours. And therefore, if I miſtake not, the greateſt noiſe that Antinomianiſm hath made in the church in theſe latter centuries, hath been after a deluge of ſuperſtition; formality, and ignorance of the doctrine of the goſpel, had overwhelmed the church, and ſermons ſounded rather like Seneca's morals, than Paul's doctrine of Chriſt crucified, and the riches of God's grace. So was it in the time of the reformation from Popery; ſo in the time of Britain's ſtruggling with and wading out from Prelacy and Arminianiſm, &c. How dangerous is it to ſet up morality inſtead of the power of godlineſs, and life of faith? to turn the covenant of grace into a baſtard covenant of works; and to mix the law with the goſpel, which is indeed accounted by the Spirit of God *another goſpel*, the preacher whereof is devoted to a curſe? Gal. i. 6, 8.

And indeed nothing is more incident to men than this: for it is as natural to them to ſeek to go to heaven by the covenant of works, as it is for fiſhes to ſwim, or birds to fly; we being naturally diſpoſed to apprehend God as a great lord and maſter, and ourſelves as his ſervants, who muſt work for wages. And ſo it comes to paſs, they conſider God abſolutely, forgetting Chriſt the way to the Father; and this, while their conſciences remain in darkneſs, without any illumination; for indeed, if the conſcience were awakened, the ſight of Majeſty would dazzle our eyes. Wherefore Luther on Pſal. cxxx. ſaith, "Often and willingly do I inculcate "this, that you ſhould ſhut your eyes and your ears, "and ſay, You know no God out of Chriſt." On the other hand, until the conſcience is indeed enlightened, and the ſoul ſees what a holy God it hath do with, how hard is it to attain ſuitable apprehenſions of the riches of his grace? And therefore the woful remains of corruption, whereby we are inclined to meaſure God's ways by our own, ſtart that queſtion, concerning the privileges of the ſaints, *How can theſe things be?* and, with Peter in a fit, cry out, *Depart from me, for I am a ſinful man.* But to the queſtion.

In this point the orthodox themſelves do not agree; which is the more to be lamented, and the rather to be conſidered and ſeriouſly weighed, that it is not a mere ſpeculation, but a very practical point, and cannot but have great influence on the frame of the ſpirit, whatſoever way the judgment goes. This may be abſolutely ſaid of the wrong ſide of this controverſy, but not without ſome qualification concerning the right; ſeeing experience teſtifieth, that although the truth, in its own nature, is apt to have influence on the heart for a holy walk, yet it hath not that actually at all times; truth known, without the blowings of the Spirit, being as wild-fire, giving light but not heat. It is, to which part of the controverſy this aptitude to influence the heart to the love of Chriſt, and the ſtudy of a holy walk, does belong? The determination thereof were to determine the doubt; which we leave to its proper place.

In thoſe points which are the moſt weighty in the matter of the pardon of ſin, the orthodox do agree; as 1. That God firmly purpoſing from all eternity to pardon the ſins of the elect, laid them wholly on Jeſus Chriſt. 2. That the Lord Jeſus hath fully ſatisfied the juſtice of God for all the ſins of all his elect, ſo as he hath left nothing of the price to be paid by them. 3. That, upon theſe grounds, all the ſins of believers are virtually pardoned. 4. That no believer ſhall ever be damned, that is, ſent unto the place of torment, for any ſin; but ſhall certainly and infallibly be ſaved. 5. *laſtly*, That, upon the ſoul's union with Chriſt by faith, when God pardons one ſin, he pardons all ſins actually which are committed, commonly called *all ſins paſt and preſent*. Only they differ in their ſentiments touching the pardon of ſin not yet committed.

The queſtion then is this, Whether or not all the ſins of a believer, paſt, preſent, and to come, are actually pardoned upon the ſoul's firſt believing on Chriſt? or, Whether their ſins to come are only virtually pardoned, and not actually till ſuch time as they renew their faith and repentance in order to the pardon thereof? Some ſimply aſſert the former; others the latter.

According to what hath been ſaid upon the former queſtion, I aſſert, that all the ſins of an elect ſoul, paſt, preſent, and to come, are together and at once pardoned, touching the actual obligation to eternal wrath, upon his firſt believing in the Lord Jeſus, and juſtification before God; ſo that in no moment of time thereafter, he can be ſuppoſed to be actually liable to eternal wrath. And in this ſenſe I embrace the opinion of thoſe that ſtand for pardon of all ſins *ſimul & ſemel.* I think I need not inſiſt much in proving this aſſertion, ſo long as the arguments before adduced ſtand in force; for if the ſins of believers, even while unrepented of, do not make them actually liable to eternal puniſhment, this poſition ſtands good; unleſs there be any found to ſay, that they are pardoned always as ſoon as committed; or, with the Antinomians, that they are pardoned from all eternity. But I ſhall adduce theſe following arguments for proof of what is aſſerted.

Arg. I. The Lord promiſeth not to remember his people's ſins, Iſ. xliii. 25. 'I am he that blotteth out thy 'tranſgreſſions for my own ſake, and will not remember 'thy ſins.' Now, how are they not remembered, if they be at any time, after they are brought within the covenant, and the poor ſouls laid under a ſentence of eternal death for them? If this be not to remember ſins, nothing is. It is certain that *remembering* cannot be properly attributed to God; but God is then ſaid to *remember ſins*, when he does that which men do, when they remember the faults of others. And who will not ſay that a judge remembers a malefactor's crime, when he hath paſſed the ſentence of death on him; or a bankrupt's debt, when he obligeth him to pay the ſame by a judicial ſentence? Say not, that in regard *remembering of ſin* is ſometimes put for *puniſhing of it*, therefore it muſt be ſo underſtood in this matter: for though I will not deny but it is ſo taken in the ſcripture; yet to faſten that upon the promiſes of pardon, touching the obligation to eternal wrath, is dangerous, in regard that then ye muſt aſſert, that what evil is inflicted on the elect unconverted, is laid on them by way of vindictive juſtice, and for ſatisfaction; which is too much poſitively to determine. It clearly follows, in regard the *not remembering of ſin* is a privilege which is new, and ſuppoſeth that God remembered their ſin before; not only does he promiſe *not to remember* them, but to *remember them no more*, Jer. xxxi. 34. Heb. viii. 12. Which confirms what was before ſaid of the Lord's remembering the ſins of the elect unconverted; and further plainly lets us ſee, that God will alter his former courſe and way of dealing with them in reſpect of their ſins. So much does that *no more* import evidently: as Job xxxiv. 32. 'If I have done iniquity, I will *do no* '*more.*' Ezek. xxi. ult. 'Thou ſhalt be *no more* re-'membered.' Now, what was God's way of dealing with them before they were brought into covenant? It was not to ſend them to hell for their ſins; but it was not to pardon them, but to let them lie under the ſentence of eternal wrath, ay and untill they made application to Chriſt by faith, and repented them of their ſins likewiſe, as ſome ſay; on what grounds we ſhall ſee afterwards. And where is there any alteration of the Lord's way of dealing with them, if their ſins remain ſtill unpardoned as to the obligation to eternal wrath, till they again believe and repent? It is ſtill I hope, the ſame faith and the ſame repentance. There is no doubt, but there is a vaſt difference betwixt the Lord's way of dealing with the elect unconverted and converted, conſidered in bulk, even by this way of our adverſaries. But as to the preciſe point of the pardon of ſins, of which alone we now ſpeak, there is no difference at all left. Yet this promiſe holds out a quite contrary courſe, as is declared. Further the ſcripture ſpeaking of the pardon of ſin, extends it to *all ſins*, without diſtinction, Ezek. xxxvi. 25.—'Ye ſhall be clean from *all* your filthineſs, and from *all* your idols will I cleanſe you.' That this is a promiſe of juſtification, and pardon of ſin, in the removal of the guilt of it, is plain, as the following promiſe is of ſanctification. And ſo Sedgwick, no friend to this doctrine, underſtands it. And indeed, if that be not a promiſe of pardon, there is none there. It will perhaps be ſaid, that this promiſe ſecures the believer of the pardon of all his ſins ſooner or later, but not together and at once. But pray let it be conſidered, that the text tells us expreſsly, it ſhall be then when he 'ſprinkles clean water on them, gives them a new heart, takes away the ſtony heart,' &c. which is undeniably then when they are firſt brought into Chriſt. If you ſay, it reſpects only the ſins that are committed; I anſwer, *Non diſtinguendum ubi lex non diſtinguit.* But then future ſins are not comprehended here; and what have they then to lippen to for the pardon of theſe ſins? It muſt ſurely be a great ſtrait that will drive men to exclude hence the pardon of future ſins: and if they will ſuffer them to be included, I ſay again, the text tells us when this cleanſing ſhall be. The apoſtle Paul delivers the ſame doctrine, Col. ii. 13.—'quickened together with him, having forgiven you all treſpaſſes,' where we ſee *all treſpaſſes* ſimply were forgiven them when they were quickened with Chriſt. Upon this text, ſaith a judicious commentator, But that we are quickened to eternal life, is evident from this, that all ſins are forgiven on which our eternal death did depend. Now, I ſay, it is as evident that our death depended on all our ſins, paſt, preſent, and to come; for it was all theſe that were the cauſe of Chriſt's death. And this the ſubſequent verſe doth confirm. I ſhall only add that ſcripture, Numb. xxiii. 21. *He beholdeth not iniquity in Jacob, neither does he ſee perverſeneſs in Iſrael;* thus read and cited by Ameſius upon this head. Upon which he ſaith, "Becauſe juſtification hath left no place to condemnation:" and tell us, that future ſins are pardoned in the ſubject, or perſon ſinning. It is true, he calls this pardon of future ſins but a *virtual* pardon; but if I miſtake not, it is the very ſame thing that we aſſert.

Arg. II. Let us take a view of the ſacrament, and ſee how they favour this full remiſſion at once. The pardon of ſin is at leaſt among the firſt of the benefits of the covenant, ſealed by the ſacraments; and ſurely, if the ſacraments ſeal the pardon of all ſins, paſt, preſent, and to come, they are all pardoned; for God ſets not his ſeal but to a truth. Again, a ſeal preſuppoſeth a deed done; for a thing muſt be before the being of it can be confirmed. This is ſo evident, that I cannot think how it can be denied with any colour of reaſon. The ſtreſs of the argument lies then in the proof of that, that the ſacraments ſeal the pardon of ſins, paſt, preſent, and to come. That they ſeal the pardon of ſin, I mean, in the lawful uſe of them, or when they are conferred on believers, I think none will deny among the orthodox; they who acknowledge them at all to be the ſeals, will acknowledge this likewiſe. That they ſeal the pardon of all ſins, paſt, preſent, and to come, the ſcripture teacheth us, 1 Pet. iii. 21. *Baptiſm now ſaveth us.* There are many opinions about the efficacy of the ſacraments, and how baptiſm is ſaid to ſave us, which I ſhall not now meddle with; but take for granted, what is proven by the learned among Proteſtant divines, that the efficacy of the ſacraments doth conſiſt in effectual obſignation and application. So then baptiſm ſaveth us from ſin, in ſo far as it ſeals our ſalvation therefrom: but if we be for one moment under the guilt of it, where is our ſalvation from it? for one ſin is damning as well as a thouſand. Therefore all muſt be pardoned at once. And learned Rutherford doubts not to ſay, that Chriſt communicates to believers at firſt, ſuch a remiſſion as he hath obtained; but he hath, ſaid he, obtained the remiſſion of all ſin: therefore ſuch a remiſſion doth he communicate to us; and addeth, that there is no reaſon why he ſhould communicate to us the purchaſed remiſſion by halves. Further. Mark tells us, chap. i. 4. that *John baptized for the remiſſion of ſins;* and Peter calls thoſe pricked at the heart to be *baptized for the remiſſion of ſins*, Acts ii. 38. But will any exclude from this future ſins? Surely ſo their comfort would have been exceeding lame; knowing that immediately after they would run into a new ſcore, and then they are juſt where they were before; their baptiſm having not ſealed the remiſſion of theſe, but only of ſins committed before or in baptiſm. And ſo this ſacrament ſhould rather be adminiſtered to the party when a-dying, than when new born. But if future ſins be included here, as certainly they are, then the remiſſion of them is ſealed, and conſequently is before; for they are not called to be baptized in order to obtain a remiſſion, (the ſcripture knoweth no ſuch doctrine;) but in order to their getting the remiſſion obtained, ſealed, in teſtimony of the remiſſion of ſins, as Piſcator expounds it. The ſame may be ſaid of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper. So then baptiſm ſeals unto worthy receivers (as alſo does the other ſacrament) full freedom from eternal puniſhments, in the pardon of all ſin, in that reſpect, together and at once. And ſo Urſin, after he hath ſhewed, that the outward baptiſm is a ſeal of the inward, tells us, that ſo is ſin aboliſhed in baptiſm that we are freed from the guilt of God's wrath, and eternal puniſhments. To the ſame purpoſe ſays Zanchius, Sin indwelling actually remains, but is taken away as to the guilt. And baptiſm is ordained for that end, that we may be freed from all guilt of puniſhment due to ſin. The thing ſignified, ſays Beza, and verily repreſented, is the aſperſion or ſprinkling of the death and paſſion of Jeſus, in the remiſſion of all our ſins.

If it be ſaid, that the ſacraments do indeed ſeal the pardon of future ſins, but that is only conditionally; whereas the remiſſion of ſins committed is ſealed abſolutely: I anſwer, this diſtinction is to be rejected. For a ſeal, as a ſeal, doth abſolutely confirm the thing ſealed, eſpecially where the benefit made over is a free gift, as the pardon of ſin is. Were there a thouſand conditions in a bargain, the ſeal confirms the ſame abſolutely.

So, if we will make any thing of conditional ſealing, it muſt be the ſealing of ſome conditional promiſe of the pardon of ſin, and that to a believer, touching the obligation to eternal wrath: which is a mere begging of the queſtion; for we know of no ſuch promiſe in the Bible. But this is not the ſealing of a remiſſion. When a king pardons a traitor, and formally gives it under his hand and ſeal, the pardon is then ſealed; but not when he writes an obligation, and ſeals it, wherein he obligeth himſelf to pardon him for whatſoever he may afterwards do treaſonably, upon condition he do ſo and ſo. Here the obligation, which is conditional, is only ſealed: not a remiſſion. But we have heard, that the ſcripture holds forth baptiſm as a ſeal of the remiſſion of ſin; of remiſſion actually conferred, not merely promiſed, as a thing to come. So teacheth Wendelin, in anſwer to the Popiſh objection, "Infants are baptized for the remiſſion of ſins;" *Ergo.* "Sins are pardoned by baptiſm in the Popiſh ſenſe." He anſwers, "I deny the conſequence. The reaſon is, Becauſe to be baptiſed for the remiſſion of ſins, is by baptiſm to be confirmed of the remiſſion of ſin. So of old, adult perſons were baptized by the apoſtles for the remiſſion of ſins, which by faith they had received before baptiſm. So John preached the baptiſm of repentance for the remiſſion of ſins, Mark i. 4. who nevertheleſs baptized none but thoſe who had before profeſſed repentance, and believed the goſpel." It is in vain to talk of the conditional ſealing of the remiſſion of ſin: for the ſacraments are ſeals of the covenant, but the covenant muſt be made ere it be ſealed;

unleſs we will ſay, that God ſets his ſeal to a blank, which no wiſe man will do. Now, faith is that which enters the ſoul into covenant; and then, and not till then, do the ſacraments, though before received, ſeal the covenant. So that, although an elect infant be baptized, or an adult perſon partake of the ſacrament of the ſupper, being unregenerate, the ſacraments ſeal no ſaving benefit to them any manner of way; unleſs you either ſay, that the unregenerate, and ſuch as have no ſaving good from God, are in covenant with God, or that God ſets his ſeal to a blank; both which are moſt abſurd. We ſpeak not now of an external federal relation; for no ſaving benefits depend thereon. And what elſe is the meaning of that ſo frequently inculcated by the generality of Proteſtant divines, for ought I can learn, that the efficacy of baptiſm is not tied to the time of its adminiſtration? We heard before wherein the efficacy of it doth conſiſt. It ſeems then it doth not always effectually ſeal any ſaving benefit at that time; and what is the reaſon of that, but that the party hath nothing of that nature to be ſealed? The Lord does indeed call all men that hear the goſpel, to believe; and tells them, that if they will believe, they ſhall be juſtified, pardoned, &c. But this is an offer of the covenant, and not the covenant itſelf, to which the ſeals are appended; otherwiſe every one to whom the goſpel-offer comes, ought not to be debarred from, but invited, encouraged, and preſſed to receive the ſacraments, as ſeals appointed of God to confirm them in the belief of the Lord's willingneſs to help them; that, being ſo perſuaded, they might embrace the goſpel-offer, and ſo the heavenly pearls ſhould be caſt before dogs and ſwine. But the ſacraments are confirming, not converting ordinances; appointed for friends, not for foes. Moreover, as in civil contracts, ſome things are *ipſo facto* diſponed and given over by the one party to the other, and ſome things are promiſed to be given at ſuch or ſuch times, one ſeal ſerves for both; yet this ſeal confirms the former, as actually made over to the party for the preſent time; the latter, as to be given him at ſuch a time: ſo it is in the covenant of grace. There are ſome things actually made over *in præſenti* to the believer, ſuch as, juſtification, reconciliation, adoption, ſanctification begun; there are other things promiſed to be given at ſuch times as God ſees meet afterwards, ſuch as, progreſſive ſanctification, final victory over ſin, &c. Of the former kind is the pardon of ſin, as hath been already ſaid. And there is no promiſe in the Bible for the remiſſion of ſin in the ſenſe pleaded for, made to a juſtified perſon; no more than there is of formal juſtification, reconciliation with God, and adoption. So that there muſt needs be a difference betwixt a ſealing the pardon of ſin, and a ſealing of the promiſes of the covenant; though one ſeal ſerves for both. From all which it appears, that there is no conditional ſealing of the pardon of ſin, either before or after the ſoul is brought to Chriſt; but ſeeing, upon our firſt believing in Chriſt, the ſacraments ſeal to us remiſſion of all ſins, paſt, preſent, and to come, abſolutely, all are together and at once pardoned. And ſo Calvin teacheth. “Baptiſm “(ſays he) bringeth three things to our faith. This is “the firſt which the Lord ſetteth out unto us, that it “ſhould be a token and proof of our cleanſing; or (to “expreſs my mind better) it is like to a certain ſealed “charter, whereby he confirmeth unto us, that *all our* “*ſins* are ſo defaced, cancelled, and blotted out, that “they may *never come in his ſight*, nor be rehearſed, “nor be imputed. For he willeth, that all they that “believe, ſhould be baptized into forgiveneſs of ſins.” And again, a little after. “Neither is it to be thought, “that baptiſm is applied only to the time paſt.——But “thus we ought to think, that at what time ſoever we “be baptized, we are *at once waſhed and cleanſed for* “*all our life.* Therefore, ſo oft as we fall, we muſt go “back to the remembrance of baptiſm; and therewith “we muſt arm our mind that it may be *alway certain* “*and aſſured of the forgiveneſs of ſins.*”

Arg. III. If a believer, at his firſt entrance into covenant with God, and union with Jeſus Chriſt, be reputed in law to have fully ſatisfied the law, for all ſins, paſt, preſent, and to come; then he is actually abſolved from the guilt of the ſame. The connection is evident: for if the law be ſatisfied, it can demand no more; when the payment and ſatisfaction is made, and ſuſtained in law, before the bar of God, as the payment, and ſatisfaction of ſuch a perſon, what can hinder the abſolution, or the getting up of the diſcharge? But ſo it is, that an elect perſon, upon his union with Jeſus Chriſt by faith, is reputed, in the court of heaven, to have actually, though not perſonally, ſatisfied the law for all his ſins, paſt, preſent, and to come; *Ergo.* Then they are all together and at once diſcharged. The aſſumption appears true; becauſe Chriſt and the believer are but one perſon in law, as the cautioner and principal debtor, the advocate and his client, the huſband and wife; yea, much more than any of theſe, in ſo far as our union with Chriſt is a more ſtrait union than any of thoſe among men. So the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, having fully ſatisfied for all ſins, and the believer being one with him, it is true, that they have ſuffered and ſatisfied in him; and the judgment of God, being according to truth, doth ſurely go this way. “In virtue of this conjunc-“tion, (ſays Beza,) and ſpiritual marriage by faith, he “taketh all our miſeries upon himſelf, and we do re-“ceive all his treaſures of him.” So teacheth Zanchius: “For, (ſays he,) by our incorporation with “Chriſt, his whole paſſion becomes ours, becauſe we “are made one fleſh and one blood; and by the paſ-“ſion of Chriſt, all puniſhment due to ſin is taken a-“way.” Luther delivers the ſame, in theſe words: “Thus he (to wit, Chriſt) happily making an exchange “with us, took on our ſinful perſon, and gifted to us “his innocent and victorious perſon. Herewith we “being arrayed and clothed, are freed from the curſe “of the law, becauſe Chriſt himſelf willingly became a “curſe for us.” And truly the ſcripture ſpeaks of Chriſt, and Adam, as if there had never been any other men in the world but they, they being the two publick perſons, in which are all mankind, 1 Cor. xv. 45, 46, 47. Now, as Jeſus the ſecond Adam entered into the ſame covenant that the firſt Adam did, (for Chriſt purchaſed heaven and glory for his people, according to the ſtricteſt terms of the covenant of works); ſo by him was done for the elect whatſoever the firſt Adam had undone for all mankind. Wherefore the caſe ſtands thus: That likeas whatſoever the firſt Adam did, or befel him, is reckoned as done by, and to have befallen all mankind: ſo whatſoever the ſecond Adam did, or befel him, as head of his people, is reckoned on their account. So then, as in Adam they ſinned, eating of the tree, ſo in Chriſt they ſuffered, hanging on the tree; as in the firſt Adam they broke the law, in the ſecond Adam they repaired the breach thereof. And as it is then, and not till then, that we become the children of Adam by natural generation, we are reputed to have ſinned in him; ſo it is then, and not till then, that we become the children of Chriſt by faith and regeneration, we are reputed to have ſuffered in him. Mr. Gibbons, in his ſermon, intitled, *The nature of juſtification opened*, (it ſhould have been ſaid *overturned*) is much piqued at this doctrine; and tells us, it is the fundamental miſtake of the Antinomians, to think, that a believer is righteous in the ſight of God, with the ſelf ſame active and paſſive righteouſneſs, wherewith Chriſt was righteous; as though believers ſuffered in Chriſt, and obeyed in Chriſt, and were as righteous in God's eſteem as Chriſt himſelf, having his perſonal righteouſneſs made perſonally theirs by imputation. But we need not wonder to hear this from one who tells us that the covenant of works is not fully executed; that it is not abrogated, but is in part executed on believers, yet diſpenſed with by ſuperinducing a new covenant of grace over it; and that the threatenings of the law are no more predictions of the event, than *thou ſhalt* and *thou ſhalt not* in the command, that the terms on which ſinners are juſtified, are, firſt, faith. People would expect a ſecondly here; but that were too barefaced. Therefore ſays he, Then this faith hath two daughters that inſeparably attend her, 1. Repentance. 2. Newneſs of life. Sure he underſtands this in the matter of juſtification, not of ſanctification; for we ſuppoſe he ſpeaks ſenſe, and to the purpoſe in hand. Further, that God accepteth from, imputeth unto ſinners faith in Jeſus Chriſt as their righteouſneſs: which faith juſtifies *formaliter & ratione ſui*, as it is covenant-keeping, &c. Surely this learned man knew other adverſaries to him of better credit than Antinomians; but he ſeems to diſſemble it, to make his doctrine take place the more eaſily. It is well known that is the doctrine taught by the body of Proteſtant divines. That the imputed righteouſneſs of Chriſt, is our righteouſneſs before God; and that faith doth no way juſtify us but inſtrumentally, or correlatively; that all our righteouſneſs for juſtification is without us. And till their arguments againſt the Arminian way of juſtification by faith be overturned, his doctrine cannot have place. He invidiouſly talks of Chriſt's perſonal righteouſneſs made perſonally theirs, and believers being as righteous in God's eſteem as Chriſt himſelf. We diſclaim all pretences to the righteouſneſs of Chriſt as the ſecond perſon in the glorious Trinity, commonly called *his eſſential righteouſneſs*; but we know no righteouſneſs elſe upon which we can venture our ſouls, but the righteouſneſs of Chriſt as our Redeemer, reſulting from his perfect active and paſſive obedience: and fear not to ſay with the apoſtle, 1 John iii. 7. that *he that doth righteouſneſs, is righteous, even as he is righteous*: not in regard of quantity, but verity; there being a finite application of an infinite righteouſneſs, not in reſpect of the full value of it, but in ſo far as our neceſſity craves it. Righteouſneſs conſidered formally with reſpect to the rule of righteouſneſs ſimply, is not capable of degrees, though it be in reſpect of the ſubject of it; one righteous perſon being infinitely more noble than another: the excellency of the agent or patient giving value to the obedience active or paſſive. But it is evident, that Chriſt's righteouſneſs is imputed to us merely under the former notion, as it denotes a conformity to the rule of righteouſneſs. Now, I pray you, conſider what the law, which is the rule of righteouſneſs, doth require; even to love the Lord with all the heart, and with all the ſoul. But there is no poſſibility of going beyond that; and if the perſon come not up to it, he is not at all righteous; and it is nothing elſe but conformity to the law that denominates a perſon under a law righteous. Wherefore degrees of compariſon here are unreaſonable. But we need not marvel to hear them ſpeak of degrees of righteouſneſs, or conformity to the law, who bring forth a new rule of righteouſneſs, beſides that which was given at firſt, as this learned man does. I had always thought, that as there is but one God, and he unchangeable, ſo there had been but one rule of righteouſneſs, and that unchangeable; and that had been fully expreſſed in the firſt covenant, its commands contained in the decalogue. But now we are taught otherwiſe: Righteouſneſs (ſays he) is a conformity to the law; he that fulfils the law, is righteous in the eye of the law. Now, the law of the covenant runs thus, 'He that believeth ſhall not 'periſh;' ſo that a believer keeps and fulfills this law, and therefore faith is imputed to him for righteouſneſs. This a new ſort of a law indeed, where there is no commandment at all. But I think it is God that fulfils this law, and not the believer; for the accompliſhment or fulfilling of it is in the ſalvation of the believer, which the ſcripture tells us is not of ourſelves, but is the work of God alone. But let us conſider it in form of a law, thus, *Believe and thou ſhalt be ſaved*; and let us ſuppoſe the rule of righteouſneſs to be here found. I ſay, that this requires either perfect believing, or not. If it require perfect faith, then the judgment of God is not according to truth, in pronouncing men righteous according to this law; for no man in this life is perfect in faith; if it require not perfect faith, then all the unbelief and doubtings in a man's heart, where there is any thing of faith, are no ſins againſt this law of grace; which is abſurd: yea, and ſo they are no ſins at all; for, as hath been already proven, believers are dead to the law of works. Moreover, believing, or faith, being in ſeveral degrees in ſeveral perſons, one is more righteous than another, or more conform to the law than another: and the leaſt meaſure of true faith being a fulfilling of this law, any further degree of it muſt be a work of ſupererogation, the law being more than fulfilled; all which are abſurd. In fine, this doctrine makes the goſpel to overturn the law, and maketh *Chriſt the end of the law*, for deſtruction, not for conſummation, *for righteouſneſs, to every one that believeth*; becauſe the righteouſneſs of the law muſt be put out of doors, before this new righteouſneſs can be brought in. But Chriſt hath plainly told us, that heaven and earth ſhall ſooner paſs away than one jot or tittle of the law. And how does it reflect upon the juſtice, purity, and holineſs of God, to accept us as righteous in his ſight formally on the account of a righteouſneſs which is as filthy rags? for ſuch is our faith *formaliter & ratione ſui*.

I think, indeed, this author, does rationally yoke theſe two together, viz. a believer's being righteous in the ſight of God with the ſelf-ſame righteouſneſs wherewith Chriſt (as Redeemer, head, and repreſentative of his) is righteous; and a believer's ſuffering and obeying in Chriſt; for theſe indeed *ſe mutuo ponunt & tollunt*; and this obligeth thoſe that acknowledge the immediate imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs to us, to acknowledge alſo our being reputed, upon our union with him, to have ſuffered in him for all ſins, paſt, preſent, and to come; which being granted, they muſt needs yield the pardon of the ſame, in the ſenſe pleaded for. But why ſhould a believer ſuffering in Chriſt be thought ſuch a groſs point of Antinomianiſm? That we ſinned in Adam, I ſuppoſe he will not deny; and if ſo in the firſt Adam, why may we not be ſaid to have ſuffered in Chriſt the ſecond Adam, who was no leſs a publick perſon in his ſuffering, than the firſt in his ſinning. The apoſtle, Eph. ii. 6. tells us, that believers were raiſed up in him; which muſt needs ſuppoſe, that they died in him. But he is very plain in this point, Gal. ii. 20. *I am crucified with Chriſt*. Hereby he proves, that he was dead to the law through the law, for the law had crucified him with Chriſt: wherefore it had no more to require of him, than the law of a land of a malefactor hanged for his crime. The ſcripture hath led Luther into that fundamental miſtake of the Antinomians: "For (ſays "he) I am crucified and dead with Chriſt through faith." And that none may miſtake his meaning, he tells us, that the apoſtle doth not ſpeak here of concrucifixion of imitation or example, but of that ſublime concrucifixion, where Chriſt alone doth all, but the believer is crucified with him through faith. Fergusson tells us, that the threatening of death, Gen. ii. 17. is fulfilled in the elect; ſo that they die, and yet their lives are ſpared; for they are reckoned in law to have died, when Chriſt their ſurety died for them. Zanchius favours this doctrine much: for he ſays, that whatſoever was done to our head Chriſt, that is partly done to his whole body, and ſo to each member already; and partly is to be done. Beza is in this point Antinomian in grain; "Although "thou (ſays he) haſt ſatisfied for the pain of thy ſins "in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, and that thou art alſo "clothed with his righteouſneſs," *&c.* And Rutherford, though a great adverſary to the Antinomians, as is well known by his learned writings againſt them, hath yet fallen into this fundamental miſtake of theirs:

“ For (ſays he) Chriſt's dying and ſatisfying, is ours; “ he dying in our ſtead and place, and we dying in him “ legally, (not phyſically;) and ſo are we not only by “ his ſatisfaction, which is made ours, and by faith ap“plied to us, negatively freed from hell; but poſitively “ righteous.” The apoſtle teacheth believers ſo to think of themſelves, Rom. vi. 10, 11. *For in that he died, he died unto ſin* (i. e. for ſin) *once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewiſe reckon ye alſo yourſelves to be dead indeed unto ſin; but alive unto God in Chriſt, en Chriſto*, &c. Where we ſee plainly, that believers are called to reckon or conclude themſelves to be *dead unto ſin*, that is, *for ſin*, as is plain from the 10th verſe, otherwiſe they do not reckon concerning themſelves as they do concerning Chriſt. The apoſtle taketh it for granted, that believers have all laid down this concluſion, or have made this reckoning, *That Chriſt died to ſin*, that is, ſuffered for it; here is another concluſion he would have them to make, *Likewiſe reckon ye alſo*, viz. that *ye are dead to ſin*, and this by way of ſyllogiſtical deduction from the former, *Houto kai humeis logizeſthe;* where the medium is our union with Chriſt, ſealed in baptiſm, ver. 4. ‘ For if Chriſt died to ſin, then ‘ we being one with him,’ died to it alſo, viz. in his perſon, as the text hath it, *in Chriſt*. Whereas indeed our dying to ſin in point of ſanctification, is in our own perſon, not in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, as is manifeſt. From what is ſaid it appears, that a believer is reputed to have ſatisfied for all ſins, paſt, preſent, and to come, at his union with Chriſt by faith; and conſequently that all his ſins are then pardoned *ſimul & ſemel*.

If any ſhall ſay, That although we be reputed thus to have ſatisfied the law for all ſins, paſt, preſent, and to come; yet it no more follows, that we have the pardon of them in our own perſons, than that we are glorified in our own perſons at our firſt believing in Chriſt; for both are fruits of the ſame purchaſe: I anſwer, That this is to confound our abſolute and relative ſtate, and to make them go on alike by degrees; which is abſurd. But I pray you let it be conſidered, that there are two things in Chriſt's obedience to the law as the repreſentative of his people; *firſt*, The payment of a debt: *ſecondly*, A purchaſe of ſome poſitive benefits. The debt being paid, and the payment of it for ſuch a perſon being ſuſtained in law, the diſcharge cannot be kept up; but juſtice itſelf *ipſo facto*, looſeth the man from the obligation, as is manifeſt. But as to theſe other bleſſings, there is no ſuch neceſſity of their being made immediately forthcoming unto them; only they have immediately a right to them all given them; and this eſpecially when the payer or purchaſer conſents to the delay of giving up theſe things to thoſe for whom they are purchaſed; as it is in this caſe. This we ſee plainly in the way of human contracts. As when a man pays his debt to the creditor, and moreover purchaſeth a piece of ground from him; the very paying of the money in juſtice looſeth him from his former bond or obligation, and gives him a right to the land; but does not put him actually in poſſeſſion thereof at that very time.

Arg. IV. The ſcripture plainly holds out unto us, that the Lord, in dealing with believers, conſidereth them as in Chriſt Jeſus, and not as they are in themſelves; and it cannot be otherwiſe, ſeeing the union made up betwixt Chriſt and a ſoul by faith, is a laſting, even an everlaſting union; ſo that after their union with Chriſt, at the firſt moment of believing, they never more ſtand before God on their own bottom, otherwiſe God ſhould be to them, even as to others, *a conſuming fire*. But if we account a believer to lie one moment under unpardoned ſin, he muſt be conſidered abſtractedly from Chriſt, and dealt with judicially as he is in himſelf; or if otherwiſe, it reflects no ſmall diſhonour on the Mediator, the perſon who is one with him, being condemned by the law. And the truth is, that a perſon being once united to Chriſt by faith, whatever is chargeable on that perſon muſt be laid to the charge of Chriſt, and he is anſwerable for it; and the ſame may be exacted of him, as the debt contracted by the wife is chargeable on the huſband; but *by once offering up of himſelf, he hath perfected for ever them that are ſanctified*. To this purpoſe ſpeaks holy John Careleſs, in his letter to William Thymes; “ He hath clothed us in all “ his merits, and taken to himſelf all our ſin, ſo that if “ any ſhould be now condemned for the ſame, it muſt “ needs be Jeſus Chriſt, who hath taken them upon “ him. But indeed he hath made ſatisfaction for them “ to the uttermoſt; ſo that, for his ſake, they ſhall never be imputed to us, if they were a thouſand times “ more than they be.” Thus he; and that moſt truly, becauſe the elect perſon being once united to Chriſt, the Lord Jeſus is reputed to have taken on all his ſins in particular, whether paſt, preſent, or to come; ſo that now, if any perſon be reputed guilty, or actually liable to eternal wrath, it muſt be Chriſt himſelf, who is legally the ſinner in point of guilt, though the fault was never transferred on him: therefore, if the ſin be unpardoned for the leaſt moment, it muſt be to him and not to us; for though they be ours by commiſſion, yet he hath undertaken and bound himſelf to anſwer for them. Among men there are two ſorts of ſureties. Some become ſureties for others, ſo as the creditor hath ſtill a right to crave the principal debtor, who, notwithſtanding of the ſuretyſhip, remains ſtill liable; in which caſe, if the principal party fails to pay, after diligence uſed for the ſame, the creditor falls on the ſurety. Some do ſo become ſureties for others, that the principal debtor is *eo ipſo* relieved and diſcharged; there being no hopes at all of payment from the principal. This laſt way Chriſt is ſurety for his people, and not the firſt way: for the Lord knowing that it was utterly impoſſible for man to ſatisfy by himſelf, muſt needs be ſuppoſed to make no other bargain; but *laying help upon one that is mighty*, he ſimply paſſeth the ſinner in his own perſon, and takes Chriſt for all; who ſays to the Father, ‘ If ‘ you take me let theſe go their way.’ And ſo, as it is ſaid, Iſ. liii. 7. *NiGGAS VeHU NaGNaNeH, He* (to wit the Father) *exacted*, and *he* (to wit Chriſt) *anſwered;* or *he was anſwered*, viz. by Chriſt. So Rabbi David judgeth the word in *Niphil* ſhould be expounded. A godly writer tells us, that God laid all on him, that he might be ſure of ſatisfaction: proteſting that he would not deal with us, nor ſo much as expect any payment from us. Wherefore in law Chriſt is the ſinner, and the believer goes free; and if ſo, then the ſin, if it be at all unpardoned, it muſt be to him, and not to us. None will ſtumble at this, who conſider matters duly. Luther doubts not to ſay, Chriſt was a ſinner, and that there was none a greater ſinner than he; and, that whatſoever ſins we do commit, or ſhall in time to come commit, they are as proper to Chriſt, as if he himſelf had committed them. “ In ſum (ſays he) ſin muſt be“come Chriſt's proper ſin, or we periſh.” Rivet defends Illyricus againſt Bellarmine, in that he ſays, Chriſt might moſt truly be called the ſinner. Bellarmine (ſays he) contends that Chriſt may attribute our ſins unto himſelf; and that truly, as I believe, for he cannot lye, therefore he might alſo truly call himſelf the ſinner, while he ſuſtained our perſon; who nevertheleſs was in himſelf innocent. What blaſphemy and impiety is here? The ſame is taught by Hemmingius, Taunovius, Witſius, Rutherford, and Bridge. The apoſtle puts it out of doubt, that it is Chriſt who ſpeaks to the Father, Pſal. xl. ſee Heb. x. and in the 12th verſe of that Pſalm he calls the ſins, the burden whereof he bears, *his iniquities*. And it cannot be denied, but that he was *made ſin;* which is more than to be a ſinner, in ſo far as the abſtract ſignifies ſomewhat more exquiſite than the concrete, if we will believe the learned Rivet, *loco ſupra citato*. From all which I conclude, that ſeeing Chriſt is made the ſinner in law, and the Lord paſſeth the man thus, upon Chriſt's undertaking the charge, all ſins, paſt, preſent, and to come, are together and at once pardoned, viz. aſſoon as the ſoul is one with Chriſt by faith.

Arg. V. The love of God, called *the love of complacency*, is, as God himſelf, unchangeable: ‘for whom he once loves he loves to the end,’ John xiii. and ‘nothing can ſeparate them from it,’ Rom. viii. Though the emanations of it towards believers may be ſtopt for a time in great meaſure, yet that love, as it is in God, ſtill remains, *quoad affectum*, as they ſay, though not *quoad effectum*. The due conſideration of this, which is not controverted amongſt the orthodox, and is plainly proven by them againſt the patrons of the ſaints falling away, will neceſſitate the aſſerting of the pardon of all ſins *ſimul & ſemel*; ſo as the believer is never after his union with Chriſt, by any ſin, for one moment, actually liable to eternal wrath. For that liableneſs to God's wrath, and the unchangeableneſs of God's love, are incompatible. Which I prove thus. For a ſinner to be liable *in actu ſecundo* to eternal death, is nothing elſe but to be under a ſentence of eternal death as a ſinner; that is to ſay, the law condemns him as ſuch, though the ſentence never be executed. Now, what is the law of God, but a tranſcript of the holy nature of God? ſo that God himſelf is ſurely ſet againſt thoſe whom the law is againſt; otherwiſe God is changeable, or the law is not a true copy of his nature; both which are more than abſurd. It comes in effect to this, that God approves whom the law diſapproves; that is, God hates the man, hath no delight in him at all; ſeeing he that is guilty of one, is guilty of all: and yet at the ſame time he loves him, and delights in him; which is a flat contradiction. If any ſhall ſay, that the ſinner may be hated of God as he is in himſelf, yet beloved as united to Chriſt, it is granted; but it makes nothing to the purpoſe, for while we ſpeak of a believer as he is in himſelf, it is merely a notion of our minds by preciſion; but really and indeed he is ever in Chriſt, and the Lord's judgment is according to truth; ſo he never deals with a believer, but as he is indeed in Chriſt, as was ſaid before. And if to adjudge a perſon to eternal wrath be not to hate him, I confeſs I underſtand not what can be made of God's hatred againſt a perſon; for it is certain it is no paſſion in him, as it is in us. Rutherford tells us, that there is no reaſon why God ſhould communicate the purchaſed remiſſion by halves, *(per partes,)* unleſs he loved and hated alſo the ſelf-ſame perſon from eternity; which is inconſiſtent. So ſaith Piſcator, God hates them whoſe ſins he hath not pardoned; and this, while he teacheth, that, by the forgiveneſs of ſin, which we ſeek in the Lord's prayer, is meant the ſenſe of pardon. There is one thing, I foreſee, will readily be ſaid againſt this, to invalidate the argument; that is, that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt was condemned by the law, yet ſtill beloved of God; and therefore they are not inconſiſtent. To this I anſwer, There is in ſin the fault, and the guilt ariſing therefrom: the latter, not the former, was transferred on Chriſt: but an unpardoned ſinner lies under both. Hence ariſeth a vaſt difference betwixt the law's condemning of Chriſt, and its condemning us. While the law condemns a ſinner, who is formally ſuch and in himſelf, it declares him to be ſinful, and oppoſite to God; which is the formal notion under which he is hated of God; and therefore it adjudgeth him to eternal wrath. But here Chriſt is innocent, only the puniſhment is exacted of him, ſeeing he came in the room of condemned ſinners, and undertook voluntarily to ſatisfy for them: wherefore God cannot but delight in him, ſeeing there was no ſinful evil in him, only a penal evil is inflicted on him. But the law finding one ſin in the ſinner uncovered with the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, leaves him in no other caſe than it did Adam guilty of the firſt, viz. condemned, and one whom God had no delight in.

Arg. VI. If all ſins, paſt, preſent, and to come, be not pardoned at once, when the ſoul is united to Chriſt by faith; then a believer at one and the ſame time is adjudged to eternal life and to eternal death. That he is adjudged to eternal life, in ſo far as he is a believer, the ſcripture plainly teacheth; ‘for he that believeth, ‘hath everlaſting life;’ and that he is adjudged to eternal death upon the account of ſins not yet pardoned, though committed, is no leſs evident: ſeeing, according to this doctrine, ſin is not pardoned in reſpect of the obligation to eternal wrath, till he renew the acts of faith and repentance; which is nothing elſe than that he is actually bound over thereto. And ſo the man is legally dead and legally alive at one and the ſame time. Whoſo ſhall reconcile theſe, *erit mihi magnus Apollo*. But I ſhall ſtand no more on this; but conclude with the following argument.

Arg. VII. *ult*. This doctrine, teaching the pardon of all ſins together and at once, upon the ſoul's believing at firſt on Chriſt, hath the advantage of the other in two reſpects.

I. In that it is moſt adapted to the grand deſign of the goſpel; which is, to exalt the riches of the free grace of God in Jeſus Chriſt. For, *firſt*, Who ſees not the grace of God far more exalted in giving out a full and complete remiſſion of all ſins, paſt, preſent, and to come, together and at once; than in giving out remiſſion by halves; as the giving up of a bond wholly and at once, ſpeaks out more favour than now and then particular receipts and diſcharges. Let none ſay, that it is too much boldneſs for us, thus to lay down methods and rules for God's exalting of his grace; and if this were true, then he ſhould ſanctify us wholly at our union with Chriſt, as well as pardon all ſins, paſt, preſent, and to come: we ſay that we cannot take upon us to lay down or propoſe rules that way; but underſtanding the exalting of grace to be the great deſign of the goſpel, we may well be allowed to conſider what doth moſt contribute thereto. And whatever other way the Lord might, in his boundleſs wiſdom, have fallen upon, for bringing about that end, I confidently aver, that none in the world can deviſe a way how grace might have been more exalted, than it is by this way laid down in the goſpel. And with the ſame confidence I ſay, that the gradual ſanctification of believers doth more exalt the riches of grace, than if God had made believers perfectly holy at the firſt moment of believing, as I ſhall afterwards make appear; ſo ſweetly doth the perfect pardon of ſin, and the imperfect ſanctification of believers, contribute to the grand deſign of the goſpel. *Secondly*, It doth alſo exalt the grace of God more, that the ſinner being once united to Chriſt by faith, hath a free and full remiſſion of all ſins, paſt, preſent, and to come, than that the pardon of future ſins ſhould be ſuſpended on the acts of our believing and repenting.

II. It is moſt adapted to excite believers to the ſerious practice of godlineſs, to a holy and ſtrict goſpel-walk. Which appears, *firſt*, In that it doth natively fill the heart with love to God, the main ſpring of goſpel-obedience, and the moſt powerful incentive to a tender walk. It is true, the man who apprehends ſins paſt and preſent forgiven, cannot but love much; but he who apprehends ſins, paſt, preſent, and to come, to be forgiven, muſt love more. Here then are two debtors to the grace of God; I think I may well propoſe our Lord's queſtion, Luke vii. 42. *Which of them will love him moſt?* and will acquieſce in Simon's anſwer, ſeeing Chriſt approved it, *I ſuppoſe that he to whom he forgave moſt*, ver. 43. *Secondly*, As this doctrine furniſhes the children of God beſt, with love to conſtrain them, and cords of a man to draw them; ſo it doth remove the fear of eternal wrath, which keeps the ſoul in bondage, Rom. viii. 15. 1 John iv. 18. fills the heart with confuſion, daſhes and mars us in our acceſs to God, and looks like ſlavery rather than the glorious liberty of ſons. But the doctrine of the pardon of future ſins only upon after repentance, *&c.* cheriſheth this fear; ſo as men muſt be continually under it, in regard they are continually ſinning; and though a man be in this moment perfectly freed from an actual obligation to eternal wrath, yet the very next moment he is again brought under it; ſo that in very deed it is a perfect rack to the conſcience, and would effectually prove ſo, were it as firmly believed as is pretended. It is needleſs to diſtinguiſh here betwixt the greater and leſſer ſins: for ſin as ſin lays the ſoul under God's wrath, where it is in a capacity of actual obligation thereto, as was ſaid before. Whatever influence the ſoul's apprehenſion of its liableneſs to eternal wrath, under ſin till it be repented of, may be ſuppoſed to have, I think it is plain, that one great end of Chriſt's death was, to deliver us, that we might ſerve him without fear of what the law or vindictive juſtice of God may do to us, Luke i. 74, 75. Luther who was a man very much exerciſed with conflicts of conſcience, is very plain this way; "Wherefore, (ſays he,) if ſin torment thee, if death terrify thee, think it is but a vain ſpectre and an illuſion of the devil, as certainly it is. For in very deed there is no more ſin, no more curſe, no more death, no devil; becauſe Chriſt hath overcome and aboliſhed all theſe. There is no defect in the thing, but in our belief; for it is difficult to reaſon to believe theſe ſo ineſtimable benefits." And elſewhere: "Hence (ſays he) it follows, that in reſpect of the conſcience, we are altogether free from the law: therefore that ſchoolmaſter ought not to be troubleſome to it with his terrors, threats, and captivity." And again, "We ought, without the conſcience, to make a God of it, (the law,) but within the conſcience, it is a devil," &c. And a little after, "Let him (Chriſt) alone reign in his righteouſneſs, ſecurity, joy, and life; that the conſcience being glad, may ſleep in Chriſt, without any ſenſe of law, ſin, and death." Theſe expreſſions are ſomewhat unuſual; but the matter is heavenly and ſublime, and the very marrow of the life of faith, and ſavours much of Paul's elevated ſpirit, while treating of the doctrine of free grace, or rather, of the Spirit of Chriſt. Agreeably to this doth Calvin teach: "The law (ſays he) hath no place in the conſciences of the faithful before the judgment-ſeat of God. The ſecond part of (Chriſtian liberty) is, that conſcience obey the law, not as compelled by the neceſſity of the law, but being free from the yoke of the law itſelf, of their own accord they obey the will of God. For becauſe they abide in perpetual terrors, ſo long as they be under the dominion of the law, they ſhall never be, with chearful readineſs, framed to the obedience of God, unleſs they firſt have this liberty given them. On the other ſide, if being delivered from this ſevere exacting of the law, they hear that they be called with fatherly gentleneſs, they will with great chearfulneſs anſwer his call." So Beza: "Foraſmuch (ſays he) as Jeſus Chriſt hath, by one infinite obedience, made ſatisfaction to the infinite Majeſty of God, it followeth, that my iniquities can no more fray nor trouble me; my accounts being aſſuredly razed by the precious blood of Chriſt.

Now, I ſhall conſider the objections againſt this doctrine; and ſhall handle them in the ſame order as Sedgwick hath them gathered together. That learned man delivereth them not as his; but tells us, after all, that his own judgment inclines to that opinion, that all the ſins paſt of a believer are (at once) forgiven, and all his future ſins are remitted unto him upon renewed acts of believing and repenting, for Chriſt's ſake.

Object. 1. Heb. viii. 12. 'Their iniquities will I remember no more.' *Not to remember iniquity any more*, doth in common ſenſe ſuppoſe, that that iniquity was before; for if it never was, it cannot be ſaid to be remembered at all. So that paſſage, Jer. xxxi. 34. 'I will forgive their iniquity;' and Jer. xxxiii. 8. 'I will pardon all their iniquities,' do ſuppoſe an iniquity or offence committed: for if it be not yet *committed*, how can it properly be ſaid to be *forgiven*? So Iſ. xliii. 25. 'I am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions;' but debts which were never as yet made, may not be entered into the book, and therefore cannot be ſaid to be *blotted out*.

Anſw. I have already ſhown, in what ſenſe the Lord ſaith, 'he will remember their ſins no more;' which is no way infringed by this objection, and doth very well agree with the ſcripture-dialect. But as for that criticiſm upon the word *remember*, that in common ſenſe it ſuppoſeth that the thing was before; I ſay it is weak, to ſay no worſe of it; for the moſt ſenſible mere man that ever was in the world ſince the fall, and inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt too, uſeth the word of that which only *was to be*, Eccleſ. xi. 8. 'Let him remember the days of darkneſs, for they *ſhall be* many.' And what will ye ſay to find it uſed of a thing that never ſo much as was to be? So David uſeth it concerning Judas, Pſal. cix. 16. 'Becauſe he remembered not to ſhew mercy.' A learned critic tells us, that in the holy language *to remember*, does not neceſſarily preſuppoſe any precedent knowledge which was forgot, and afterwards comes into mind; but as we ſee ſays he, it is taken ſimply for the knowledge of any thing, and ſpeaking of the thing known. Now, when it is applied to God, it is certain the exiſtence of the thing, and his knowledge of it, cannot be ſeparated, for the leaſt moment. The learned gentleman Leigh tells us, that the Hebrew word ſignifies to *make mention of a thing*. And I think it is to be obſerved, that the apoſtle, in tranſlating of it, uſeth not a compound, but a ſimple word, *ou me mneſtheſo etis* which may very well be ſo tranſlated, as well as the verbal is in almoſt all the places of the New Teſtament, In the Greek, *mnemoneuo* which ſignifies to *remember*, *memini*, *recorder*, 2 Tim. ii. 8. Rev. xviii. 5. Luke xvii. 32. So the Septuagint uſeth it, Exod. xiii. 3. And one tells us, it anſwers to the Hebrew word *ZACHAR*; and yet we find it uſed of a thing, that was to come, to wit, the departure out of Egypt, which was long after Joſeph's death; but by faith Joſeph remembered it, *emn moneuſe*, Heb. xi. 22. But why ſhould men go ſo ſtrictly to work about the notation of the word? for if ſo it be, it is certain God can no more be ſaid properly to *remember* a thing than *to forget* it. And as unhappy are the adverſaries in their criticiſm on the words *pardoning* and *forgiving* their importing the actual commiſſion of ſin.

The apoſtle tells us, 1 Tim. iii. 16. that *Chriſt was juſtified in the Spirit*, viz. abſolved from the guilt of the elects ſins, which he had voluntarily taken upon him, and ſatisfied for; yet ſome of theſe were not then committed, nor are they to this day, notwithſtanding he was juſtified in reſpect of them, 2 Kings v. 18. 'In this thing (ſays Naaman) the Lord pardon thy ſervant, that when my maſter goeth into the houſe of Rimmon; when I bow down myſelf in the houſe of Rimmon, the Lord pardon,' &c. Upon this there is a queſtion propoſed, Whether or not Naaman deprecates and ſeeks that to be forgiven which he did before his converſion, or that which he was to do after his converſion? Wendelin tells us, that ſome modern interpreters embrace the firſt; but moſtly all others the latter; which he himſelf holds likewiſe. And of that judgment he ſays, are the Chaldee, Greek interpreters, Jerome, Pagnin, Luther, Vatablus, Munſter, Junius, and Tremellius; the French, Italian, and Spaniſh tranſlators. However it be, I remark, for the purpoſe in hand, that many learned men are not ſo fond upon the pretended import of the word *pardon*, but that ſometimes for their part, they will ſuffer it to reſpect ſin not yet committed. And I would challenge any man to give me a ſolid anſwer and reaſon, why ſin may not be forgiven before it be committed, as well as ſatisfied for at the deareſt rate, before the actors be in *rerum natura*. I think the firſt may at leaſt as eaſily be as the latter, of which no true Chriſtian will doubt; and I would leave it to the judgment of any unbiaſſed perſon, whether or not the exacting of ſatisfaction for ſins not only not yet committed, but even the actors of which are not yet in being, ſeems to be more liable to inconveniencies, than the pardon of ſins, though not yet committed, yet ſatiſfied for, the perſon now at the even time living and believing in him who died for the ungodly ? Wherefore it is ſtrange that Bp Downhame's gravity permits him to be ſo wanton on this point, as to tell us, that this cannot be, unleſs we make God like the pope, who aforehand forgave ſins to come. Will his lordſhip allow the pope to take money aforehand for ſins to come, and not allow him to give people what they have bought with their money ? But no more of this. If we did not too much meaſure God's ways by man's ways, perhaps there would be leſs difficulty in this matter. Only we know, that, as to him with whom we have to do, all is preſent before his eyes ; there is neither time paſt nor time to come with him. No better is that which they would make of the word *blotting out*. If the future ſins of believers were not in God's debt book, how came juſtice to exact payment of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt for them ? Scripture tells us, that ‘ in the volume of God's book ‘ it was written’ concerning Chriſt, that ‘ he came to do ‘ the will of the Father,’ Pſal. xl. 7. What was that will, but that he ſhould ‘ lay down his life for the ſheep,’ John x. 18. or die for the ſins of the elect ? If Chriſt's ſufferings were written in that book, it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe the cauſe of them might be found there alſo. But if things muſt needs actually be before they be put in God's book, David has been in a great miſtake, while he tells us, that all his members were written in God's book, when as yet *there was none of them*.

Object. 2. Other ſcriptures purpoſely ſpeaking of the forgiveneſs of ſins have a reſtrainedneſs unto ſins committed, and look only at them, Jer. xxxiii. 8.——*whereby they have ſinned,——have tranſgreſſed.* Mark, *have ſinned*, and *have tranſgreſſed*, reſpecting the ſins paſt, not what they ſhall commit, Ezek. xviii. 22. ‘ All ‘ his tranſgreſſions that he hath committed, they ſhall ‘ not be mentioned unto him,’ 1 John ii. 1. *If any man ſin ;* as if ſin muſt be committed before he make interceſſion for the pardon of it. So in the Old Teſtament there was no ſacrifice for any future ſin.

Anſw. As for the firſt two ſcriptures, that they have a reſpect to paſt ſins, I do not deny ; but that they reſpect theſe only, is ſaid, not proven. If they be reſtrained to paſt ſins, what comes of preſent ſins, the ſecond member of this tripartite diviſion, very little, if at all, uſed, for any thing that I have learned, by any but thoſe of late ? others that went before, being content with the phraſe of *pardon of ſin*, ſimply, or *all ſin*, univerſally, as the ſcripture ſpeaks. “ It hath been “ (ſays Iſaac Ambroſe) commonly ſaid by ſome of our “ divines that juſtification is tranſacted in our firſt u- “ nion and incorporation into Chriſt ; at which time it “ is conceived, that the pardon of all ſin is ſealed to “ the believer at once.” If then it be reſtrained, I ſay, to paſt ſins, then this aſſertion is falſe, that all ſins, paſt, and preſent, are forgiven at once ; which the adverſaries themſelves do hold true. But theſe clauſes, *have ſinned*, and *have tranſgreſſed*, are plainly ſet down, not to diſtinguiſh their paſt and preſent, from their future ſins ; that would have been but ſmall comfort to a man with a deceitful heart, that is ever ſinning ; but to preſs the ſenſe of their ſins upon their conſciences, and to hold them before their eyes, that they might be the more affected therewith, and ſee the grace of God in Chriſt more. If we muſt conſider that, Ezek. xviii. 22. ‘ All ‘ his tranſgreſſions that he hath committed, they ſhall ‘ not be mentioned ;’ pray take in likewiſe the following clauſe, ‘ In the righteouſneſs that he hath done he ſhall ‘ live.’ Here are *ſins* that he *hath committed ;* and *righteouſneſs* that he *hath done*. If the *ſins* that he *hath committed* be excluſive, in point of remiſſion, of the *ſins* he *ſhall commit* : then his *righteouſneſs* that he *hath done*, which muſt be underſtood, in a goſpel-ſenſe, of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt received by faith, muſt, by virtue of the antitheſis, be excluſive of the *righteouſneſs* he *ſhall do*, in point of pardon, or legal life. And ſo the doctrine of obtaining the pardon of future ſins by the renewed acts of faith and repentance, falls to the ground ; their life being appropriated to the righteouſneſs they have done, as much as the not mentioning of their ſins is to thoſe they have committed. Let no man tell me here, that the Lord is ſpeaking to them in the tenor of the covenant of works, and according to the law. I acknowledge, that the phraſe of *doing righteouſneſs*, looks like the legal diſpenſation of the covenant of grace under the Old Teſtament. But the law ſtrictly ſo called, or the covenant of works, knows nothing of repentance and turning from ſin, nor of the pardon of ſin, here mentioned. Nay, though a man under the influence of the covenant of works could turn from ſin indeed, that covenant would not allow his former ſins not to be mentioned. As for that place, 1 John ii. 1. it makes nothing againſt us, in regard the apoſtle is there ſpeaking of believers who have an *Advocate with the Father*, and are actually pardoned as to the obligation to eternal wrath, but do fall under God's fatherly diſpleaſure by their after ſins, for removal of which they muſt employ the Advocate. But take it as ye will, there is no neceſſity of the actual commiſſion of ſin before interceſſion can be made anent it, no more than before ſatisfaction be made for it. But this was ſpoken to at large already. As to what is ſaid of the ſacrifices under the Old Teſtament, we are ſure of two things ; *firſt*, That they were types of the true ſacrifice, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, as ſuffering for ſinners ; *ſecondly*, That the ſacrifice of Chriſt was for all ſins, paſt, preſent, and to come ; and therefore the believing Jews who were taught the myſtery of Chriſt, behoved to underſtand it ſo.

Object. 3. Thoſe qualifications which God himſelf makes with reſpect to the forgiveneſs of ſins do neceſſarily ſuppoſe a precedent commiſſion of them : 2 Chron. vii. 14. ‘ If my people——ſhall humble themſelves, ‘ and pray, and ſeek my face,’ &c. 1 John i. 9. ‘ If we ‘ confeſs,’ &c. Prov. xxviii. 13. ‘ He that confeſſeth ‘ and forſaketh, ſhall find mercy,’ Acts iii. 19. ‘ Re- ‘ pent ye,——that your ſins may be blotted out.’ Doth God put us to humble our hearts for, to pray for the pardon of ſins not yet committed ? Would he have us to confeſs and forſake thoſe ſins ? Wherefore, if theſe things be required for forgiveneſs, and yet reſpect only ſins that are paſt, as indeed they do, all are not pardoned at once.

Anſw. Somewhat of this nature I have met with before in the firſt objection againſt the firſt queſtion. I think it ſtrange, that men, when they hear the pardon of ſin ſpoken of in any place of ſcripture, do preſently fancy to themſelves, that it is the taking off the obligation to eternal wrath. As for that, 2 Chron. vii. 14. it relates to the taking off of temporary ſtrokes from the people, as is evident from the text, ‘ I will forgive their ‘ ſin.’ How ? ‘ I will heal their land.’ What is the diſeaſe ? The ſhutting up of heaven, that there is no rain, &c. So Rutherford expounds it. And that forgiveneſs they might have, and no doubt ſome had, and yet lie under God's wrath for ever. But ſuppoſe it did relate to the pardon of ſin in the ſenſe pleaded for, there are more conditional qualifications here, than the adverſaries themſelves will readily require as abſolutely neceſſary. There is prayer made in the temple, ver. 14, 15. which I hope they will not ſay was, even under the Old Teſtament, neceſſary ſimply for the pardon of ſin. The ſecond ſcripture alledged I have already ſpoken to, and may afterwards ſpeak to it further. The laſt of them will alſo be conſidered afterwards. Wherefore I leave them for the time. As for that, ‘ He that confeſſeth and ‘ forſaketh ſhall have mercy ;’ it ſeems to be that which hath moſt weight for that which is pleaded ; but yet the weakneſs of it, we hope, will appear. That the argument then may be the more cloſely anſwered, I ſhall reduce it into this form. The ſoul's humbling of itſelf, confeſſing, forſaking, and turning from ſin, reſpect only ſins paſt, and cannot be where ſin is not actually committed; but theſe qualifications mentioned, are neceſſarily required to the obtaining of the pardon of ſin: *Ergo.* No ſin can be pardoned till it be committed, and ſo all is not pardoned at once. I diſtinguiſh the major. The ſoul's humiliation, confeſſing, and forſaking, *&c.* conſidered and taken explicitly, reſpect only ſins paſt, and cannot be where ſin is not actually committed: I grant, conſidered virtually, they reſpect only ſins paſt, *&c.* I deny; for ſo they reach to future ſins alſo. Apply this diſtinction to the minor: Theſe qualifications are neceſſarily required to the obtaining of the pardon of ſin, if they be taken explicitly, I deny; and ſo will our antagoniſts, ſo long as that remains true, ‘ Who can ‘ underſtand his errors?’ That they are requiſite as conſidered virtually, *tranſeat.* But what can be made of that againſt us? Nothing at all in the point in hand: for this virtual humbling, confeſſing, &c. takes in future ſins as well as paſt ſins, and preſent, which we know not: for a man who is truly humbled for one ſin, is virtually humbled for all, paſt, preſent, and to come; ſeeing he is humbled for it, confeſſeth, forſaketh, and turns from it as ſin; for *a qua tali ad omne valet conſequentia.* Will our adverſaries deny, that a believer's future ſins are virtually pardoned upon his firſt entry into the ſtate of juſtification? If they be virtually pardoned, why not virtually confeſſed and forſaken, eſpecially ſeeing they make confeſſion, &c. ſo neceſſary antecedently to pardon? And truly this may as well be ſaid of future ſins, as of thoſe ſins which we neither know, nor yet ſhall ever after know in time; for as to us, *De non apparentibus & non exiſtentibus eadem eſt ratio.* Thus I think the weakneſs of this argument doth ſufficiently appear. I ſhall not further meddle with the aſſumption here; but in what ſenſe we underſtand repentance to relate to the pardon of ſin, will afterwards be declared.

Object. 4. If all ſins, paſt, preſent, and to come, are forgiven at once unto believers, then no believer is to pray unto God for the forgiveneſs of any ſin which he commits, after he is once brought into Chriſt; yet Jeſus Chriſt doth teach even believers to pray, *Forgive us our treſpaſſes,* Matth. vi. 12. Luke xi. 4. To this may be added for confirmation, that the children of God do accordingly pray daily for the pardon of ſin, as may be ſeen every where in the lives of the ſaints.

Anſw. 1. Our Lord here teacheth believers to pray for the *ſenſe of pardon,* and manifeſtation of the ſame to their own ſouls; and that prayer ſuits believers very well, though all their ſins paſt, preſent, and to come, are already pardoned before the Lord in the ſenſe pleaded for. And though it may be hard to find where *pardon* is uſed preciſely for the *manifeſtation thereof,* yet he is a great ſtranger in the ſcripture who knows not, that therein things are frequently ſaid to *be,* or be *done,* when the ſame only is *manifeſted.* We find the Apoſtle tells us, that Abraham was *juſtified by works,* James ii. 21. not formally; but manifeſtatively; his juſtification which he had long before, being then plainly evidenced. But as for thoſe who are of opinion, that there is no pardon mentioned in the ſcriptures, but what reſpects the obligation to eternal wrath, there needs to be no great difficulty in finding ſuch a place as may convince them, that *pardon* is uſed ſometimes for the *ſenſe* or *manifeſtation of pardon* preciſely and only; and which may rationally convince any man, that pardon is not always taken for the removal of the obligation to eternal wrath, formally conſidered: Matth. vi. 14. ‘ For if ye forgive ‘ men their treſpaſſes, your heavenly Father will alſo ‘ forgive you.’ Not unlike to this is that, Luke vi. 37. ‘ Forgive, and ye ſhall be forgiven.’ We may ſee plainly here, that *our forgiveneſs* is required as previous to *God's forgiveneſs*: and the following verſe tells us, that there can be *no hope of forgiveneſs,* ſo long as we *do not forgive others.* Mark, to whom he ſpeaks; even to believers, who may call God Father; yet, under a temptation, may be led away with a revengeful ſpirit againſt thoſe that have done them wrong; but till they lay it down, God will not forgive them. Now, will any man who is orthodox, ſuſpend our formal remiſſion of ſin at the hand of God, on our remiſſion of offences done to us, as previous to God's formal act of removing the obligation to eternal wrath? This the Papiſts would indeed have to eſtabliſh our juſtification by works. But the ſcripture teacheth us, that God's forgiving us formally conſidered, is the cauſe of our forgiving others; and ſo muſt go before it, as the cauſe before the effect.

A judicious interpreter tells us, that our remiſſion is poſterior to the divine remiſſion; as Chriſt teacheth in the parable of the king and ſervants, Matth. xviii. for the king forgave firſt, the ſervants behoved to forgive after: ‘ I forgave thee all that debt, ſhouldſt thou not alſo have ‘ [illegible] compaſſion on thy fellow ſervant?’ And a little after, purſuing the cauſe againſt the Papiſts, he will not ſo much as yield it to a cauſe of a remiſſion *ſine qua non.* Bayn ſpeaks very pithily to the ſame purpoſe: “ Our forgiving (ſays he) followeth and doth not go “ before forgiveneſs (divine:) for none can forgive his “ brother, that doth not love his brother, none can “ love his brother truly, that loveth not God; none “ can love God, but thoſe that are firſt loved of him, and “ have their ſins firſt covered. And this forgiveneſs “ of God, is an action of his *ſimul & ſemel.*” And afterwards he concludes; “ When the ſcripture bids us “ forgive that we may be forgiven, it meaneth of the *ſenſe* “ that we may *feel ſealed* to our ſpirits God's pardon.” Now, if it be not a formal remiſſion touching the obligation to eternal wrath, and yet all pardon have reſpect to that obligation, it muſt needs be underſtood of the manifeſtation of that pardon. Seeing then the ſcripture mentioned is an argument to enforce the duty injoined in the petition, it is very reaſonable, that we underſtand the petition the ſame way; as we ſaid before, that we are here taught to pray for the ſenſe of pardon, not for a formal pardon, as it reſpects eternal wrath. And we prove it by the argument uſed already, thus: The forgiveneſs mentioned in this petition is poſterior to our forgiving of others; but it is the manifeſtation of forgiveneſs, not the formal pardon, that is poſterior to our forgiveneſs: *Ergo.* The aſſumption is proven already. I prove the propoſition: *Firſt,* We ſeek this remiſſion as a benefit we yet want, but ſpeak of our remiſſion as a duty we in the preſent do. *Secondly,* How can we ſeek of God, that he would forgive us as we forgive others, if we have not done it, or are doing it? Surely that were to pray for the ſhutting up of God's bowels of mercy on us, rather than the opening of them; ‘ For if we forgive not men, God will not forgive us,’ verſ. 15. *Thirdly,* That theſe words, *as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us,* are an argument, though not to move us to believe that God will forgive us, I think will not be denied by any ſober perſon. But if it be ſuch an argument, then the ſoul muſt feel itſelf endowed with this qualification, ere it can certainly determine that God will forgive its ſin; and the confidence of hearing cannot be in greater degree than the feeling of that qualification. *Fourthly,* That it is ſo to be underſtood, appears from the parallel place, Luke xi. 4. ‘ Forgive us— ‘ for we alſo forgive;’ *kai gar hemeis aphiemen,* Piſcator expounds *forgiveneſs* in the petition plainly of the manifeſtation of pardon. “ Chriſt (ſays he) by divine “ remiſſion in this place underſtands the ſenſe of it in “ our minds, which is the ſenſe of faith; ſignifying “ that it cannot be that we by faith can feel the divine “ remiſſion, unleſs we be conſcious to ourſelves of our “ remiſſion whereby we have forgiven others.” That we pray here for the ſenſe of pardon, is evident from what is ſaid; and ſo far I acquieſce in it: but I mean not to ſay, that *pardon* is taken here or elſewhere only for the manifeſtation of pardon. But it ſeems no leſs evident to me; that upon what is ſaid, they that underſtand it only of the manifeſtation of pardon may hold their ground againſt thoſe who acknowledge no pardon but what reſpects the obligation to eternal wrath. But in regard that a ſoul may have the ſenſe of pardon touching the obligation to eternal wrath continuing with him, and that he is ſtill obliged daily to pray, *Forgive us our treſpaſſes*, in reſpect of which he can only pray in ſuch a caſe for the continuance of it; and ſeeing the words are apt to beget in us a conception of a formal pardon, and that the ſcripture teaches us another ſort of a formal pardon than what reſpects God's eternal wrath: I do not judge, that the ſenſe of pardon is all that we are taught to pray for in this petition. Therefore,

2. I anſwer, We pray here alſo for a formal pardon. For underſtanding of which, let us remember the diſtinction formerly made betwixt the pardon of ſin as it relates to the obligation whereby the ſinner is bound over to eternal wrath, and that which reſpects the obligation whereby the ſoul is bound over to temporary ſtrokes. That pardon of ſin is in ſcripture uſed in the laſt ſenſe, hath been already proven, and it is very commonly ſo taken. I ſhall adduce ſome other inſtances, 2 Kings xxiv. 4. ‘And alſo for the innocent blood ‘which he ſhed, which the Lord would not pardon.’ Jer. v. 1. ‘Run—through the ſtreets of Jeruſalem,---- ‘if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth ‘judgment, that ſeeketh the truth, and I will pardon it.’ Would not the Lord pardon the blood ſhed by Manaſſeh (to them that were involved in the guilt with him) as to the obligation to eternal wrath? Manaſſeh himſelf was pardoned in that ſenſe, and doubtleſs paſſed no ſuch peremptory ſentence on the reſt that were involved in his guilt. But the context plainly tells us, it is meant of temporary ſtrokes that came upon the Jews by the hands of their enemies. Is that the goſpel offer to pardon Jeruſalem as to the obligation to eternal wrath, if there were found but a few among them that ſought the truth? No, ſure, though the Lord averts temporal puniſhment on that account many times. The believing and repenting people of God ſtill under temporary ſtrokes complain Lam. iii. 42. ſaying, *We have tranſgreſſed, and have rebelled, and thou haſt not pardoned.* But will God hold his people under obligation to eternal wrath, though believing, repenting, confeſſing, and forſaking? Iſ. xl. 2. ‘Speak comfortably to Jeruſalem, and cry unto her that ‘her iniquity is pardoned, for ſhe hath received of the ‘Lord's hand double for all her ſins; not in a way of vindictive juſtice, ſurely, but temporary ſtrokes from fatherly diſpleaſure. I ſay then, that in this petition we are taught to pray daily for the pardon of ſin, as it reſpects temporary ſtrokes and fatherly diſpleaſure; but no otherwiſe, even no more than that God would juſtify us, and adopt us, &c. which are done already perfectly. And that this is the formal pardon which we are commanded to ſeek, is plain from that we are directed to go to a father for it. To conclude: we are taught there to pray for the ſenſe of pardon as touching the obligation to eternal wrath, and for a formal pardon reſpecting temporary ſtrokes; or, if you pleaſe, call it only that formal forgiveneſs juſt now mentioned, ſo that ye include the other in it, as a certain ſpecies in the general kind. For the confirmation of the objection, what the practice of the ſaints is *de facto* is not the queſtion; but what it ought to be *de jure*, or in point of right. When the children of God have loſt ſight of their intereſt in Chriſt, what wonder is it that they pray as thoſe who have no part in him? But ſuch a practice is grounded on a miſtake, and therefore is not warrantable. But that their prayers are actually ſometimes for the removal of temporary anger, when they pray for pardon of ſin, though ſome may underſtand them otherwiſe, is evident: As when David, Pſal. xxv. *Lifting up his ſoul to God*, verſ. 1. *truſting in him*, verſ. 2. *waiting on him all the day*, verſ. 5. recalling to mind former experiences of God's loving kindneſs, verſ. 6. and conſcious to himſelf of thoſe acts, yet prays, verſ. 7. that *the Lord would not remember the ſins of his youth*: can it be ſuppoſed, that he thought they were unpardoned as to the guilt of eternal wrath ſtill? Or did the church think ſo, Pſal. lxxix. 8. when ſhe prays, ‘O remember not againſt ‘us former ſins?’ It is plain both aim at the guilt of temporary ſtrokes, that may be brought on after they are, by their pardon, put out of hazard of eternal wrath. I ſhall conclude this anſwer with what Mr Rutherford ſays, “Our deliverance is twofold, as our miſery is. “*Firſt*, There is a guilt of ſin, or our obligation to e-“ternal wrath; the other miſery is the blot of internal “guilt of ſin. In regard of the former, we are freely “and perfectly juſtified, and pardoned at once from “all ſins in our perſon and ſtate. Through the ſenſe of “this, and in regard of deliverance from temporal “judgments, and doubtings and fears of eternal wrath “every day, while we ſeek daily bread, we deſire that “our ſins may be forgiven.”

Object. 5. It is poſſible, that a believing perſon may fall into ſuch a ſin or ſins of ſcandal, for which he may be juſtly caſt out from the viſible church; and, upon his neglect or practice of repentance, he ſtands bound or looſed from his ſin, not only in earth, but alſo in heaven; for ſo Chriſt himſelf delivers it to us in Matth. xviii. 18. But this cannot poſſibly be, if all ſins be already pardoned in heaven; for then they are always looſed and never bound in heaven.

Anſw. That it is poſſible a believer may fall into ſuch ſins, for which he may be juſtly ſo treated by the church; and that what the church does that way in that caſe is ratified in heaven, I doubt not. But that ſuch a perſon is bound over, upon his contumacy, either in heaven or earth, to eternal wrath, or looſed upon his repentance therefrom, I do utterly refuſe; and till that be proven, the argument is of no force. I will not here enter upon an inquiry into the nature of excomunication. But the ſcrewing it up ſo high in the caſe ſuppoſed, is ſo far from confirming the hypotheſis of our adverſaries, that it doth exceedingly weaken it: for by this the ſin of a believer may be looſed in heaven, and yet bound on the earth, and the church in her duty ſtill as to that perſon. Put the caſe (which may very well be ſuppoſed,) that the excommunicate believer, thinking himſelf (though wrongouſly) leſed by the ſentence of excommunication, goes over ſeas into a far country, where there is no church at all, and is there touched with the ſenſe of his ſin, renews his faith and repentance, and ſues for a pardon, or the removal of the obligation to eternal wrath; he cannot but have it, even according to the principles of our adverſaries: yet ſtill he is bound on earth; and if ſo, bound in heaven too, as we heard juſt now: and ſo his ſin is both pardoned and unpardoned in heaven at one and the ſelf-ſame time; pardoned, becauſe he has repented: unpardoned, becauſe he ſtill lies under the ſentence. And if this binding of a believer's ſin on earth and in heaven reſpects the obligation to eternal wrath, it ſeems to me natively to follow, that a believer in a ſtate of excommunication is in a ſtate of condemnation. For, as one ſays well, “If there were any ſin remain-“ing, a man is ſtill in the ſtate of condemnation.” How powerful is truth! If we turn over but another leaf before that in which this argument is applauded as Achillean indeed by the learned man, we ſhall find him telling us, that if God did yet hold you guilty, ye could not ſay, that ye have peace with God; for God is not at peace with you, nor ye at peace with him, while enmity continues between you; and ſo it doth *while any ſin remains unpardoned.* And after he hath told us there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt, he adds, “And verily, if all condemnation be removed, all ſin “is pardoned; if *any one ſin* remained *unpardoned*, “then condemnation would ſtill be in force upon us for “that *one ſin*.” But if we ſhall underſtand this *binding* and *looſing* of a believer's ſin with reſpect to temporary anger or temporal judgments, the matter is plain, and the abſurdity is evited: for though the man in ſuch a caſe may, by the renewing of his faith and repentance, recover the ſenſe of his pardon touching the obligation to eternal wrath; yet, till he be looſed on earth, he is not looſed in heaven from the temporary judgment he was laid under; but ſtill he feels the weight of God's fatherly diſpleaſure, having no acceſs to the communion of the church: which is no doubt a very heavy band to a tender heart, and will make ſuch an one go with a bowed-down back.

Object. 6. If all ſins, paſt, preſent, and to come, are forgiven at once, then a juſtified perſon in the midſt of the groſſeſt ſins, may rejoice in God, as much as when he humbles his ſoul, repents, and ſeeks his face.

Anſw. This objection is juſtly raiſed againſt Antinomians, who deny a believer's liableneſs, either to eternal wrath or temporary ſtrokes for ſin. But it can, with no colour or ſhadow of reaſon, be brought againſt us, who are taught, that the frowns of our deareſt Father are bitter as death. See more above.

Object. 7. Forgiveneſs of ſin is a judicial act in God, as the contrary act of condemning is. Now, the judge neither condemns nor forgives offences which are not extant.

Anſw. This objection is of a piece with the firſt, and does truly ſtrike at the root of the doctrine of the goſpel, and quite overturns the ſatisfaction of Chriſt: and is as unadviſedly objected here by the adverſaries, as ſome do object the logical maxim, *Non entis nulla ſunt accidentia.* It is dangerous to endeavour to regulate the procedure of the omniſcient Judge, according to the order of human policy. It was a judicial act in God, 'for ſin to condemn ſin in the fleſh' of Chriſt, Rom. viii. but wo to us that live now, if it was only ſin that was extant which was thus condemned.

Object. 8. *ult.* The continual work of Chriſt in heaven as our interceſſor, 1 John ii. 1. and the daily ſuing out of pardon in his name, ſeems to carry much in it for the acquiring of daily pardon.

Anſw. It does ſo for pardon: that is the taking off of temporary ſtrokes. And that we might be ſure of what we ſue daily for, he left that comfortable word with his people before he aſcended into heaven, 'I go to your Father and my Father, to your God and my God.' But of this before.

I conclude with that of the apoſtle, Gal. v. 1. 'Stand faſt therefore in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Verſ. 13. For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only uſe not liberty for an occaſion to the fleſh; but by love ſerve one another.'

QUEST. III.

Whether or not repentance be neceſſary in order to the obtaining of the pardon of ſin?

HAving, in the former queſtions, had ſo frequent occaſion to ſpeak of repentance its relation to the pardon of ſin, I ſhall endeavour to clear what I have hinted at before in this matter. I do not now ſpeak of the repentance that may be found in Cain and Judas, ariſing merely from the ſenſe of God's wrath, which is called legal repentance; but of the true goſpel repentance, which is a ſaving grace, and acceptable to God. Laying aſide the Popiſh and Arminian neceſſity of it, and the conditional neceſſity thereof urged by others; not needing to conſider them particularly, ſeeing *a fortiori* they will be overturned, if it can be proven, that the pardon of ſin is prior to repentance; I ſhall lay down ſome conceſſions touching this matter, then our aſſertion confirmed with arguments, and objections anſwered.

Conceſſ. 1. Repentance is neceſſary *neceſſitate præcepti.* It is a commanded duty, and ought to be preached by the miniſters, and practiſed both by them and hearers of the goſpel. And whoſo make no conſcience thereof, plainly appear to me to know neither Moſes nor Chriſt, law nor goſpel.

Conceſſ. 2. It is neceſſary alſo *neceſſitate medii.* It is a holy mean appointed of God, or a mids neceſſary to be gone through in order to the attaining of eternal life.

Conceſſ. 3. Faith and repentance, as they are ordinarily linked together in preaching, ſo they cannot be ſeparated in practice. And though we may, and muſt diſtinguiſh them, yet they muſt not be divided. And whatſoever precedency is here, it is rather in order of nature, than order of time. The graces of the Spirit being given together and at once, yet much depends on the diſtinct uptaking of the native order of thoſe graces.

Conceſſ. 4. As pardon denotes a relation to temporal ſtrokes, as hath been above explained, repentance is a neceſſary mean in order to the obtaining of it; that is, the removal of temporal ſtrokes. The reaſon of this is obvious: for the Lord's deſign in inflicting ſuch ſtrokes, is the believer's repentance, humiliation, and amendment, &c. So that when the Lord hath inflicted temporary ſtrokes on a believer for his ſins, they are not taken away till he repent and amend, and ſo anſwer the deſign of God in inflicting of them, Iſa. xxviii. 9. It is true, they may be changed as to the ſpecies of them; and when one ſort prevails not, the Lord brings on another. But ſtill there is a continuance of them till they prove effectual. I do not ſay, that preſently the ſin is pardoned, or the ſtroke removed upon repentance. Scripture and experience tells us the contrary. David, though repenting, yet lies under the effects of God's fatherly diſpleaſure; it is a while ere his broken bones be cured. The Lord will not, upon every repentance of a ſinner, paſs by the ordinary courſe of nature. Men may be caſt into diſeaſes for their ſins, and repent while God's hand is upon them, and may recover, but by degrees. Beſides, ſome temporary ſtrokes of God upon believers, are of that nature, that they cannot be taken off without a miracle; as the death of David's child, &c. And there is a great reaſon for this: for God, in inflicting of temporary ſtrokes on believers, has other deſigns beſides that of the amendment of the party; as the vindication of his own honour, that others may fear, and the like.

Conceſſ. 5. Repentance alſo is neceſſary in order to the attaining of the ſenſe of the pardon of ſin, as it relates to eternal wrath; as the tree muſt be known by its fruits. Repentance is a fruit of faith; and where there is no repentance, it cannot be ſuppoſed, that aſſurance can be had. Yet this conceſſion I underſtand ſo as, that although a clear diſcerning of repentance in a believer is neceſſary unto a firm aſſurance which fully quiets the heart, yet the believer may, without that, attain unto ſuch an aſſurance, as is that of an adherence unto the truth of that propoſition, *My ſins are pardoned;* of which perhaps we may hear more afterwards. Theſe things being yielded.

I aſſert, with Rutherford, That in regard of our obligation to eternal wrath, and all the puniſhments of ſin according to the order of juſtice by the law of God, faith in Chriſt is the only means and way to get out of our bondage and miſery. And I wiſh this way of ſpeaking of faith as a mean were more generally received. If it were ſo, it might be of good uſe to bury the debates about the conditionality of the covenant of grace, and the inſtrumentality of faith in our juſtification, and might tend to give us diſtinct uptakings of the true nature of the ſecond covenant. "I had rather (ſays Durham) "call it (faith) *the mean* by which it (Chriſt's righte-"ouſneſs) is apprehended." So then repentance is not required as a mean in order to the obtaining of the pardon of ſin, touching the obligation to eternal wrath. In a word, goſpel repentance doth not go before, but comes after remiſſion of ſin, in the order of nature.

Arg. I. The firſt and immediate effect of ſaving faith, is union with the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: for the formal act of faith as juſtifying, is the receiving of Chriſt, by which the ſoul is joined unto him, 1 Cor. vi. 17. The union betwixt Chriſt and believers may be conſidered, as with reſpect to us, actively and paſſively; as we are ſaid to *join ourſelves*, and to *be joined* to the Lord, Jer. l. 5. 1 Cor. vi. 17.; in reſpect of the latter, the Spirit, on God's part, apprehending us; and in reſpect of the former, faith on our part apprehending him, makes up the bleſſed union, as the immediate reſult thereof. Moreover it is evident we can have no ſaving benefit from Chriſt, by faith, without communion with him; which communion ſuppoſeth, and is grounded upon union with him. So Parſon, ſpeaking of the effects of faith, tells us, that firſt there is union with Chriſt. "What "can (ſays he) more neceſſarily and immediately fol-"low upon the offer, on God's part, in the goſpel, of "Chriſt to be ours, and our receiving him by faith, "than union to his perſon? This I take to be the "fruit of the firſt conſummate vital act of the quicken-"ed ſoul, and then is the marriage-knot tied." Now, if union with Chriſt be the immediate effect of faith, repentance muſt either go before faith, or it muſt come after remiſſion of ſins. The former cannot be ſaid, ſeeing the repentance in queſtion is pleaſing to God; but 'without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God,' Heb. xi. 6. The Lord himſelf tells us, that without him we can do nothing, John xv. 5. *chorus emu*, *extra me*, ſays Grotius; *ſeorſim a me*, ſays Beza. Now, we are ſtill without Chriſt, till by faith we are united to him, Eph. ii. 12. Wherefore true repentance cannot go before faith. It remains then, that it comes after remiſſion of ſin. For how can it be conceived, that the ſoul is united to Chriſt, but that ſin is alſo immediately pardoned? Seeing by virtue of this union the ſoul hath a perfect righteouſneſs to preſent unto God, it cannot but *eo ipſo* be juſtified and pardoned. If any thing ſhall be ſuppoſed to intervene betwixt union with Chriſt and juſtification, we ſhall have a man righteous and unrighteous, condemned and not condemned at once; condemned, becauſe, *ex hypotheſi*, he is not juſtified, nor his ſins pardoned; not condemned, becauſe he is 'in Chriſt Jeſus,' Rom. viii. 1.

Arg. II. We may clearly perceive this doctrine from the parable of the two debtors, Luke vii. where the concluſion of the whole is in verſ. 47. 'Wherefore I ſay 'unto thee, Her ſins, which are many, are forgiven; 'for ſhe loved much: but,' &c. The occaſion of this parable is told us, verſ. 37, 38, 39. A woman which was a ſinner comes to Chriſt, waſhes his feet with tears, wipes them with her hair, kiſſeth his feet, &c. The Phariſee having known what a profane wretch this woman was ſometime, but being ignorant of the change wrought on her, and the favour ſhe had obtained with God, thinks with himſelf, that Chriſt cannot be a Prophet, in regard he admitted ſuch a profane perſon to treat him ſo; which he ſuppoſeth he would not have done, had he known what ſort of a woman ſhe was. The ſcope of the parable is, to convince the Phariſee, that this woman was not ſuch a one as he took her to be; but that ſhe was a pardoned ſinner, and one who, notwithſtanding of her former courſe of life, had now obtained favour with God; and therefore there was no ground for the Phariſee's inference, that Chriſt was not a Prophet, and he was miſtaken in thinking Chriſt knew not what ſhe was. To prove that this woman was ſuch a one as is ſaid, he makes uſe of the parable of two debtors; the one whereof owed five hundred, the other fifty pence, both to the ſame creditor; and both are forgiven; then propoſes the queſtion, 'Which of 'the two will love moſt?' Simon anſwers, 'He to 'whom moſt is forgiven.' Wherefore the concluſion of the point is, that ſeeing thoſe love moſt to whom moſt is forgiven, and it is evident this woman loves moſt, which is manifeſt by thoſe her expreſſions of love, and her tears, moſt is forgiven to her, ſhe is a pardoned ſinner. And thus our divines againſt the Papiſts unanimouſly underſtand this love as the effect or conſequent of her forgiveneſs. See Calvin, inſtead of all, handling this place againſt the patrons of the merit of works. Hence I argue thus: Our love to God follows upon, and is a fruit of the remiſſion of ſin; but our repentance proceeds from love to God, and ſo in order of nature is poſterior thereto: *Ergo*, Repentance follows remiſſion of ſin. Both the premiſſes are evident from this parable, eſpecially the propoſition. To confirm the aſſumption, we are told, 1 John iv. 19. 'We love him, becauſe 'he firſt loved us.' God's love to us is always antecedent to ours towards him. Now theſe preſuppoſe remiſſion: for how can God delight in thoſe whom his law condemns? he hates thoſe whoſe ſins he hath not pardoned, as we heard before: or how can we love God while he is our enemy, which he is ſtill ſo long as our ſins are not pardoned? This is plainly taught us, Hoſ. xiv. 4. 'I will heal their backſlidings, I will love them 'freely.' Upon which Zanchius thus comments: 'He ſays not, in the firſt place, *I will love them*, then, *I will heal their rebellions*; but firſt *I will heal*; then, *I will love*.' He teacheth then, that God loves none with that love whereof we ſpeak, but after the forgiveneſs of their ſins through Chriſt; and that thoſe whoſe ſins are not pardoned, are hated of God. For there can be no love, ſays Hemmingius, no obedience, except mercy and reconciliation, for the Mediator's ſake, be firſt apprehended. We heard before Bayn telling us, there can none love God, but thoſe that are firſt loved of him, and have their ſins covered with him.

A godly and learned divine hath an exception here; which is this. Repentance may be conſidered as it doth not only follow pardon, but alſo the intimation thereof; ſo it is a melting of heart, and a ſelf lothing that floweth from felt love. This is the melting of heart ſpoken of in that woman. But repentance, as it is a work of ſanctifying grace, ariſing from the ſenſe of bypaſt ſin, and hope of future mercy, goeth along with faith, for the attaining of the hoped-for remiſſion.

Contra 1. That is granted, this woman's repentance followed her pardon, is well; but that it followed the intimation thereof, is not proven; yea, the contrary ſeems pretty clear, if we conſult the place; for after ſhe had expreſſed her penitency, as the evangeliſt tells us, her pardon is intimated, verſ. 48. *And he ſaid unto her, Thy ſins are forgiven*: and adds, verſ. ult. *Thy faith hath ſaved thee, go in peace*; which is a manifeſt check to her doubts and fears, creates a calm in her troubled ſoul; and tells us plainly, that ſhe came to him in trouble, fear, and anxiety. So far was ſhe from the intimation of pardon. And no wonder it was ſo; for it is but the Lord's ordinary way to uſe a hard wedge for knotty timber. She was a ſinner, a harlot, ſays Piſcator, and, it ſeems, but very lately converted; they who knew her before, not having as yet diſcerned the change. If it be ſaid, that intimation was made, not ſo much for her who had the ſenſe of pardon before, as for thoſe who ſat at meat with Chriſt; the contrary of that appears, in that the ſame was convincingly concluded as to them in the preceding verſe. As for what is ſaid of her repentance flowing from felt love, it is true in ſome ſenſe. For God's love may be felt two ways; *firſt*, materially and objectively; *ſecondly*, formally or ſubjectively. The firſt way no doubt ſhe felt it: for God's pardoning love was the effectual cauſe of her love to God, and repentance in her heart, according to that, Jer. xxxi. 3. 'With loving kindneſs have I drawn thee:' for God's love worketh its like in our ſouls, independently on our knowledge thereof; 'as the wind bloweth where it liſteth, and we hear the ſound thereof, though we know not whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth,' John iii. 8. 'Did not our hearts burn within us, (ſay the diſciples,) while he talked with us?' &c. Luke xxiv. 32. and yet they knew not till afterwards who it was that ſpoke to them; ſo might ſhe feel God's love, yet not formally and ſubjectively, as is clear from the neceſſity of the intimation ſpoken of before; for had ſhe known that indeed, the power whereof ſhe felt, it would have created peace, and quelled the ſtorm of conſcience in her.

2. That there is another kind of repentance, than this of that woman's, which goes alongſt with faith for the attaining of remiſſion, I muſt needs refuſe till it be proven. I confeſs I can ſee no ſuch repentance in the ſcripture as is here deſcribed. The repentance we now treat of, reſpects the ſoul's union with Chriſt, at the firſt converſion of the ſoul to God; and ſo the worthy author tells us in theſe words: "We ſay, that repentance underſtood in the laſt ſenſe, is ſimply neceſſary for the obtaining of the pardon of ſin; ſo that without it no unreconciled ſinner can expect peace with God." And yet this repentance is ſaid to be a work of ſanctifying grace. Now, that a work of ſanctifying grace ſhould, in order of nature, go before the pardon of ſin, I think will be hard to reconcile to that which is generally the doctrine of orthodox divines, that juſtification goes before ſanctification; that the ſtate of the ſoul muſt firſt be changed, and the tree firſt made good, before it can bring forth good fruit, or a work of ſanctifying grace; or that our perſons muſt be firſt accepted, ere our works can be acceptable. But ſure it is, while ſin is unpardoned our perſons are not accepted.

Arg. III. Hence then it further appears, that true repentance follows the pardon of ſin, and therefore cannot be a mean to attain it. For if good works do not go before, but follow our juſtification, as is generally maintained by Proteſtant divines, with whom you will ſeldom miſs, on that head, the famous ſaying of Auguſtine, *Bona opera non præcedunt iuſtificandum, ſed ſequuntur juſtificatum*; repentance muſt needs follow the pardon of ſin, or it muſt be denied to be a good work; the contrary whereof we have heard, in that it is ſaid to be a work of ſanctifying grace; and it is ſurely a very complex of good works, if it be ſuch as our Catechiſm, according to the ſcripture deſcribes it, viz. 'a turning from ſin unto God,' &c. We cannot but take notice how much Socinus and his fellows labour for the precedency of repentance to the remiſſion of ſin, *hoc velut & magno mercentur*. But repentance and converſion (ſays Socinus) goes before the blotting out of ſin, Acts iii. 19. For juſtification (ſays Schlichtingius) neither begins without faith and repentance, nor does it laſte without the fruits and effects of faith and repentance. I know, that the learned men who plead for repentance as neceſſary to the attaining of the pardon of ſin, do with their ſouls abhor Socinus's deſign therein; but why ſhould we yield any thing to the common enemy without neceſſity? In his treatiſe of juſtification, he lays hold on this their doctrine to inveigle them in a contradiction: "There is another extreme (ſays he) received commonly, not without the great undoing of ſouls, that is, that our good works do nothing at all pertain to our juſtification, but as they are the effects of the ſame. (Here is the venom of the Anti-Socinian doctrine.) Whence it follows, that ſeeing it is certain we are juſtified by faith, it muſt needs come to paſs, that they be of opinion, that a man is juſtified even before he doth any good, though afterwards he ſhall do. Which is contrary to the whole ſcripture; which, to paſs other things, doth plainly teſtify, that the remiſſion of our ſins doth not conſiſt nor exiſt without repentance; and ſeeing it is moſt true, and they themſelves *acknowledge that*, and confeſs that our juſtification is no other indeed than remiſſion of our ſins," &c. Hornbeek anſwer to this: "We confeſs, ſays he, that our good works pertain not to juſtification *antecedently* and caſually, but are the *effects* of juſtification itſelf." This is the very thing we plead. But as for that which the ſame learned man adds in anſwer to that of Socinus, viz. That repentance is required in the *ſubject*, which may be partaker of remiſſion, but is not therefore requiſite to God's juſtifying as it denotes *his action* abſolving a man; but well indeed as it denotes its *termination*, and the ſenſe of it paſſively in the faithful ſoul; it does indeed confirm me in the doctrine I plead for, while I ſee the miſerable ſtrait thoſe are brought into by this objection, who hold the precedency of repentance to the remiſſion of ſin. For I think it is clear, Socinus is not ſpeaking of juſtification as it is an action of God preciſely, not terminated upon the creature; for thus juſtification goes before faith as well as repentance, it being in that ſenſe from eternity; nor yet is he ſpeaking of the ſenſe of it in the ſoul; but of juſtification properly ſo called, terminated on the creature. And unleſs we make the termination of juſtification in the faithful ſoul, and the ſenſe of it, all one, I confeſs I cannot divine what is the difference betwixt juſtification as it denotes the difference of God abſolving a man, and as it denotes the termination of it on the ſoul; only they are different ways of conceiving one and the ſame thing; even as calefaction, as it is referred to the fire, is termed an action, and as referred to the water, is called paſſion. For an action of God abſolving a man, (unleſs you underſtand it of the decree of abſolution, which is not in the queſtion,) is a tranſient act; and it will be very hard to ſhew a difference betwixt a tranſient act, and an act terminated on an extrinſic object. I like much better what that learned author delivers afterwards. "So juſtification (ſays he) is conſidered either on God's part, or on our part, terminated in us, and its ſubject. The firſt is in the eternal decree of God deſtinated for us; in the promiſes from the firſt age of the world, and in the goſpel, offered; by Chriſt, merited; by his reſurrection, confirmed and ratified; *hitherto actively*. But it is conſidered *paſſively*, as applied to and terminated on the ſoul, by faith. And this way the grace of remiſſion is more clearly ſeen, as it comes to men, not only having merited nothing of good, but yet being (*conſiſtentibus*) in guilt and wickedneſs: in the mean time, with the grace of juſtification, endued alſo with that of ſanctification, whereby, for the time to come, they from the heart do live, not unto wickedneſs, but unto God and Chriſt." This doth indeed daſh Socinus's doctrine in the head and heart. The Aſſembly in their larger Catechiſm tells us, that in ſanctification the ſeeds of repentance unto life are put into the heart. Whereby it is manifeſt, that repentance doth not go before juſtification, and conſequently that it cannot be a mean to attain the pardon of ſin.

If any ſhall ſay, that repentance is properly and ſolely an evangelic work, and therefore is not to be put in the ſame claſs with other works following juſtification, and commanded by the law; I anſwer, That according to the doctrine of the goſpel, it is plain, that faith as it receives Chriſt, is oppoſed, in the matter of juſtification to all works whatſoever; and ſo does not only exclude repentance, but itſelf as work, as proteſtant divines teach againſt the patrons of the righteouſneſs of works. But this is not to be yielded, that repentance is in ſuch ſort an evangelic work, as if it were not at all commanded by the law: for the law of the Lord is perfect, and contains the whole duty of man. It is true, as was ſaid above, the law knows no place of repentance, how it may be accepted, as the goſpel doth; it promiſeth no ſtrength wherewith it may be performed, as the goſpel does. But as, ſuppoſing the revelation of Chriſt, and the offer of him in the goſpel, the law obligeth us to believe; ſo ſuppoſing the rational creature to have ſinned, the law obligeth him to turn from ſin unto God, that is, to repent; otherwiſe the impenitency of the devils were no ſin, which I think none will adventure to ſay. So then it is true, that expreſsly and abſolutely the law does not call for repentance, yet virtually and hypothetically it doth. But why are many works called *evangelic*, but becauſe they are done by faith in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt manifeſted in the goſpel, and under the influence of the covenant of grace? Whereas legal works are done by the power of nature, and under the influence of the covenant of works; and in this ſenſe any work of ſanctifying grace is as much an evangelic work, as repentance. But, upon the whole, let the forementioned author, in his confutation of Socinianiſm, anſwer for me, “ Now, (ſays he) in that he (viz. Socinus) placeth evangelic works before juſtification, in “ that he is contrary to ſcripture and reaſon; to the “ ſcripture, Rom. iv. 5. and iii. 28. Gal. ii. 16. Rom. “ xi. 6. That opinion is contrary to reaſon; becauſe “ ſeeing faith is the beginning of all good works, with- “ out which no man can pleaſe God, or perform any “ thing acceptable to him, and by it *aſſoon as it is preſent, we are juſtified*, good works cannot go before “ juſtification, as they cannot go before faith, but only “ follow.” The like he hath again elſewhere, telling us, that God abſolves men *choris ergon*, without works, without *previous piety*. It ought not to be ſaid, that by this doctrine, faith itſelf, as an evangelic work, is to be caſt behind juſtification likewiſe; for faith being the principle of all, muſt needs be excepted, in regard it is that which unites the ſoul to Chriſt. The forecited author tells us how we are to underſtand this. “ A man “ (ſays he) is juſtified before he hath done any good, “ that is, good following on faith; who when he believes is juſtified.” But the deſcription formerly given of an evangelic work, leaves no room at all for this exception; and truly the name of a work ſhould be far from the matter of our juſtification before God. Though it ſhould be ſaid, that repentance is not conſidered here as a work, but as a quality, it will not take off the force of the argument, which concludes againſt the very being of repentance before pardon, in order of nature at leaſt.

Arg. IV. If we conſider the promiſes of repentance in the covenant, we ſhall find they come in the ſame order that we plead for. Ezek. xxxvi. After the Lord had told them of remiſſion of ſin, verſ. 25. ‘ From all ‘ your idols will I cleanſe you; he promiſeth repentance, verſ. 31. ‘ Then ſhall ye remember your own ‘ evil ways,’ &c. So Ezek xvi. 60, 61, 62, 63.—‘ I ‘ will remember my covenant with thee.—Then thou ‘ ſhalt remember thy ways—And I will eſtabliſh my ‘ covenant with thee, that thou mayeſt remember, and ‘ be confounded,’ &c. Hoſ. xiv. 4. ‘ I will heal their ‘ backſliding,’ Verſ. 8. ‘ Ephraim ſhall ſay, What have ‘ I to do any more with idols?’ Iſa. xliv. 22. ‘ I have ‘ blotted out as a thick cloud thy tranſgreſſions, and as ‘ a cloud, thy ſins: return unto me, for I have redeemed thee.’ This is the native order of theſe things; and why ſhould we ſtrive to diſturb and confound the ſame? for this doctrine of the precedency of repentance to pardon calls for the quite contrary order. If it be ſaid, theſe promiſes reſpect a repentance they ſhould be ſtirred up to after their pardon; but that does not hinder but that there may be a ſort of repentance going before pardon: I anſwer, (beſides what is already ſaid on this head,) That there is a ſort of legal repentance that goes before pardon, I do not deny, which belongs to conviction, and may be in Judas and Cain, and was in thoſe elect ones, Acts ii. 37. when they were *pricked to the heart*; whom yet the apoſtle calls to true repentance, ver. 38. And this I judge to be neceſſary by God's appointment, at leaſt in the ordinary way, in the courſe of God's ordinary diſpenſation; thoſe perſons being firſt killed by the law, whom he minds to revive by the goſpel. But this goes before faith; and cannot, but in a very large ſenſe, be reckoned a mean in order to the attaining of remiſſion of ſins; ſeeing it is *toto genere* different from any ſpecial and ſaving work of the Spirit. But the queſtion is of goſpel repentance, which is theologically good; and if there be any ſuch different from that which is here promiſed, I would know where it is promiſed; for no other appears in thoſe places, but what follows pardon. If it be not promiſed at all, it is not at all, otherwiſe the covenant is defective; which is abſurd. If you ſay, it is included in the new heart; I ſhall on the ſame grounds infer the neceſſity of all the graces of the Spirit, as well as of repentance, patience, chaſtity, &c.; which no man holding juſtification by faith alone, ever ſaid were neceſſary in order to the attaining of pardon. But let it be ſo, the new ſtate of cleanneſs by way of pardon is ſet before; *I will cleanſe you*, alſo, *I will give you a new heart*. But we ſtand not on the order of words. The apoſtle plainly tells us, that the ungodly are the objects of juſtification, Rom. iv. 5. ‘ But to him that worketh not, but believ- ‘ eth on him who juſtifieth the ungodly,’ &c. Is the repenting ſinner the man who *worketh not?* is he the *ungodly* whom God *juſtifieth?* “ Who can think “ (ſays Hoornbeek) that the ungodly is ſaid by Paul to “ be juſtified, becauſe after juſtification he remains “ ungodly, and not becauſe he had been ungodly; and “ *in the very act of juſtification*, he could no otherwiſe “ be conſidered than in himſelf *ungodly?* though with “ his juſtification he be endued with the grace of God, “ whereby he ſhall afterwards live godly; but this neither before nor in juſtification; for God abſolves a “ man even *choris ergon*, without previous piety.”

Arg. V. Though the patrons of the doctrine of the neceſſity of repentance in order to the obtaining of the pardon of ſin, do not aim at any incroachment on the doctrine of free pardon; yet with all deference to thoſe learned men, I conceive, that ſuch doctrine is injurious to the grace of God, and doth much darken the free pardon offered in the goſpel, in regard the pardon is promiſed immediately to thoſe that believe, Acts x. 43. *Through his name, whoſoever believeth in him, ſhall receive remiſſion of ſins.* Iſ. lv. 1. Acts xvi. 31. Rev. xxii. 17. But they require, that believers bring ſomething with them, if they would obtain it, even that they bring repentance alongſt with them. I think Dr. Preſton ſays well, when he tells us, “ It is a fault to think “ God's pardons are not free, and that you muſt bring “ ſomething in your hand. The very end (ſays he) of “ thy going to Chriſt, is to get thy hardneſs of heart “ and deadneſs of ſpirit removed, to be healed and enlivened.” And it is truly ſtrange to think from what airth repentance ſhould come to people, while as yet their ſins are unpardoned, and God is their enemy. What need is there of thoſe things? What need is there of thoſe ways? Why go we not by faith to a reconciled God, to get repentance; but muſt ſeek repentance wherewith we may go to an unreconciled God, who is a conſuming fire? If I miſtake not, that is not the way of the goſpel. It is a ſeaſonable admonition that one gives us to this purpoſe, “ When you go to mourn “ for ſin, begin aloft with Chriſt; and do not always “ think to begin below with ſin, and ſo to come up “ to Chriſt; but begin aloft with Chriſt, and fall down “ upon your ſin.” “ Papiſts (ſays Dr Preſton) tell of “ eſcaping damnation, and of getting into heaven. But “ ſcripture gives other motives (to good works). Thou “ art in Chriſt, and Chriſt is thine; conſider what he “ hath done for thee, what thou haſt by him, what “ thou hadſt been without him, and thus ſtir up thyſelf

“ to do for him what he requireth.” Let them that will, repent that Chriſt may do for them ; I ſhall deſire always to believe what Chriſt hath done for me, that I may repent : not doubting but that the being inſtructed therein is the plain way to ſmiting on the thigh, and ſaying, “ What have I done ?” So ſays a godly writer, “ Firſt of all, God's favour is apprehended, and remiſſi- “ on of ſin believed ; then upon that cometh alteration “ of life and converſation.” Upon the whole we may ſee that the goſpel teaches us to come empty-handed to the market of free grace, for remiſſion of ſin and God's favour. But he comes not empty, who brings repentance alongſt with him. If any man ſhall ſay, that if we ſcrew up matters ſo high in this point, we muſt caſt faith as well as repentance, in the matter of attaining pardon ; for that is ſtill ſomething we bring with us. I ſhall anſwer, for the ſafety of God's grace, let the *work* faith, the *inherent quality* faith, go, and be made to ſtand aback, while the ſinner ſtands before God's tribunal to be juſtified, that the *empty-handed taking* faith, may alone have place. Hath not the Lord made it to be only of faith, that it might be of grace, while faith comes with an empty hand, and receives all ? There is a vaſt difference betwixt faith and repentance in this matter, even as much as betwixt giving and receiving : for there is no grace of the Spirit that hath more of the nature of giving than repentance, in ſo far as it is a turning of the whole man from ſin unto God ; and upon that head it ought to be baniſhed far from the ſoul's juſtification, and to have no part nor lot in the matter of attaining free pardon. And ſeeing this doctrine doth ſo well agree with the natural religion that is in all men, whereby they, when they come to God to obtain a favour, would always be ſure of ſome qualification in themſelves fitting them for the receipt of it ; let us take heed, that it turn not the covenant of grace into a baſtard covenant of works. The covenant of works ſays, *Do this* : the covenant of grace ſays ſo too. Where is the difference then ? Why, the covenant of works ſays, ‘ Do this and ‘ thou ſhalt live,’ viz. in God's favour, wherein life lies, Pſal. xxx. 5. But the covenant of grace ſaith, ‘ Live ‘ thou, and do this, Ezek. xvi. 6, 7. Now, this doctrine ſays, ‘ Repent, and thy ſins ſhall be pardoned ;’ which is indeed, ‘ Do this and thou ſhalt live.’ It requires not perfect obedience indeed ; but if we reſolve it, we find it to be this, “ Turn from ſin ſincerely unto “ God, though thou canſt not perfectly, and thou ſhalt “ live in God's favour.” Now, we know *magis & minus non variant ſpeciem.* I have almoſt loſt ſight of faith its relation to the pardon of ſin : and no great wonder ; ſeeing another thing is ſet betwixt them, which ſeems to take the right hand of faith ; for they will not ſay repentance goes before faith, and yet they will not allow it to come after remiſſion of ſin. So then it muſt go betwixt them, and therefore is the neareſt mean : and whichſoever of two means be in themſelves the more noble, yet in relation to the common end, it is highly reaſonable to prefer the immediate and neareſt mean to the mediate and remote ; whereby it comes to paſs, that, in the matter of the pardon of ſin, repentance muſt be the more noble mean. Again, I ſay, I believe and deſire to go immediately to Chriſt for pardon : but doſt thou repent of thy ſins, thy faith cannot obtain pardon without repentance ? Well then, ſtill repentance is preferable to faith here ; for without it faith can do nothing ; but with it, it proves effectual ; now, *Propter quod unumquodque eſt tale, illud ipſum eſt magis tale.* But this I am confident is not the doctrine of the goſpel. Let us take a watchword from holy and learned Rutherford : “ We would beware (ſays he) of Mr Baxter's “ order of ſetting repentance and works of new obedi- “ ence before juſtification ; which is indeed a new co- “ venant of works.”

Arg. VI. *ult.* If repentance be a mean neceſſary in order to the obtaining of pardon, then unleſs a man be aſſured of the truth and reality of his repentance, he cannot without ſin embrace the offered pardon ; the very embracing of it is a ſin unto him ; which is very abſurd. I prove the connection : ‘ for whatſoever is not ‘ of faith, is ſin ;’ that is, ſays acute Beza, all that is done in doubt of conſcience, whether it pleaſe God or not, and ſo conſequently whether God command it or not, is but ſin. And the context makes it plain, that the apoſtle means it of the faith of God's command. Now, how can that be of faith, and how can that be but ſin, when the perſon doubts of God's command obliging him in particular to believe and lay hold upon the offered pardon ? He is perſuaded, that he dare not embrace the pardon or believe it, unleſs he be a true penitent ; for God offers it to none immediately, but to true penitents, *ex hypotheſi ;* and yet no wonder that he very much doubts whether he be ſuch a one or not, and is moſt ready to conclude he is not. So that till he be perſuaded of the truth of his repentance, he cannot in faith embrace the offered pardon. When God makes his offers of pardon only to ſuch as are ſo and ſo qualified, how can he be excuſed from preſumption that adventures on the embracing of them, not diſcerning himſelf to be thus qualified ? When the Lord covers his table in the goſpel, but invites none but ſuch as are qualified with true repentance, he that doubteth, is damned if he eat. But the goſpel requires no ſuch thing, as that a man muſt know his repentance to be true before he embrace the offered pardon ; but ſimply calls all that will come, to come and take of the water of life freely. We may eaſily perceive how injurious this is to ſouls under exerciſe, how it natively tends to keep them long *in the place of the breaking forth of children.* For although the perſon apprehends God's anger gone out againſt him, and hears of the free pardon offered in the goſpel ; yet ſtill it appears to him forbidden fruit, unleſs he be conſcious to himſelf of the truth of his repentance ; ſeeing true repentance is a mean abſolutely neceſſary in order to the obtaining of the pardon of ſin. And while they cannot ſee the truth of their repentance, the offers of the goſpel, and promiſes of pardon, while they hear them, do but torment them the more, while they perſuade themſelves, that none but true penitents can have acceſs unto them ; which ere they can lay hold on, they muſt redd the marches betwixt legal and goſpel repentance, and muſt have it made out to their conſciences, that their repentance hath all the diſcriminating characters that diſtinguiſh it from the repentance of Judas, and from that ſorrow for ſin which proceeds merely from the force of an enlightened conſcience. And ſeeing true repentance proceeds from love to God, as we heard before, they muſt love God, not only while they apprehend him their enemy, but even while he is their enemy in very deed ; being a judge to them, under whoſe condemnatory ſentence they ly, their ſins being unpardoned. Whatever the ſoul in this caſe actually does, it is plain from what is ſaid, that, acting according to this principle, they are obliged to ſuſpend the embracing of pardon till they know they repent. But I ſuppoſe, that when a ſinner is ſufficiently made to ſee his abſolute need of Chriſt, and of goſpel grace, he does then embrace Chriſt by faith, which makes up a happy union betwixt Chriſt and him ; whereupon follows the abſolvitory ſentence ; and that independently on his conſciouſneſs either of his own acts towards God, or of God's actions towards him. In the mean time, this falſe perſuaſion, while ſtuck to, mars their peace and comfort. The plain goſpel-way (ſo far as I underſtand it) is, That a ſoul being, by the law, brought to a ſenſe of the abſolute and indiſpenſable need of Chriſt, (for till then a ſoul will never be content with the goſpel-way of ſalvation,) hath an offer of Chriſt, and of the pardon of ſin, freely made unto it, without any reſpect to any inherent qualification ; and thereupon cordially takes both according to the offer, embraceth Chriſt and his pardoning grace ; or conſents to take Chriſt, by which he becomes his ; whereupon he is immediately juſtified and pardoned, without any more ado: and hence natively flows true repentance; which being diſcerned by them, confirms to them the pardon of ſin more and more. I ſaid more and more, in regard that this truth we now plead for being believed, ſuppoſing the ſoul conſcious of its own act of reception, it is even then, at the ſoul's firſt embracing of Chriſt, ſufficient *in ſuo genere*, to aſſure him of the pardon of his ſins. And no farther goes the conſciouſneſs of true repentance: for, in reſpect of both, the ſupervenient teſtimony of the Spirit is neceſſary to remove all doubts, and to ſet the ſoul in perfect peace. For let the medium be, either the receiving of Chriſt and the pardon offered, or repentance, the illuſtration of both premiſſes and concluſion by the Spirit is neceſſary, in order to the full quiet of the heart. And I think I may add, That faith is a more firm and ſteady ground of aſſurance of the pardon of ſin, *quoad nos*, than repentance; in regard it is eaſier known. And hence it is, that divines uſe to give advice to Chriſtians perplexed with doubts and fears as to their ſtate, when they can diſcern no evidences of grace in themſelves, to lay by the inquiry, and, as if they had never believed in Chriſt, repented of their ſins, &c. to exerciſe a direct act of accepting of Chriſt offered in the goſpel, and then to reflect on that act in order to their quietneſs. If any ſhall endeavour to retort this argument, and ſay, that if it hold, then as to faith, which is a neceſſary mean to pardon, we muſt in like manner be aſſured of the reality thereof, or it is ſin for us to embrace the pardon: I anſwer, It follows by no means. There are two ways of embracing a pardon. *Firſt*, A pardon may be embraced in the way of preſumption; which overleaps Chriſt himſelf, and graſps at his benefits; and particularly remiſſion of ſin. This no doubt is a ſin; for God offers no pardon in that way. *Secondly*, A pardon is embraced by faith; which receives Chriſt, and in him and with him the pardon of ſin. This cannot be ſin, whether we be conſcious of the reality and uprightneſs of our act or not; though it is not ſo in regard of repentance. The reaſon is, There is a vaſt difference betwixt faith and repentance in this matter. The laſt of theſe is required as a qualification in the party diſtinct from the receiving of the pardon; or it is required as a mids, through which a ſoul muſt go before it can win at the pardon; and therefore, if faith ſhould lay hold on pardon, not knowing it hath come by this mids *quoad nos*, we come not at it in God's way, and conſequently it is ſin to embrace it ſo, viz. not having known, antecedently to our taking of it, that we do repent. But faith is not a qualification previouſly required to the embracing of the pardon? but, as it is conſidered here, is the very act of receiving of it, Acts xxvi. 18. 'That they may receive forgiveneſs of ſins.' Wherefore the previous knowledge thereof in us cannot be neceſſary in order to the embracing of the pardon, unleſs you ſay, that a man muſt know he receives forgiveneſs before he receive it; which is abſurd. To conclude, I ſuppoſe, that the way to deal with ſouls in order to their ſalvation, is, to labour by all means to conclude them under the law; that is, to hold out unto them their miſerable ſtate by nature, ſo as they may clearly ſee themſelves lying under the curſe, no ways able to help themſelves; whence they ſhall feel an abſolute need of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and, when they are brought that length by the bleſſing of God, to propoſe unto them Chriſt with his free pardon; which he is to be commanded in God's name to accept, without any more ado about any thing to qualify him for a pardon. "Wherefore, (ſays Luther,) when I ſee a man "ſufficiently broken, to be oppreſſed with the law, terrified with ſin, and to thirſt after comfort; then is it "time, that I remove out of his ſight the law and active righteouſneſs, and propoſe, by the goſpel, paſſive "righteouſneſs; which, Moſes, with his law being excluded, does exhibit the promiſe concerning Chriſt, "who came to die for the afflicted and ſinners."

Object. 1. The command of repentance is prefixed to the obtaining of pardon, and preventing of wrath, and that by way of certification, that if it be not, remiſſion is not to be expected, Acts iii. 19. 'Repent, 'that your ſins may be blotted out;' which doth imply, that without this, the blotting out of ſin is not to be expected. See alſo Acts ii. 38. and viii. 22.

Anſw. How little weight is to be laid upon the prefixing of the command to the obtaining of pardon, will appear in the examination of the places of ſcripture adduced. As for that of preventing of wrath; I chearfully yield, we cannot be ſaved unleſs we repent and obey, as we cannot be pardoned unleſs we believe. For the better underſtanding of the ſcriptures alledged, I am content to borrow light from the learned man that hath this objection; who, while he defends faith alone to be the condition of the covenant of grace, propoſeth an objection againſt himſelf, viz. As theſe places (which he had adduced for confirmation of that aſſertion, that faith alone is the condition of the covenant) do propoſe faith, ſo other places do propoſe repentance, as Acts ii. 38. &c. He anſwers to this, That if that objection hold, repentance and works would be equalled with it. "We "therefore (ſays he) take it thus: Where repentance "is propoſed, there *the whole way of turning to God* "more generally is propoſed." And herein he follows Calvin, who ſpeaks thus; "And truly I am not ignorant, that under the name of *repentance*, is compre"hended, the whole turning to God, whereof faith is "not the leaſt part." I ſubſume, But in theſe places alledged, faith is not once named, but repentance is propoſed: *Ergo*, The whole way of turning to God more generally is propoſed. And if the prefixing thereof to the promiſe of pardon do ſufficiently evince, that it is previouſly required to forgiveneſs, then faith, repentance, and works are in the ſame balance, or repentance and works are equalled with faith: for who can deny, that new obedience is comprehended under the whole turning unto God? So Hemmingius citing that of Jeremiah, "Let every man return from his evil ways, and I "will forgive your iniquity and your ſins," tells us, "That here is a commandment, and a promiſe. The "commandment is, that the ungodly do return; the "promiſe is of reconciliation. Hereupon it is gather"ed, that repentance is a converſion of man unto God; "in the which converſion he doth depart from evil, "believe the promiſe, and ſtudieth to lead a new life "according to the will of God." Now, unleſs that our whole turning to God more generally be a mean of remiſſion of ſin, which I hope will not be ſaid by the objector, theſe ſcriptures alledged prove nothing to the purpoſe. But let us take a particular view of them, As to that, Acts iii. 19. *Repent,—that your ſins may be blotted out*; though I ſhould grant, that the repentance here exhorted to is repentance ſtrictly ſo called, and that God offers pardon here, and requires repentance; it will not therefore follow, that it is required antecedently to the obtaining of pardon. "Wherefore when "God offereth forgiveneſs of ſins, (ſays Calvin,) he "likewiſe uſeth to require repentance on our part: ſe"cretly declaring, that his mercy ought to be to men a "cauſe to repent them.——— Again, Repent ye, and "be converted, that your ſins may blotted out, Acts "iii. 19. where yet it is to be noted, that this condition "is not ſo annexed, as though our repentance were a "foundation to deſerve pardon; but rather (becauſe "the Lord hath determined to have mercy upon men, "*to this end that they ſhould repent*) he teacheth men "whether they ſhall travel if they will obtain grace." But indeed I very much doubt, if the repentance here ſpoken of, be meant either in whole or in part, of true goſpel-repentance; in regard we find converſion is alſo exhorted unto in the very next word, which I ſuppoſe may take in true repentance. Wherefore I rather incline to expound it ſimply of a change of the mind from one opinion to another, from worſe to better. It is well known, that the people of the Jews had very unſound notions concerning their Meſſiah, his nature and offices; they looked for one who ſhould make a great figure in the world, reſtore the kingdom to Iſrael, and deliver them from the Roman yoke. This prejudicated opinion remaining with them, the doctrine of the goſpel could have no acceſs unto their hearts; for the preaching of the croſs was to the Jews a ſtumbling block; they expected far other things of their Meſſiah than that he ſhould be crucified, &c. The apoſtle therefore calls them to lay aſide this prejudice, and be converted. This very well agrees with the context; for Peter having told them, how they had crucified him whom God now had glorified, he ſhews them, how it came to paſs they did ſo, verſ. 17. 'Through ignorance ye did it. For (as Paul ſays) had they known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.' Wherefore, verſ. 18. he removes their miſtake, telling them, that, by the writings of the prophets, the Meſſiah was to ſuffer the very things that they had inflicted on Jeſus of Nazareth. Whence he brings in that exhortation, verſ. 19. *Repent therefore*, &c. "Then be no more under the power of that dangerous miſtake, but change your mind, and turn to the Lord." But underſtand *repentance* here, what way you pleaſe, this ſcripture makes nothing for what is alledged; for it is evident, that the *blotting out of ſin* here reſpecteth, not the time of repentance, but the time of refreſhment. Wherefore, as Mr Rutherford anſwers, "The words ſhould bear, that ſins were not pardoned untill the time of refreſhment, that is, till the day of eternal happineſs, and reſt from our labours of this life; in which day ſins are only blotted out declaratively, ſaith Diodati." *The world to come*, ſays Tainovius, whoſe beginning is at the laſt judgment, is called by Luke very elegantly, as his manner is, *Anapſuxis*, becauſe it denotes *refreſhment*, which is done, and comes to them who are weakened by heat, through refrigeration; as ye may ſee in ſome who are in a ſwoon, when ye pour cold water on them. So Calvin, Beza, Piſcator, and Aretius, underſtand it. Wherefore the remiſſion here ſpoken of, is not the formal forgiveneſs that is in queſtion; but is an open declaration of the ſame at the day of judgment. And hereunto the emphaſis of the Greek word rendered *blotting out* doth beſt agree: for it ſignifies (ſays Zanchius) ſo perfectly to blot out a thing, that there remains behind no veſtige of it. As little does that place, Acts ii. 38. *Repent, and be baptized--for the remiſſion of ſins*, help their cauſe; for who ſees not, that the command of *being baptized* is prefixed to the promiſe, as well as the command to *repent?* Muſt it then follow, that baptiſm is a neceſſary mean in order to the obtaining of the remiſſion of ſin? The argument is of a like force for both. But moreover, where is there a promiſe here? Mention is indeed made of remiſſion, but not by way of promiſe. Nay, there is nothing here of a formal reception of forgiveneſs. For, as Piſcator well obſerves, theſe words, *for the remiſſion of ſins*, do not depend upon the word *repent*, but upon that *be baptized*. And the plain ſenſe of the word is, that they ſhould be baptized in teſtimony of remiſſion of ſin, not to obtain remiſſion of ſin through this mean or inſtrument; becauſe faith alone is the mean or inſtrument whereby we apprehend remiſſion of ſins in the goſpel. If you ſay, Is there no promiſe of the pardon of ſin to be found here? I anſwer, The formal forgiveneſs of ſin is comprehended in ver. 39. 'The promiſe is to you,' &c. Now, what promiſe? the promiſe of the Spirit, ver. 17. and of ſalvation, verſe 21. 'Whoſoever ſhall call on the name of the Lord, ſhall be ſaved,' firſt of all; which preſuppoſeth faith; 'for how can they call on him on whom they have not believed?' Now it is plain, that the apoſtle exhorts them to repent, from this ground, that the promiſe is to them, as the particle *for* imports. And though the 39th verſe comes laſt, yet, in order of nature it is firſt, as the premiſſes go before the concluſion. And thus I think, we have the plain meaning of the apoſtle in theſe words. Q. d. "Ye are pricked at the heart; but do not deſpond, in regard the ſaving and ſpecial gifts of God are in your offer, and promiſed to you upon your acceptance thereof: therefore do ye wholly turn to God by faith, repentance, and new obedience; and, for your confirmation in the remiſſion of your ſins, receive baptiſm as the ſeal of the covenant." As to that, Acts viii. 22. we ſay, that the command to *pray* is prefixed to what he ſays of *remiſſion*, as well as the command to *repent* is; yet muſt it not be hence concluded, that *prayer* muſt needs go before *forgiveneſs*. But here, as before, we ſay *repentance* is put for *the whole turning to God*.

Object. 2. The connection betwixt repentance and pardon is peremptorily inforced, Luke xiii. 2, 3. *Except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.* Prov. xxviii. 13. *Whoſo confeſſeth and forſaketh his ſins, ſhall have mercy.*

Anſw. All this is what we deny not. There is no doubt a connection betwixt repentance and pardon. But the queſtion is rather about the annexing of the one to the other, Whether repentance be annexed to pardon, or pardon to repentance? We ſay, the former is true, and there is nothing here to prove the contrary. Yea, the firſt of theſe ſcriptures cited, doth not ſo much as hold out a connection betwixt repentance and pardon, but only betwixt non-repenting and periſhing. And there is a vaſt difference betwixt theſe two; for the former cannot be lawfully inferred from the latter; as will appear, if duly conſidered. Let the argument be this, 'Except ye repent ye ſhall periſh,' *Ergo*, if ye do repent ye ſhall live. The conſequent is true; but the conſequence is naught. It is as that, Our ill works will damn us, *Ergo*, Our good works will ſave us, or as if we ſhould ſay, If ye do not pray to God, ye ſhall periſh, *Ergo*, If ye do, ye ſhall live. We ſee here the conſequent is falſe, and ſo is the conſequence; for *bonum non niſi, ex integra cauſa, malum ex quolibet defectu.* Non-repentance ſimply, and of itſelf, is ſufficient to make us periſh: but who will ſay, that ſimple repentance of itſelf is ſufficient to ſave us, even in the way of means? As to that other ſcripture, Prov. xxviii. 13. I ſay with Mr Rutherford, That the Holy Ghoſt there is not upon order, as if penitent confeſſion, forſaking of all ſin, muſt go before forgiveneſs; but the Lord deſigns the perſons pardoned, that they muſt be ſuch as forſake their ſins. Now, there is great reaſon for this; becauſe men who hide their ſins and forſake them not, will yet pretend to ſhare of pardon; who therefore have great need to be undeceived. And truly, ſeeing, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, 'Confeſſion is made with the mouth unto ſalvation,' Rom. x. 10. and, with reſpect to open and ſcandalous ſins, it muſt be underſtood of confeſſion before men; I ſee not how the neceſſary precedence of it unto pardon can be avouched; for who will ſay, that a formal pardon cannot be had, but theſe things muſt be before it?

Object. 3. The ſcripture grounds the cauſes of people's ruin on their not repenting, as in Lev. xxvi. Amos iv. Ezek. xviii. Rev. xvi. and many ſuch places; where this, *They repented not*, is given as the cauſe of God's continued quarrel with them.

Anſw. If we will underſtand this according to what was ſaid above, that by repenting in ſuch places where it is ſimply propoſed, without faith, is meant the whole turning to God, the argument is of no weight. But it ſeems here to be urged as taken for repentance ſtrictly ſo called. And let it be ſo, the conſequence is naught. Every thing that people's ruin is grounded on, the contrary is not therefore a previous mean to pardon; as is evident to any that will conſider, Hoſ. iv. Swearing, lying, &c. are made the grounds of that people's ruin; yet I hope the reverend uſe of God's name, and ſpeaking truth, muſt not therefore be reckoned the means of pardon. Many ſuch places might be alledged. But perhaps it will be ſaid, none of theſe things had been their ruin, if they had repented. But what is that to ſay, but that none of theſe things would have been their ruin, if they had turned from them unto God, embracing the contrary virtues ? So it is ſtill the ſame thing as before, theſe contrary virtues are made by this way the means of pardon. But if the argument be good, it is believing that is the mean : for the ſcripture expreſsly tells us, that men are condemned becauſe they have not believed, John iii. 18. and Chriſt calls believing the work of God, John vi. 29. and John calls it his command (1 John iii. 23.) by way of eminency.

Object. 4. *ult*. In the promiſes of the covenant, remiſſion of ſin is ſubjoined to the exerciſe of repentance, as neceſſarily antecedent ; ſo that without it there is no acceſs to any promiſe of pardon, Lev. xxvi. 40, 41, 42. 'If they confeſs their iniquity, then will I remember 'my covenant :' which doth preſuppoſe confeſſion, and the exerciſe of repentance, and the humbling of the heart, to go before the application of the covenant. And leſt it ſhould be thought a legal covenant, it is expreſsly ſaid to be the covenant with Abraham, which cannot be denied to be of grace, 1 Kings viii. 47. Solomon expreſsly covenanteth for pardon on theſe terms ; and 2 Chron. vii. 13, 14. the Lord doth expreſsly aſſent to theſe articles. It may be confirmed from 1 John i. 9. which ſuppoſeth that there is no engagement, to ſpeak ſo, upon God's faithfulneſs to pardon any ſinner, but him who repenteth.

Anſw. I have already proven the contrary of this in the fourth argument ; having produced ſeveral promiſes where there is no veſtige of any ſuch order, but of the contrary. If there be no acceſs to the promiſe of pardon without repentance, it is we ourſelves that bolt the door ; and therefore let us blame ourſelves, and thoſe who adviſe us to find any good qualification in ourſelves, before we embrace the free pardon. But if God's hand be at the work, the pardon ſhall find acceſs to us, and our hearts ſhall be opened to receive it ; and being received, it ſhall, by its ſupernatural efficacy, melt and thaw the heart into true repentance, though we know not whence it comes, nor whither it goes ; but are buſy in preparing the room for it, while we neglect to open the door to let it in. As for the covenant itſelf, it is our conſent that brings us within the bond of it. The Lord offers to be our God in Chriſt ; we by faith conſent to take him ſo. Call it the condition, mids, or what you pleaſe ; I hope you will not ſay, I dare not give this conſent until I repent ; for this conſenting or believing is my neceſſary and indiſpenſable duty, whatever ſtate I be in. But you will ſay, I dare not embrace the pardon till I repent. If you mean *de facto*, it is my weakneſs ; if *de jure*, how ſtrange is this ? I may not embrace what is leſſer ; and yet may, and muſt what is infinitely greater and better ; for God himſelf is better than ten thouſand pardons. But I am perſuaded, that when I find my ſoul content to take God in Chriſt to be my God, and do actually conſent to that gracious offer, that the promiſe of pardon is abſolute to me, Ez. xxxvi. 25. : for *eo ipſo*, that God is my God, his free pardon is mine, and it can be no preſumption in me to embrace what is mine own. God holds it forth to me, in the covenant, I by faith lay hold on it ; there is nothing here that intervenes, ſo that it is ſtill abſolute ; and if abſolute, how can it be ſaid there is no acceſs to it without repentance ? As for theſe ſcriptures, Lev. xxvi. 40. &c. 1 Kings viii. 47. 2 Chron. vii. 13 ; I grant they preſuppoſe repentance, &c. ; but they touch not the point in hand, in regard they reſpect the pardon of ſin, as it is the removal of temporary ſtrokes, as I have already ſhewn, and will be manifeſt to ſuch as view the places : for who ſees not, that the multitude of thoſe things there required, is very unlike the ſimplicity of the goſpel-offer, 'Believe, and thou ſhalt be ſaved ?' It is clear, that the people are conſidered there in a national capacity, and under national ſtrokes for national ſins ; for removal, repentance of the ſame kind is required. And though, in ſuch a general repentance of a people, they that believe are ſpiritually and theologically ſerious, and, with a removal of common calamity from off the ſociety whereof they are members, get God's countenance to ſhine on their ſouls ; yet the generality are never evangelically penitent. But moral ſeriouſneſs in ſuch a caſe, according to the Lord's way of dealing with nations, is a mean to get theſe temporal ſtrokes removed ; as may be ſeen in the caſe of the Ninevites, and many a time in the caſe of the Jews. What though this covenant be a covenant of grace ? the covenant of grace has undeniably temporary ſtrokes threatened in it ; and it is generally allowed, that there is a twofold being in this covenant ; the one external, the other internal. The one gives people to ſhare of the outward bleſſings of the covenant, the other makes them partakers of ſpecial and ſaving bleſſings. And thus one and the ſame perſon may be under the covenant of works and the covenant of grace ; in the former, in reſpect of his ſoul's ſtate, with God's curſe upon him, under the latter, externally partaking of the external privileges, protections, deliverances, &c. given to the viſible church. So then we may plainly ſee what it is for God to 'remember his covenant.' When the captive, broken, and afflicted Iſraelites confeſs their ſins, humble themſelves, &c. God removes the temporary ſtrokes they lie under. And this is applicable to particular perſons, in reſpect of the ſpiritual and ſaving federal relation to God ; for ſo it is in the inward and ſpecial adminiſtration of the covenant : but then it reſpects ſuch as are juſtified and ſanctified, but none other ; as theſe promiſes and prayers concern Iſrael ſeparated from among all other people, 1 Kings viii. 53. As to that ſcripture, 1 John i. 9. 'If we confeſs,' &c. the author himſelf tells us afterwards, that John is there writing to believers, and puts himſelf in the roll. And there is is no doubt but it is ſo : for he writes to his *children*, and that their joy might be full ; and ſpeaks of God as faithful, in reſpect of his promiſes to them ; and juſt to forgive, in reſpect of the merits of Chriſt imputed to them. And, as Caſe tells us, he aſſerts the doctrine of actual ſin in the juſtified againſt the Simonians, Gnoſtics, and other heretics of that age ; of whom he ſhews out of Auguſtine, that they taught that there was no ſin but unbelief ; that to the juſtified all things were clean, however they live, that a juſt man does not ſo much as commit a ſmall ſin, and upon this they could not but teach, that the juſtified were not to confeſs ſins. Againſt theſe then the apoſtle ſets himſelf here, and teacheth the juſtified to confeſs their ſins. Whence it appears, that this doth not at all concern the point in hand ; the queſtion being of the means neceſſary in order to juſtification, and the pardon of ſin at firſt ; betwixt which and the ſubſequent pardons, I have proven above that there is a vaſt difference.

QUEST. IV.

Where hath ſin its lodging-place in the regenerate?

‘GOD made man upright, but he found out many inventions.’ He was a glorious creature, as he dropt from the forming finger of God, all whoſe works are perfect. It was man's glory, that he was created after the image of God. It was God's will he ſhould be created mutably ſo. Of his mutability there can be no controverſy. Sad experience teacheth us, that man is not now perfect; but, on the contrary, a maſs of ſin, and lump of hell, the noble kind being infected with diabolic contagion, which he voluntarily received. Whereby it comes to paſs, that all is infected. The underſtanding, which formerly was a ſun of light in this little world, is not only overclouded, but utterly darkened, as to any ſaving uptaking of ſpiritual things. The will which before was the Lord's deputy-governor there, endued with principles of true loyalty to its ſupreme Maſter, is now turned traitor, and utterly perverſe; having forſaken its allegiance to the great King, gathers in the rents of the crown to itſelf, and in very deed, with ſacrilegious audacity, attempts to occupy the throne of the Higheſt. Call it no more Naomi, but Marah; no more *will* but *luſt;* for we have dealt *bitterly* with ourſelves. The affections, formerly ſubject to right reaſon, having loſt their maſter, go up and down, roving as lawleſs miſcreants; ſet themſelves on lawful objects exceſſively, and unlawful objects are their deſire. Neither conſcience nor memory can do their work. And the body with its members is made ſlave to this unruly beaſt; which alſo is made to ſerve the polluted piece of clay, which wants not a miſerable influence on the more noble part of man.

But grace makes a change; and ſets right the disjointed members, though not perfectly; for the ſaints complete deliverance cometh not till the pins of this tabernacle of the body be looſed. The body of death remains till the death of the body. Then ſhall they be made perfect in holineſs. But now they groan under the burden of indwelling ſin, and with Paul, cry out, ‘O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death!’ That ſin doth remain in the regenerate, is evident from ſcripture and experience againſt deluded perfectioniſts. Where it remains, is the queſtion. The Dominican monks, and ſome others, were of opinion, that though original ſin remains after baptiſm, yet it is only in the inferior part of the ſoul, (as they ſpeak,) or in the ſenſitive part; but not in the mind and will. Some have been of opinion, that it remained only in the body, and that it was nothing elſe but deſire of meat; &c. or ſenſual pleaſures. No wonder theſe things entered into the minds of men, who were left to grow vain in their imaginations, without a due ſenſe of the remaining corruption of nature. But I find ſome expreſs themſelves in this matter to this purpoſe, viz. That ſin which is left in the regenerate, dwelleth in the body properly ſo called, and is as an enemy beat out of the town or ſtrong hold, and lodging in the outworks, and as it were, about the walls; from whence it makes its ſallies, and infeſts the ſoul. Which I ſuppoſe we may ſoon find contrary to ſcripture, reaſon, and experience.

Arg. I. The ſcripture plainly holds forth ſin dwelling in the heart: Jer. xvii. 9. ‘The heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked; who can know it?’ There is an unfathomable depth of wickedneſs therein, which none can ſearch out unto perfection. Our Lord tells us, that the heart is the ſpring and ſource of all evil, Mark vii. 21. *For from within, out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications:* So Matth. xii. 34. he brings a general reaſon to prove that the Phariſees being evil could not ſpeak good things: *For* (ſays he) *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh.* Theſe places are manifeſtly general, and agree both to good and bad. Is there not deceit and deſperate wickedneſs even in the hearts of the regenerate? Have any ſuch perfectly known their own hearts? Do not evil words proceed out of their mouth? This then is from the abundance of the heart. Hereunto add the neceſſary qualification requiſite in thoſe who ſhall have acceſs to God in duties, that *they know every one the plague of his own heart,* 1 Kings viii. 38. Not without reaſon doth the wiſe man call for *keeping of the heart with all diligence,* Prov. iv. 23. that we may ſet double guards on it. It plainly tells us, that the heart is a deceitful thing, and bent to turn aſide after crooked ways. Say not, that all the hazard is from the influence which the body hath on it; for the heart can go aſtray in ſuch things wherein it is not capable of being influenced by the body, as will appear afterwards. But indeed if that were ſo, we ſhould rather have been directed to keep the body with all diligence. But it is plain, the greateſt hazard is from the heart; as Moſes teacheth in that parallel place, Deut. iv. 9. ‘Only take heed to thyſelf, and keep thy ſoul diligently,’ &c. Mr Gray ſpeaks feelingly, and no leſs truly, concerning the heart: “I think (ſays he,) ſuch is the deſperate deceitfulneſs of our hearts, that if all the ſaints ſince Adam's days, and who ſhall be to the end of the world, had but one heart to guide, they would miſguide it.”

Arg. II. The Spirit of God calls the regenerate to carry on the work of renovation in their ſouls, minds, and wills; which evidently holds forth, that there is much of the old man remaining there ſtill, even in their ſouls, and that in the moſt noble faculties thereof: Rom. xii. 2. ‘Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind;’ where it is clear the apoſtle is ſpeaking to regenerate perſons, Eph. iv. 23. he calls thoſe who had learned Chriſt, yet to be *renewed in the ſpirit of their minds.* And the apoſtle ſpeaking of himſelf, 2 Cor. iv. 16. tells us, that *the inward man is renewed day by day.* If any ſhall ſay, that by ‘the renewing of the inward man,’ is meant the ſtrengthening of the ſoul to bear afflictions; I grant the ſame without any prejudice to what we aſſert; for it ſuppoſeth a culpable weakneſs, in regard of which the ſoul hath need to be renewed. The apoſtle, Col. iii. 10. teacheth the ſame doctrine; ‘and have put on the new man, which is renewed;’ *kai enduſamenoi ton neon, ton anakainoumenon;* where I pray you take notice of the apoſtle's changing of the tenſe, ‘Ye *have* put on the new man, which is renewed;’ he ſpeaks of the renovation in the preſent tenſe, denoting the continuance of the action. And that it relates to the mind, is no leſs clear; for this new man is expreſsly ſaid to *be renewed in knowledge.* Hereunto add the apoſtle's prayer for the believing Theſſalonians, 1 Theſſ. v. 23. ‘And the very God of peace ſanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole ſpirit and ſoul and body be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.’

And how frequently doth the ſcripture diſcover the particular evils that are to be found in the ſoul as their proper place? as we may ſee in the apoſtle's prayer for the believing Epheſians, chap. i. 17. &c. So Col. i. 9. 10. How frequently does the Lord reprove his diſciples for the relics of unbelief in them? The apoſtle confeſſeth in the name of all believers, the great remains of darkneſs that are yet on their minds, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. But to recount ſuch places as teach that ſin is yet remaining in the mind and will, were an endleſs labour.

Arg. III. There are many members of the body of death, which the godly ly under, that are purely ſpiritual; whereof the body can be no receptacle; and muſt needs remain in the ſoul, even in the mind and will; ſuch as, Atheiſm, ignorance, hatred of God, unbelief, want of love to God, &c. That theſe and the like cannot be ſaid to lodge in the body, is evident: For, 1. Some of theſe ſins are mere privations; as, ignorance of, and want of love to God, &c. privations, I ſay, of rectitude, that ought to be, not in the act, (for there is no act, but a ceſſation from action;) but in the power, which is nothing elſe than the ſoul, mind, and affections; unleſs you will ſay, that the body is capable to love God, which is moſt abſurd. And no leſs abſurd is it to aſſert the ſame anent the ſenſitive part of the ſoul, as they call it. 2. How can theſe ſins be ſaid to lodge there, where there cannot be ſo much as an imagination of their objects; as in hatred of God. The body is not capable thereof; in regard God is not the object of the fancy, but of the mind; ſo that we can have no imagination of him; he being infinitely removed from matter: and therefore as far from the imagination, as colours from hearing, ſounds from the taſte, or the moſt abſtract notions from the ſoul of a beaſt. 3. Moreover, there are ſome ſins founded on reflection, which the body is not capable of, as, pride, and lifting up of the ſoul, upon the account of its perceiving in itſelf ideas of the moſt ſublime things, far removed from the knowledge of others. How ſuch can be ſaid to be driven out into the body, I perſuade myſelf no man can ſhew with any colour of reaſon; yet pride is not the leaſt of the members of the body of death.

Arg. IV. If the remains of original ſin in the regenerate be not in the ſoul, but whatever remains of it be driven to the body; then original ſin is quite razed out in regeneration, not only *ut non imputetur*, but *ut non ſit*; it hath no more a being in the ſaints: and ſo there is no ſin the regenerate are chargeable with but actual ſin; and ſo all the children of God have been under a miſerable miſtake, while they confeſſed and bewailed their original corruption. All which is contrary to the ſcriptures, and the ſentiments of orthodox divines. I prove the connection, for if the remains of natural corruption lodge not in the ſoul, it hath no lodging in the man at all. The reaſon is, becauſe the body conſidered as contradiſtinct to the ſoul, is not *ſubjectum capax*; for the body as ſuch is ſubject to no law: now, 'where 'there is no law, there can be no tranſgreſſion;' and if the body as ſuch were ſubject to a law, then all bodies ſhould be ſo; I mean, of a moral law. If you ſay, the body is not conſidered here ſimply as a body, but as a conſtituent part of the man; I anſwer, that indeed the whole *ſuppoſitum* is under the law. But the formal reaſon of a man's being ſubjectible to a law, is rationality, which is the only thing that makes him capable to be directed by a law. So that although ſin may be from the body occaſionally, as madneſs from the diſtemperature of the brain; and may be alſo in it terminatively, as whoredom, drunkenneſs, &c.; yet formally it is in the ſoul; which, againſt the law, complies with the temptation, which in ſome caſes the body may have a deep ſhare in; and the ſoul uſeth the members of the body for fulfilling the deſires of ſin, to which it is incited by the body. Whatever power we grant unto the body for ſtirring up the ſoul to ſin, and whatever we ſay of that incitation conſidered ſimply as an action of the body; we judge it highly agreeable to reaſon, that the inciting to ſin which is by the body, as it ariſeth from a view of the object, is, at leaſt interpretatively, an imperate act of the ſoul, which takes fire upon the firſt view of the ſpecies of the external object preſented by the eyes, ears, &c.; and conſequently follows that act of the ſoul, though the motion of the blood and ſpirits, thus commanded by the ſoul, adds feuel to the fire. For whence, I pray you, is the motion of the blood and ſpirits in the body inciting to ſin, but from the ſoul, which, upon a view of the object, judgeth the ſame to be fit for it to enjoy *hic & nunc*; and ſo wills it with a ſort of velleity at leaſt; whereupon natively follow ſuch motions in the body? This is evident from this, that when the practical judgment goes a contrary way, theſe motions in the body follow it in the ſame: though indeed, when once the devil is raiſed thus in the blood and ſpirits, the ſoul cannot eaſily lay him; becauſe the will hath but a politic, not a deſpotic power over the fancy once ſet upon an object; as is too evident from experience. Had Achan, when he ſaw the Babyloniſh garment, and wedge of gold, judged they had been devils appearing in ſhape of bodies, doubtleſs quite contrary motions tending to averſation would have ariſen in him. So that I think it is clear, that incitation to ſin by the body, follows the conception of luſt in the ſoul; and that the body is only the midwife helping to bring forth the unhappy birth.

From what is ſaid it appears, that even actual ſin is not formally in the body, but in the ſoul: for though the body may contribute ſomething thereto *in genere entis*, yet the ſoul only gives all *in genere moris*. From thence is the *anomia* of the action. Now, if it be driven to the body, as is alledged, it ſurely ſtirs there; that is, original ſin there breaks forth into action; which cannot be ſaid, as we have already declared. And therefore we may ſafely thence, conclude, it is not there; for where it is, there it will bring forth its unhappy births.

One thing more I add: That if the patrons of this opinion be of the judgment, that the ſoul doth not always think, by this argument they ſhall be obliged to ſay, that regenerate infants have no ſin in them at all; nor godly perſons adult, when they ſleep, and do not dream: for ſin is put out of the ſoul, they ſay, and the body is at reſt.

Arg. V. If in regeneration indwelling-ſin be driven out of the ſoul into the body, then it is in the body, either in more or leſs, or in equal meaſure, as before converſion. In greater meaſure it cannot be, or then the renewing in the whole man falls to the ground; yea, the body is the worſe of regeneration, and is ſo far from having old things done away, that they are increaſed to a greater height; which to reconcile to the privilege which the bodies of believers have in their union with Chriſt, and being the temples of the Holy Ghoſt, is impoſſible. If it be ſaid, it is there in leſſer meaſure than before; let them ſhew how that can be. Surely, according to their principles, ſin properly had part of its lodging in the body before converſion. Now, what room it had in the ſoul, it has loſt, according to them. Wherefore it cannot be in leſs meaſure there than before; unleſs you ſay, that it had leſs before converſion in the ſoul, than it had in the body. But experience flies in the face of this aſſertion: for thoſe that are converted before they come to maturity, when they do come to years, find tenfold more difficulty in guiding of their bodies, than they had before their converſion. If the laſt be ſaid, then the body is nothing the better of regenerating grace; which is inconſiſtent with the union with Chriſt. If you ſay, that we juſt now confeſſed the body may be in a worſe caſe after regeneration than before, wherefore much more equally evil with what it was before, I anſwer, That I ever denied the body to be a ſubject capable formally either of moral goodneſs or evil; and therefore in that reſpect it neither can be better nor worſe. But otherwiſe, we muſt diſtinguiſh the ſtate of the body, with reſpect to nature, and with reſpect to grace. With reſpect to nature, and in itſelf, it may be indeed in a worſe caſe, as was ſaid; in ſo far as, by the power of nature grown up, it is more hard to be tamed and holden in than before. But in reſpect of grace conferred on the ſoul, when it is at its worſt, it is in better caſe than when it was in its beſt natural ſtate, the ſoul being graceleſs; as one is in a better caſe, when he hath drunk in the precepts of ſobriety, and has a faithful tutor, than when he was a child; though now both have more ado than formerly. This will more clearly appear, if we conſider how the body is partaker of regenerating grace. Grace is not, nor cannot be formally and ſubjectively in the body, but objectively and reductively. It is not by way of inherence in it, but in reſpect of uſefulneſs it is for it; for grace makes no change in the body, but in reſpect that the members of the body are thereby better employed than before, as the apoſtle teacheth, 1 Theſſ. iv. 3, 4. 1 Cor. vi. 19. Rom. vi. 13. So then grace in the ſoul is the guide and tutor of the body, though the body be not formally gracious; even as the eye which ſees alone ſerves the whole body for light; for if the eye be ſingle, the whole body will be full of light.

Arg. VI. ult. The experience of the godly teſtifies, that ſin is not ſo driven out of, the ſoul as is pretended: ſo. "who is ſo holy, that he does not find much dark- "neſs in his underſtanding? great ſelf-love in his will? "that all his faculties do frequently go aſtray from "what is true, juſt, and good?" &c. ſays Zanchius. Although the godly have much ado with their bodies, yet I conceive that the hardeſt work of all is with the heart. Nothing is more ordinary with exerciſed ſouls than complaints of the deceitfulneſs of the heart; which they believe, though it wanted a corrupt body, or a devil to tempt, yet would prove a tempter and a devil to itſelf. Who finds not, when the body lies quite by from troubling, ſufficient matter of exerciſe from a hard and dead heart? Who does not diſcern in themſelves a root of Atheiſm, blaſphemy, hatred of God, &c. all which are the kindly fruits of old Adam, ſpringing from the curſed ground of the heart? And I doubt not, but if I could have acceſs to the cloſet-doors of ſome ſuch as ſtickle for this baniſhment of ſin into the outworks, but I ſhould hear them confeſs ſin's lodging in the prime faculties of their ſouls, though in conference they refuſe it.

One thing more I muſt add: That ſeeing diſtempers having their ſeat in the body are to be cured, not by the word, but by phyſical applications, when miniſters have done their work in converting ſouls, they ought to turn them over into the hands of ſkilful phyſicians, the proper object of whoſe art is the body as curable of diſtempers. But enough of this.

Object. 1. The apoſtle (Rom. vii.) teacheth us, that ſin dwells only in the body, verſ. 24. *Who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death!* verſ. 23. ſpeaking of indwelling ſin, he tells us, he *finds a law in his members;* and verſ. 18. *I know that in me, that is, in my fleſh,* (i. e. the body,) *there dwells no good thing.*

Anſw. Vehemency of affection, whether of love or hatred, produceth ſeveral deſignations to the things beloved or hated, the more to expreſs the vehemency of the mind for or againſt the object. So was it with the apoſtle in the matter of indwelling ſin, which was a moſt grievous burden to him. Wherefore ſometimes he calls it *ſin* by way of eminency, as being the great maſter-devil, Rom. vi. 12.; ſometimes *luſt*, Rom. vii. 7. to expreſs the vehemency of its activity, Gal. v. 17. ſometimes he ſpeaks of it as an officious troubleſome gueſt, Rom. vii. 17. 20. ſometimes he calls it a *man*, and an *old man*, Eph. iv. 22. becauſe of its antiquity, and ſubtilty, and ſtrength. It is old indeed, yea the elder brother, though made to ſerve the younger. Here he calls it *a body*, and *a body of death*. The meaning is, ſays Piſcator, "Who ſhall deliver me from this "death, which as a ſort of body, or thing ſubſiſting by "itſelf, exerceth its power in me, and miſerably vexeth "me? But by death metonymically he underſtands "indwelling-ſin." And indeed this very well agrees with the ſcope of the apoſtle; and chap. vi. 6. he had called it a body. But why he ſhould call his own body, which he knew was *the temple of the Holy Ghoſt*, *a body of death*, I ſee not. On good reaſon doth he call indwelling ſin, a body; in regard that as a body hath many members, ſo hath indwelling-ſin. It is not one ſimple luſt, but a compound of all iniquity, and the ſeed and ſpawn of all unrighteouſneſs. It is a complete body; it wants not one member; for as a believer hath every grace in the root and habit, ſo hath he every ſin the ſame way dwelling in him; for let grace once be withdrawn, there ſhall be a compliance with any temptation. And well might he call it a body of death, as being in its own nature a deadly thing, as lothſome as carrion, and devoted to death or deſtruction, being already nailed to the croſs of Chriſt, Gal. v. 24. from which it was not to come down till it had breathed out its laſt. As to what the apoſtle ſays of his members, Piſcator doth indeed underſtand it properly of the members of his body, in which ſin exerts its ſtrength; yet doth not dream that the ſeat of ſin is only or mainly in the body. And ſo we may underſtand it without prejudice to our cauſe; for it is plain ſin may exert its ſtrength there where it hath not its proper place of abode. Others think, that by members he means every faculty of ſoul and body; and ſo they will have the word taken, Rom. vi. 13. Jam. iv. 1. If this be admitted, it weakens the cauſe of our adverſaries. But I ſuppoſe the apoſtle here diſtinguiſhes two oppoſite parties in and from himſelf. The one he calls the inner man; the other he muſt be ſuppoſed to call the outer man. Let us ſee then what he means by thoſe men he ſpeaks of. That he does not thereby underſtand the ſoul and the body, is clear to me upon theſe three accounts: 1. Becauſe the inner man, in the act of ſin, ſtill ſtands out againſt the outer man; ſo that the inner man is blameleſs, verſ. 20. But this cannot be ſaid of the ſoul. 2. In the outer man there dwells no good thing, verſ. 18. which to underſtand of the body, I ſhall afterwards ſhew to be abſurd. I add, 3. That, as I ſaid before, the outer and the inner man are really diſtinct from the man himſelf. Though they both be ours, yet they are not ourſelves; which is plain, if ye conſider, that, through the whole of this diſcourſe, the man himſelf is holden forth as toſſed betwixt theſe two: ſometimes led by the one, ſometimes by the other: the man himſelf is the prey; they are the two combatants that fight for the maſtery over him; and accordingly the ſtrongeſt party carries away the poor captive. According to the inner man, he delights in the law of God; which gives us to underſtand, that according to the outer man, he is averſe to it. Whence it is evident, theſe two are diſtinct from himſelf, and therefore cannot be his ſoul and body. Moreover, theſe two are elſewhere called by the apoſtle the new and old man; whereof the one is ſaid to be put on, the other to be of the man himſelf, yet are they not divided or ſeparated from him: both of them are in him, and diffuſed through the man, according to the capacity of each part. Whence it plainly appears, that theſe men are nothing elſe but grace and corruption, as the apoſtle teacheth, verſ. 20.—'Sin that dwelleth 'in me.' And hence we may eaſily perceive, what he means by the members he ſpeaks of. Why, even as the ſeveral graces of the Spirit are the members of the inner and new man, Eph. iv. 24. ſo the ſeveral particular luſts of the heart are the members of the old and outer man; which members the apoſtle calls us to mortify, Col. iii. 5.

Now, in theſe members of his he finds a law; that is, activity, power, and efficacy: *for the fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit*, Gal. v. 17. "As laws, (ſays Flavel,) "by virtue of their annexed rewards and puniſhments, "have a mighty power and efficacy; ſo ſin, indwelling "ſin, that root of all our trouble and ſorrow, hath a "mighty efficacy upon us." And by this law, indwelling-ſin brings the ſoul into captivity to itſelf, the man being made captive to that law of ſin which is in his members. Where we muſt take notice, that the apoſtle does not refer that being in his members to *ſin*; if ſo indeed, this expoſition would be ridiculous; but the words in the original plainly refer it to the law, *to nomo tes hamartias to onti*, holding forth the power and efficacy of original ſin, which ſets it ſeveral members on work. But to proceed: That the apoſtle calls his body his *fleſh*, is falſe. For, 1. No good thing dwells in his fleſh; but the Holy Spirit dwells in his body. 2. Will any ſay, that the law of ſin is ſerved only with the body, and the law of God only with the ſoul? But the apoſtle tells us, ver. 25. that 'with the mind he ſerves the law 'of God, with the fleſh the law of ſin;' where he aſſigns to each part its proper work and ſervice. We ſay then, that the apoſtle does not here diſtinguiſh the ſoul from the body, but corrupt nature from grace, and himſelf as regenerate, from himſelf ſo far as he was unregenerate. And ſo the apoſtle, Gal. v. 19. &c. while he reckons up the works of the fleſh, he placeth among them *hereſies*; which, if any thing, do belong to the ſoul; and among the works of the Spirit we find *temperance*; which the body may claim on as good grounds as any good thing elſe. And it is remarkable, that when the apoſtle ſpeaks of the ſtate of non-regeneration, while men are totally under the power of corruption, he calls it *being in the fleſh*, Rom. vii. 5. not in the body I am ſure. And in this way of ſpeaking of corruption the apoſtle follows Chriſt himſelf, in his conference with Nicodemus, about the neceſſity of regeneration, John iii. 6. 'That which is born of the fleſh, is fleſh;' not a body in oppoſition to a ſoul, but corrupt, and therefore ſtanding in need to be born again. Only, to hold forth the neceſſity more ſtrongly, he calls it not *fleſhly*, but *fleſh*, itſelf, in the abſtract: *q. d.* It is nothing but a very lump of ſin and corruption.

Object. 2. Rom. vi. 12. 'Let not therefore ſin reign 'in your mortal body:' *Ergo*. Sin remains only in the body, not in the ſoul.

Anſw. Some tells us here, that by the body is meant, ſnyecdochically, the whole man; as, upon the other hand, the Spirit of God, in the ſcripture, under the name of ſoul comprehends the body alſo. But the epithet given by the apoſtle to the body while he calls it mortal, ſeems to reſtrain it to the body properly and ſtrictly taken. Therefore we paſs that, and deny the conſequence, on good grounds: for it is plain here, the apoſtle ſpeaks metaphorically of ſin's power as a king: but who will ſay, but a king may reign there where his ſeat is not? wherever ſin remains, it is certain where it hath not loſt the reigning power, it reigns through the whole man, ſoul and body. Shepherd tells us, that here is, 1. Obedience, i. e. the outward acts; 2. Luſts, the inward breathings; 3. Sin itſelf, where the luſts are ſeated. "This therefore, ſays he, is the reigning "ſin, which hath taken poſſeſſion of every part." And no doubt ſin may work there where it hath not its proper ſeat, as a king reigns in the remoteſt parts of his dominions.

Object. 3. *ult.* 'That which is born of the Spirit, is 'ſpirit;' John iii. 6. *Ergo*. There are no remains of ſin left in the ſoul.

Anſw. The body is, *ſuo quodam modo*, born of the Spirit, as well as the ſoul; for the leaven of grace leavens the whole man; grace makes not a new ſoul only, but a new creature; 'Old things are done away, and 'behold, all things are become new,' 2 Cor. v. 17. The body, as well as the ſpirit, is Chriſt's, 1 Cor. vi. *ult.*; yea, the bodies of the regenerate are members of Chriſt; yet are they not wholly renewed. So ſay we of the ſoul: the whole ſoul is cleanſed but not wholly. Were men perfectly born of the Spirit, they ſhould be altogether ſpirit: but this renovation is carried on by degrees only. "For (as Luther ſaith) we have got "the firſt fruits of the Spirit; the leaven is hid in the "lump; but the lump is not wholly leavened; it is be"gun to be leavened.

QUEST. V.

Why the Lord ſuffereth ſin to remain in the regenerate?

WE have ſeen already, that though there is a great change wrought on the elect in their regeneration, yet that change is imperfect; there ſhall be no perfect delivery from indwelling-ſin till death; the body of death, though crucified, yet lives till the death of the body; and it is not ſo driven out to the outworks, but that it remains, and hath its ſeat in the main hold, in the ſoul, even in the mind and will. Experience ſuffereth not gracious ſouls to doubt of the being of ſin in them, while it occaſions ſo much ſtruggling and wreſtling; yea, while they feel the great ſtrength of it, they are many times ready from thence to call in queſtion the being of grace in them, and to put forth that which was Rebekah's queſtion, in another caſe, Gen. xxv. 22. *If it be ſo, why am I thus?* And therefore, although we are not to call God to an account of his doings with ſupercilious boldneſs, flowing from an obſtinate and ſtubborn heart; yet it may very well be allowed, that we go humbly, and with her enquire of the Lord.

The ſoul in regeneration gets a new nature, though the grace received is not of ſuch efficacy as totally to drive away the old. The regenerate get a real love to God in their hearts, and a real hatred againſt ſin: ſo that the man would fain leave ſin, if it would leave him. And the truth is, that although ſin and the ſoul are inſeparable till death, yet ſin rather cleaves to the ſoul than the ſoul to it. But, alas! though hated, it will not depart; following the man cloſely, as the ſhadow doth the body. But could it be lulled aſleep, could it be ſo intoxicated as to leave off action, the child of God might have ſo much the better occaſion to ſerve God without diſtraction while in the body. But how can the devil be quiet, when he knows his time is ſhort? How can this old man ſleep, while ſo many and various inſnaring objects ſtill preſent themſelves unto his view? Or how can the fleſh be at reſt, when it is nailed to a croſs? Wherefore ſin cannot but both be, and be active in the ſoul while on this ſide of time; even till that terrible ſoldier death come, and thruſt his ſpear into its ſide, and bring forth its heart-blood.

'But are not two ſparrows ſold for one farthing? yet 'one of them cannot fall to the ground without our 'heavenly Father; yea, the very hairs of our head are 'numbered.' We muſt not therefore think, that the children of God are left in this caſe by a fatal neceſſity, and that God is here an idle ſpectator. He hath the hearts of all men in his hand. If the centurion knew, that he being a poor mortal clothed with a ſhadow of authority, having rude ſoldiers under him, could ſay to one, Go, and he goeth; to another, Come, and he cometh;

faith might well thence draw the concluſion, That, much more, God, the ſovereign Lord of all, can ſay to diſtempers, whether of body or ſoul, Go, and they ſhould be gone; Come, and they ſhould immediately be at hand. He raiſed up the ſoul when it was dead in ſin ſpiritually; now the living ſoul is ſick, how can any doubt of his power to cure it, and make it every whit whole? Yet the diſtemper remains with his deareſt children, though he be a hater of iniquity, and his people groan to him daily under it. Though he can, yet we ſee he will not free them from it till death. But whatever be the reaſon or reaſons of this diſpenſation, we believe, that when once his people have got over Jordan into the heavenly Canaan, they ſhall ſay without all reluctancy or doubting, *He hath done all things well.*

As when a man hath newly recovered out of a ſevere fit of ſickneſs, he is then moſt ready to take care of himſelf, and will be afraid of the leaſt cold blaſt, and more narrowly than before inquire into the cauſes of his diſtemper, by which he hath ſo ſore ſmarted; and if he find himſelf in ſuch circumſtances, that he cannot miſs but again fall into his old diſtemper, he will long to be rid of that condition, and ſeriouſly think how he comes to be in ſuch pitiful circumſtances: Even ſo I think it will be with a thinking ſoul, after a recovery from a dead frame and diſpoſition of ſpirit, into which, by his unwatchfulneſs, the power of corruption within, and the malice of the devil from without, he had before been caſt. Contraries ſet together appear then beſt in their own colours; therefore the diſadvantages of a bad frame can never ſo well appear, as when they are freſh in the memory of the newly recovered ſaint, who hath now the candle of the Lord ſhining on his tabernacle; and conſequently the way leading to that bad frame of ſpirit, never appears ſo hateful as at ſuch a time. Suppoſe then the thoughts of a certainty of his falling back to be obſervant unto him, what thoughts of heart will this create? It is true, ſometimes a child of God, when matters go right with his ſoul, may be thinking of building tabernacles here, as Peter on the mountain; and with David, ſaying, *My mountain ſtandeth ſure, I ſhall not be moved.* But this is a piece of the levity of the vain and fooliſh heart, when men look only above them, without deep conſideration of the way of God's diſpenſation. But I ſuppoſe, that when in this caſe they look *about them*, through the world, where ſo many ſnares are laid for them, amongſt which of neceſſity they muſt walk; and look alſo *within them*, and ſee what boſom-enemies are yet alive, ready to betray them into the hands of the devil; and do take pains to conſider what a vile heart yet they have, from whence ſuch miſts and fogs are ready to ariſe, as may again make a thick cloud betwixt them and their Lord, and make them loſe ſight of the guide of their youth, and captain of their ſalvation; they will then even ſtand in need of new comfort, and ſomething from above to eſtabliſh their hearts. And here I think we may ſtand, and ſee a gracious ſoul joining trembling with mirth, and bemoaning itſelf thus.

“ O happy hour when the Lord awakened me out of
“ my ſpiritual ſleep! The devil and mine own corrup-
“ tions had lulled me aſleep; though even in the time
“ my heart waked, and I found an inefficacious diſſatis-
“ faction with myſelf, which was not able to rouze me
“ up, but made me ſometimes as it were to ſtart in my
“ ſleep: but my Beloved left me not, as juſtly he might,
“ to ſleep a perpetual ſleep; but knocked at the door of
“ my heart, ſaying, “ Open to me, my ſiſter, my
“ ſpouſe:” and though I was long a ſtirring to get up,
“ he ſtood ſtill, till his head was filled with the dew,
“ and his locks with drops of the night; at laſt he put
“ in his hand at the hole of the door, gave the rouzing
“ knock, ſpoke to my heart the overcoming word, capti-
“ vated my ſoul ſo as my bowels moved towards him.
“ I opened to my Beloved; he came in; I ſupped with
“ him, and he with me. He hath brought me into
“ the banqueting-houſe, his banner over me is love.
“ O how does my ſoul love him! my Lord and my
“ God!——But, ah Lord! my ſoul fails; I have been
“ here before, but a cloud overtook me, darkened the
“ holy place, I loſt the light of thy countenance; and,
“ which now pierceth my ſoul, the very enemies re-
“ main in me, who before carried me back into the bor-
“ ders of Egypt, ſet me down in the land of darkneſs
“ and ſhadow of death, and put out my two eyes. Now
“ is ſin to me more bitter than death and hell; yet I
“ know aſſuredly I muſt again meet with that terrible
“ ghoſt; and if I live long in this tabernacle, I ſhall
“ loſe all I now enjoy: my ſong ſhall be turned into
“ lamentation and howling, the now ſmiling counte-
“ nance ſhall again be provoked to frown, my wine is
“ mixed with water; corruption will again lift up the
“ head, the ſorrowful day of my captivity will, I fear,
“ overtake me, this heart of mine will have me back
“ to where I was before. O to be gone! I ſee with a
“ ſorrowful heart and weeping eyes, a neceſſity of ſin-
“ ning, into which we poor mortals have brought our-
“ ſelves, and the Lord leaves me yet under it. Lord
“ why are not the curſed Canaanites utterly rooted out?”

I judge, that a man in this caſe needs not fear his enjoyment to be a deluſion, there is ſo much of an evangelical ſpirit breathing in it. The ſound hatred that appears here againſt ſin, while the ſoul doth feelingly apprehend it as the greateſt of evils, is ſo far above the ſphere of elevated nature, that it is a clear diſcovery of a renewed nature. A man willing to part with all, ſo that he might be free of ſin, is one made partaker of the divine nature, aſpiring to a more accompliſhed participation of it. This caſe ſavours of much real burning love to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, while the ſoul hath ſuch an ardent deſire of being nearer to him, and would fain be ſo near him, as to have ſuch communion with him as might never be interrupted nor overclouded any more. It is alſo an evidence, that the ſoul hath taſted of the ſweetneſs of Chriſt and fellowſhip with him, while it is ſo filled with fear of loſing his preſence. And many ſuch things may be diſcerned in it.

Yet I dare not juſtify the ſoul through the whole of this caſe. So true it is, *Nihil eſt ab omni parte beatum.* I conceive, there may be ſomething here in the mourner which is not allowable, and may juſtly be new grounds of mourning to him. There ſeems to appear here a kind of ſpiritual ſelfiſhneſs, when the ſoul hath its own ſpiritual advantage (which is ſo ſeemingly at leaſt) ſo much upon the heart, that it keeps not due reſpect to the ſovereign will of God, to which belongs the free diſpoſal of all good, and particularly of the influences of his grace; ſo that the creature, as a creature, is indiſpenſably bound to a ſilent ſubmiſſion, whatever way ſovereignty doth caſt the balance. When Peter was upon the mount with Chriſt, ‘ It is good for us to be here, ‘ let us make tabernacles,’ ſays he; but the verdict of the Spirit of God thereupon is, that ‘ he wiſt not what ‘ he ſaid.’ Senſe is much addicted to ſelf; and though it hath ſpecious pretences, yet its language is not always to be heard; for it is certain it is an ill judge of controverſies betwixt Chriſt and the ſoul. But faith is ſure always to decide in Chriſt's favour. If Chriſt ſmile on the ſoul, faith ſaith, He doth well; and ſenſe ſays ſo too. If he frown, then ſenſe cries out againſt him; but faith ſays, He doth all things well: let him deſert, afflict, yea, kill the man, faith ſays, *It is the Lord; let him do what ſeemeth him good; good is the will of the Lord.* Faith puts a knife to the throat of ſelf-love and ſelf-wit, to ſacrifice them to the will of God, who is infinitely wiſe: it teacheth a man to lay his mouth in the duſt, and wrap up his will in the will of God. In the hearts of the godly exerciſed, pride goeth much abroad in vail, though not in dreſs; it is there transformed into an angel of light, appearing in a ſhape different from that it doth appear in others. Pride in the hearts of natural men, when Chriſt comes to them, ſays, ‘ Depart from us, for ‘ we deſire not the knowledge of thy name;’ but pride in the hearts of the godly exerciſed, when Chriſt ſeems to be going away, or they know they will not have always the preſent meaſure of communion with him, will not ſuffer Chriſt to be maſter of his own proceſs; though it is certain, that we are obliged to a holy ſubmiſſion; and the potſheard muſt not quarrel with the potter, but the Lord muſt have leave to go and come as he pleaſeth: Humble-hearted Mary, when Chriſt ſays unto her, *Touch me not, Mary, for I am not yet aſcended;* though her love would have carried her forward, yet her deniedneſs to her ſpiritual ſelf, at Chriſt's command, makes her hold up her hands. It were good in ſuch a caſe to learn that leſſon.

Moreover, Satan may be working here under ground to blow up the preſent enjoyment with a fear of diſtruſt. Satan grudgeth the happineſs of the people of God, and endeavoureth by all means, ſeeing he cannot hinder theſe refreſhing influences of the Spirit, and comfortable manifeſtations, to make them as ſhort lived as poſſible; and for this end he goeth about to fill the ſoul with a diſtruſtful fear, holding before his eyes, the certainty of his backſliding, and of loſing the preſent enjoyment; which breeds in the ſoul a ſinful jealouſy of Chriſt, while the man is either ignorant of, or doth not conſider the end and deſign of God in his diſpenſation; which Satan is now buſy to miſrepreſent, wreſt, and make uſe of to his great diſadvantage; which once taking place, blaſts the comfort of the preſent enjoyment, mars our thankfulneſs for what God hath given already. And whereas it is now time for the man to improve his acceſs to God, for more ſtrength againſt the devil and his own corruption, this fear takes up the man ſo, as he lets that good occaſion ſlip out of his hands, and ſo is more eaſily overcome by the temptation; even as the fear of the battle in a ſoldier takes away his ſtomach, that he cannot eat, whereby he is the more unfit for his work. And, in fine, God may hereby be provoked to withdraw, ſo as they ſhall be made to ſay, "That which I "feared, is come upon me." *Probatum eſt.*

For the cure of this jealouſy of Chriſt in the ſoul, ariſing from the conſideration of his diſpenſation in leaving ſin to be and act in thoſe who wreſtle againſt it, and account it their greateſt burden, it is neceſſary the ſoul be acquainted with, and ſeriouſly conſider of the true reaſon or reaſons thereof, in regard we are ready to ſuſpect the worſt. A wife obſerving her huſband frequently to carry towards her reſervedly, and to wrap up himſelf from her, though he may be doing ſo for his own and her good, will be yet ready to ſuſpect, that ſuch carriage flows from his want of love towards her; and will not be ſatisfied eaſily, till ſhe know the true reaſon of his ſo doing. So is it here. And ſurely the Lord doth not deal thus with his people, but with great reaſon; which being known and ſeriouſly pondered, will make the ſoul conclude, he doth all things well.

To a ſoul then in this caſe ſeveral things may be propoſed.

I. In the firſt place, God hath ſo ordered the matter of the believer's ſanctification, that ſin is left to be active in their ſouls while here, for their further humiliation. They are hereby taught to bear low ſails all the days of their lives, and, with Hezekiah, to 'go ſoftly all their 'years in the bitterneſs of their ſouls,' Iſa. xxxviii. 15. Wherefore we read, that leaſt Paul ſhould be exalted above meaſure through the abundance of revelations, there was given to him a thorn in the fleſh, a meſſenger of Satan is ſent to buffet him, 2 Cor. xii. 7. And ſo we find David, after his grievous fall, grows in the grace of humility, Pſal. li.

II. Next, This gives the ſoul many errands to God, ſtirs him up to the frequent exerciſe of prayer, and calling on the name of the Lord. The ſoul feels the continual need of pardon, and therefore muſt needs be much lying at God's footſtool. The experience of the godly ſeals the truth of this, while, many times, they feeling the children (grace and corruption) ſtruggling together within them, are made (as Rebekah) to 'go and enquire 'of the Lord,' Gen. xxv. 22. Hence, when they grow remiſs in their duty, the Lord ſometimes, for their awakening, ſuffers them to fall into ſome ſin or ſins, grievouſly wounding the conſcience; and ſo, like a preſumptuous ſelf-willed child falling into the fire, they cry for and value the help of their Father more.

III. Yea hereby we are made more watchful and obſervant of the heart. When the priſoner, having eſcaped, is retaken, he will be put in more cloſe cuſtody than before. When men find by experience what a bankrupt the heart is, they will learn not to give it credit. We live in a world where there are traps ſet before, and behind, and on each ſide to catch us; we walk amidſt many ſnares, yet are ready to fall ſecure, and careleſs, and to let down our watch. It is not amiſs then that we ſometimes ſmart in order to our being kept awaking.

IV. Further, as God left the Canaanites in the land to try his people, ſo he hath left the remains of natural corruption in his people for their exerciſe and trial; that having liſted themſelves to war under Chriſt's banner, they may have whom to fight with, and whom by ſtrength from above they may overcome. God gives his people armour at their converſion; is it reaſonable it ſhould lie by them ruſting? If the Canaanites were at the firſt daſh utterly expelled the land, many of the graces of the Spirit ſhould be laid by as uſeleſs. 'Hope 'that is ſeen, is not hope; for what a man ſeeth, why 'doth he yet hope for it?' Had we no enemies, or were we put beyond their reach utterly, there ſhould be no occaſion for the exerciſe of the grace of watchfulneſs. Patience ſhould not have its perfect work; yea faith itſelf, as being 'the evidence of things not ſeen, and the ſub'ſtance of things hoped for,' ſhould be of no more uſe. What ſhould become of ordinances? God hath ſet up a miniſtry in his church to be for working together with him, to bring down the kingdom of darkneſs by degrees; he hath ſet up his word for a light to travellers towards Zion, not being well acquainted with the way; he hath given us his holy ſacraments for our confirmation in faith, growth in grace, and comfort through the Spirit: theſe all might be laid aſide, were it not that our ſanctification is carried on by degrees.

V. Moreover, by this diſpenſation of grace, we are made more and more to feel our need of Chriſt, and his precious blood for the removal of guilt daily contracted anew, and for ſtrengthening our ſouls in our Chriſtian courſe: ſo that we muſt come up out of the wilderneſs leaning on our beloved. And we ſee that our ſtock is not in our hand; and if it were, it would quickly be loſt. Is not the ſoul made hereby to bleſs the Lord, that it is not left to be its own pilot, while ſailing through the troubleſome ſea of this world; but that Jeſus Chriſt is his great ſteerſman, by whoſe conduct he ſhall come ſafe to Immanuel's land.

VI. I add, That it may be obſerved, it is God's ordinary way to bring about great works by degrees; amongſt which the ſanctification of a ſinner deſervedly takes place. God could have created the world in a moment, yet he was pleaſed to take ſix days for it. As ſoon as Adam fell, he could have ſent Chriſt to have died; but thouſands of years muſt paſs before this great work be accompliſhed. It is determined to the laſt days, the time of the world's old age. A dark revelation of this his purpoſe was made to Adam in the primitive goſpel-promiſe; it was made more manifeſt to Abraham; revealed yet more clearly to and by Moſes, more to the Prophets, till John the Baptiſt at laſt pointed him out with the finger. He could have brought Iſrael out of Egypt into Canaan eaſily in a few days; but it pleaſed him that they ſhould wander forty years in the wilderneſs. So that it is but conſonant hereunto, that he exerciſeth his people ſo long in the wilderneſs of the world, after he hath brought them forth of the ſpiritual Egyptian bondage. And as it is God's ordinary method to carry on great works by degrees, ſo to bring them to paſs through many difficulties. Joſeph muſt be ſold for a ſlave, and laid in irons in a ſtrange land, before he be advanced. The Iſraelites muſt endure hard bondage and grievous affliction in Egypt, before they are brought into the land flowing with milk and honey. Yea the man Chriſt muſt firſt ſuffer, and then enter into his glory. So that in this diſpenſation he holds but his ordinary road. Finally,

VII. A learned man lays down the whole matter thus. "While we bear about a mortal body, this domeſtick tyrant cannot be altogether expelled; becauſe it is neither expedient for the glory of Chriſt, nor for our ſalvation. For the glory of Chriſt is ſo much the more illuſtrious, as his benefit is the better felt by us, while that enemy doth indeed dwell in us, but by the grace and Spirit of Chriſt is ſo repreſſed and holden captive, that it cannot domineer over us, nor deſtroy us;—yea while we experience in us the grace of Chriſt ſo efficacious, that by it he makes us overcomers. Moreover the glory of Chriſt becomes more illuſtrious, while, by reaſon of indwelling ſin, we in very deed feel that we cannot be juſtified but by the perfect obedience of Chriſt, which we apprehend by faith. It is alſo expedient for our ſalvation, that the enemy abide in us till death, that we may have one to fight with perpetually, and fighting by the grace of Chriſt may overcome, and by overcoming may gain a greater crown to ourſelves, Rev. iii. 2 Tim. iv."

That the conſideration of theſe things may be very uſeful to a ſoul exerciſed with the conſideration of this diſpenſation of providence in the matter of ſanctification, as above declared, I think none can deny. To ſee how God makes ſuch an excellent medicine of ſuch poiſonous ingredients, cannot but be very delightful. Yet I doubt, if the principal, if not the only reaſon, be yet explained: or if thoſe things in this mould and frame be very likely to ſatiſfy the ſoul, when this puzzling queſtion comes more cloſely home upon the heart: but that very plauſible objections may be raiſed againſt the ſame, to ſhew their invalidity as to the main point in hand.

The great matter is, to find out the reaſon or reaſons why it hath pleaſed the Lord to leave ſin in the elect after converſion, and not to make them perfectly free from the indwelling of it at that very time, as he could certainly have done, if it had pleaſed him. Now, I obſerve upon the whole of theſe grounds formerly laid down, which are uſually pleaded in this caſe, that the caſe under conſideration is reſolved either into our own advantage, and the quickening of inherent grace, or into the will of God ſimply; and this by all of them, except the firſt part of the laſt ground aſſigned. As to the laſt of the two; it is indeed in effect that God would have it ſo becauſe he would have it ſo; which I do confeſs may ſuffice, and no more can be had in ſome caſes, Rom. ix. 18. 'Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy.' But I ſuppoſe that this caſe is not of that ſort. As to the firſt; ſin now appearing to the ſoul in its blackeſt colours, the creature's advantage being laid in the balance therewith, can have but little weight. As for the three firſt grounds they do plainly ſuppoſe the queſtion. The fourth ſeems to go the ſame way. As for the firſt part of the laſt ground, it points out the truth in general. But the explication of it mars all, while it is declared by our proper feeling of the benefits of Chriſt; which doth indeed hold good conſidered abſolutely, but comparatively underſtood it doth not. Now, it is plain, that any thing that can be here ſaid, ſatisfyingly, muſt be by way of compariſon. But I think no man can doubt, but that the more free of ſin a Chriſtian is, he feels the benefits of Chriſt the better. The ſame is to be ſaid of the fifth reaſon. As to the reſt, they do at leaſt come under the diſadvantage propoſed in the general obſervation (to ſay no more upon them) reſolving the caſe as ſaid is.

To all of theſe grounds the following replies ſeem not to be unreaſonable. "You tell me (ſays the Chriſtian under the ſuppoſed exerciſe) that this is God's deſign by this diſpenſation to humble me, to ſtir me up to call on his name, to make me more watchful, to let me ſee my need of Chriſt more. But my pride, ſlothfulneſs, unwatchfulneſs, unſenſibleneſs of my need of Chriſt, are the great burdens I grone under. That which I would be at, is to have all theſe rooted out of my heart: and I know God could have done that at firſt, can do it ſtill, yet he does not: What ſhall I ſay? As for faith, hope, &c. it is my ſoul's trouble, that I have ſo little of them; I would fain be at the full meaſure; and I know the graces of the Spirit are inſeparable: whoſo hath one hath all. But though the exerciſe of theſe graces were inconſiſtent with the ſtate of perfection that I would fain be at, which nevertheleſs is not ſo, (for if I were perfect in this life, or altogether free from ſin, I could not but exerciſe faith, hope, and patience, as the man Chriſt did; and watchfulneſs, as Adam did, or at leaſt might have done in paradiſe;) yet I am ſure the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect above, are at no loſs in that they do not, nor need not exerciſe thoſe graces; neither is the glory of God thereby impaired, but indeed made more illuſtrious. I deſire to value ordinances more than my neceſſary food, both becauſe they have Chriſt's ſtamp upon them, and becauſe in this my weary ſtate I cannot want them. But, Oh! ſhould I not be content, though all the ſtars were ſet, and had hid their heads, ſo that the Sun of righteouſneſs were riſen with perfect healing under his wings? What though the inns were blocked up, if once the traveller were at his journey's end? But ſurely, if I were as I would be, I could manage ordinances far more to the glory of my Lord, and to mine own ſatisfaction, than I can now do at my beſt. The firſt and ſecond Adam wanted not ſacraments, and made uſe of them too. And I am perſuaded, that if I were free of ſin, I would have a far more deep ſenſe of Chriſt's benefits, and of my need of him, than now I either have or can have. Self-righteouſneſs, that ſpawn of the old ſerpent, is one of my greateſt burdens, that makes me weary of this longſome night, and long to ſee the day when I ſhall be able to ſing the ſong of the redeemed ones, and to give my Lord all and haill the glory, in which my wretched heart now will needs ſhare with him. Though I cannot love him as I ought, nay, nor as I would; yet would I be well content to continue in the fight never ſo long, ſo that I could but manage it without diſhonour to my Captain. It is not ſuffering, but ſinning that affrights me. And I cannot but think that ten thouſand jewels in my crown are too dear bought at the rate of one ſin againſt my Lord; whereas there is not one ſin, but many in my moſt complete actions now. It is God's ordinary method, I confeſs, to bring about great works by degrees, and over the belly of many difficulties. And O how early did God begin with me, how many times did he lay ſiege to my graceleſs heart, how long did he follow a poor miſerable worm nothing, ere I would give conſent? What great difficulties did grace break through, what iron gates did it lay by, when at firſt it ſhined into my ſoul? And yet I would chearfully bear, and go through difficulties, if they were only in the kind of ſuffering, ſo that I were free of ſin, that evil of all evils."

By all this we may ſee farther into the nature of the caſe propoſed, and may diſcover what it is that is at the bottom of all, and what that is which moſt toucheth them in the quick. The caſe then terminates in an ardent deſire of, and an unfeigned reſpect unto his glory, who hath brought the ſoul from darkneſs to light, and crowned it with loving kindneſs and tender mercies; to which glory ſin is ſo oppoſite. Wherefore I am of opinion, the whole is to be reſolved into the praiſe of the glory of his grace, Eph. i. 6. which ſeems moſt exactly to anſwer the point.

I confeſs, that as none can bear a wounded ſpirit, ſo none can cure it but the great Phyſician of ſouls. It is *he that ſmiteth*, and it is only *he that can bind up: he kills and he makes alive.* He is the healer of all the ſoul's diſeaſes and pains. An exerciſed ſoul hath great dexterity in raiſing objections, and is not eaſily ſatisfied; and its doubts and difficulties can no man reſolve to its ſatisfaction, till he who is the great Interpreter of the mind of God, and *hath the tongue of the learned*, take the work in hand, and *ſpeak a word in ſeaſon to the weary ſoul*, by his holy Spirit. Yet the ſcripture ſhews that the Spirit teacheth and comforteth by the word; 'He 'ſhall receive of mine,' (ſays Chriſt, ſpeaking of the Spirit,) 'and ſhall ſhew it unto you,' John xvi. 14. which is more clearly delivered, chap. xiv. 26. 'But the Com'forter—he ſhall teach you all things, and bring all 'things to your remembrance, whatſoever I have ſaid 'unto you.' So that from the word ſouls are to be dealt with for their comfort and ſatisfaction, looking to the Lord Jeſus to ſend his Spirit to render the ſame effectual.

It plainly appears to ſuch as read the ſcriptures with a humble mind, and conſider the doctrine therein delivered, and take notice of the Lord's way of dealing with his own, that the grand deſign of God in the contrivance of the elect's ſalvation, is, *to exalt the riches of the free grace of God in Chriſt:* Rom. iv. 16. *Therefore it is of faith, that it might be of grace*, Eph. ii. 8. 9. 'For 'by grace are ye ſaved;---not of works leſt any man 'ſhould boaſt.' Moſt plainly does the apoſtle reſolve the whole of man's ſalvation into this, Eph. i. 3.---6. 'To 'the praiſe of the glory of his grace.' I ſay, not ſimply to exalt grace, (which is always here to be underſtood of the free favour of God, or the grace of God without us;) for even by the firſt covenant the grace of God was exalted, and manifeſtly appeared in God's condeſcending to enter into a covenant with Adam, and to require obedience of him by virtue of a covenant, and that with a promiſe of ſo great a reward, to which his beſt works could bear no proportion; when, by virtue of his ſovereignty merely, he might have exacted all obedience; here was grace, though, as Bayne calls it, a more common and inferior grace; but I ſay the riches of grace, in reſpect of which the former was but a ſmall ſcantling of grace. Thus the apoſtle holds it forth, Eph. i. 7. 'According to the riches of his grace.' Chap. ii. 4. 'But God, who is rich in mercy;' and verſe 7. 'That in the ages to come he might ſhew the exceeding 'riches of his grace.' This then is clearly the great deſign of God in the contrivance of man's ſalvation. Now, the heart of a child of God is (if I may ſo term it) ſhapen out in breadth and length to this deſign: for what is faith, but an hearty acquieſcing in the way of ſalvation held forth in the goſpel, as ſuited both to man's neceſſity, and the divine perfections, and particularly tending unto the manifeſtation of the riches of grace, whereby Chriſt is made all, and the creature nothing?

Here then I apprehend, we may find the great reaſon of the Lord's diſpenſation in the matter of the believer's ſanctification, the knowledge and conſideration whereof is moſt likely to give ſatisfaction to the ſoul thus exerciſed. And it is briefly this: The exalting of Chriſt, and of the free grace of God in him, is the great deſign and end of the contrivance of man's ſalvation, as held forth in the goſpel; but God's leaving of ſin to be, and to be active in the regenerate while they are in this world, yea and keeping of them for a while in that caſe in the world, does contribute more to the advancement of that deſign, than the making of them ſinleſs immediately upon their cloſing with Chriſt. Therefore may we already not only believe, but ſee, that in this matter he hath done all things well.

If we conſider a perſon under this exerciſe before declared, we ſhall find he is one that is filled with a deep ſenſe of his own vileneſs, emptineſs, and nothingneſs; and hath high thoughts of Chriſt, and of free grace; and ſo he is diſpoſed to welcome whatſoever hath a tendency to the exalting of the ſame. And foraſmuch as the glory of that God who hath done ſo great things for him, lies neareſt his heart, and the diſhonour done unto him, galls him moſt; when he ſees this way brings more glory to Chriſt, and exalts grace more than the way he would be at, it may juſtly be expected, he ſhall lay his hand upon his mouth, ſaying, 'It is the Lord, let him 'do what ſeemeth him good.' It remains then, that we demonſtrate the truth of this, that this way does more exalt Chriſt and free grace than the other; which I hope will be no difficult taſk.

I. The more ſins be pardoned to a believer, grace is the more exalted, Chriſt hath the more glory; the more items are blotted out of juſtice's debt-book by the precious blood of the immaculate Lamb, the ſinner is the more deep in the debt of free grace: but it is beyond controverſy, that in this diſpenſation more ſins are pardoned to a believer than otherwiſe would have been. *Ergo.* Let none pretend that free grace might have been as much or more exalted in keeping the believer from ſin altogether after converſion, as in pardoning of the ſame, leſt they fall foul upon God's deſign in ſuffering ſin to enter into the world, prefer the grace of the firſt covenant to that of the ſecond, and, in effect, ſay that God's diſpenſation is not ſuitable to this deſign.

II. The more ſin is aggravated by its circumſtances, the more is free grace exalted in pardoning of it, the more illuſtrious is the virtue of Chriſt's blood; for the deeper the ſtain is, the harder is it to waſh out: but by this diſpenſation, whereby ſin is left in the regenerate for a while, free grace hath the glory of pardoning ſins more heinous than thoſe committed in the ſtate of ignorance and unbelief. *Ergo.* Is not the offence of a ſpouſe, child, friend, &c. more grievous than the offence given by a ſtranger? Friends wounds pierce moſt deeply: *for it was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it*, &c. Pſal. lv. 12. The godly lie under far more acceſſary bonds and obligations to duty than others; and it is certain, the more obligations a man lies under to duty, the ſin is the greater. Adultery and murder committed by a David, are more heinous in the ſight of God than the ſame ſins committed by a wicked man. This is ſo manifeſt, that I need not inſiſt to enumerate thoſe aggravating circumſtances that are to be found in the ſins of the godly, which by no means can be in thoſe of the wicked. And does not the pardoning of theſe deep-dyed ſins exalt free grace wonderfully? Let men but conſult their own experience, and they ſhall have a clear proof of this. The pardon of any ſin does much affect a godly heart with admiration of the riches of grace; but when a man, after a recovery from ſome ſin, after vows and reſolutions againſt it, &c. doth relapſe into the ſame, and yet has his backſlidings healed, this augments the admiration of it. Of all ſinners backſliders have the greateſt difficulty to believe; and upon a received pardon, as they indeed are, ſo they ſeem to be, greateſt debtors to grace.

III. The more deeply ſin appears to be rooted in our natures, the more is the grace of God magnified in rooting it up; the more inveterate the diſeaſe ſeems to be, the more is the cure of it to the honour of the phyſician: *Since the world began, was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind*, John ix. 32. If a tree were plucked up in an inſtant, beholders could never ſo clearly ſee how faſt rooted it was, as when it abides many pulls of a ſtrong hand. Who could have imagined the ſtrength of ſin to have been ſo great in David as it afterwards appeared, when he had been ſo often bruiſed and troubled in ſpirit, and had arrived at ſo great mortification. The experience of believers affords to us an example of the ſame. Many times, after great wreſtlings, they ſeem to themſelves to have got great victory over a particular corruption, ſo that they are ready to think with themſelves, that it will never be able to moleſt them as before; but at length it gets out again, renews the aſſault, and makes them ſee how it is, like Nebuchadnezzar's tree, Dan. iv. 15 faſtened in the earth of the heart with a band of iron and braſs. Now, it is manifeſt, that were ſin rooted out at the firſt daſh, the fixedneſs of it in man's nature could never ſo much appear to beholders, as it may and doth in the way of this diſpenſation. *Ergo.*

IV. That which diſcovers, to the view of all, the creature's emptineſs moſt, doth undeniably exalt grace moſt; but the emptineſs of the creature, and its continual need of ſupply diſcovered to the view of all this way: *Ergo.* I think, the angels themſelves, who deſire to pry into the myſtery of grace, could not but learn a leſſon of the creature's frailty and nothingneſs by Adam's fall, and of the riches of free grace in the way of his recovery; and the daily ſlips of the ſaints on the earth may be to them ſpeaking teſtimonies of the creature's weakneſs; for we ſee the apoſtle thinks it not below their dignity, that they go to ſchool in the church to learn *the manifold wiſdom of God,* Eph. iii. 10. Suppoſe a weak child be held up on his feet by his father's hands, ſo that he cannot fall; whether doth his weakneſs appear ſo as when he is left to feel his own weight, and ſo gets ſeveral falls? The ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, who are now above the clouds, and the confirmed angels, are ſtill creatures; and therefore live and act by a continued dependance on God; but the emptineſs of the creature appears not ſo clearly in their caſe, as in the ſtate of the ſaints on earth; whoſe weakneſs we not only know, but ſee with our eyes, while they get ſo many falls, and give ſo many ocular demonſtrations of their need of grace, and of their own emptineſs. So that if the nothingneſs of the creature proclaim the riches of grace, free-grace is moſt exalted this way.

V. The more cowardly, faint hearted, and feckleſs the ſoldiers are that get the victory over a potent enemy, the more is the valour of the captain diſcovered, the greater glory redounds to him; but ſuch are the ſaints in their Chriſtian warfare: *Ergo.* When David attempted to take in the ſtrong hold of Zion, 2 Sam. v. 6. the Jebuſites boaſting of the ſtrength of the caſtle, looking on it as an impregnable fort, told him, that except he took away the blind and the lame, he could not get in there; meaning that ſuch was the ſtrength of the fort, that the very blind and lame were ſufficient to defend it againſt David and all his men, though others ſhould ſit by, looking on and doing nothing: which did mightily commend the ſtrong hold. They are potent enemies, expert, and ſubtile, whom the Chriſtian is called to encounter with: Eph. vi. 12. *For he wreſtles not (only) againſt fleſh and blood, but againſt principalities, againſt powers, againſt the rulers of the darkneſs of this world, againſt the ſpiritual wickedneſs in high places.* In the mean time, he is a weak creature, weak naturally as a man, in compariſon of them, but yet weaker as a ſinful man; but he is nevertheleſs more than conqueror: which ſurely doth more advance the glory of the great Captain of our ſalvation, than if he had ſtronger and more expert ſoldiers. O what riches of grace appears here, which otherwiſe would have been in greater meaſure ſmothered! and ſeeing the ſcripture ſo frequently calls the Chriſtian courſe *a warfare*, let me alſo add this, that when an enemy beſiegeth a town, wherein he hath a multitude of friends ready on all occaſions to betray the ſame into his hand, yet the town holds out, and he is repulſed; what a ſhameful repulſe is that? Is not the glory of the governor far greater in this caſe, than if he had forced the enemy to raiſe the ſiege, while he had plenty of his friends within the walls? the application is eaſy.

Finally, to ſhut up all; it is plain, that the more difficulties the work of man's ſalvation is carried through, the free grace of God is the more exalted; but Lord Jeſus, the author of eternal ſalvation, hath the greater glory; but in this way it is carried on over the belly of more difficulties, than it would have been, if by the firſt grace the Chriſtian might have been made perfect. *Ergo.* And ſeeing *(cæteris paribus)* none can prize reſt ſo much as they who have been ſore toiled, and have come out of the greateſt tribulations, I think I may be allowed to ſay, that a child of God having come to his journey's end after ups and downs, falls and riſings; having won through the troubleſome ſea of this world, and being ſet ſafe aſhore, after many dangers of ſhipwreck, in a longſome voyage, will have the praiſes of free grace in his mouth ſounding more loudly, and will ſing the ſong of Moſes and of the Lamb in a more elevated ſtrain and higher notes, than if he had never been in danger through the whole of his courſe.

From all which it appears, that this diſpenſation is moſt ſuitable to the grand deſign of the goſpel, the exalting of the riches of free grace in Chriſt. And what lover of Chriſt will not ſay Amen!

QUEST. VI.

Who have right to baptiſm, and are to be baptized?

THE right of infants to baptiſm hath been denied and violently oppoſed by the Anabaptiſts, ſo called from rebaptizing of thoſe that were in their infancy baptized; ſo that, according to them, adult perſons only have right to this ordinance, the whole ſpecies of infants being excluded. Againſt this ſpiritual robbery much hath been written by learned men, and infants right to baptiſm aſſerted and ſolidly inſtructed from the ſcriptures of truth. In which point I am fully ſatisfied, not doubting but as God is the believer's God, ſo he is the God of his ſeed; and therefore none can forbid water: wherefore I am not to meddle with this point. As the Anabaptiſts denying infant baptiſm, have been faulty in making the ſubject lawfully receptive of baptiſm too narrow; ſo it is a queſtion to me, Whether or not others have made the ſame wider than the word of God will allow? There may be a fault both ways; in exceſs as well as in defect. That ſome infants born within the viſible church may be baptized, I doubt not; but that all ſuch ought to be admitted to this holy ordinance, I find I cannot ſubſcribe unto, unleſs I be more ſatisfied in that point, than hitherto I am. This being a matter of practice, is worthy of conſideration; and my doubts in that point have obliged me to this enquiry, if poſſibly I may find any thing in this matter wherein I may reſt. In anſwer to the queſtion propoſed, ſomewhat muſt be ſaid touching the right of adult perſons to this ordinance, as well as of infants. But in regard that it is very rare to hear of an adult perſon baptized amongſt us, I ſhall ſay but little upon that head;

and poſſibly I might have waved it altogether, were it not that it may contribute ſomething to the clearing of that wherein my difficulty lies, viz. the right of infants born of Chriſtian parents, who are a reproach to their profeſſion.

That we may the better ſucceed in this inquiry, there is one diſtinction that muſt be taken notice of; and that is, There is a twofold right to church privileges: there is a right *in foro Dei*, or before the Lord; and there is a right *in foro eccleſiæ*, or in the judgment of the church. Where theſe two are confounded, men multiply words to no purpoſe. A perſon may have a right to church-privileges before the Lord, who hath no right thereto before the church: and contrariwiſe, one may have a right before the church to church-privileges, that hath no right thereto before the Lord: for the being of a thing is ſufficient *in foro Dei*, but the appearing of it to be ſo, is neceſſary *in foro eccleſiæ*; ſeeing as to us *de non apparentibus & non exiſtentibus eadem eſt ratio & idem judicium*. So theſe are two diſtinct queſtions, "Who "ought to be baptized?" and, "Who ought to ſeek "baptiſm?" The firſt reſpects a right to baptiſm before the church; the ſecond a right thereto before God. Which being premiſed, we lay down theſe following concluſions.

CONCL. I. None have a right to baptiſm before the Lord, but thoſe who have actually a ſaving intereſt in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Arg. I. The ſcripture plainly holds forth, that the having of the Spirit and faith are neceſſarily prerequiſite to baptiſm: Acts viii. 36, 37. 'Here is water, (ſays 'the eunuch) what doth hinder me to be baptized?' Philip anſwereth, 'If thou believeſt with all thine 'heart, thou mayeſt.' He ſaith not only, 'If thou be'lieveſt;' but, 'If thou believeſt with all thine heart;' which plainly denotes *faith unfeigned*, as the apoſtle ſpeaks; hence then, as Urſin infers, *Ergo, ſi non credas non licet*; 'If thou believeſt not, thou mayeſt not;' which is neceſſarily to be underſtood with reſpect to the judgment of God; for none can ſay, that ſincere faith is neceſſary to a right to the ordinance before the church. And ſo Philip baptizeth him on a credible profeſſion of faith; but withal tells him, that it is no leſs than the truth of faith that can warrant him before the Lord to ſeek baptiſm to himſelf, Acts x. 47. 'Can any 'man forbid water, that theſe ſhould not be baptized, 'which have received the Holy Ghoſt, as well as we?' importing, that if they had not received the Holy Ghoſt, they had no true right to baptiſm; but they had received the Holy Ghoſt, as well as (Gr. *Kathos*, even as) the apoſtle himſelf, and the believing Jews, who received the ſame as a Spirit of ſaving grace, as well as of extraordinary gifts; not only (ſays Piſcator) the gift of tongues, but of Chriſtian faith. Whence he obſerves, That adult perſons, concerning whom it appears from probable arguments that they believe in Chriſt, are to be received into the church by baptiſm. What though this receiving of the Holy Ghoſt have an immediate reſpect to extraordinary gifts, it is no otherwiſe made a ground whereupon they have right to baptiſm, but as it is an evidence of their having the Spirit of ſanctification. They heard them ſpeak with tongues; therefore ſays Peter, 'Can any man forbid water, ſeeing theſe have 'received the gift of the Holy Ghoſt?' which, according to that, Acts ii. 38, 39. did preſuppoſe repentance, at leaſt in appearance; which appearance was the ground of their right *in foro eccleſiæ*, and the reality of the ſame the ground of their right *coram Deo*.

Arg. II. The words of inſtitution make this evident, Matth. xxviii. 19, 20. 'Go ye therefore, and diſciple 'all nations, baptizing them,' &c. They muſt be firſt diſcipled; and then, and not till then, have they a right to be baptized. To be a diſciple of Chriſt and a believer are reciprocal terms, as Chriſt teacheth us, comparing with this, Mark xvi. 16. 'He that believeth and is 'baptized,' &c. And infants may be no leſs diſciples of Chriſt than adult perſons, as is clear from that, Acts xv. 10. 'Now therefore, why tempt you God to put a 'yoke, (viz. circumciſion) on the neck of the diſciples?' The apoſtles underſtood it ſo, as is plain from their practice; which may well be to us a ſufficient commentary hereupon. See how Peter ſets himſelf to his work, Acts ii. 38. 'Repent therefore, and be baptized;' where it is plain, that he requires there repentance antecedently to baptiſm, as neceſſary to qualify them for the right and due reception thereof. And there is no example of baptiſm recorded in the ſcriptures, where any were baptized but ſuch as appeared to have a ſaving intereſt in Chriſt; as afterwards we ſhall ſhow.

Arg. III. This will plainly appear, if we conſider the nature of ſacraments, the ends and uſes for which they are appointed of God, as the ſcriptures do declare the ſame.

1. The ſacraments are not converting, but confirming ordinances; they are appointed for the uſe and benefit of God's children, not of others; they are given to believers as believers, as Rutherford expreſſeth it, ſo that none other are ſubjects capable of the ſame before the Lord. Either we muſt ſay, they have no reſpect at all to ſaving grace; or that they are appointed as means of the conveyance of the firſt grace, that is, to convert ſinners; or, finally, for confirmation of grace already received. If it be ſaid, they have no reſpect at all to ſaving grace, then baptiſm cannot be called the baptiſm of repentance; nor are perſons baptized for the remiſſion of ſins; nor can it be looked on as a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith: all which is evidently againſt ſcripture teſtimony. And I do not remember it is pleaded by any, though Mr Fulwood is pleaſed to ſay, that perſons may be conſidered to be truly baptized without reſpect to ſaving grace. If it be ſaid, they are appointed as means of the conveyance of the firſt grace; then, 1. Either there are none converted before baptiſm which is manifeſtly falſe, Acts viii. 12. 37. or elſe baptiſm is in vain conferred on converts, which is no leſs falſe. But ſurely in vain are means uſed to confer on any that which they have before. 2. It were unfaithfulneſs to Chriſt, and cruelty to men, to with-hold the ſacraments from any perſon whatſoever. Were it not ſoul-murder to with-hold the means of conveyance of the firſt grace from any, and unfaithfulneſs to him, who will have all men to be ſaved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth? But that the ſacraments, and particularly baptiſm, are not to be conferred on all promiſcuouſly, none can deny. Wherefore it remains, they are indeed appointed for confirmation; which doth neceſſarily ſuppoſe the pre-exiſtence of grace in the ſoul, ſeeing that which is not, cannot be confirmed.

2. Baptiſm is appointed of God to be a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith. So teſtifies the apoſtle concerning circumciſion, Rom. iv. 11. and conſequently of baptiſm, which hath now come into its room, Col. ii. 11, 12.——'By the circumciſion of Chriſt: buried with 'him in baptiſm.' This none but Socinians, and ſuch as they, will quarrel. But now none have right to the ſeal, but ſuch as have intereſt in the thing ſealed. The being of a thing is preſuppoſed to the ſealing of it; the contract muſt be made before it be ſealed. No wiſe man will ſeal a blank, far leſs muſt God's ſeal be given to him that hath no intereſt in that which it is appointed to ſeal. And it is evident, that ſuch as are out of Chriſt, have no intereſt in his righteouſneſs, therefore no right before God to the ſeal of it. 'Abraham received cir'cumciſion, (ſays the apoſtle,) a ſeal of the righteouſ'neſs of faith which he had before.' Where the party baptized is one that hath no ſaving intereſt in Chriſt, the ordinance as to him is abuſed, and ſo he hath no right thereto before the Lord. The abuſe is manifeſt from what is ſaid; for, as Witſius teacheth, God ſeals nothing to ſuch a one, that is truly good. The benefits of the covenant he hath neither part nor lot in; how then

can he have right to the ordinance ſealing the ſame? Some poſſibly may ſay, it ſeals the conditional covenant of grace to ſuch a one. But, not to examine the conditionality of the covenant of grace, denied by many godly and learned divines, 1. This is inconſiſtent with the common doctrine of orthodox divines, teaching, That the efficacy of baptiſm is not tied to the moment of time wherein it is adminiſtred: for if it ſeal the conditional covenant to ſuch, it is certain its efficacy is tied to that moment; for we know no other efficacy of it but effectual obſignation. 2. Baptiſm either ſeals that conditional covenant as merely offered and not accepted, or as both offered and accepted. If the firſt be ſaid, then, 1. It ſeals no engagement on our part; which is not only contrary to the orthodox doctrine of divines about baptiſm, but is inconſiſtent with what the ſcriptures ſay of the baptized, their being ‘ buried with ‘ Chriſt in baptiſm, baptized into Chriſt, into one body,’ &c. 2. How then can any deny baptiſm unto thoſe to whom the conditional covenant is held forth, whether they conſent to be diſciples of Chriſt or not? If the ſecond be ſaid, the caſe is altered, yea, the cauſe is yielded; for ſuch as accept of the covenant are in Chriſt, ſeeing there can be no entering now into covenant with God but through the Mediator. It will not help the cauſe to alledge, that it ſeals the conditional covenant, as accepted externally by profeſſion: for God doth propoſe faith, and not profeſſion, as the terms of the conditional covenant of grace; and therefore whoſo come not up to the terms defined by God himſelf in his word, they are not accounted before the Lord to have accepted of the covenant, though before men they may be accounted of ſo; in regard not faith in itſelf, but the profeſſion of it vocal or real, appeareth to them. If any ſhall ſay, that baptiſm ſeals viſible church memberſhip to thoſe that have no ſaving intereſt in Chriſt, his righteouſneſs, &c. I would demand a proof of that, that baptiſm is appointed to ſeal viſible church memberſhip, and no other benefit of the covenant; or where it can be found, that God ſealeth the benefits of the covenant by halves. As Mr. Baxter obſerves, the end of a ſacrament muſt enter the definition thereof; and it is certain it is appointed of God to ſeal the righteouſneſs of faith, remiſſion of ſins, &c. to ſome. If then it be appointed to ſeal only viſible church memberſhip to others, there muſt be two baptiſms, though the apoſtle tells us there is but one, Eph. iv. 5.

3. Let us view thoſe ſcriptures that directly hold forth the nature, ends, and uſes of baptiſm, Matth. iii. 11. ‘ I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, *eis metanoian*. So it is called *the baptiſm of repentance*, Acts xix. 4. ‘ John verily baptized with the baptiſm of ‘ repentance:’ not in reſpect of repentance to come after, but going before; for John baptized none but thoſe that confeſſed their ſins, Matth. iii. 6. and he required of them a profeſſion of their faith in him that was to come, Acts xix. 4. It is called *the baptiſm of repentance, for remiſſion of ſin*, Mark i. 4. Peter calls thoſe pricked at the heart to *repent and be baptiſed for the remiſſion of ſin;* where it can be no otherwiſe underſtood, but in teſtimony and confirmation of remiſſion of ſins, as our divines ſhew againſt the papiſts. Rom. iv. 11. ‘ He received circumciſion, a ſeal of the righte‘ ouſneſs which he had before.’ Gal. iii. 27. ‘ For as ‘ many of you as have been baptized into Chriſt, have ‘ put on Chriſt,’ where baptiſm is made a ſeal of our union with Chriſt, which is one of the ends of baptiſm. This end, ſays a learned man, none but the faithful do obtain; for, as the apoſtle ſays in the ſame place, ‘ Ye ‘ are all the children of God by faith in Chriſt Jeſus.’ So baptiſm is called the laver of regeneration, and we are ſaid to be baptized into Chriſt's death, and into one body; all which are to be underſtood of baptiſm, as ſealing thoſe things done already. From which it appears, that none but ſuch as have an intereſt in Chriſt have right to baptiſm before the Lord. Which will be further clear by the arguments to be adduced for proof of the next concluſion.

Many teſtimonies might be adduced which are given by orthodox divines unto this truth, whereof ſome afterwards ſhall be touched. But Mr Fulwood flies in the face of it, in his diſcourſe of the viſible church. “ The “ word of God (ſays he) Gen. xvii. 23. acknowledgeth “ that one may have a right to the firſt ſeal of the co“ venant, and that *coram Deo*,---that hath no ſaving “ grace.---Iſhmael was thirteen years old, verſ. 25; “ when he was circumciſed, and therefore---of age to “ anſwer for himſelf; yet Iſhmael had no ſaving grace; “ —neither was he within the covenant of Iſaac, the “ covenant of abſolute and certain ſalvation, from which “ he was excluded, verſ. 19. Yet Iſhmael hath a right “ to the firſt ſeal of the covenant *coram Deo*, as is moſt “ evident from the immediate command of God, that “ he that was born in Abraham's houſe,---muſt needs “ be circumciſed, verſ. 12. and accordingly Abraham “ underſtood it.———He proceeds upon the command “ of God to circumciſe Iſhmael firſt of all. Now, “ what is it that giveth one right to any ordinance but “ the command, or at leaſt more evidently than the “ command of God himſelf? And that right which we “ have from God's command, is doubtleſs a right *co*“ *ram Deo*, and in his ſight.”

In anſwer to this, I deny that Iſhmael had a right to circumciſion *coram Deo;* and the contrary is very far from being moſt evident from the immediate commandment of God, ſee Gen. xvii. verſ. 12. The commandment of God layeth an obligation on ſuch as it is directed unto, to make uſe of ſuch an ordinance as the command relateth unto; but it giveth not a right to any ordinance. If the ordinance which the command reſpects be not a ſealing ordinance, then indeed the command preſuppoſeth the perſon's right thereto, and evidenceth it; the ordinance being ſuch as requires no ſpecial qualification in the party to found his right thereto: As it is in the hearing of the word, the command to hear preſuppoſeth a right to hear, otherwiſe miniſters ſhould, at the command of God, preach to them that have no right to hear; for the command to hear obligeth not but when there is ſomething ſpoken that may be heard. But if the ordinance be a ſealing ordinance, as that we now ſpeak of is, then the receiving of it comes under a twofold notion; firſt, of a duty; and, ſecondly, of a ſpecial privilege; the confounding whereof, or not diſtinguiſhing of the ſame, ſeems to be the ground of this miſtake. It is a duty becauſe commanded; it is a ſpecial privilege, becauſe allowed only to a certain ſort of perſons. Now, in ſuch a caſe there is ſome ſpecial qualification in the party required to found his right to the ſealing ordinance. I think this learned man will not ſay but it was neceſſary, that the party having right to circumciſion, ſhould be one in covenant with God, whatever that covenant be ſaid to be; and that a perſon no way in covenant with God, could have no right thereto *coram Deo:* ſo that the right to that ordinance turned on the hinge of perſonal qualifications undeniably; and the command of God did not give a right to it, but obliged to the qualification (whatever it was,) and to the uſe-making of the ordinance, and that conjunctly; but did not ſo much as evidence a right thereto, either before God or the church. And what is ſaid of circumciſion, agrees to all ſealing ordinances; ſo that what is alledged by the learned man concerning the right to a ſealing ordinance, from God's command obliging to receive, it is *de ſubjecto non ſupponente*, in my opinion. And the thing he had to prove, was, that the command of God in ſuch a caſe gives a right to the ordinance; which cannot be received without proof, and upon a bare aſſertion. When Peter, in the name of the Lord, commands every one of thoſe to whom he ſpoke, to be baptized, Acts ii. 38. it did indeed oblige them to ſubmit to that holy ordinance, but in the mean time to go about it in God's way, and to be perſons duly qualified for baptiſm. But this command did not evidence their right thereto, either *coram Deo* or *coram eccleſia*, while they continued impenitent murderers of the Lord of glory; nay nor at all; for it was upon their gladly receiving the word that the apoſtle proceeded to admit them. Here then I would aſk, 1. Whether or no thoſe perſons to whom the apoſtle ſaid, ‘Be baptized every one of you,’ were obliged to ſubmit to this ordinance? That they were, is manifeſt, if the command of God, by the mouth of his ſervant, could oblige them. 2. Whether or no, while they continued impenitent mockers of religion, enemies to Chriſt, neither ſorrowing for their ſins nor profeſſing ſorrow for them, not believing nor repenting, nor appearing ſo to do, might the apoſtles have baptized them? or could they lawfully have received baptiſm? Whoſo will ſay they might, would pour contempt on Chriſt's holy ordinance. Sure I am, had they baptized them in ſuch a caſe, they had gone beyond the bounds of their commiſſion, obliging them firſt to diſciple, then to baptize. From all which it appears, that perſons may be obliged to the receiving of baptiſm by virtue of the command of God, and yet have no right thereto, either before God or the church. Again, the command of Chriſt, ‘Do this in remembrance of me,’ obligeth all that hear the goſpel to partake of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, as God giveth opportunity; yet it neither gives all a right thereto before God or the church: nay nor does it evidence the ſame; for there are many that may not lawfully partake, and many that may not lawfully be admitted thereto by church-officers, notwithſtanding that the command of God obligeth them to do this. If it be their ſin not to partake, which it muſt needs be, Chriſt revealing his will to them, whereof this is a part; then it is their duty to receive it: yet they may not lawfully receive it, while continuing in their open wickedneſs. All that hear the goſpel have not a right to it, either before God or the church, as I think none will deny. All indeed ought to eat: but according to the apoſtle, they muſt firſt examine themſelves and then eat, 1 Cor. xi. 28. Urſin upon that queſtion, *Who ought to come to the ſupper?* tells us, “The ſacraments are appointed for the faithful and con-“verted only, to ſeal the promiſe of the goſpel to them, “and confirm their faith.” And that the wicked and hypocrites ought not to come; not that they are not obliged to come, that is not his meaning; but that they cannot lawfully come, as is manifeſt from what he ſays afterwards, that ſuch not coming *peccatum peccato cumulant*, ‘heap ſin on ſin.’ But hear the objection againſt this doctrine, and his anſwer to it. “*Object*. God com-“mands all to make uſe of the ſacraments; *Anſw*. “He commands to all the uſe of the ſacraments; yet “the lawful uſe, which is not without faith and repen-“tance. He commands that all be baptized, and make “uſe of the ſupper; but he alſo commands that all be-“lieve and repent, Acts ii. 38.” Let us ſuppoſe, a maſter commands his ſervant to ſow his ground; doth this give a right to him to go immediately and caſt in the ſeed, before that ever he break the ground with the plough, and make it fit for the receiving of the ſeed? Should he go thus to work, he were a diſobedient ſervant. Neither could it excuſe that he had his maſter's immediate command to ſow his ground. Even ſo in the preſent caſe. Iſhmael being by the command of God obliged to receive the ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith, was *eo ipſo* obliged to receive the righteouſneſs of faith; and till then he had no right to the ſeal before the Lord.

Concl. II. Viſible believers, and ſuch as have a profeſſion of religion, probably ſignifying their having of a ſaving intereſt in Chriſt, have a right to baptiſm before the church, ſo that they may be admitted thereto, though indeed they have no ſaving grace, yea nor never ſhall have it. This may be allowed without a ſcrupulous inquiry into their ſtate before God; and men in this caſe ought to take the firſt probable profeſſion as the ground of admiſſion. All this is clear from the examples of baptiſm recorded in the ſcriptures, particularly from the practice of John the baptiſt, Matth. iii. 6. and of Philip baptizing the Samaritans, and amongſt them Simon the Magician; and his baptizing the Eunuch, Acts viii. And truly, if an apparently ſerious profeſſion did not warrant the church to give the ſeals to ſuch perſons as have it, they could adminiſter them to none without a revelation from God as to the perſon's ſtate before the Lord. But this is ſo plain, that it were in vain to ſtand upon further proof thereof. And therefore we proceed to

Concl. III. None but viſible believers, or ſuch as appear to have a ſaving intereſt in Chriſt, have right to baptiſm before the church. Whatever people do profeſs, in words, as to their faith in Chriſt, &c. if their profeſſion be openly and viſibly contradicted and belyed by their practice; if they be habitually profane in their walk, or groſsly ignorant of the fundamental points of the Chriſtian religion, they ought not to be baptized, though they offer themſelves to baptiſm.

Arg. I. ‘That which is holy is not to be given ‘to dogs, neither are pearls to be caſt before ſwine,’ Matth. vii. 6. But the ſacrament of baptiſm is a holy thing, and thoſe that are not viſible ſaints, are viſible dogs and ſwine: Prov. xxvi. 11. ‘As a dog returneth ‘to his vomit, ſo a fool to his folly,’ 2 Pet. ii. 18, 20. Who is *the fool*, but *he that underſtandeth not*, and *doth not ſeek after God, who is altogether corrupt and filthy?* Pſal xiv. Our Lord himſelf tells us, that ‘it is not ‘meet to take the childrens bread, and caſt it to dogs,’ Matth. xv. 26. And therefore as Zanchy ſaith, “to ad-“mit unto the ſacrament of baptiſm the impenitent and “unbelievers, what elſe is it but to trample under foot “the blood of Chriſt, and expoſe it to mockery?” It were frivolous to ſay, that if this prove aught, it would prove that no unregenerate man ought to be baptized; for they are thoſe fools; for indeed, as was ſaid before, none of theſe have a right to the ordinance before the Lord. But be what they will as to their ſtate before God, unleſs they appear to us to be *fools*, *dogs*, and *ſwine*, we are not to hold them as ſuch, but to eſteem them viſible ſaints, as they are indeed ſuppoſed to be.

Arg. II. None ought to be baptized but viſible diſciples of Chriſt; for in baptiſm there is an open acknowledging of the party for a diſciple of Chriſt. He ought to be looked on as a ſervant of the great Maſter, before he get on his badge, and wear his livery. The commiſſion for baptizing runs ſo, firſt to *make diſciples*, then to *baptize*, Matth. xxviii. 19. And this is the very native order of theſe things. But none but viſible believers can be acknowledged for Chriſt's diſciples. *Ergo*. The aſſumption I prove, 1. None can be eſteemed Chriſt's diſciples, but thoſe that appear to have *learned of the Father*, and ſo alſo have *come to Chriſt*, being drawn effectually by the Father, John vi. 44, 45.; and none but viſible believers are ſuch. Though that the Lord may have begun to teach others, and they are beginning to learn of him, yet till this appear to us, we can never reckon them diſciples of Chriſt. Let it be remembered, that we do acknowledge infants to be diſciples of Chriſt, as well as adult perſons; and whatever is, or may be ſaid on this head, muſt be underſtood *de ſubjecto capaci*, and but prejudice to the holy ſeed, the infants of the faithful. 2. We muſt judge of people's diſcipleſhip by their fruit, Matth. vii. 20. ‘By their fruit ſhall ye know them;’ viz. whether they be Chriſt's diſciples or the devil's. This our Lord plainly teacheth, John xv. 8. ‘Herein is my Father glori-‘fied, that ye bring forth much fruit; ſo ſhall ye be’ (i. e. appear, yea further appear, to be) ‘my diſciples.’ The ſame is taught, John viii. 31. ‘If ye continue in ‘my word, then are ye my diſciples indeed.’ Hence it plainly follows, that none but viſible ſaints are viſible diſciples of Chriſt, and that ſuch whoſe practice belyes their profeſſion are excluded. 3. Such as are worſe than infidels, cannot be reckoned diſciples of Chriſt; ſuch as have ‘ denied the faith, are worſe than infidels,’ 1 Tim. v. 8.; and thoſe whoſe practice openly contradicts their profeſſion, have denied the faith; for though they ‘ profeſs to know God, yet in works they deny him,’ Tit. i. 16.; and it is horrid indeed to think on ſealing them with the ſeal of the covenant that in their works deny God, unto whom *nothing is pure, who are abominable, diſobedient, and to every good work reprobate.* 4. We are plainly inſtructed what it is without which none can be Chriſt's diſciples, Luke xiv. 26, 27. ‘ If any man——hate not his father and mother;——and whoſoever doth not bear his croſs, and come after me, cannot be my diſciple.’ Will Chriſt acknowledge men as his diſciples on no other terms? then without the appearance of theſe things, we ought not to reckon perſons his diſciples. Neither are ever any called diſciples of Chriſt in the ſcriptures, but ſuch as were viſible believers. We read indeed, John vi. 66. that ‘ many of his diſciples went back, and walked no more with him,’ and ſo ſome viſible believers apoſtatize; not that they are viſible diſciples of Chriſt when they fall into a total and final apoſtaſy; but they that now are apoſtates, were viſible diſciples of Chriſt before. When we ſay, an *apoſtate diſciple*, or a *diſciple gone back*, the term *diſciple* is affected with alienation, as philoſophers ſpeak; as when we ſay, a dead man, the meaning is, he who was a man while living, is now dead. Hence it appears, that the argument taken by Fulwood from this ſcripture, to prove that the viſible church may be conſidered to be truly a church of Chriſt without reſpect to ſaving grace, is of no uſe to his purpoſe. “ Now, let it be ſuppoſed, (ſays he,) that they now ceaſed to be diſciples, (and truly I think it may not only be *ſuppoſed*, but fully *concluded* they now ceaſed to be diſciples,) yet this only evidenceth, for the time paſt, that they never had any true grace, howbeit they were then diſciples. Unleſs they had gone on, they could not have gone back; and ſo long as they went on, they were diſciples. Not thoſe that ſeemed, but thoſe that were diſciples, went back.’ It is true indeed, that the apoſtaſy of theſe perſons evidenced, for the time paſt, that they never had any true grace; but it did not evidence that they never had any evidence, before men, of true grace, or that they never had any appearance of true grace, which, unleſs his argument prove it, cannot reach his concluſion: yea, it evidenceth the quite contrary, that they had ſome time an appearance of ſaving grace, in ſo far as they were accounted diſciples of Chriſt, and to have walked with him. But I deny that their apoſtaſy only evidenced they had no true grace; it evidenced alſo, that they were never the true diſciples, whom Chriſt ſent his diſciples to make and baptize, and ſo no church-members before God: for, as Mr Baxter ſaith, “ When Chriſt ſaith, “ Make me diſciples of all nations, baptizing them,” he “ means ſincere diſciples, though we cannot ever know them to be ſincere.” It is a weak criticiſm, to remark, that it was not thoſe that ſeemed, but thoſe that were diſciples, that went back; for *were* is no more in the text than *ſeemed*. And what if I ſay, they were ſeeming diſciples, and not real? But they were indeed viſible diſciples before their viſible apoſtacy; they were as really viſible diſciples as Peter and John were; but when they apoſtatiſed, they ceaſed to be viſible diſciples.

Arg. III. All the examples of baptiſm recorded in the ſcripture, hold forth none to have been baptized, but thoſe that before baptiſm appeared to have a ſaving intereſt in Chriſt. Thoſe whom John the Baptiſt admitted, were ſuch as ‘ confeſſed their ſins,’ Matth. iii. 6. So thoſe baptized by Peter, Acts ii. 42. *Then they that gladly received his word, were baptized.* The Samaritans believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jeſus Chriſt, and then were baptized, Acts viii. 12. ‘ Simon himſelf believed alſo, and was baptized,’ ver. 13. *The eunuch ſaid, I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God, and then was baptized,* ver. 37, 38. Paul is firſt converted, and then baptized, Acts ix. 18. The centurion, and thoſe with him, received the Holy Ghoſt; and therefore none could forbid water. So Lydia, Acts xvi. 14, 15. the jailor, ver. 32, 33. Criſpus and others, Acts xviii. 8. Neither can any inſtance be adduced wherein the matter appears to have been handled otherwiſe; and ſurely theſe examples are our rule in this caſe. What though ſome of them, as Simon Magus, were indeed hypocrites, the argument nevertheleſs holds good, if their hypocriſy did not appear before they were baptized; which cannot be proven to have been even in the caſe of Simon: yea it appears right plainly, from the hiſtory of him, that it was ſome time after he was baptized that his hyprocriſy appeared; for, after he was baptized, he continued with Philip all the time, till the apoſtles which were at Jeruſalem ſent unto Samaria Peter and John, and the Samaritans received the Holy Ghoſt through the laying on of the apoſtles hands.

Arg. IV. If the admiſſion of ſuch to baptiſm as are not viſible ſaints, be a profaning of the holy ordinance, then they have no right before the church thereto, nor ought they to be baptized; the former is true: *Ergo*, the latter alſo. The profanation of the ordinance appears, in that thoſe are declared to be real members of Chriſt, clothed with the real righteouſneſs of Chriſt, bleſſed with the pardon of ſin, &c. who, to the ſight of the world, have, or at leaſt appear to have, none of theſe things: for baptiſm, as was ſhown before, is appointed of God to ſeal theſe and ſuch like; and ſo is a teſtifying ſign that the party baptized is ſuch a one. Wherefore, to baptize ſuch perſons, were to proclaim an agreement betwixt Chriſt and Belial, and to ſet up for concord betwixt light and darkneſs, and ſeal the ſame with a witneſs; which cannot be but an abuſe of God's holy ordinance. It was a heavy charge againſt the prieſts, Ezek. xxii. 26. that they *had violated God's holy law, and profaned his holy things; and put no difference between the holy and profane, nor ſhewed difference between the clean and unclean.* Now the law which they violated in this we have expreſsly ſet down, Lev. x. 8, 9, 10. ‘ And the Lord ſpake unto Aaron, ſaying, Do not drink wine nor ſtrong drink, thou, nor thy ſons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation; leſt ye die: it ſhall be a ſtatute for ever throughout your generations; and that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean.’ The firſt reſpects moral, the other ceremonial purity and impurity. And this putting difference is evidently diſtinguiſhed from the ſhewing difference doctrinally; as appears from verſ. 11. *And that ye may teach the children of Iſrael*, &c. Now, ſurely the Lord doth as little allow the profaning of his holy things under the goſpel, as under the law; and the putting no difference betwixt the holy and profane, cannot but be a profaning of God's holy things, now as well as then. The prieſts alſo are reproved for bringing into the ſanctuary, ſtrangers uncircumciſed in heart and in fleſh, and thereby polluting it, Ezek. xliv. 7. And to prevent the miſtake, leſt they ſhould think that the only ground of the quarrel was, that ſuch were uncircumciſed in fleſh, the Lord tells them, verſ. 9. that ‘ no ſtranger uncircumciſed in heart, nor uncircumciſed in fleſh, ſhall enter into his ſanctuary.’ Mark the disjunctive particle, ‘ uncircumciſed in heart, nor in fleſh.’ Was the ſanctuary more holy than the ſacrament of baptiſm is? will moral impurity pollute the one, and not the other? If any ſhall ſay, that this reſpects not *Iſraelites*, but *ſtrangers;* and ſo although it may hold good in our caſe as to profeſſed Pagans, yet not as to profeſſed Chriſtians: I anſwer, 1. The ſtrangers were debarred from the ſanctuary as uncircumciſed in heart, therefore all uncircumciſed in heart were debarred ; for *a qua tali ad omne valet conſequentia*. 2. The Lord expreſsly reproves the profane Iſraelites for entering into his ſanctuary, Jer. vii. 9, 10, 11.

Arg. V. ult. If none have a right to baptiſm before the Lord but real ſaints, then none have a right to it before the church but viſible ſaints. The argument has been already proven ; and the conſequent is very plain. Theſe two poſitions do mutually eſtabliſh one another. If the word debar all from the ſacraments that are not real ſaints, to admit ſuch as have no appearance of ſaintſhip, were to pull in with the one hand, while we ſhut out with the other ; which is the high way to make people Atheiſts, and to believe nothing that is preached. When God hath declared, that none have right before him to the ſeals of the covenant, but thoſe that have a ſaving intereſt in his Son, in whom ‘ the promiſes are yea and amen ;’ and hath required the diſpenſers of the holy myſteries, to ‘ put a difference betwixt the holy and unholy, and to ſeparate betwixt the precious and the vile,’ and told us, that ‘ we ſhall know them by their fruits ;’ men ought to beware of admitting ſuch as plainly appear to be profane and vile. Men muſt not be blind, when the works of the fleſh are manifeſt, Gal. v. 19.

Now, all this doth no way prejudice the right of infants to baptiſm *coram eccleſia*, for the infants of viſible believers, are no leſs viſible believers than they themſelves are, ſeeing the Lord declares himſelf to be not only the *believer's God*, but *the God of his ſeed*. “ We “ do not tie (ſay the profeſſors of Leyden) the efficacy “ of baptiſm to that moment when the body is waſhed ; “ but we do, with the ſcripture, prerequire faith and “ repentance in all that are to be baptized, at leaſt ac- “ cording to the judgment of charity ; and that as well “ in infants that are within the covenant ; in whom by “ the power of God's bleſſing and of the goſpel cove- “ nant, we affirm, that there is the ſeed and ſpirit of “ faith and repentance ; as in the aged, in whom the “ profeſſion of actual faith and repentance is neceſſary.” Yea, ſaith Zanchius, “ We muſt believe, that an in- “ fant of faithful parents is already baptized with the “ baptiſm of the Spirit, ſeeing it is in the covenant.” It were eaſy to heap up teſtimonies given by orthodox divines to the firſt and third concluſions. Urſin gives his judgment thereanent in two theſes. “ All (ſays “ he,) and only the regenerate lawfully, receive bap- “ tiſm. The church adminiſtereth baptiſm lawfully to “ all, and only theſe whom ſhe ought to account in “ the number of the regenerate.”

CONCL. IV. All infants deſcended of parents, whereof one only is a viſible believer, hath right to baptiſm before the church ; they ought to be baptized, whether it be the father or mother that makes a credible profeſſion. Such as are in covenant with God viſibly ; we are to look on them as probably within the covenant as to the ſaving benefits thereof, ſo that none can forbid water. The apoſtle plainly tells us, they are not *unclean* but *holy*, 1 Cor. vii. 14. and therefore ſubjects lawfully capable of this ordinance. I find no need to inſiſt on this point, being fully ſatisfied therein, and knowing none that deny it who do not altogether reject infant-baptiſm. If it be inquired, Who is to be ſponſor for the child when the father is an unbeliever ? I anſwer the father cannot be admitted, ſeeing there is no reaſon to expect that he will bring up his child in the fear of that God, the fear of whom is not before his own eyes ; or in that religion, to which he himſelf is a ſtranger. To overlook the mother, and to require another to be ſponſor for the child, I ſee no reaſon. But the mother is to be ſponſor for the child ; 1. Becauſe it ſeems the child hath its right by her. 2. Becauſe the ſcripture lays the bonds on her ; ſo that ſhe is antecedently obliged to bring up her child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, Eph. vi. 4. 3. Becauſe ſhe is the perſon moſt to be truſted in ſuch a weighty concern. Whoever it be that preſents the child to be baptized, I ſuppoſe is not material, providing he or ſhe be a church-member. Neither is it neceſſary that the ſponſor preſent the child ; but if it can be conveniently done, it ought to be. Only in the caſe ſuppoſed, the bonds being laid on the mother, it is not reaſonable the child ſhould want the ſeal of the covenant till ſhe be able to appear in the congregation, if providence allow an opportunity before that time.

But now I come to the main point of this inquiry, viz. Whether or not all infants born of Chriſtian parents, ſo called in oppoſition to Jews, Turks, and Pagans, have a right before the church to baptiſm ? or, Whether the open wickedneſs, profanity, or groſs ignorance of the parents, ſhould hinder the infant to be baptized, till either the parents reform, or the child come to mature age, and by his perſonal walk ſatisfy the church as to his right to that ordinance ? What hath been ſaid to the former point, ſeems pretty clear ; but to determine this, *hoc opus, hic labor eſt*.

Many godly and learned hold the former part of that queſtion, though, as I apprehend, on different grounds ; all which I conceive, are expreſſed by Zanchy, and Oliver Bowles. Their words are as follows. “ The chil- “ dren of thoſe, ſays that judicious divine Zanchius, “ that are indeed in the church, but, becauſe of their “ unclean way of living, declare that they are not in- “ deed of the church ; if they be offered to baptiſm, they “ cannot be debarred therefrom, nor ought they. “ The reaſon is, Becauſe though the parents be wicked, “ yet their impiety ought not to prejudge their chil- “ dren *which are born within the church*. But if you “ ſay, only the children of the faithful are to be bapti- “ zed, becauſe thoſe infants only are judged to be with- “ in the covenant, and they only holy ; I anſwer, the “ impiety of their neareſt parents is not to be conſider- “ ed here, but *the impiety of the church in which they* “ *are born* ;——as alſo *their anceſtors who have lived* “ *godly and holily*.” “ All infants (ſays Mr Bowles) “ who, in the judgment of charity, are within the co- “ venant, are to be baptized.——And baptiſm is to be “ adminiſtred exactly according to this judgment of “ charity. And that judgment concludes all to be “ within the covenant, *whoſe parents were ſometime* “ *ſealed with the ſeal of the covenant*.” Hereto add Mr Fulwood's notion of it. He judgeth the children of openly wicked parents are to be baptized, becauſe their *parents may be really members of the viſible church*, (notwithſtanding their want of ſaving grace,) and *really baptized*. And ſo they allow the children of ſuch heretics amongſt whom the formula of baptiſm remains ſafe, children of excommunicate parents, baſtards, if there be any *evidence of the baptiſm*, at leaſt *of one of the parents*. Some add foundlings. Bowles requires that there be ſponſors found in order to the baptizing of theſe children of heretics, &c. otherwiſe he acknowledges the action to be luſory, and baptiſm to be polluted. I remember there is a queſtion, Whether or no the infants of Pagans, Turks, or Jews, wholly in the power of a Chriſtian believer, being by him devoted to Chriſt, ought to be baptized ? This is by Mr Baxter reſolved in the affirmative, on ſcripture-grounds. In this caſe, the infant's right is wholly from the ſponſor. Now, if the children of openly wicked Chriſtians be put in this caſe, the plea for their right to baptiſm from their being born in the church, of godly progenitors, of baptized immediate parents, falls to the ground. But I ſuppoſe thoſe learned men mean no ſuch thing ; but that, by virtue of their birth-privilege, the children of openly wicked Chriſtian parents have a right to baptiſm ; and that, laying aſide the caſe of ſuch ſponſors from whom the infants wholly derive their right to the ordinance, it is not neceſſary that one of the parents be a viſible believer, or have a ſerious and credible profeſſion, in order to their childrens having a right to baptiſm *coram eccleſia*. And for proof of this point, let the following arguments be conſidered.

Arg. I. The ſeal of the covenant belongs to all thoſe that are within the covenant; but the infants of all Chriſtian parents are with the covenant: for ſo runs the covenant, ‘I will be thy God, and the God of thy ſeed.’ Seeing the parents are ſealed with the ſeal, they muſt needs be within the covenant, and conſequently their ſeed alſo. The covenant is not made with the root, but alſo with the offspring; and if ſo, why may not the ſeal of the covenant be effectual, not only to the baptized parent, if he believe, but alſo render his ſeed capable at leaſt of the external ſign. Wherefore the apoſtle ſaith, ‘Now are your children holy,’ to wit, by external holineſs; whereby they are reputed to be within the covenant, being come of ſuch a parent as hath given up his or her name to Chriſt, 1 Cor. vii. 14. Let it be duly conſidered what was the caſe that was ſo ſtraitening to thoſe Corinthians, which Paul doth reſolve in the forecited place. It was not, whether or not the godly huſband or wiſe might lawfully abide in the ſtate of marriage with a wicked Chriſtian yokefellow? but, whether or no the Chriſtian huſband or wiſe might lawfully abide in that ſtate with a Pagan? The apoſtle tells them they might, and gives the reaſon, *For the unbelieving huſband it ſanctified to the believing wiſe*, i. e. the Pagan to the Chriſtian; and gives the reaſon, *Elſe were your children unclean; but now they are holy.* And it is very palpable, there was very open wickedneſs amongſt that people. What ſad diviſions and diſorders were among them? They tolerated the inceſtuous perſon; they did not mourn, but were puffed up; ſome of them were drunken when they came to the Lord's table; ſome denied the reſurrection, &c. Notwithſtanding of all, the apoſtle tells them their children were holy, conſequently within the covenant, and to be baptized.

Arg. II. The infant not having ſtretched forth its hand to the parents iniquity, muſt not bear his ſin, at leaſt in ſpirituals, Ezek. xviii. 20. *The ſon ſhall not bear the iniquity of the father: the ſoul that ſinneth it ſhall die.* But ſurely, if no infants ſhould be admitted to baptiſm but thoſe of viſible believers, many infants born of Chriſtian parents ſhould be debarred, and ſo uncontrovertibly bear the iniquity of their fathers. If God hath manifeſted his mercy ſo far, that the child ſhould not bear the father's ſin, they ſeem to go ſtrangely to work that will debar poor infants becauſe of the wicked life of their parents, in which they, poor ſouls, have no hand. Which is the more to be noticed, and calls people to be the more wary, if we conſider that many a time God brings choſen veſſels out of the loins of the moſt profligate parents. Even in the family of Jeroboam was one ‘found in whom there was ſome good thing found toward the God of Iſrael.’

Arg. III. If the hereſy, impiety, or profanity of the Jewiſh parents did not exclude their children from circumciſion, then the hereſy, profanity, or impiety of Chriſtian parents, cannot exclude their children from baptiſm; the former is true: *Ergo.* The conſequence is plain; for baptiſm is the ſame to us that circumciſion was to them; ‘circumciſion was a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith,’ Rom. iv. 11. as well as baptiſm; and none will ſay, that the grace of God is more narrow under the New Teſtament, than it was under the Old. The minor is no leſs manifeſt, if we conſider theſe four things. 1. The univerſality of the command, with reſpect to circumciſion, Gen. xvii. 10. ‘Every man-child among you ſhall be circumciſed;’ which command is repeated, verſ. 12. Here is no exception. The puniſhment or cenſure to be inflicted on the uncircumciſed man-child among the Jews, verſ. 14. ‘The uncircumciſed man-child ſhall be cut off from his people,’ 4. Conſider the practice of Joſhua, who at God's command circumciſed the children of Iſrael at Gilgal, Joſh. v. where it is expreſsly ſaid, ‘When they had done circumciſing all the people,’ ver. 8. yet theſe were the children of them whom God for their wickedneſs kept out of Canaan, who fell in the wilderneſs, who vexed his holy Spirit forty years, ſo that he ſware they ſhould never enter into his reſt. And they themſelves cannot be ſuppoſed to be all viſible believers. 4. We never read of any of the Iſraelites children that were debarred from that ordinance on any pretence whatſoever. From all which it is evident, that the impiety of the Jewiſh parents did not debar their children from circumciſion, and therefore as little can the impiety of Chriſtians debar theirs from baptiſm. Here is a grant of the firſt ſeal of the covenant, yea, a command to receive the ſame, directed unto the children of all that are externally in covenant with God, as Chriſtians and their ſeed are. If any will ſay, it is now done away, and concerns not us under the New-Teſtament diſpenſation; they muſt acknowledge themſelves obliged to ſhew us the repeal thereof in the ſacred records, otherwiſe confeſs it ſtill ſtands in force.

Arg. IV. This doth further appear, if we conſider that ſcripture, Acts ii. 38, 39. *Repent therefore, and be baptized every one of you.—For the promiſe is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God ſhall call.* Now, what is that promiſe he ſpeaks of, but the great promiſe, ‘I will be thy God, and the God of thy ſeed?’ The apoſtle hereby means to ſtir them up to repentance, and to be baptized: and for their encouragement he tells them, ‘the promiſe is to them and their ſeed’ Note, that the promiſe is to them antecedently to their repenting; this is plain, becauſe the apoſtle's argument is truly thus, The promiſe is to you, therefore repent and be baptized: he argues from their privilege to their duty. Again, the promiſe is ſaid to be to ſuch ‘as are afar off, even as many as God ſhall call,’ meaning the Gentiles, Eph. ii. 13. ‘Ye who ſometimes were afar off.’ The call here ſpoken of, is the outward and external call, which puts the Gentiles into the ſame caſe with thoſe Jews who ſurely were not ſavingly called, ſo that the promiſe is to their ſeed alſo, as well as to the Jews ſeed. Hence I form a twofold argument.

1. If the promiſe be to the born Iſraelites and their ſeed, even antecedently to their repenting, then the promiſe is unto perſons within the Chriſtian church and to their ſeed, antecedently to true repentance in them; but the former is true; *Ergo.* And if the promiſe be ſo to them, the ſeal of it muſt be ſo likewiſe.

2. The promiſe is to the Gentiles, whom the Lord externally calleth, and to their ſeed; but ſuch are openly wicked Chriſtian parents: *Ergo.* Who can forbid water to their infants?

Arg. V. John the Baptiſt and the apoſtles admitted all to baptiſm that offered themſelves, Matth. iii. 5, 6. ‘Then went out to him Jeruſalem and all Judea, and were baptized of him.’ He debarred none; no not the Phariſees, whom yet he called *a generation of vipers*, verſ. 7. That he did baptize them, is clear from his own expreſs teſtimony, verſ. 11. where ſpeaking to the Phariſees and Sadducees, he ſaith, ‘I indeed baptize you with water,’ Luke iii. 21. it is expreſsly ſaid, ‘When all the people were baptized.’ Now the practice of John plainly holds forth, that they had a right to that ordinance, and that they were in covenant: *Ergo, a majori* the infants of wicked Chriſtian parents are to be baptized. Now, if we look to the apoſtles, we ſhall find, that notwithſtanding of all that John baptized, yet Chriſt by his diſciples baptized more than he; as the Evangeliſt expreſsly teſtifies, John iv. 1. Philip on a bare profeſſion of faith baptized the Eunuch; and ſo in other examples. Now, it is certain, that they would never have refuſed baptiſm to the infants of the parents whom they baptized; but ſo it is, that thoſe children whoſe title to this ordinance is queſtioned, are the children of ſuch parents as profeſs their faith in Chriſt; why then ſhould not their right to the ordinance be acknowledged?

Arg. VI. Thoſe children whom God acknowledgeth to be born to him, and to be his children, have a right to the firſt ſeal of the covenant; for what children have right to it, if God's children, ſuch as are born to him, have it not? but ſo it is that God owneth the children of the Jewiſh wicked parents to be born unto him, and to be his children: *Ergo*, Ezek. xvi. 20, 21. ‘Moreover, thou haſt taken thy ſons and thy daughters, ‘whom thou haſt born unto me, and theſe thou haſt ‘ſacrificed unto them to be devoured:—Thou haſt ‘ſlain my children, and delivered them to cauſe them ‘to paſs through the fire unto them.’ Here is moſt groſs and open wickedneſs of the parents, yet the Lord will not have it to prejudge the church ſtate of the children.

Arg. VII. If none but the infants of viſible believers have right to baptiſm, and ought to be baptized; then, 1. Families, pariſhes, and whole countries, might come in a ſhort time to be paganized; ſeeing in many places there are ſo very few viſible believers. 2. Through the rigidity and indiſcretion of church officers, many poor infants who are the children of believing parents ſhould be deprived of that ordinance: for people may go to heaven while we hear not the ſound of their feet: and it is well known ſaving grace may lie hid under the aſhes of much ignorance and corruption. 3. Then miniſters ſhould have no certain rule to walk by in baptizing any infants. All that is left to them, is their opinion: They think ſuch a one to be a believer, and ſuch an one to be an unbeliever; and therefore they will baptize the infants of the one, not of the other: and they may be miſtaken as to both, they may take a ſheep for a goat, and a goat for a ſheep. Is this ſure ſtanding? or can we ſuppoſe that God hangs ſuch a weighty matter as this upon the opinion and fallible judgment of men? one poſſibly thinks ſuch a meaſure of knowledge, and ſuch a walk, to be ſufficient ground whereon he may judge a man a believer: another will think ſo little will not ſerve the turn: Where ſhall we faſten? Surely theſe things hang not on ſuch uncertainties.

Arg. VIII. The children of baptized church-members ought to be baptized: but the children of many openly ſcandalous and wicked parents are the children of baptized church-members: therefore ſuch children ought to be baptized. This argument is Mr Fulwood's, and is the reſult of a large diſcourſe concerning the viſible church. And ſo much for the proof of this point.

Notwithſtanding of all that is ſaid for the right of the infants of ſuch Chriſtians, ſome are of opinion, that one of the parents muſt needs be a viſible believer, or have a ſerious credible or probable profeſſion, or elſe the child hath no right before the church to baptiſm. And truly, though I have not wilfully diſſembled any thing that might add more force to theſe arguments, but have repreſented them to the beſt advantage, ſo far as it occured to me, yet I ſtill doubt of the truth of that poſition: and therefore I will now propoſe ſome arguments that make me to doubt the truth of it, and incline me to the latter opinion, that I may at leaſt eaſe my mind a little, by caſting forth theſe my doubts into this paper.

In the firſt place, We muſt conſider, whether infants may derive their right from their mediate and remote parents, or only from their immediate parents; for to bury this in ſilence, were to beat the air in arguing for the laſt poſition. And if I underſtand ought of this controverſy, this is one of the main hinges of it. Some learned men diſtruſting the right of infants from ſuch immediate parents as are openly wicked, who declare by their impure life they are not of the church, do derive the right of ſuch infants from their mediate or remote parents, who lived a godly and holy life. I find two ſcriptures adduced for proof of this. The one is, Rom. xi. 16. ‘If the root be holy, ſo are the branches.’ “By “the root (ſays Zanchius) he underſtands not their “neareſt parents, who perhaps were wicked; but thoſe “firſt fathers of the Jewiſh people, Abraham, Iſaac, “and Jacob, to whom was made and confirmed the “promiſe and covenant, that God would be their God, “and the God of their whole ſeed, by a perpetual co“venant. Therefore all their poſterity, who had not “altogether apoſtatized to the gods of the Gentiles, “were, I ſay, they all were in the covenant, and they “were judged holy by reaſon of covenant-holineſs, *fœ“deris ſanctitate ſancti judicabantur*.” Hence the promiſe is ſaid to be to them and their ſeed, (Acts ii. 39.) many generations after Abraham. Another ſcripture is that, Exod. xx. 6. ‘Shewing mercy to thouſands of ‘them that love me, and keep my commandments,’ while he viſits iniquity only to the third and fourth generation. The truth is, if this were ſatisfyingly explained, and convincingly proven, the difficulty of the caſe would be in great meaſure removed. Againſt it let theſe few reaſons be conſidered.

I. I obſerve, that the learned men who plead this, muſt needs diſown the neceſſity of the baptiſm of one of the parents; and ſo they ſhall be judged holy, and within the covenant, and to have right to baptiſm, whoſe immediate parents were never ſo much as baptized; beſides, that they are openly wicked in their lives: for it is plain, that godly progenitors may have ſuch come of them as are unbaptized. But notwithſtanding, according to this opinion, the children of ſuch unbaptized parents may have right to baptiſm, and ought to be baptized; which will not be granted, (as we heard before,) even by ſuch as agree with them in the main point; and I ſuppoſe, there are few that will be ſatisfied with leſs than the baptiſm of one of the immediate parents.

II. Are there not many infants born in ſuch places where God has a church, whoſe immediate and mediate parents, ſo far as any man now living knoweth or can remember, have been brutiſhly ignorant, profane, or both; ſo that the God in whoſe name the infant is to be baptized, is a God whom neither they nor their fathers have known? As to theſe we may crave leave to inquire, *Quomodo conſtat?* What evidence is there that their mediate parents have lived a godly and holy life? I think no man that conſiders for how many generations God hath left ſome nations without the knowledge of his will concerning man's ſalvation, will obtain of himſelf to build his charity in this point upon that, that God ‘viſits the inquity of the fathers on the children to the ‘third and fourth generation’ only.

III. If it be ſufficient to give an infant a right to baptiſm, that it is come of godly progenitors, then the children of ſome Pagans and Mahometans have a right to baptiſm, though born and to bred up in a Pagan or Mahometan country, and having nothing common with the church of God; but that is abſurd, Eph. ii. 12. *At that time ye were without God, ſtrangers to the covenant of promiſe*. And the apoſtle gives us to know, that the children of Pagans are unclean, 1 Cor. vii. 14. The conſequence holds good, in regard the children of ſome Pagans have had godly anceſtors, and ſome of them lively baptized members of the Chriſtian church, as is manifeſt in the caſe of thoſe of Smyrna, Thyatira, Laodicea, and the reſt of Aſia (for the moſt part,) which are now unchurched. But you will ſay, theſe infants are unchurched. It is ſo, but how do we know that but by their parents being unchurched? What if a godly woman with child ſhould be caſt out into a Pagan country, and there bring forth her child; is the poor infant therefore ſtranger to the covenant, and no church-member, becauſe born in a Pagan country? No, ſure: *the earth is the Lord's and the fulneſs thereof*, and the place of the child's birth can never prejudge it of the right it has by the promiſe and covenant of God. Wherefore it is plain, that the place of the nativity of the Pagans children can never evince their being unchurched; for *a quatenus ad omne valet conſequentia*. So that it is by the unchurched ſtate of the parents that we know theſe infants to be unchurched. Let us conſider the infants of the firſt unchurched generation, we find they have no right to the ſeal of the covenant, yet, *ex hypotheſi*, they are come of godly progenitors. Wherefore it doth inevitably follow, that mediate parents their being in covenant with God, is not ſufficient to give to their remote ſeed a right to baptiſm.

IV. If infants may derive their right before the church, or the evidence of their right before the Lord, to baptiſm, from their remote parents; then either from any of them whatſoever, or from ſome of them only; I know no mids. If from any of them whatſoever, then there is no infant under heaven that hath not a right to baptiſm; which is abſurd. The reaſon of the conſequence is, becauſe there is not an infant in the world that is not come of parents that were godly; which will hold true, ſo long as it remains undoubted, that all the world is come of Noah and of Adam. If from ſome of them only, then, 1. They that will have this believed, muſt tell us how far we may go back to ſeek mediate parents, from whom the infant may derive its right. 2. They muſt afford us ſome probable evidence, that ſuch mediate parents were godly. 3. They muſt give us ſome reaſon, why we may go ſo far back, and no further. The demands ſeem truly as reaſonable, as the anſwering of them is difficult, to ſay no more.

Now, let us conſider the ſcriptures adduced for infants deriving their right to baptiſm before the church, from their remote parents. The firſt whereof is that, Rom. xi. 16. *If the root be holy, ſo are the branches.* I am ſatisfied, that by the *root* the apoſtle doth not mean Chriſt, as ſome think: nor yet the covenant, as others: but Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, or rather Abraham alone. And it is clear, that the apoſtle is ſpeaking here of the Iſraelites, to whom only Abraham was a root in reſpect of carnal generation; ſo that whatever advantage the Iſraelites may have of this, we Gentiles can have none, ſeeing he was none of our remote parents. It is true, the Gentiles may be the ſpiritual ſeed of Abraham; but this quite alters the caſe, if we would plead it in this matter; for now we ſpeak of parents from whom infants deſcend by carnal generation. And the way how we come to be Abraham's ſeed, the apoſtle plainly tells us, Gal. iii. 29. *And if ye be Chriſt's, then are ye Abraham's ſeed, and heirs according to the promiſe.* If any ſhall ſay, that this is a general maxim, and may be applied to the Gentiles as well as the Jews: then unleſs the immediate parents be the root, by virtue of which their children are holy, as was argued before, ſo now we crave, 1. That it be ſhown how far we may go up to ſeek the root. 2. That it be manifeſt ſuch infants are branches of a holy root. Yea, and it is reaſonable in this caſe, ſuch a remote parent be condeſcended on as had ſuch a privilege as Abraham had, that he ſhould be a root, whoſe remote ſeed ſhould be holy; for however every godly parent is, by the covenant of God into which he enters, ſo privileged, that God is his God, and the God of his ſeed; yet I think none will make every believing parent equally privileged, in this matter, with Abraham; the ſcripture holding forth Abraham's ſpecial privilege in the holineſs of his ſeed, by any other perſon in the world. Now, where can we fix for ſuch a one in the caſe of us Gentiles? But to ſpeak plainly to the point, I am of opinion, that unleſs we be ſwayed with authority of men, there is nothing in this ſcripture that appears for evidencing the right of the branches to the ſeals of the covenant; ſo that it hits not the point in hand. My reaſon for this is, that the branches the apoſtle ſpeaks of here, was the body of the people of Iſrael, the offspring of Abraham, and natural branches of this holy root: which branches were already actually broken off and unchurched; ſo that whatever be ſaid of them, they could have no right to the ſacraments, unleſs you will make them common to them that are without the church, as well as thoſe that are within. That the body of the Iſraelites was now broken off, is plain; ſo that it were in vain to prove it, while the apoſtle is treating ſo expreſsly of their reingraffing. And that they were the branches ſpoken of here, is evident to me from the ſcope and deſign of the apoſtle, which is to prove the calling again of the Iſraelites, and their reingraffing. For one proof of which, he adduceth this argument, ‘If the root be holy, ſo are the branches;’ but the root is holy: *Ergo*, the branches alſo. But holy branches, though cut off, ſhall be graffed in again. It is true, ſome of theſe branches were not broken off, viz. the believing Jews, for there were ſtill ſome, amongſt whom the Gentiles were graffed in, verſ. 17. But the apoſtle needed not prove, that the believing Jews were holy: neither would it contribute ought to his purpoſe, ſo far as I can ſee; neither did the Gentiles boaſt againſt thoſe branches that were not broken off, but againſt thoſe that were broken off, verſ. 18, 19, 20. ‘Boaſt not againſt the branches.—Thou wilt ſay then, The branches were broken off.—Well; becauſe of unbelief they were broken off.’ The only difficulty here is this, How branches broken off, or an unchurched people, can be *ſaid to be holy?* I find one arguing from this text for infant-baptiſm, brings in this objection. “But what kind of conſequence is this, If the root be holy, ſo are the branches?” which he ſolves, and ſenſeth the text thus. “The apoſtle in the former verſe ſpeaks of a receiving in again of the Jewiſh nation, and brings in this as a ground to hope for it: there is yet a *holy root* which hath an influence on the branches; and argues, that if the root be holy, when the *branches* broken off *ſhall be* reingraffed, they *ſhall be holy likewiſe.*” If this interpretation be received, the difficulty is removed; but I know none elſe that puts this ſenſe on the text. It is true, no time is defined in the text, neither the preſent nor the future; for the words are *ei he riza hagia, kai hoi kladoi.* But if we read that of the branches in the future tenſe, why not alſo that of the root? But that which ſtumbles me mainly as to this interpretation, is, that it is utterly alien from the ſcope of the apoſtle, makes his arguing very jejune, and fathers on him a moſt palpable *petitio principii;* for thus ſays the apoſtle, according to him, the ‘Jewiſh nation ſhall be received again; for when they ſhall be reingraffed, they ſhall be holy;’ which evidently ſuppoſeth the thing in queſtion. But the learned man ſupports the cauſe with better arguments than this. Only by the by I cannot but notice, that Mr Baxter upon that ſubject, adducing ſeveral arguments out of that chapter, makes no mention of any argument from the text under conſideration. In whatever ſenſe thoſe branches broken off are ſaid to be *holy*, it ſeems plain they are called *holy*. And, in my opinion, the branches of this root, or the body of that people which was now broken off, are ſaid to be *holy; holineſs* being attributed unto them not univerſally, but indefinitely; and that not only in reſpect of particular perſons, but particular generations of them. Abraham being the root, all that come or ſhall come of him, from the firſt child begotten of his own body, to the laſt of his race that ſhall be born in the world, are accounted the branches of this root, make up one collective body of branches, one ſeed and one people; which, by virtue of the holineſs of the root, is ſaid to be holy. Thus we find the apoſtle ſpeaks of them, verſ. 15. ‘For if the caſting away of them be the reconciling of the world; what ſhall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?’ Where it is evident, the apoſtle underſtands not this receiving again of the particular generation, or the particular perſons that were then broke off, as the event hath proven; yea, many generations have paſſed ſince, and they are not as yet received; but of this collective branches, which is ſaid to be received again, when ſome of them are received. So verſ. 24. ‘How much more ſhall theſe which be the natural branches, be graffed into their own olive?’ verſ. 31. ‘Even ſo alſo theſe have now not believed, that through your mercy they alſo may obtain mercy.’ Now, this holineſs is in reſpect of ſeparation to God by the decree of election; God having ſo caſt the lot of electing love, that it runs moſt eminently in that vein, or amongſt the natural branches of the root; though it is, by the unſearchable judgments of God, like unto ſome rivers, that having run above ground a good ſpace, get under the earth, and run there, (as Gaudiana in Spain, running under ground fifteen miles,) and afterwards break forth again, to run above the ground, till they empty themſelves into the ſea, as Ovid ſays of Lycus, a river in Lycaonia,

> *Sic ubi terenno Lycus eſt epotus hiatu,*
> *Exiſtit procul hinc, alioque renaſcitur ore.*

So under the Old-Teſtament diſpenſation, ‘ Happy ‘ waſt thou, O Iſrael; who was like unto thee?’ Now their ſun is overclouded, but we look for the day when all Iſrael ſhall be ſaved, Rom. xi. 26. Or, if you pleaſe, call it a ſeparation by virtue of the covenant with Abraham; all comes to one thing. Only this holineſs of the branches, you ſee, can give no right to ſealing ordinances. The apoſtle right clearly favours this interpretation, verſ. 28. ‘ As concerning the goſpel, they are ‘ enemies for your ſakes; but as touching the election, ‘ they are beloved for the fathers ſakes.’ Why not holy, as well as beloved of God? not that every individual branch has ſhare, either before God or the church, of the ſpecial love of God; but that the people, and collective body of branches, is ſo beloved of God by others, that out of them he will yet chuſe many to himſelf, having in a ſpecial manner pitched on that ſeed for veſſels of glory. Thus God is ſaid to have ‘ ſo ‘ loved the world,’ (in oppoſition to fallen angels,) ‘ that ‘ he gave his Son, that whoſoever ſhould believe on him, ‘ ſhould have everlaſting life.’ Even as a king may be ſaid to love a particular family, when he takes one or two of that family, and prefers them, while he takes not any notice of other families, though he do not prefer every individual perſon among them. This is plainly confirmed by the apoſtle’s reaſon, verſ. 29. ‘ For the ‘ gifts and calling of God are without repentance.’ Yea, and they are ſtill called ‘ the natural branches,’ and ‘ the olive, their own olive,’ notwithſtanding that they are broken off, verſ. 24. And thus we ſee how the branches broken off are ſaid to be holy. As to that ſcripture, Acts ii. 39. brought for confirmation of the point foreſaid, it is plain, that notwithſtanding they were Abraham’s ſeed, and the promiſe was to them, and to their children, (in what ſenſe we ſhall afterwards enquire,) yet the apoſtle expreſsly prerequires repentance to their admiſſion unto baptiſm.

As to that other ſcripture, Exod. xx. 5, 6. ‘ Shew‘ ing mercy unto thouſands of them that love me;’ whence ſome learned men would prove infants right to baptiſm from their remote parents; I ſuppoſe no ſuch thing can be proven from hence. This promiſe doth not reſpect the children of wicked immediate parents, though the remote ſeed of the godly, as thoſe learned men would have it; but only the children of immediate godly parents, to whom the Lord will ſhew mercy for their parents ſake, and that unto thouſands, viz. ſucceſſively godly; the Lord will ſtill remember thoſe their progenitors, in doing them good; and the longer the godly race has continued, one after another, in the love of God, the better ſhall it be for the children. Now, theſe few reaſons incline me to underſtand it ſo.

I. If by the event we may judge of this promiſe, as doubtleſs we may, we ſhall find, that it cannot be underſtood as thoſe that differ would have it. Take we an inſtance in the ſeed of Abraham. From Abraham to Chriſt, as Matthew reckons, there are reckoned only thrice fourteen generations. However we underſtand the evangeliſt, it is certain, there were but a few generations in compariſon of the thouſand in the text; and yet a very little after, the Jews are broken off, and unchurched, and had no right to the ſeals of the covenant; and long before, the ten tribes, all the ſeed of godly Abraham, were rejected. Yet no doubt the promiſe of God remained ſure; his truth failed not, though the wicked ſeed of Abraham was caſt off, yea, and *wrath came on them to the uttermoſt*, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, 1 Theſſ. ii. 16. I know that to ward off this, it is ſaid, the promiſe is only to be underſtood of thoſe that are within the church. But, in my opinion, thoſe who will be ſatisfied with this anſwer, are fixed before in the point in queſtion, on ſome better grounds, or elſe they are eaſily ſatisfied: for it ſeems ſtrange, to plead from this text in favours of the children of openly wicked immediate parents, for their right to the ſeals of the covenant, and yet to yield, that God may ſo far take away his mercy from them, notwithſtanding of this promiſe, as to break them off utterly, and put them in the ſame caſe with Pagans, while they, poor ſouls, were not capable to unchurch themſelves; ſo that, notwithſtanding of the piety of their remote parents, they are ruined by their neareſt parents. I would think, that if this promiſe made over church-privileges to ſuch children, it ſhould, in the firſt place, ſecure them from breaking off, and being caſt out of the church; in regard it is made to go over the immediate wicked parents, and the mercy is to be ſhown to their children, being the remote ſeed of the godly. If any ſhall ſay, that, by virtue of this promiſe, the rejected Jews ſhall be received again; it is *gratis dictum*: for there is nothing here peculiar to the Jews, nothing which may not be applied, and belongs to the Gentiles, and their ſeed, as well as the Jews; and ſo ye may as well argue for the receiving in again of the Laodiceans, Thyatirians, &c. But however it be, notwithſtanding of this promiſe, they are broken off for the time, and have no right to church-privileges.

II. Unleſs our interpretation be admitted, the promiſe and the threatening will be found inconſiſtent. For ſuppoſe the ſecond generation of a wicked man be godly, and alſo the third, the promiſe and the threat both ſhould belong to that third generation; the promiſe, becauſe ſuch a one is the immediate ſeed of the godly, and the Lord will ſhew mercy to thouſands of them that love him; the threatening, becauſe he is the remote ſeed of the wicked, even the third generation; and the threat is, that he will viſit the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation. And that ſuch caſes may and do fall out, who can deny? An inſtance of it take in the caſe of Rehoboam, whoſe ſon was like himſelf, 1 Kings xv. 3. *He walked in all the ſins of his father, and his heart was not perfect with the Lord.* Yet Aſa, the ſecond from Rehoboam, did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, as did David his father, ver. 11. And the third, Jehoſhaphat, was a godly man. See then, according to the interpretation of thoſe that differ, if both the promiſe and threat belong not to Jehoſhaphat?

III. Unleſs we expound it of the immediate ſeed of the godly, there are none, or at leaſt very few in the world, not comprehended in this promiſe: for I think it will be hard to find any in the world that are a thouſand generations removed from godly parents. And truly, if it be ſo very good and profitable to be come of godly parents ſo far remote, genealogies are no more vain under the New Teſtament than under the Old.

Thus it would ſeem, that children derive their church-right to baptiſm from their immediate, and not from their remote parents. But I will add yet ſome more for proof of that point; and will try whether thoſe texts alledged on the contrary, have led us to any thing that may be helpful to our purpoſe.

Arg. I. The child ſtands *coram eccleſia* for church-privileges by the ſame perſons by whom he falls. This propoſition, I think, cannot be denied in the matter of moral ſtanding, and right to privileges, whether civil or religious; and of no other ſtanding do we ſpeak here. But ſo it is, that infants fall from church-privileges by their immediate parents: *Ergo*, they ſtand by them. The minor is clear from the caſe of the Jewiſh infants at the rejection of that people. That their infants fell from all right before the church to the ſeal of the covenant, is clear; and I think none will doubt it: for they were the natural branches as well as others, and were capable of reingraffing; and the believing Gentiles comes with his ſeed in the room of the unbelieving Jews and his. Well then, the apoſtle tells us, it was *for unbelief they were broken off*, Rom. xi. 20. If ſo, then either becauſe of their own, or their parents unbelief; not becauſe of their own, for they were not capable of rejecting Chriſt in their own perſons; if becauſe of the parents unbelief, then either of their remote or immediate parents; not becauſe of the unbelief of their remote parents; for their root was holy, verſe 16.; therefore becauſe of the unbelief of their next parents. I think none will quarrel our reaſoning from the caſe of the Jewiſh children to thoſe of Chriſtians, but Anabaptiſts and Socinians. I ſee not what exception any would enter againſt this argument, unleſs it be, that theſe Jews they profeſſedly rejected Chriſt; but the openly wicked Chriſtians, of whom we ſpeak, do not. But let the difference be what it will; though theſe Jews had turned profeſſed Atheiſts, ſtill it remains true, that unleſs their children had ſtood by them, they could not have fallen by them. I find Fulwood brings in this as an objection againſt his doctrine, "That children ſtand in the viſible "church in their parents right:" and anſwers, "That "the infant's right is ſeated in itſelf, though it be de"rived from its parents." And this he proves by four arguments. But, in my opinion, he needed not have been at the pains; for I doubt if there be any that ſay the child's right is ſeated in the parent, whether it be underſtood of his right before God or the viſible church. But ſure it is, the child can have no viſible right to the ſeals of the covenant, but as he is the child of ſuch mediate or immediate parents, that have right to the ſame, and are members of the church; and his viſible right ſtands or falls with theirs. So that it may well enough be ſaid, that they ſtand in their parents right, or that they ſtand before the church by their parents.

Arg. II. If the repentance of immediate parents be neceſſarily prerequiſite unto their infants right to baptiſm (I mean the viſible repentance of the parents to the viſible right of the infants) notwithſtanding that the infants are the remote ſeed of undoubtedly godly parents; then infants derive their right to baptiſm from their immediate, not their mediate parents; but the antecedent is true: *Ergo*. The conſequent alſo. The ſequel is manifeſt. The aſſumption I prove from Acts ii. 38, 39. *Repent and be baptized for the remiſſion*, &c. Here are two ſorts of perſons ſpoken of, viz. the adult, perſons, who were perſonally guilty of the murder of the Son of God; and their ſeed, or little ones. Both were Abraham's ſeed, at leaſt moſt of them were ſo: for however theſe words, *and as many as were afar off*, &c. be explained; yet none can doubt but the natural ſeed of Abraham are deſigned in theſe words, *For the promiſe is to you, and to your children*. So the children here ſpoken of, are the children of remote godly parents. Two things here remain to be proven for clearing of the aſſumption; 1. That repentance is required as neceſſary antecedently to a right to baptiſm here injoined. 2. That in the call to baptiſm, the children of thoſe parents are comprehended as well as themſelves.

1. As to the *firſt*, That repentance is required of the parents in this text, as neceſſarily prerequiſite to a right to the baptiſm urged by the apoſtle, is plain, if ye conſider, in the *firſt* place, That if they had right to baptiſm antecedently to their repentance, the apoſtle could not have denied the ſame unto them till they did declare it; and that the rather, that they were now pricked at the heart for their murdering of Chriſt, and crying out, *What ſhall we do to be ſaved*. Yet we find the apoſtle requires in the firſt place, that they ſhould repent, and ſtays their baptiſm till they have evidenced their repentance, notwithſtanding that their preſent perplexity required a ſpeedy poſſeſſion of thoſe privileges they had right unto. And when the apoſtles do fall a baptizing, they baptize thoſe, and thoſe only, who gladly received Peter's word, ver. 41. Further, how could they have been baptized antecedently to their repentance, ſeeing they were to be *baptized in the name of Jeſus Chriſt*, as ſays the text; and none but Chriſt's diſciples ought to be baptized? Matth. xxviii. 19. They could not be accounted Chriſt's diſciples till they profeſſed their faith in him, and their repentance; and conſequently till then could have no right *coram eccleſia* to baptiſm in his name. Finally, they are called to be baptized for the remiſſion of ſins, *non obtinendam, ſed obſignandam*, i. e. in teſtimony of remiſſion of ſins: but this could not be before faith, ſeeing it is by faith we obtain remiſſion; and faith cannot be without repentance. Wherefore it is evident, they are called to repentance as neceſſary antecedently to baptiſm.

2. For the *ſecond*, That the call to baptiſm here comprehends the children of theſe parents as well as themſelves. *Metanoeſate, kai baptiſtheto ekaſtos humon.* The authors of Antiſynodalia Americana will have theſe words (if I right remember) read *and every one of you be baptized*, (it ſeems,) that the ſenſe may be, every one of you that repent be baptized. But as our tranſlation is exactly according to the original, ſo the call to repentance and to baptiſm, are of equal latitude, as the words plainly bear, and the nature of things themſelves, as was ſhown before; otherwiſe it was no ſin in them that rejected baptiſm ſo to do, providing only they did not repent, though under this call; which methinks is no ſound divinity. But to the point; This appears, if ye conſider theſe particulars. 1. Here is expreſs mention made of their children together with themſelves, 'For 'the promiſe is to you, and to your children.' Now, thoſe to whom is the promiſe, are by this call obliged to be baptized; but the promiſe was to their children as well as themſelves: *Ergo*. If any doubt the major, I might prove it thus: If the gift of the Holy Ghoſt was to be given after baptiſm, then thoſe to whom the promiſe is made, are called to be baptized; the former is true: *Ergo*. The reaſon of the conſequence is, becauſe the gift of the Holy Ghoſt, and the promiſe being to them, are joined together; the latter as the ground of the former. The aſſumption appears from the apoſtle's own words, 'Be baptized,——and ye ſhall receive the 'gift of the Holy Ghoſt.' 2. To what other end ſhould mention be made of their children, but that the apoſtle would have them to repent, ſo that both they and their ſeed might receive the ſeal of the covenant? This, I think, muſt be granted, unleſs we will join hands with the Anabaptiſts, and delay the baptiſm of their children till ſuch time as they were capable perſonally to evidence their repentance. 3. The ſcope of the apoſtle, which was to comfort thoſe that were pricked at the heart for the murdering of the Lord of glory, doth prove this. They ſaw now what it was to be guilty of Chriſt's blood, and doubtleſs (as an awakened ſoul has a quick memory for bygone ſins) they remembered well, that ſome time they had cried out, *His blood be on us, and our children.* Wherefore, that the plaſter might be as broad as the ſore, it was neceſſary that there ſhould be taught the reception of their children to baptiſm, together with themſelves; and ſo both were called together thereto. 4. In all examples of the parents call to receive the firſt ſeal of the covenant, the children alſo are comprehended, whether under the Old or New Teſtament diſpenſations; and how can it be otherwiſe, ſeeing God has ſaid, he will be the believer's God, and the God of his ſeed alſo?

Arg. III. God threatens that he will viſit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him; but promiſeth to ſhew mercy to thouſands of them that love him, and keep his commandments. I have already proven, that the promiſe is only to the immediate ſeed of godly parents; and by the ſame labour, that the threatning is only to the immediate ſeed of the ungodly: and as I ſaid of the meaning of the promiſe, its being extended to thouſands; ſo ſay I of the threatening, its being extended to the third and fourth generation, viz. ſucceſſively, and one after another ungodly. God, in puniſhing the children, will remember the iniquity of their fathers and grandfathers; they being ſtill the children only of the wicked. Now whatever elſe the mercy promiſed doth comprehend, I think it will be denied by none but Anabaptiſts, and ſuch as they, that it includes a viſible right to the firſt ſeal of the covenant. By the ſame reaſon then, the threatening includes the contrary; and ſo God himſelf in his holy and wiſe diſpenſations, has explained it, while he hath broken off wicked parents and their ſeed from the viſible church, and all right to church privileges. The ſcripture then affords us a twofold argument for our purpoſe.

Arg. 1. from the threatening. If God viſit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children of immediate wicked parents, then the children of immediate wicked parents have no right to baptiſm, though they be the remote ſeed of the godly; the former is true: *Ergo.* The ſequel, which only needs proof, is thus evinced: The mercy promiſed to the children of God, comprehends a grant of viſible right to the initiating ſeal made to them; *Ergo,* the judgment threatened to the children of wicked parents, comprehends a denuding them of, or a denying unto them, a viſible right to the ſame; for *contrariorum contraria ſunt conſequentia.* And otherwiſe, they to whom the threatening viſibly belongs, ſhall have the mercy of the promiſe viſibly belonging to them alſo; not without great appearance of confuſion of thoſe things which God hath ſo divided and diſtinguiſhed. This reaſoning the learned Zanchius yields to us *in theſi,* though *in hypotheſi* he is againſt it. His words are, “There is a certain antitheſis betwixt the “promiſe and threatening. Now, what doth he pro“miſe, when he ſays, *He will ſhew mercy to thoſe that* “*love him?* temporal good things only? not at all; “but eternal life, according to that, *He that doth theſe* “*things, ſhall live in them:* and in many places he “promiſeth ſalvation to them that keep his law. *There*“*fore alſo in the threatening,* he threatens *eternal* “*death.*” Yet the ſame learned man will not allow us to conclude from this, that the children of thoſe parents who are excluded from the covenant for their iniquities and defections, are excluded alſo. But why, upon the ſame ground we may not argue as before is done, I ſee not. Nothing can ſtrike againſt the one, that doth not equally militate againſt the other. But ſays the learned man, “Surely when we come to the fourth generation, “where thoſe fathers alſo are wicked, and excluded from “the covenant for their own wickedneſs; their chil“dren alſo, belonging to the fifth generation, muſt ne“ceſſarily be ſuppoſed to be excluded from the covenant; “and likewiſe their children, and ſo on. How then “would it be true that the Lord ſays, he will not ex“tend this curſe but to the fourth generation at moſt?” I anſwer, with all deference to that judicious man, there is no abſurdity in this conſequence that he draws from the opinion of thoſe that differ from him; yea, the threatening itſelf obligeth us to believe it, it being ſuppoſed they are ſtill wicked one after another; for ſurely even the fifth generation, in the caſe ſuppoſed, are the children of thoſe that hate God, and ſo liable to the threatening; only the fifth generation, according to the threat, hath not the ſins of any of the former, but the fourth, remembered againſt them in the puniſhment; and ſo on, till we come to the third and fourth generation again; whereby the Lord ſhews himſelf indeed ſlow to wrath, but abundant in goodneſs; while on the other hand, the mercy promiſed extends to thouſands. And thus we ſee how it remains true, that God will not extend this curſe beyond the fourth generation, that is, viſiting the iniquities of the grandfathers upon the children. But nevertheleſs, if there ſhould be thouſands of quaternions of wicked generations, the denial of mercy ſhould be carried down through them all, according to the threatening. If the learned man mean, that we cannot refuſe, according to our interpretation, to allow the fifth generation of ſucceſſively wicked perſons the ſeal of the covenant; I deny any ſuch thing follows, but the contrary, as was cleared before. But if he take that to be true, it deſerves conſideration how that can agree with God's diſpenſation, in viſiting the iniquities of the fathers on the children among the Jews, ſixteen hundred years and upwards; not to ſpeak of the Pagans. It can no more be inferred from thence, then, that God will not give the mercy to more than thouſands of them that love him. But when God minds the mercy we ſpeak of, either to the fourth or fifth generation, the mercy, I ſay, of viſible right to the firſt ſeal of the covenant in their infancy, we may expect he will deal with the third or fourth ſo as to make way for it.

Arg. 2. from the promiſe. If the mercy promiſed belongs only to the immediate ſeed of godly parents, then children derive their viſible right to the ordinance of baptiſm from their immediate, not from their mediate parents: the former is true; *Ergo.* The reaſon of the conſequence is, Becauſe a viſible right to the firſt ſeal of the covenant is comprehended in this mercy, whatever more it include; which I need not ſtand to prove, till the arguing of the orthodox from this text, againſt Anabaptiſts, be invalidated. The aſſumption I have already proven by three reaſons. And I ſhall now add a fourth from the ſcope of the words. The ſcope plainly is this: That ſeeing it is natural for parents to deſire the proſperity and happineſs of their ſeed, and the evil that cometh on their children, eſpecially by their means, is afflicting and heavy to them; therefore, as they would not ruin the fruit of their bodies, they ſhould take heed that they depart not from the way of God's commandments; and as they would have their children to enjoy the mercy of God, they would ſhew themſelves to be lovers of God, and keepers of his commandments. That this is the ſcope of the place, is paſt doubt with me. This the learned man before mentioned doth grant. “If then (ſays he) their children be dear to them, at “leaſt on their account let them not revolt from the “true worſhip of God to idolatry. Surely this is the “end of this commination.” But how the contrary opinion agrees with the ſcope, I cannot ſee. Now, let us conſider the Iſraelites, to whom the law was immediately given. It is pleaded, that the open wickedneſs of immediate parents among them did not take away this mercy from their ſeed; but they derived their viſible right to the ſeal from the holy root, which was Abraham alone, or Iſaac and Jacob alſo. But theſe holy men were dead long before, ſo that there was no need to ſtir them up to keep God's commandments, being then in glory: and as for that generation of adult perſons, it could have no influence on them, being ſo underſtood; what needed they fear the threat, ſeeing their infants were already ſecured from any harm they could do them, ſeeing they were the remote ſeed of the godly? The promiſe could have no influence on them either; ſeeing by virtue thereof, however holy they were, their infants could have no advantage they had not before, from Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob. So that the threatening and promiſe both are rendered quite uſeleſs to them, and could have no tendency to the ſtirring up of them to a holy life; unleſs their fearing where no fear was, and hoping where there was no ground, could have efficacy on them. The ſame way is it rendered uſeleſs to us Gentiles, ſuppoſing once that we have had but one godly remote parent. I ſee no way to evite this, unleſs we ſay, that the mercy promiſed has no reſpect to a viſible right to the ſeal of the covenant, and ſo gratify the Anabaptiſts; or deny this to be the ſcope of the place. Either of which they may venture on that will. I dare not. It is in vain to ſay, that the mercy in the promiſe comprehends many particular mercies; and though that one was ſecured to them as the children of remote godly parents, yet there might be ſome others that the children might meet with, through the holy life of their immediate parents. For, though it might be, that they ſhould have many mercies, through the holy life of their immediate parents; yet none at all by virtue of this promiſe, which they had not before by their remote parents: for though the mercy promiſed comprehend ten thouſand particular mercies, they are all in that one word made over to the children of thoſe that love God; and if theſe be the remote parents, in the ſuppoſed caſe, then they are all made over unto the remote ſeed of the godly, though the immediate ſeed of wicked ones, as upon the account of the remote parents. But nothing can be more agreeable to the ſcope, than to underſtand it only of the immediate ſeed of godly parents: and it is eaſy to perceive what an incentive to a holy life it muſt needs be to every parent. It is very probable it would ſcar many from their open wickedneſs, if it were duly preſſed doctrinally, and followed accordingly in the way of diſcipline. And I am truly apprehenſive, that the blunting of the edge of this threat and promiſe, is one of the pillows of the ſecurity of our day, and fills our congregations with ſo many people as would not be tolerated in a well-ordered commonwealth. I will add yet.

Arg. 3. From the threat and promiſe jointly conſidered. If the children of openly wicked immediate parents may be acknowledged by the church to have a right to the ſeal of the covenant, on the account of their remote godly parents, as well as the children of godly immediate parents; then the church ſhould make no difference betwixt the children of thoſe that love God, and thoſe that hate him: but that ought not to be ſo. For where God in his word hath made a difference, the church ought to do ſo too; for in all things revealed we are bound to follow God's judgment: but ſuch practice ſeems to thwart with it, as the text ſhews; God having put ſo manifeſt a difference betwixt them, that he will viſit the iniquities of the fathers upon the one, and ſhew mercy to the other. It ſeems then, we ought to ſeparate betwixt the precious and the vile, put difference between the holy and profane, even in this caſe. Let none ſay, they know not who are the precious, who the vile, amongſt infants. Here is God's revelation of his mind, for the terror of the wicked, that he will viſit their iniquities on their children. If the Lord be pleaſed to bring elect veſſels out of the loins of openly wicked parents, and of his free grace to give them his Holy Spirit, as no doubt he may do, and many times actually doth; yet *de occultis non judicat eccleſia.* We are to wait till we ſee the ſame evidenced by their perſonal carriage; and in the mean time, we go according to the plain revealed word, leaving ſecret things unto the Lord: even as we are to look on the ſeed of viſible believers as viſible ſaints, and to deal with them as ſuch, till by their walk they manifeſt the contrary. Wherefore, there is no ground to ſay, as Zanchy, that "this is repugnant to God's eternal election, ſeeing that many times elect children "are born of wicked parents and idolatrous reprobates." What though they be elected, we have no evidence of it; without which, as to us, it is as if it were not. Truly, if this ſhould hold good, there is no infants of the moſt barbarous ſavages in the world but have a right to baptiſm; for who knows but they are elected, and in due time will be called? But I ſuppoſe, in admitting to baptiſm, the church looks to the party's being in Chriſt, and having the Spirit; not to his election immediately or ſolely; for even the elect may be for a time dogs and ſwine, not fit ſubjects of ſealing ordinances. If any ſay, that they do make a difference betwixt thoſe children requiring ſponſors, in order to the adminiſtering of the ſeal to the children of openly wicked parents: I anſwer, 1. I wiſh it were ſo ordinarily, that ſponſors were required for the children of ſuch parents as are not themſelves viſible believers. 2. If the godly parents die before the child's baptiſm, where is the difference? But, 3. There is no difference at all in point of right to the ordinance and church-ſtate: for ſtill the one as well as the other is ſuppoſed to have right to the ordinance as ſuch a ſeed; and the children of the godly are not baptized without ſponſors either.

Arg. IV. If the children be unclean, unleſs the unbelieving huſband be ſanctified by the believing wife, or the unbelieving wife be ſanctified by the believing huſband, then the children derive their right to baptiſm from their immediate parents; the former is true: *Ergo.* All this is clear from the teſtimony of the apoſtle, 1 Cor. vii. 14. *For the unbelieving huſband is ſanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife——by the huſband: elſe were your children unclean; but now they are holy.* So that the apoſtle plainly turns this matter of the childrens holineſs, and conſequently of their right to the ordinance, on the ſtate of the immediate parents, as the only hinge of it *coram eccleſia.* I do eaſily perceive an exception that will be entered againſt this argument by thoſe that differ, to wit, That in this caſe there were no remote parents from whom the children could derive their right: theſe immediate parents being both once Pagans, come of Pagan parents, though now the father or mother was a believer; and ſo can make no general rule. *Anſw.* Grant theſe parents to whoſe caſe the apoſtle applies this, were all come of mere Pagans; which nevertheleſs will be impoſſible to prove, but that ſome of them might be the children of parents proſelyted to the Jewiſh church; yet the rule that the apoſtle lays down here, is a general rule for all ſuch caſes wherein a believer is yoked with an unbeliever, *For the unbelieving——is ſanctified——elſe were your children unclean,* &c. This, I think, cannot be denied. Let us then ſuppoſe the believing wife, a daughter of a believer, but the wife of an unbeliever; ſuch a caſe not only may be, but no doubt has been. It is no ſtrange thing to imagine an unbeliever to profeſs faith and repentance, and that to gain marriage with a believing woman; and thereafter to turn back again to infidelity, and that openly, when he has accompliſhed his deſign: yea, it is very ſuppoſable, and like unto the Lord's dealing in his ordinary diſpenſation of grace, that there were ſome in Corinth in that caſe, the father and the daughter called, but her huſband left to remain in infidelity, or *vice verſa.* In this caſe then I aſk, whether or no the children of the believer and unbeliever ſhould be holy, and have right to the ſeal of the covenant, though the unbelieving huſband were not ſanctified by the believing wife? If you ſay, they muſt be holy, as you muſt ſay, while ſo much ſtreſs is laid on a child's being the remote ſeed of the godly (for ſo the child is in the ſuppoſed caſe) then you plainly contradict the apoſtle, teaching, that unleſs the unbelieving huſband were ſanctified by the believing wife, the children were unclean, not holy. If you ſay, they ſhould not be holy, unleſs the unbelieving huſband were ſanctified by the believing wife, then you plainly derive the child's right from the immediate parent, and acknowledge that the piety of the remote parent giveth not a viſible right to the ordinance unto the child; which is the very thing we plead for. Moreover, let us ſuppoſe among theſe Corinthians a believing father, his daughter, a wife, and her huſband, both unbelievers; which I think, is a very rational ſuppoſition: I aſk, whether or no their children be holy? If they be holy, then I would know what children under heaven are unholy. If they be not, then the piety of remote parents doth not evidence their ſeed to be holy, and infants derive not their right from godly remote parents. We have a caſe in the Old Teſtament, which we ſhall conſider here: Ezra x. 3. *Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God, to put away all the ſtrange wives,* *and ſuch as are born of them.* Ver. 16. *And the children of the captivity did ſo.* Ver. ult. *And ſome of them had wives by whom they had children.* Now, I would know whether or not thoſe children born to the Jews of their ſtrange wives, were holy children, and had right to the ſeal of the covenant? If they were, it is ſtrange they ſhould put away their holy children, or that the fierce wrath of the Lord ſhould go out againſt them for keeping ſuch a holy generation. This looks not very like God's way, to put out of his church a holy ſeed. To ſay they were to be put away becauſe they rejected the covenant of God, is *gratis dictum*; ſurely ſome of them were not capable to reject the covenant. Yet thoſe children put away, were the remote ſeed of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, as much as Boaz, whom Salmon begat of Rahab a Canaanite; and Obed whom Boaz begat of Ruth the Moabiteſs, and many others. Theſe two are expreſsly owned by Matthew to be the children of Abraham, Matth. i. 2. 5.: yet were not theſe children holy; and conſequently, ſome of the children of Abraham Iſaac, and Jacob, were not holy; and that though born within the viſible church: which, I think, ſhould go far to prove the main point now under conſideration. How was it then that they were unclean, and not holy? I know no other reaſon can be given, but that their mothers were not ſanctified to their fathers for bringing forth of a holy ſeed. The contrary whereof was in the caſe of the Corinthians; which ſtill hangs all on the ſtate of the immediate parents. Whatever diſparity be betwixt theſe two caſes, here is all we are ſeeking after, viz. children come of godly remote parents, born within the church likewiſe, as that phraſe is commonly uſed, yet unholy, having no right to the ſeal of the covenant, becauſe of the ſtate of their immediate parents. And if a thouſand differences betwixt theſe two caſes ſhould be produced, ſo long as they agree in the point for which they are adduced, the cauſe is ſafe.

Arg. V. ult. A curſed ſeed have no right to the ſeal of the covenant; but the children of openly wicked immediate parents, though they be the remote ſeed of the godly, are a viſibly curſed ſeed. This is plain from Deut. xxviii. 18. where God tells the Iſraelites, even the ſeed of Abraham, that 'if they did not hearken 'to the voice of the Lord, to obſerve to do all his com'mandments, the fruit of their body ſhould be curſed.' Hence it follows, that childrens right to the ſeal of the covenant is derived only from their immediate parents, not from their remote parents: for notwithſtanding of the holineſs of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, God will curſe their remote ſeed, becauſe of their immediate parents. Now, whom God has declared in his word to be curſed, they are viſibly curſed; which is inconſiſtent with a right to a ſealing ordinance, as I ſhall afterwards prove, when I come to improve this argument further. And ſo much for the proof of infants deriving their right to church-privileges, or to the ſacrament of baptiſm *coram eccleſia*, from their immediate parents only.

I come now to offer ſome arguments to prove, that none but the children of viſible believers, or ſuch as make a viſible profeſſion, have right before the church, or a viſible right, to the ſacrament of baptiſm. Having fixed the former point, viz. That infants derive their viſible right to baptiſm from their immediate, not their remote parents; now the queſtion is, Whether or not it be neceſſary, in order to the child's viſible right to baptiſm, that one of the immediate parents be a viſible believer, or have a probable or credible profeſſion? We offer the following arguments for the affirmative.

Arg. I. If no infants but thoſe whereof one of the parents do commend themſelves and their ſeed to the church, either by their converſation, or by their baptiſm, have right before the church to that ordinance; then no children but thoſe whereof one of the parents is a viſible believer, have a viſible right to the ſame; the antecedent is true: *Ergo*, the conſequent alſo. The truth of the antecedent is acknowledged, at leaſt by ſome of thoſe that differ, while they do neceſſarily require that it appear to the church, that one of the parents have been baptized, otherwiſe the children can have no viſible right to the ordinance; though indeed they think this ſufficient to intitle their children to baptiſm, though their walk be not as becomes the goſpel in any tolerable meaſure. I ſuppoſe thoſe learned men that do require the evidence of the baptiſm of one of the parents, underſtand it as the *minimum quod ſit*, that the church can be ſatisfied in this matter with nothing leſs than this: though albeit this were wanting, if the parents commend themſelves and their ſeed to the church, by a credible profeſſion or holy converſation in the ſight of men, they would look on this as giving their infants a viſible right to the ſeal. If it be not underſtood thus, I cannot yield to it. I doubt not but in ſome caſes, the adminiſtrator of baptiſm may have greater clearneſs to baptize the child of an unbaptized perſon, than of many that are certainly known to have been baptized. The child of ſuch a parent may have a viſible right to baptiſm: for it is plain, that an unbaptized parent may have faith and repentance, and that ſo as they may ſufficiently appear to the church to be believers and penitent, while in the mean time there is not the leaſt ſhadow of thoſe things in many that are baptized. Now, by faith the ſoul is entered into covenant with God; and at the ſame time the parent is taken into covenant, his child alſo is brought into the covenant; whence it appears, that both parent and child have a viſible right to baptiſm, antecedently to the baptiſm of the parent. So theſe converts, Acts ii. they had viſible right to baptiſm before they were baptized, and this by reaſon of their probable profeſſion; which alſo gave their children a viſible right thereto as ſoon as they themſelves had it. So, put the caſe ſuch parents ſhould have died before they were baptized, it could not have robbed the children of their viſible right which they had to the ſeal of the covenant. Yea, I ſuppoſe the truth of the antecedent is yielded by them all, viz. that one of the two, either the baptiſm, or elſe a viſible godly converſation of one of the parents, is neceſſary to the child's viſible right to baptiſm. As for thoſe that go to the remote parents for the child's right, we are agreed in that the viſible piety of parents is neceſſary. Only they ſay, the piety of the remote parents is neceſſary; we ſay, it is the immediate parent, as has been proven. Others expreſs themſelves thus, that the children of ſuch as are probably judged within the covenant, have right to baptiſm. Now, this probable judgment muſt needs proceed upon one of the two things mentioned. And as for thoſe who ſay, that the infants of wicked parents being *born within the church*, have right to baptiſm, I think it is plain they mean by that, born of baptized parents. Either they mean it ſo, or that it is the place of their birth that gives them this privilege. I could ſcarcely have thought any could have been ſo abſurd as to have affirmed the latter. Yet I find one zealous aſſertor of the real and viſible title that the children of openly wicked parents have to baptiſm, tells us, that there are many arguments urged by divines for it, that to him were never ſatisfactorily anſwered; whereof this is one: "That ſuch children have their right ſupplied "from the *holineſs* of the *place* or *people* wherein they "are *born*." I wiſh he had told us what divines thoſe are that urge this argument. I doubt if he can ſhew us any of whom he will have much credit, that ever aſſerted ſuch a thing. He might have left out the *people* here, for there are none born *in people*, but in the place where a holy people lives; but by this addition he ſeems to anſwer a queſtion ariſing from his own words, which I fancy would puzzle many great divines; and that is, How a place now under the goſpel-diſpenſation is made holy, eſpecially ſo holy, that the very birth of an infant *in it* gives it a real title and viſible right to the holy ordinance of baptiſm? *Anſw.* There is a holy people lives in that place. But I would propoſe more queſtions ſtill upon the back of that. What holineſs is that that a holy people communicate to the ſpot of ground where they live? And what is the way how they make it holy? And by virtue of what appointment of God is it that Engliſh ground is holy, where a holy people lives? And whether or no we may ſuffer Pagans to come in, and defile our holy place with their unclean feet? And how came it that the land of Egypt and Babylon were not made holy places, ſeeing they were places where God's holy people lived for many years? Why had not the Egyptian and Babyloniſh infants a right to circumciſion from the holineſs of the place and people wherein they are born? No doubt if this learned man had been living in the ſeventh century, when Auguſtine came from the Biſhop of Rome, and called the Britons to help him in the converſion of the Saxons that were Heathens, he would have thought their anſwer very unmannerly (as indeed it cannot be approven,) viz. That they were not obliged to preach to their enemies, ſeeing the Saxons had ſpoiled them of their lands, and did ſtill continue to prey upon them; but he would off-hand, not only have preached to them but baptized their infants, in regard of the holineſs of the place and pariſh wherein they lived; for, beſides the ancient inhabitants, the Queen was a Chriſtian, and had her preacher; and the King was converted too afterwards by means of Auguſtine, and no doubt he did not alone embrace the Chriſtian religion. But enough of this. Paul uſed another way of arguing, 1 Cor. vii. 14. 'For the unbelieving huſband is ſanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is ſanctified by the huſband: elſe were your children unclean; but now are they holy;' though theſe infants were born in a place where God had a church. And I do not think we ſhall find many to conclude if a Pagan woman were caſt out upon our coaſt, and brought forth a child, that *ipſo facto*, the child ſhould have a right to baptiſm. But I proceed to prove the ſequel of the major thus: The baptiſm of a parent that hath no credible profeſſion, or is an openly wicked perſon, is not ſufficient to commend himſelf to the church, or to commend his ſeed to her, for the ſeal of the covenant: *Ergo*, the ſequel ſtands good. For if one of theſe two, the baptiſm or the credible profeſſion of the parent, be neceſſary to this end, then it clearly follows, that if his baptiſm be inſufficient to that end, and yet he have no credible profeſſion, his child hath no viſible right to baptiſm: and ſo none but the children of viſible believers are thus privileged. I prove the antecedent, That baptiſm that ought to be looked upon as unprofitable and non-baptiſm, cannot commend a man's ſeed to the church, as having viſible right to baptiſm: but that baptiſm which is without a credible profeſſion ought to be looked upon as unprofitable and non-baptiſm: *Ergo*, the propoſition is clear. The aſſumption I ſhall prove by the following reaſons.

Reaſ. I. The apoſtle tells us expreſsly, Rom. ii. 25. 'Circumciſion verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumciſion is made uncircumciſion.' I hope thoſe that differ will allow us to argue from circumciſion to baptiſm; and will eaſily acknowledge, that we may ſay the ſame concerning baptiſm, 'Baptiſm verily profiteth,' *&c.* Urſin arguing for the neceſſity of church diſcipline, among other reaſons, gives this for it: "Thoſe that are not yet baptized, muſt not be admitted to the ſupper: but baptiſm is not baptiſm to thoſe that fall away from their baptiſm," Rom. ii. 25. *Ergo.* I hope none will think he is arguing for the neceſſity of church-diſcipline to be exerciſed againſt Turks, Pagans, and Jews; but the openly wicked of whom we ſpeak; as is manifeſt from what he ſays in the ſame page. It is evident the apoſtle ſpeaks here of the openly wicked Jews, who had the outward ſign of circumciſion, but a profane converſation; as is clear from the preceding verſes. So that verſ. 24. he plainly tells them, *the name of God was blaſphemed among the Gentiles, becauſe of them*, (as it is in our caſe,) which manifeſtly argues open wickedneſs, with a profeſſion of religion. Yet becauſe of their circumciſion they valued themſelves highly: but the apoſtle ſhews them they had no profit of it, but their circumciſion was by their profane life made uncircumciſion. "He anſwers, (ſays a learned commentator on the place,) That the outward ſacramental ſymbols profit nothing without good life and manners; ——without which circumciſion differs nothing from uncircumciſion; that is, a Jew differs nothing from a Heathen." If then God in his word hath pronounced the circumciſion of openly wicked perſons to be unprofitable and uncircumciſion, and he hath declared his mind concerning the baptiſm of openly wicked Chriſtians; the church ought to look upon it to be ſuch as God declared it to be, that is, unprofitable and non-baptiſm. If this hold good, it ſays much to the point. I ſhall conſider what exceptions may poſſibly be entered againſt it, ſo far as they occur to me.

Exc. 1. It would follow then, that ſuch ſhould be rebaptized when they repent. Anſw. I deny it would follow, more than thoſe to whom circumciſion became uncircumciſion by their profane life, ought to have been circumciſed again upon their repentance; which was never done: and yet this was no new, but the good old way, the apoſtle lays down here. Although, as Chriſt teacheth, by excommunication a man is made to be as a Heathen; yet the rebaptizing of an excommunicated perſon upon his repentance, is not urged. I ſay then with Urſin, in anſwer to the ſame objection, that "reception by baptiſm is ratified to penitents, even without the iteration of the ſign." Indeed, if baptiſm were of the kind of phyſical cauſes, this exception might poſſibly have ſome force; for when a Phyſical cauſe is unprofitable and as good as none, there muſt needs be a new application, or elſe the effect is not produced; as when a plaſter is laid to a ſore, if it be unprofitable, and as good as none, there muſt needs be a new application made, or the party cannot be healed. But the baptiſm is no phyſical cauſe, but a moral cauſe; which, though unprofitable, and as good as none to a perſon ſometimes; yet, without a new application, it may become profitable: as ſuppoſe a ſeal were appended to blank paper, even the King's ſeal, and given to a man, what is he the better of it, what doth it profit? nothing at all: but if the King ſhall write on that paper a grant of a penſion, then it profits indeed. But you ſee plainly there needs no iteration of the ſign. The application is eaſy.

Exc. 2. The apoſtle means, that circumciſion profits nothing to juſtification, though otherwiſe it may. I anſwer, *Non diſtinguendum ubi lex non diſtinguit*. The apoſtle ſimply, without any limitation, pronounceth, that 'circumciſion profiteth nothing, if a man be a breaker of the law.' To which that is a plain contradiction, 'Circumciſion profiteth ſomething, though a man be a breaker of the law.' Yea, he tells them roundly, it is *uncircumciſion*, and therefore *unprofitable*, not only to juſtification, but to all intents and purpoſes. And I think it can ſcarcely be denied by any that conſiders the apoſtle's diſcourſe, but that hereby he levels the openly wicked Jews with the Heathens in point of circumciſion, ſo that the one had as much real profit of it as the other, that is, none at all. Yet further, I do indeed believe, that the great thing the apoſtle is aiming at in theſe chapters, is juſtification by the free grace of God; and to this end he endeavours, in this chapter, to beat down the boaſting of the wicked Jews, (as, in the next chapter, he proves all, both Jews and others, to be guilty before God:) for effecting of which, he lays out before them their vitious lives ſo unanſwerable to the written law that God gave them; which has a native tendency to his main ſcope and deſign: and withal tells them, that their circumciſion would not cover their wickedneſs. But notwithſtanding of that, they were wicked men ſtill, as he clearly ſhews, ver. 28, 29. ‘ For he is not a Jew, ‘ which is one outwardly ——but he is a Jew, which ‘ is one inwardly,’ [illegible] I ſee no reaſon to underſtand the words of [illegible] we are now upon, as the exception gives it, [illegible] it profiteth nothing to juſtification, but in [illegible] is uncircumciſion. Read the whole text accordingly, and I ſuppoſe we may find the weakneſs, yea and unſoundneſs of this exception. “ For “ circumciſion [illegible] profiteth to juſtification, if thou “ keep the law: [illegible] thou be a breaker of the law, thy “ circumciſion is made uncircumciſion in point of juſ“ tification.” Now by *juſtification* here, is either meant [illegible] free grace, or juſtification by works. If [illegible] the free grace of God, according to the [illegible] grace, be meant; how does circumciſion [illegible]? has that any hand in our juſtification? If juſtification by works, according to the old covenant; then I aſk, by what appointment of God was ever circumciſion, a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith, made [illegible] for juſtification by works? Let any ſuch appointment be produced, and then we ſhall ſee the law and the goſpel confounded. Wherefore, though a man ſhould keep the law of works, circumciſion ſhould profit him nothing to juſtification: yea, poſſibly I may ſay, if he ſhould go about it as a piece of God's worſhip, it ſhould contribute to his condemnation, in regard it is no part of the law of works, and therefore to him ſhould be [illegible]ſhip. And ſo, if any ſhall ſay, that though circumciſion was never appointed to be a ſeal of the covenant of works, yet it might profit as a commanded [illegible], and as an act of obedience to the law of works; I confidently deny it, that it could be an act of obedience to the law of works, that could ever profit that way. And the reaſon is, becauſe God never commanded it to be uſed but as a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith; nor did it ever belong, before God, to any but ſuch as were in the covenant of grace with him; nor before the church, to any but ſuch as were viſibly in that covenant. The law and grace hath two diſtinct dominions, Rom. vi. 14.; ſo that receiving of circumciſion could no more be an act of obedience to the law of works, than the obeying of a particular law of the kingdom of England can be an act of obedience to the law of Scotland, though both kingdoms be under one ſovereign. Only I deſire it to be noticed, that when I deny that the receiving of circumciſion could be an act of obedience to the law of works, I deny it only in the ſenſe it is aſſerted in the inſtance againſt our anſwer to the exception; that is, that it could be an act of obedience to the law of works profiting to juſtification, thereby, as a part of a law righteouſneſs; which is the plain ſenſe of the inſtance. The reaſon why I add this caution, is this, Becauſe I am of opinion, that where the covenant of grace is revealed, and it is revealed only to loſt ſinners, and they are called to enter this covenant, and conſequently to receive the ſeal of it; thoſe ſinners being under the covenant of works, as to its commanding and threatening power, though the promiſe of it is weak through the fleſh, are, by virtue of that covenant and law of works, obliged to believe, and accept of the covenant of grace, and to receive the ſeals thereof, and ſo to get out from that covenant of works. In this reſpect, to receive the ſeal of the covenant of grace, is a remote act, at leaſt, of obedience to the law of works, but not at all profiting as a part of our righteouſneſs before God, or profiting to juſtification by that law. I cannot indeed apprehend how the covenant of works does not oblige every one that is under it to obey whatſoever God ſhall command them to do; ſo that, ſuppoſing a call to receive Chriſt made to one under the law, he is obliged by the law to receive Chriſt, and to ſubmit to the law of Chriſt, which commands men to receive the ſeals of the covenant of grace, whatſoever they be that are under it; and therefore I cannot deny but thus it is a remote act of obedience to the law of works, to receive the ſeals of the covenant of grace, in ſo far as it obligeth them to ſubmit to Chriſt, whoſe law particularly enjoins this; though indeed the law of works leaves the ſoul as ſoon as it is in Chriſt, they dying to it, and it to them. The law then that the apoſtle ſpeaks of here, I conceive to be the ten commands, as they are the law of Chriſt; to which obedience is performed only in point of ſanctification. And thus indeed theſe perſons might be profited by circumciſion, if they did evidence their faith in, and love to Chriſt, by ſincere keeping of his law; circumciſion being a ſeal of the covenant of grace; and their keeping of the law ſincerely, an infallible token that they were within the bond of that covenant, and had right to all the promiſes of it; the accompliſhment whereof is confirmed by the ſeal. But while they, by their looſe walk and wickedneſs, evidenced their hypocriſy, and that they were but Jews outwardly and in name, they were not a whit profited by circumciſion.

Exc. 3. This is underſtood of their circumciſion before the Lord, not before the church. *Anſw.* That cannot be proven from the text. But let it be ſo: Then, 1. I ſay, ſeeing God makes account of every thing as it is in itſelf, for his judgment is according to truth, then their baptiſm who are profane in their lives, profiteth nothing, but their circumciſion is made uncircumciſion. 2. Seeing God hath not kept this his judgment of it ſecret, but hath revealed the ſame in his word, ſo as every one may read what account he makes of it, it neceſſarily follows, that the church muſt account ſo of it, unleſs men may take liberty to let their judgment go another way than God's mind revealed, and look on them quite another way than God tells us he looks upon them.

Exc. 4. The apoſtle plainly teacheth the profit of circumciſion, Rom. iii. 1, 2. *What advantage then hath the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumciſion? Much every way.* For anſwer to this, we muſt take notice that here are two diſtinct queſtions, which are ſo many objections of the Jews againſt his doctrine. He had in the former chapter levelled them with the Heathens, and reckoned their circumciſion for uncircumciſion; he eaſily perceives the Jews would take this very ill, and therefore brings them in here with two queſtions in their mouths; the firſt, *What advantage hath the Jew?* the ſecond, *or what profit is there of circumciſion?* To the firſt of theſe, the apoſtle anſwers by way of conceſſion, *Much every way*, ver. 2. to wit, in reſpect of God, who had given them many things which were indeed advantageous in themſelves; which things he had not given to the Heathens; but not in reſpect of themſelves; for they were no advantages to themſelves, no advantages eventually. And ſo again, in this chapter, he puts the Jews and Gentiles in the ſame balance, by teſtimony from the Pſalms. So that it is a kind of ironical conceſſion, uſed alſo by the apoſtle towards theſe ſame perſons, chap. ii. 17, 18, 19, 20. As if he ſhould ſay: “ Ye have indeed much advantage every way, I “ confeſs; for unto you were committed the oracles of “ God; God gave you the revelation of his mind and “ will, when the poor heathens were left to walk in “ darkneſs, having nothing to guide them but the dim “ light of nature; but ſo much more the miſerable are “ ye, and the greater ſhall your condemnation be, while “ ye walk as ye do.” As for the ſecond queſtion, it is not here anſwered; but that *(much every way)* belongs allenarly to the firſt, which the words in the original plainly hold forth, which are theſe: *Ti oun to periſſon tou Ioudaiou, e tis he aphelcia tes peritomes? Polu kata panta tropon. Polu*, viz. *to periſſon.* But the ſecond queſtion he anſwers, chap. iv. 11.; where he tells them, what profit there is of circumciſion, and to whom it was profitable. Both theſe he ſheweth in the perſon of Abraham, of whoſe fatherhood they boaſted; ‘ And he ‘ received circumciſion, a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of ‘ faith which he had yet before being uncircumciſed.’ That is the profit of circumciſion, that it ſeals the righteouſneſs of faith; but it profits only thoſe that have received and ſubmitted to that righteouſneſs: to the wicked it profits no more than a ſeal ſet to a blank. So that the argument ſtands good notwithſtanding of theſe exceptions.

Reas. II. The baptiſm of thoſe perſons to which the characters given by the Spirit of God in the ſcriptures appear not to agree, ought to be reputed unprofitable, and their circumciſion is uncircumciſion; but ſuch is the baptiſm of thoſe who have no credible profeſſion: *Ergo*. The major is plain: for no baptiſm but the ſcripture-baptiſm can be reputed profitable; and the ſcripture-characters of baptiſm muſt needs agree to ſcripture-baptiſm. The minor will appear, if we take a view of ſome ſcriptures ſpeaking of baptiſm, Mark i. 4.—— ‘the baptiſm of repentance, for the remiſſion of ſins.’ Matth. xxviii. 19. ‘Diſciple all nations, baptizing them,’ &c. Mark xvi. 16. ‘He that believeth and is baptized.’ Acts ii. 38. ‘Repent, and be baptized, for the remiſſion of ſin.’ Acts xxii. 16. ‘Ariſe, and be baptized, and waſh away thy ſins;’ or, ‘be waſhed from thy ſins,’ as ſome read it, and the words will bear, *kai aplouſai tas hamartias ſou*. Gal. iii. 27. *As many of you as have been baptized into Chriſt, have put on Chriſt.*’ 1 Pet. iii. 21.——*Baptiſm doth alſo now ſave us; not the putting away of the filth of the fleſh.* “For many are externally waſhed only, (which is the uſe of baptiſm not lawful, *qui eſt uſus baptiſmi non legitimus;*) few, ſo as they may call on God with a good conſcience.” *Pareus in loc.* “This purifying of the conſcience is oppoſed indeed to waſhing ſimply carnal, but not to the ſacrament of baptiſm; for to the entireneſs of baptiſm (*ad integritatem baptiſmi*) both concur the external and the internal waſhing, not one of them only; and when any hath received it worthily, that anſwer of a good conſcience towards God is joined.” Hornbeck. Now, let it be conſidered, how theſe things agree to the baptiſm of thoſe that have no credible profeſſion: What viſible agreement is there betwixt them? Nay, what viſible diſagreement is there not? If any ſhall ſay, that ſuch perſons they profeſs all thoſe things! I ſhall reply with *Nunquid illa nonplus dicunt quam nudam aliquam a nobis factum profeſſionem?*

Reas. III. That baptiſm which the church cannot look upon as a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith to him that hath it, they ought to make no account of it, but look on it as unprofitable; but ſuch is the baptiſm of him that hath no credible profeſſion: *Ergo*. The propoſition is evident, if ye conſider, that baptiſm is a ſacrament of the covenant of grace; and all the ſacraments of the covenant of grace, whether under the Old or New Teſtament agree in this, that they are ſeals of the righteouſneſs of faith. Now, it is an undeniable maxim, *Negato genere tollitur ſpecies;* That which I cannot look upon as an animal, I cannot look on as a man. That baptiſm which is not a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith, is non-baptiſm; and how can that baptiſm be profitable that ſealeth not that which baptiſm is appointed of God to ſeal? The aſſumption I prove alſo: Where the church cannot look on a man as privileged with the righteouſneſs of faith, they cannot look on his baptiſm as ſealing the righteouſneſs of faith to him; but ſo it is in the preſent caſe, where the perſon makes no probable or credible profeſſion: *Ergo*. The aſſumption is clear, and the propoſition alſo; for the having of the thing ſealed is preſuppoſed to the ſeal, as was ſaid before. If they repent, it becometh indeed a ſeal to them, but otherwiſe it doth not. This I apprehend to be the truth. We have heard Pareus's judgment, that the bare outward waſhing, which is all that many get, is the unlawful uſe of baptiſm. Urſin tells us, “The ſacraments are no ſacraments to them that have no true faith. Therefore (ſays he) they are mad that ſay unbelievers receive, together with the ſigns, the things ſignified by the ſigns.” And a little after he thus argues; “To whom nothing is promiſed in the word, to him the ſacraments ſeal nothing. To the wicked nothing is promiſed in the word;——therefore the ſacraments ſeal nothing to the wicked.” The learned Witſius teacheth us thus: “Baptiſm confers nothing on ſuch, (*viz.* to whom it belongs not *ſtricto jure;*) no grace, no ſalvation doth it ſignify or ſeal, no more than a piece of wax, adorned indeed with an elegant character, but appended to clean paper, on which nothing is written, and to be written; or, if you will, appended to a paper beſpattered every-where with ſo exceeding great blots, that no good can be written on it.” It muſt be obſerved, that this very learned man is of opinion, that all federate elect infants are regenerated before baptiſm. That I dare not ſay; but, with the generality, as I ſuppoſe, of the orthodox, I think they are, in the judgment of charity, to be looked on as ſuch, and that baptiſm is conferred on them as viſible ſaints. Now, that opinion made the learned man to expreſs himſelf, ſo, “On which nothing is written, and *to be written.*” And concerning adult perſons he tells us, “It cannot be that any adult perſon may well be baptized, but he that believeth.” So that it is plain, according to him, baptiſm ſeals nothing to the unregenerate. Mr Baxter gives us his judgment in the point thus: “Baptiſm is ordained to ſignify and ſeal, and thereby confer remiſſion of ſins; but not to all that have right in the judgment of the church to be baptized; but only to thoſe that have right to it before God, and to whom his word doth firſt give remiſſion; that is, *not to all whom we muſt baptize*, as being probably true believers, but only to thoſe that *have true right* to baptiſm and its benefits, *as being true believers indeed.*” And if we would hear again who have right to baptiſm before God, he tells us elſewhere, “It is *only ſolid true faith* which is the condition of the promiſe of remiſſion; therefore it is that only that gives right *in foro Dei* to the ſeal.” But how, notwithſtanding of all this, he condemns as an error in Mr Tombes the following propoſition, I do not underſtand. The propoſition is, “Every right adminiſtration of baptiſm is not God's ſealing: actually God ſealeth not, but when it is adminiſtred to a believer: it may be called a right act of the adminiſtrator according to God's appointment, but not God's ſealing.” We ſee here Mr Tombes ſpeaks plainly of the adminiſtration of baptiſm in reſpect of the adminiſtrator, not of the party to whom it is adminiſtred. I confeſs I incline very much to Mr Tombes's error in this point; and ſo much the more freely, that I think, by what is ſaid, it appears to be the judgment of others of more entire fame than he. Once more hear the learned Witſius. “Indeed (ſays he) the adminiſtrators of holy things, who muſt act about every one from the judgment of charity alone, cannot diſtinguiſh the elect from the non-elect; and in ſo far they are not at all faulty (*atque hactenus nihil peccant,*) if perhaps they baptize even them to whom baptiſm is not due *ſtricto jure.*” And a little before: “If we conſider the moſt ſtrict right to baptiſm, it agrees to none but the elect in very deed, and *in the judgment of God.*” And who would think but Mr Baxter himſelf had fallen afterwards into the ſame error with Mr Tombes, at leaſt when he ſays, “*We ought* to baptize them, though they have *no true right* to baptiſm, becauſe we are to take all for true believers that make a probable profeſſion.” Is not that a right act of the adminiſtrator which he *ought* to do, and *muſt* do? And yet, as he himſelf ſays, baptiſm is ordained to ſeal remiſſion of ſins, but not to all whom we muſt baptize. I hope none will ſay, God ſeals by baptiſm what he did not, or where he did not ordain it to ſeal. It would ſeem then very conſequential to infer Mr Tombes's concluſion from theſe premiſſes. Mr Baxter ſays indeed, in confutation of this poſition of Mr Tombes, “That it is only the conditional promiſe which God ſealeth by the ſacraments, *If thou believe in the Lord Jeſus, thou ſhalt be ſaved.*” Poſſibly then one may think, that he means God ſeals remiſſion of ſins to believers only, but to others he ſeals the conditional promiſe. But this will not ſalve the matter in my opinion. For, 1. Mr Baxter telleth us roundly, that the promiſe is to others beſides believers, and ſo is the ſeal: and that this will be evident, if it be once underſtood, that it is *only* the conditional promiſe, which God ſealeth by the ſacraments. What can be made of this, but that it is the ſame thing that God ſeals to believers, and to others beſides them? 2. Underſtand it only of others, beſides believers; is not remiſſion of ſin comprehended in that promiſe which he ſays the ſacraments ſeal? Sure I am the ſcriptures make it one main part of the ſalvation promiſed, Matth. i. 21. *Thou ſhalt call his name Jeſus; for he ſhall ſave his people from their ſins.* 3. How can baptiſm be appointed to ſeal remiſſion of ſins to believers, and only the conditional covenant to others, when, as Mr Baxter himſelf teacheth us, “That in relations, ſuch as ſacraments are, the end entereth the definition?” Therefore (if not through any natural incapacity of the ſubject (which I dare ſay, Mr. Baxter will not plead in this caſe,) but God's mere inſtitution, baptiſm have ends ſo exceeding different in (infants and the aged, ſays he there, let me change it into) believers and others, then you muſt have ſeveral definitions of baptiſm, and ſo ſeveral baptiſms; but the apoſtle ſaith, there is but one baptiſm. Much more he has to the ſame purpoſe in that place. Let them who can reconcile theſe things do it: it is altogether beyond my reach; it may be becauſe I am not well acquainted with his doctrine. But I will weigh what the learned man ſays in confutation of the above-mentioned propoſition, and to prove that the ſacrament rightly adminiſtered to a hypocrite, is God's actual ſealing. His arguments are two.

I. “If the ſacrament rightly adminiſtered to an hypocrite, have all in it that is eſſential to God's actual ſealing, then it is an actual ſealing; but the ſacrament———: therefore it is his actual ſealing. A ſeal is an engaging or obliging ſign, or at leaſt a teſtifying. He that actually uſeth a ſeal to ſuch an end, doth actually ſeal. Now, 1. God uſeth this ſign; 2. and to this end. 1. He uſeth the ſign while his miniſters uſe it in his name at his command. 2. He commandeth it to be uſed to this end, to engage himſelf to make good his promiſes. For, 1. To what other end ſhould God command them? 2. Elſe he ſhould command them to be uſed to one end to one, and to another end to another.——3. If the promiſe be to others beſides believers, then ſo is the ſeal, (for to whom God promiſeth, to them he engageth himſelf to perform;) but the promiſe is to others; therefore, &c. It is only the conditional promiſe, &c. *ut ſupra.*”

Anſw. I deny the minor of this argument, together with the proof of it, that God uſeth the ſeal to this end to hypocrites. The reaſon is, Becauſe hypocrites have no profeſſion of, intereſt in, or right to thoſe things whereof God hath appointed the ſacrament to be a ſeal. What a miniſter may do *de facto*, is not the queſtion: but I deny, that miniſters do uſe the ſacrament at God's command, or *de jure*, towards any but as they are viſible ſaints; and if they ſhould uſe it in his name towards any that are not ſo, they ſhould go beyond the bounds of their commiſſion, Matth. xxviii. 19. as it is above improven, with help from Mr Baxter himſelf. That God commandeth the ſeal to be uſed to this end, to engage God to make good his promiſes, is true in reſpect of them that are in Chriſt, in whom the promiſes are Yea and Amen; but in reſpect of hypocrites, it is falſe. But to what other end ſhould God command them? I anſwer that God hath commanded the ſeals as ſeals to be uſed towards believers only; and he hath commanded Miniſters to look on them as viſible believers that have a probable profeſſion. And if it be ſaid, that he has commanded miniſters to uſe them towards all viſible believers, but ſome of them are hypocrites, and ſo he commands them to be uſed to hypocrites: I anſwer, he commands the ſeals materially conſidered, that is, ſprinkling with water, and bread and wine, to be given and adminiſtered to all viſible believers; but conſidered formally as ſeals, he commands them only to be adminiſtered to thoſe that are real ſaints. So that in this ſenſe the ſacrament cannot be adminiſtered as a ſeal to any but on ſuppoſition that the party is in Chriſt, ſeeing none other have a right before God thereto: yet it is a right act of the adminiſtrator when he adminiſtereth the ſign to one that is a cloſe hypocrite, in regard he is a viſible believer. And in aſſerting that the adminiſtrator is not bound to know certainly and infallibly, that the party whom he baptizeth hath a right to baptiſm before the Lord, Mr Baxter himſelf will bear me out: for he ſaith expreſly, “Miniſters have right to baptize thoſe that before God have no right to baptiſm; for they muſt judge of mens right by a probable profeſſion.” Now, let Mr Baxter aſk, to what other end than to ſeal actually, doth God command the ſeals to be adminiſtered to a hypocrite? I anſwer, he commandeth them not at all to be adminiſtered to them; for whatſoever is given them, or adminiſtered to them, is not God's ſeal; for *forma dat eſſe rei.* And the water in baptiſm adminiſtred to a hypocrite, is no more God's ſeal to him, than a ſoul and a body without union are a man. And if I ſhould ſay, the ſacrament is no ſacrament to him, it is no more than what we heard before was roundly ſaid by a far wiſer head. And truly I think it deſerves to be conſidered, how the definition of a ſacrament agrees to that which is adminiſtered to a hypocrite. “A ſacrament is an holy ordinance, inſtituted by Chriſt; wherein by ſenſible ſigns, Chriſt, and the benefits of the new covenant, are repreſented, ſealed, and applied to believers.” But I paſs this. If we conſider other caſes wherein miniſters are commanded to diſpenſe other ordinances, beſides this of baptiſm, it may give light to what is now under conſideration. When a brother hath fallen into any ſcandalous ſin, and he appears penitent, the church-officers look on themſelves as commanded to abſolve him, and to looſe his ſin; and this they do in the Lord's name and at his command, not only looſing him from church cenſure, but declaring his ſin to be pardoned before God: yet this is on ſuppoſition that he really be before the Lord, that he appears to be before the church. Yet, notwithſtanding of all this, if he be hypocritical in his repentance, he is not looſed in heaven; but what they do herein, they do in God's name and at his command. And you may proſecute this the ſame way, to prove God's looſing the hypocrite in heaven, as Mr Baxter doth the preſent argument. In admitting of cloſe hypocrites to the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, the church dare not debar them, which argues a ſenſe of God's command in the caſe; yet the church dare not admit them but as they appear to be real believers. The act of admiſſion is a right act in thoſe that admit them; but God in his word declares they have no right to it, miniſters doctrinally debar them as ſuch to whom the ſeals belong not. Only men know not their hearts; and in their lives they are viſible believers, but in their hearts enemies to God, whom he will ſeverely examine for coming to this goſpel-feaſt without a wedding-garment; for ſtretching out their hands, being profane dogs, to ſnatch up the children's bread. Strange if notwithſtanding of all this, this adminiſtration be God's actual ſealing. The ſhort is, the command to the adminiſtrators is not an abſolute, but a qualified command. His ſecond reaſon to prove that God uſeth the ſeals for actual ſealing to hypocrites, falls with the firſt. It follows indeed on his doctrine, as was obſerved before, that the ſacraments are uſed for one end to one, and another end to another, which with him (as it was above explained) I account an abſurdity; but it no way follows upon our doctrine. As to the third reaſon, That the promiſe is to others, and therefore ſo is the ſeal; I cannot but obſerve another piece of inconſiſtency (as it appears to me) of this man with himſelf. He ſaith, the promiſe, meaning that, *If thou believe, &c.* is to others beſides believers, and therefore infers that ſo is the ſeal; no doubt he means it belongs to them really and *in foro Dei:* and yet elſewhere he flatly denies, that the ſeal belongs to any but true believers, and ſuch as have true ſolid faith *in foro Dei,* though it may belong to them *in foro eccleſiæ.* But I deny, that the promiſe which the ſacrament ſeals is that promiſe he ſpeaks of, and have given my reaſon before. But the former obſerve brings to mind an argument againſt it; which is this: If it be that conditional promiſe which baptiſm ſealeth, or God ſealeth by baptiſm, then whoſoever have a right before the Lord to that promiſe, have right before the Lord to baptiſm; but that is abſurd: *Ergo.* The conſequence is evident: for whoſo have a right to the thing ſealed, have a right to the ſeal; and deny it who will, it cannot be denied by any making uſe of this argument. The minor I prove thus: If thoſe that have a right to that promiſe before the Lord, have therefore a right to baptiſm before the Lord, then Jews, Turks, and Pagans, to whom the offer of the goſpel is made, though they be ſtill in their infidelity, have a right to baptiſm, even *coram Deo;* but that is moſt abſurd: *Ergo.* The ſequel is plain. For whoſoever they be that have the goſpel offered to them, have right *in foro poli* to the conditional promiſe of ſalvation; ſo that if they ſhould believe, God could not but ſave them by virtue of that promiſe. The appendix to his Aphoriſms, in which he ſaith he hath fully proven this poſition of his, my poor library doth not afford me; neither think I myſelf at any great loſs thereby; for I look on it as moſt uncomfortable doctrine, "That it is only the conditional pro-"miſe which God ſealeth by the ſacraments." If they ſeal no more, ſadly have many godly ſouls been deluded in their enjoyments at ſacraments. But, however, it falleth under the next queſtion, he ſays; and ſo we may expect to hear that ſad doctrine confirmed. If I really believed he could confirm and prove it convincingly, I would hear it as my doom and ſentence of death. Wo to poor ſaints, if the ſacraments confirm and ſeal no more to them.

Now, that which Mr Baxter in the next queſtion ſets himſelf to prove, is, That the abſolute promiſe (or covenant) of the firſt grace is not it that is ſealed in baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper. And for proof hereof he gives ſix arguments, But this ſeems to me as ſtrange arguing, as from the mill to the moon. What conſequence is this, It is not the abſolute promiſe of the firſt grace that baptiſm ſeals; *Ergo,* it is only the conditional promiſe, *If thou believe, thou ſhalt be ſaved?* What though it be not the abſolute promiſe of the firſt grace, muſt it therefore be that conditional promiſe? is there no other promiſes in the covenant but theſe two? I think if there were any ſhadow of a conſequence here, it behoved to be thus; It is not the abſolute promiſe of the firſt grace; *ergo,* it is the conditional promiſe of the firſt grace; which ſhould be Pelagianiſm in grain, and put much reſpect on the Jeſuits maxim, *Facienti quod in ſe eſt, Deus non denegabit ulteriorem gratiam.* And we might leave him to his diſpute with Mr Tombes. But I cannot think that ever Mr Tombes would aſſert, that it was only the abſolute promiſe of the firſt grace that baptiſm is a ſeal of. His words, as Mr Baxter ſets them down, are, "That the covenant whereof baptiſm is a ſeal, is "the abſolute covenant of grace, made only to the "elect." It is certain, many famous divines do hold, that the covenant of grace is abſolute, and that baptiſm is a ſeal of the covenant of grace; and therefore it muſt needs be, according to them, a ſeal of the abſolute covenant. But that which Mr Baxter aims at, ſeems to be that baptiſm doth not at all ſeal the promiſe of the firſt grace. Whatever be of this, if I were obliged to believe it, I would require more convincing arguments than Mr Baxter offers for it; which I will briefly conſider, to the end I may win to ſome light in it.

Arg. 1. "That which is ſealed to by the ſacraments "is a proper covenant, having a reſtipulation on our "parts, as well as a promiſe on God's part; but the ab-"ſolute promiſe is not a proper covenant, with ſuch a "mutual engagement: therefore." *Anſw.* Thoſe that hold the covenant of grace to be abſolute, will tell him, that in reſpect of us it is a mere promiſſory covenant. But if I deny the major with them, I ſee nothing to prove it, but ſomewhat from Mr. Baxter, who holds it to be that promiſe, *If thou believe, &c.* to diſprove it. For, ſays he, "The very definition of a proper cove-"nant ſheweth as much, that it muſt be a mutual en-"gagement. Now, in that abſolute promiſe there is "no ſuch matter——but only God telleth what he will "do." I ſay the ſame, *mutatis mutandis,* of the conditional promiſe. There is no mutual engagement there, but only God telleth what he will do, if we will do ſo and ſo. Where it is plain, there is no engagement at all upon the party to whom this promiſe is made by virtue of it, unleſs it be an engagement, by way of gratitude, to accept of ſuch a precious offer; but the promiſe is to him, whether he fulfil the condition or no, or any way engage with the promiſer, ay and until he that made the promiſe declare he will no longer ſtand to theſe terms. I am confident, that neither *Grotius de jure belli,* nor other lawyers (of whom he ſpeaks here) will ever ſay, that a bare conditional promiſe is a proper covenant, where there is a mutual engagement. Many times, both in peace and war, ſuch conditional promiſes are made, which not being accepted, there is no covenant made. So that by this argument neither Mr Tombes nor Mr Baxter are right.

Arg. 2. "If it were the abſolute promiſe of the firſt "grace that is ſealed by the ſacraments, then the ſacra-"ments muſt be given to no man, or to all men. But, "&c. The conſequent is manifeſt, becauſe that abſo-"lute promiſe or prophecy is only of the elect, and that "before regeneration; now, no man hath any ſign given "him, ſo much as probable, by which to judge of the "unregenerate elect." *Anſw.* I deny the conſequence, (here called the conſequent, either by a typographical error, though not marked amongſt the reſt, or that *Aquila non captat muſcas.*) And what is alledged for proof thereof, is falſe taken univerſally. Though we have no probable ſign given us whereby we may judge of the election of the ſeed of openly wicked parents, till ſuch time as they evidence ſome good thing in them by their perſonal walk; yet as for the ſeed of believers, we have God's promiſe, 'I will be thy God, and the God 'of thy ſeed.' As for infants eſpecially this holds good. And as for thoſe children of godly parents, who when they are come to years of diſcretion, yet favour nothing of piety, that ſays indeed we cannot judge them probably to be regenerated; but yet it ſays not that we may not probably judge them elected. But this brings into my mind an argument againſt baptiſm its being a ſeal of the abſolute promiſe of the firſt grace, which poſſibly may deſerve conſideration. It is this.

If baptiſm be a ſeal of the abſolute promiſe of the firſt grace, then ſome openly wicked adult perſons have a right *coram eccleſia* to baptiſm; but that is falſe, as we have before proved: *Ergo.* I prove the conſequence. They to whom the thing ſealed doth viſibly belong, have a viſible right to the ſeal of the covenant; but if baptiſm be a ſeal of the abſolute promiſe of the firſt grace, the thing ſealed by baptiſm doth viſibly belong to ſome adult perſons openly wicked: *Ergo,* if baptiſm, &c. The propoſition is plain. The reaſon of the aſſumption is, Becauſe the promiſe of the firſt grace belongs viſibly to thoſe that are viſible elect ones, or ſuch as we may probably judge elected: and the ſeed of the righteous we muſt probably judge to be elected, becauſe of the promiſe, 'I 'will be thy God, and the God of thy ſeed;" yet nothing is more plain, than that there are many of the adult ſeed of the righteous that are openly wicked; *Ergo.* But I paſs this.

Arg. 3. "It may be known to whom that covenant belongs which is ſealed by the ſacraments, but it cannot be known (before the fulfilling, no not at all) to whom (particularly) that abſolute promiſe doth belong: therefore, &c." *Anſw.* I diſtinguiſh the major. It may be known (without extraordinary revelation) probably to whom that covenant which is ſealed by the ſacraments belongs particularly, I grant; and in this ſenſe the minor is falſe. It may be known infallibly, I deny. But, as Mr Bowles ſaith, "Baptiſm is to be adminiſtered according to the judgment of charity, ſeeing it can by no certain ſigns be determined who they are that are actually in covenant." Now, if this argument could have any weight, it behoved to be proven, that we may without any extraordinary revelation know infallibly to whom in particular the covenant ſealed in baptiſm doth belong; which the learned man doth not attempt.

Arg. 4. "If——that abſolute promiſe muſt be fulfilled to a man before he be capable of receiving the ſacraments, which are ſeals of the covenant of grace, then it is not that abſolute promiſe which is the covenant of grace ſealed to by the ſacraments; but——that abſolute promiſe muſt be fulfilled, &c. therefore it is not that abſolute promiſe which is the covenant ſo ſealed to." *Anſw.* This is a manifeſt *ignoratio elenchi.* This is neither what Mr Baxter undertook to prove, nor what Mr Tombes denied, ſo far as we can learn by his words cited by Mr Baxter. Mr Tombes indeed ſaith, That the covenant whereof baptiſm is a ſeal, is the abſolute covenant of grace, as ſeveral divines of better note ſay as well as he, but not that the abſolute promiſe of the firſt grace is the covenant of grace; it is according to their opinion a part of it, but a part is not the whole. Does Mr Baxter think, that his adverſaries in this point leave out of the covenant of grace all grace but the firſt? and if he would have concluded his own theſis, he ſhould have inferred, *Ergo*, it is not the abſolute promiſe of the firſt grace that is ſealed to. But let us hear the proof of the conſequence; which is this: "The mercy promiſed in the covenant which is ſealed, is not given before the firſt ſealing: but the mercy promiſed in that abſolute promiſe is (according to Mr Tombes, and in part the truth) given before the firſt ſealing of the covenant of grace; therefore, &c." I wiſh Mr Baxter had ſet down his concluſion. However, we will get ſome concluſion in the premiſſes. But behold! how he wavers again. The concluſion of this argument is plainly this: therefore the mercy promiſed in that abſolute promiſe, is not the mercy promiſed in the covenant which is ſealed. And this concluſion we have inſtead of the major propoſition of his argument, which ought to have been the concluſion of his proof. Such wavering would tempt a man to diſtruſt the cauſe he is defending. But as to the premiſſes, the major taken univerſally is manifeſtly falſe; and unleſs you will maintain that there is only one ſingle mercy of the covenant which is ſealed, which is the covenant of grace no doubt, you muſt either take it ſo, or it is an argument *ax puris particularibus*, as is manifeſt. So then the major is, No mercy promiſed in the covenant which is ſealed, or in the covenant of grace, is given before the firſt ſealing. But moſt of our divines, that ever I read, againſt the Papiſts and Lutherans their baptiſmal regeneration, will tell him, that ſome mercies promiſed in the covenant which is ſealed, are given before the firſt ſealing; yea more, unleſs that ſome of theſe mercies be given before baptiſm, ſuch as the ſaving indwelling of the Spirit, regeneration, union with Chriſt, remiſſion, &c. they can have no right, before God, to the firſt ſeal; and unleſs they appear to us probably to be given them, they have no right before the church to it. And if Mr Baxter hath not ſaid as much, as that ſome mercies promiſed——are, yea and muſt be given before the firſt ſealing, or the parties have no right to baptiſm before the Lord, let what is ſaid before manifeſt. I need not ſtand to prove the falſity of Mr Baxter's major propoſition laſt named, it hath been ſufficiently done before. But at length we come to ſomething that is indeed to the point, which immediately follows the concluſion of the laſt ſyllogiſm; and it is this: "God doth not promiſe and ſeal to a man that hath a new heart, to give him a new heart; or to a man that is a believer, that he will give him to be a believer; except we ſpeak of the continuance or increaſe of faith and newneſs, which is not the thing in queſtion." But I anſwer, there is another uſe of a ſeal beſides that of engaging and obliging to the performance of any thing; it is alſo of uſe to teſtify and repreſent, as a demonſtrative ſign. This is plain, not only from the common nature of ſeals appended to contracts, but from that plain ſcripture, Rom. iv. 11. 'And Abraham received circumciſion, a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith which he had before.' And Mr Baxter himſelf acknowledgeth it; "A ſeal (ſays he) is an engaging or obliging ſign, or at leaſt a teſtifying." So then, although God doth not ſeal the promiſe of giving a new heart to him that hath a new heart, by way of *engagement* and *obligation* to perform the promiſe, yet he may ſeal to him that hath a new heart the promiſe of giving a new heart; he may ſeal it, I ſay, by way of *teſtimony*, that ſuch a promiſe hath been made to, or concerning that perſon that hath the new heart. This is not done in vain; for the promiſe contains a grant of the mercy; it is the foundation of our right, and the tenor of our freeholding, or holding of free grace; which it is very reaſonable we ſhould be put in mind of, the rather that ſome learned men do very much to darken the glory of grace. Suppoſe a king ſhould write a promiſe of a vaſt ſum of current money to be given freely to one that had been a traitor to him, or rather is a traitor, and ſhould actually pay it him before the writ be ſealed; and upon the payment thereof, the man ſees his folly, in that he ſhould have been ſo undutiful to ſuch a gracious prince, and ſo becomes a loyal ſubject: what ſoleciſm in conduct would it be, either in the ſubject to deſire of him, (even after he hath got the money,) that he would pleaſe to ſeal this his promiſe and grant; or in the king, to ſeal his own writ? May be the man hath no great ſkill to diſcern betwixt true and counterfeit money; the rather ſhould the promiſe be ſealed. The application is eaſy. God made promiſe to Abraham, ſaying, *I will be thy God*, ſeals it with circumciſion; yet before circumciſion the promiſe was made out to Abraham; God was the God of Abraham before he was circumciſed, yet was not the ſeal uſed in vain. But Mr Baxter will ſay, that he ſealed the continuance of that mercy of being his God. Let it be ſo; yet *ipſo facto* that God ſealed by way of engagement and obligation the continuance of that mercy to Abraham, he alſo ſealed, by way of teſtimony, the beginning of that mercy, or that mercy given at firſt, and conſequently the promiſe thereof; for God ſeals no mercy to us but as it is comprehended in a promiſe. If any will ſay, that the ſacraments ſeal any mercy but what the word promiſeth, let them prove it. For my part, I think it contrary both to ſcripture and reaſon.

Arg. 5. "The benefits of the covenant of grace, which is ſealed by the ſacraments, are (by thoſe of age) to be received by faith; but the benefits of the abſolute promiſe of the firſt grace are not to be received by faith: therefore this is not the covenant of grace ſo ſealed. The major is evident. Mr. Tombes ſaith, only believers muſt be baptized as diſciples. The minor is proved before. Faith is a part of the thing promiſed; and we do not by faith receive our firſt faith, or our power to believe." *Anſw.* To paſs this, that the concluſion of this argument is indeed, Therefore the benefits of the abſolute promiſe of the firſt grace are not the benefits of the covenant of grace, which is ſealed by the ſacraments; the concluſion, as it is formed by the learned man, labours under the former diſeaſe, *quod non concludit negatum.* He had need of quicker eyes than I can pretend to, that can diſcern a contradiction between theſe two; The abſolute promiſe of the firſt grace is not the covenant of grace, which is ſealed by the ſacraments; and that, The covenant whereof baptiſm is the ſeal, is the abſolute covenant of grace, made only to the elect; which is the propoſition Mr Baxter undertakes to confute. But I deny the major, univerſally taken. When Mr Baxter ſpeaks of receiving the benefits of the covenant by faith, either he means receiving of the things themſelves, or receiving a right to them; and in both ſenſes the propoſition is falſe. If he mean it of receiving the things themſelves, as contradiſtinct from receiving a right thereto, then I would fain know, 1. Whether the reſurrection of our bodies, and glorification, be benefits of the covenant of grace? and then, 2. How theſe benefits in this ſenſe are received by faith? If he mean it of receiving a right thereto, contradiſtinct from receiving of the things themſelves, then I would deſire to underſtand, whether juſtification, adoption, and ſuch relative benefits, be benefits of the covenant of grace; and then, how a man can receive a right to relative benefits, as contradiſtinguiſhed *in re* from the things themſelves; or if a man can have a right to a relation, and not *ipſo facto* be ſo related. I ſpeak not of *jus ſub termino;* but an immediate preſent right, as the matter with faith in reſpect of juſtification, &c. Whoever may quarrel this, it cannot be contradicted by Mr Baxter's principles. "As to the relative " benefits, (ſays he,) right to them, and right in them, " are inſeparable, &c." As to the proof of the propoſition, I confeſs I ſee not how it toucheth the point. Mr Tombes ſaith very right, and according to the ſcriptures, when he ſaith, Only believers muſt be baptized as diſciples, meaning it of thoſe that have right thereto before the Lord; and many others ſay, and that on good grounds, that only the regenerate, juſtified, &c. muſt be baptized as diſciples: and yet it will not hence follow, that the benefits of the covenant of grace ſealed by the ſacraments, muſt be received by regeneration, juſtification, &c.

Arg. 6. "The covenant ſealed to by the ſacraments " is a plainly propounded, unqueſtionable covenant; " but this abſolute promiſe of the firſt grace is not " ſuch, &c." *Anſw.* This concluſion is like ſome others before, that hit not the ſcope of the diſpute. But no doubt the covenant is plainly propounded, and ought not to be queſtioned. But who can help the queſtioning that nice wits will needs make about truths plainly propounded? And this argument might have been left out, while it is ſeen plainly and unqueſtionably, that many that have eyes in their head as well as this learned man, cannot agree with him, as to what it is that the ſacraments do ſeal. But it is time now to come to his ſecond argument for God's actual ſealing to hypocrites.

II. "If God do no more in his actual ſealing to be" lievers, than he doth when the ſacrament is rightly " applied to hypocrites, then he actually ſealeth to " hypocrites; but God doth no more, &c. The ma" jor is proved by the enumeration of the ſeveral acts. " 1. God maketh the promiſe. 2. He commandeth " miniſters to publiſh it. 3. He hath inſtituted the ſa" craments as mutual engaging ſigns or ſeals. 4. He " commandeth miniſters to deliver or apply them to " thoſe that profeſs their conſent and deſire to enter or " renew the covenant.——Now, what act more than " theſe doth God perform to the elect or believers?" *Anſw.* The proof of the major I will take for the proof of the minor, which is denied. And to his queſtion, I ſay, God doth more than all thoſe things enumerated while he actually ſeals to believers, or elſe he ſhould not actually ſeal to them at all. The Weſtminſter aſſembly in their Shorter Catechiſm, tells us, what God doth more, in anſwer to that queſtion, *How do the ſacraments become effectual means of ſalvation?* The anſwer is, *The ſacraments become effectual——by the bleſſing of Chriſt, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them.* So then God bleſſeth them to believers, which he doth not when adminiſtered to hypocrites; God works by his Spirit in the one, not in the other; and thus he gives them efficacy to believers, not to others. God ratifies in heaven what miniſters do on earth, when the ſacraments are adminiſtered to them who are fit for receiving of them; which is not done in the caſe of others. What if a Jew or a Mahometan ſhould undertake to put a mock on the Chriſtians and their God; and in purſuance thereof, ſhould feign repentance, and faith in Jeſus Chriſt, ſo as no miniſter ſhould know but he were ſerious, and ſo be baptized? might not this be a right act of the adminiſtrator? But doth God no more in his actual ſealing to believers, than he doth when ſuch a one is baptized? Believe it who will, I cannot obtain it of myſelf to give credit to it. Put the caſe, that two viſible church members fall into ſome ſcandalous ſin, and are cenſured: both give ſufficient evidences of their repentance to the church, yet the one is hypocritical, the other ſincere; God maketh the promiſe, commandeth his miniſters to publiſh it, he hath inſtituted church-diſcipline for the re-gaining of offenders, he commandeth that ſuch as appear penitent be abſolved. But doth God no more towards the one than towards the other? Surely he doth, as in the former caſe.

Arg. II. If the parents of ſuch infants concerning whom our queſtion is, have no right to the table of the Lord, then the infants have no right before the church to the ordinance of baptiſm; but the former is true; *Ergo.* And hence it hath been a piece of difficulty to me, to reconcile the practice of admitting mens children to baptiſm, and in the mean time debarring themſelves from the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, and that conſtantly. The minor is leaſt to be doubted; for the church, in debarring openly wicked perſons from the table of the Lord, declareth that they are looked on as perſons that have no right thereto. I apprehend it will be ſaid, that ſuch perſons have *jus ad rem*, but not *in re;* and that the former is ſufficient to intitle their children to baptiſm *in foro eccleſiæ.* This I willingly grant, as to ſome that are debarred from the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper: even as in the caſe of the Iſraelites with reſpect to the paſſovet, where ſome had a remote right to that ordinance; but when they were unclean, they could not rightfully claim the poſſeſſion of it. But I would diſtinguiſh of ſcandalous Chriſtians, or baptized perſons. Some are habitually and conſtantly ſcandalous, who never gave any probable ſigns of their ſincerity; others there are that have ſometimes given ſuch probable ſigns, but afterwards fall into ſome ſcandalous ſin or ſins. That the latter ſort have *jus ad rem*, or a remote right to the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, I will not deny. Yea, it will not be grievous to me to grant, that the children of ſuch perſons, while as yet they have not evidenced their repentance, have nevertheleſs a right *coram eccleſia* to baptiſm. And my reaſon is, becauſe the church ſtill looks on ſuch a perſon as a living, though not a lively member of Chriſt, as one ſavingly in covenant with God, evidenced by his former walk, before the hour of temptation; and the child's viſible right to baptiſm, depends not on the parent's frame, but his viſible ſtate as in covenant with God; for ſo runs the promiſe, 'I will be thy God, and ' the God of thy ſeed;' So that the church looking on the parent as having God for his God, in the ſenſe of the promiſe, muſt needs look on his ſeed as enjoying the ſame privilege, and conſequently a right to baptiſm. But as for thoſe who are habitually profane, who never appeared to walk in any tolerable meaſure becoming the goſpel, as there are too many baptized perſons, they have not ſo much as a remote right to the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper; for it is appointed of God for believers, and them only; for the living, to make them grow; not for the dead, to give them life, elſe why are any debarred from it? So that none have a right, no not a remote right thereto, before God, but real believers; and none have a remote right thereto, before the church, but viſible believers. Whatever ſome are pleaſed to plead for the right of all baptized perſons to the Lord's table, it will not much move me, nor do I think it will move many (but to indignation,) when they ſiſt their conſciences before the tribunal of a holy God; therefore I will not digreſs from my purpoſe, to conſider the weak arguings wherewith ſome endeavour to ſupport that cauſe. We ſay then, that as none have a remote right to this ſacrament *in foro poli*, but ſuch as are right as to their ſtate; and none a proximate right thereto, but ſuch as are in a frame, in ſome meaſure, ſuitable to that venerable ordinance; ſo none have *jus ad rem in foro poli*, but viſible believers; and none *jus in re*, but the ſame perſons being free of public ſcandal. I proceed to prove the conſequence. The child hath no viſible right to that ordinance to which the parent hath none. This propoſition hath been proven before. But if the parents have not ſo much as a remote right to the table of the Lord, they have no right to baptiſm: *Ergo*. if the parent have not ſo much as a remote right to the table of the Lord, the child hath no viſible right to baptiſm. The minor is clear; for I think it will be denied by none, that all that have right to baptiſm have a remote right to the table of the Lord, *& vice verſa*. None need to think ſtrange, that we ſpeak of perſons actually baptized their right to baptiſm, no more than to queſtion the right that a man hath to an eſtate he has long enjoyed; for it is certain here, that poſſeſſion may be where there is no rightful poſſeſſion, or right and title to what is poſſeſſed. If any ſay, that children are not baptized in their parents right, but in their own right, they may freely for me enjoy their liberty to expreſs it ſo; for it is certain the child has a right, and that right is not the parent's right; but all the evidence that we can have of a child's right to baptiſm, is from the parents; therefore ſaid I, the child can have no *viſible right*, &c. I doubt not, but as the child of a moſt profane parent may have the Spirit; ſo in that caſe it hath a moſt undoubted right before the Lord, to the ſeal of the covenant; but the parent being an openly wicked perſon, there is no probable evidence of this; nor can there be in that caſe, till the child do manifeſt the ſame by its perſonal carriage. In the mean time as to us *de non apparentibus & non exiſtentibus eadem eſt ratio*.

Arg. III. A curſed ſeed hath no right to a ſealing ordinance; but the children of the openly wicked, or ſuch as make no credible profeſſion, are a curſed ſeed: *Ergo*. There can be no doubt of the aſſumption, the ſcripture is expreſs for it, Deut. xxviii. 18. *Curſed ſhall be the fruit of thy body*. The propoſition I prove thus. If a viſibly curſed ſeed, (for ſo I underſtand the curſed ſeed I ſpeak of in the argument, taking it for granted, they are viſibly curſed whom God has declared in his word to be curſed, which I think none can deny with any colour of reaſon;) if a viſibly curſed ſeed have a viſible right to a ſealing ordinance, then a viſibly curſed ſeed are a viſibly bleſſed ſeed; but that is abſurd: *Ergo*. The conſequence is plain: for they that have right to the ſeal of the covenant of grace, are a viſibly bleſſed ſeed; they are ſurely viſibly bleſſed who appear to be in the covenant with God, and members of Chriſt, as thoſe who have a viſible right to baptiſm. The aſſumption is no leſs plain: for *bleſſing* and *curſing* are inconſiſtent; whom God viſibly curſeth, he cannot at the ſame viſibly bleſs, elſe they ſhould be viſibly happy and miſerable at one and the ſame time; even ſo happy as God's bleſſing makes, and ſo miſerable as God's curſe makes a perſon. It is in vain to ſay, they are bleſſed and curſed in ſundry reſpects; ſo that however in ſome other reſpects they are curſed, yet, in reſpect of a right to the firſt ſeal of the covenant, they are a bleſſed ſeed: for there is no ſuch diſtinction, nor ground for ſuch diſtinction, in the text. But in what other reſpects can they be viſibly curſed, when they are viſibly bleſſed in this reſpect! Were they in the moſt miſerable caſe that ever any was in the world in other reſpects, while they have a viſible right to baptiſm, God is their God, and who will dare ſay, that thoſe who are thus viſibly privileged are viſibly curſed? As the bleſſing of God puts a perſon in a bleſſed ſtate, ſo his curſe puts him in a curſed ſtate, in whatever particular the bleſſing or the curſe do chiefly appear; for God's bleſſing and curſing are formally forenſic actions, and ſo the different ſtates reſulting therefrom are inconſiſtent utterly, as juſtification and condemnation. Yea, I add, that the executive bleſſing and curſing are alſo inconſiſtent; for theſe flow from, and do neceſſarily preſuppoſe the formal acts of bleſſing and curſing; ſo that although a perſon in a curſed ſtate may receive good things from God, that are in themſelves, and unto others bleſſings indeed, yet they are curſed, Mal. ii. 2.: even as afflictions, which are curſes to the wicked, are nevertheleſs bleſſings to them that are in Chriſt. What though the ſeed of the wicked, by ſovereign grace may be bleſſed; yet, while this bleſſing is latent, we are to look on them as God in his word hath denounced the ſeed of the wicked to be: for the word is the rule of the church's judgment, not the ſecret will of God; *Secret things belong to the Lord, but unto us thoſe things that are revealed*. When they do by their perſonal carriage declare themſelves to be bleſſed ones, the church is to deal with them as ſuch then, but not till then. As God hath declared the ſeed of the wicked to be curſed, ſo he hath alſo declared the ſeed of the righteous to be bleſſed, Pſal. xxxvii. 26. *His ſeed is bleſſed*; and cxii. 2. *The generation of the upright ſhall be bleſſed*. What a vaſt difference doth the Lord in his word make between the ſeed of the righteous and the ungodly? the one is bleſſed, the other curſed: it ſeems reaſonable then the church ſhould make ſome difference betwixt them alſo in the matter of church-privileges, as was argued before. Can we ſuppoſe, that God hath given no more ground of comfort to the godly as to their ſeed, than he has given to the wicked, if they be but baptized? Or can we reſtrain this ground of comfort merely to temporal good things? In this readily the children of the faithful have leaſt ſhare. I think it is a pitiful ſtraitening of the many promiſes that are made to the godly and to their ſeed, to allow them no more ground of comfort as to their childrens ſouls, than wicked baptized perſons may have as to theirs, notwithſtanding of the curſes denounced upon them. Allow both an equal right to the ſeal of the covenant of grace, and ſo to all the benefits thereof, and then ſure all odds are made even. For my part, I am indeed of opinion, that, but prejudice to the ſovereignty of God, who hath neither in the curſe nor in the bleſſing ſet a law for himſelf, to bind up the hands of free grace from bringing forth elect veſſels out of the loins of wicked parents; nor the hand of abſolute dominion, in reprobating ſome of the ſeed of the godly; that the main thing aimed at, both in the curſe and in the bleſſing, is what concerns the eternal ſtate of their ſeed, viz. that God will deny his grace to the children of the wicked, and ſo damn them for their ſins; and give his grace to the ſeed of the godly, and ſo ſave them eternally. So judicious Calvin underſtands the threatening and the promiſe in the ſecond command. And it is highly reaſonable, that the holy oracles of God ſhould be always underſtood in the moſt comprehenſive ſenſe, where there is nothing to reſtrain the ſame, as it is in this caſe. And what elſe can we make of the grand promiſe of the covenant, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy ſeed?* This anſwers the ſcope and deſign of the declaration of the mind of God moſt fully, both in the declaration of the curſe, and of the bleſſing. This makes them moſt pungent incentives to true piety. And thus God himſelf hath viſibly explained the ſame. How often do we ſee the children follow the footſteps of their parents, graceleſs parents with their children no better than themſelves, when the children of the godly are bleſſed? It is true, the wickedneſs of ſome of the children of the godly is much noticed, and ready to be talked of, when the children of the wicked their impiety is not; but this plainly confirms what we ſay; for no better is expected of the ſeed of the wicked, when better things are looked for in the children of the godly. Seldom it is but the godly have ſome good; ſeldom the wicked have any. Of ſome ſtock of people God never wants ſome, even to the view of the world; and of others he hath none, in all appearance. And if the curſe and bleſſing be thus underſtood, it doth mightily ſtrengthen the argument, as I apprehend; for baptiſm is *de jure* conferred on children, only as they are apparently ſuch as belong to God in a ſaving manner, as was before pleaded. This argument then I will conclude, with Balaam's words inverted, *How ſhall we bleſs whom God hath curſed?*

Arg. IV. If it be neceſſarily prerequired to infants right to baptiſm *coram eccleſia*, that their parents appear penitent, and lovers, not haters of God; then none but the infants of viſible believers have a viſible right to the ordinance of baptiſm: The former is true; *ergo*, the latter alſo. The conſequence is plain; for viſible penitents, lovers, and not haters of God, are viſible believers, and none other; the one cannot be neceſſary, but the other *ipſo facto* is alſo neceſſary; and thoſe whom we cannot look upon as viſible penitents, and lovers of God, we muſt needs look upon as viſibly impenitent perſons, and haters of God, and ſo as viſible unbelievers, wanting that which is neceſſary to evidence their infants right to baptiſm. The aſſumption is proven before from Acts ii. 38. Exod. xx. 5, 6. From the former of theſe it plainly appears, that repentance was prerequired of thoſe pricked at the heart, antecedently to their own, or their childrens viſible right to baptiſm. And what though parents now are ordinarily poſſeſſed of that privilege in their infancy; when they were admitted as viſible ſaints, ſeeing afterwards they have nothing of that viſible ſaintſhip? ought they not to be preſſed to repentance, in order to a viſible right to their ſeed for this ordinance, having now loſt that viſible right thereto themſelves, which they had in their infancy poſſibly? Thoſe in the text were circumciſed, whether *jure* or *injuria* we ſhall not determine; and circumciſion was a ſeal of the ſame covenant whereof baptiſm alſo is; it was a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith, as well as baptiſm; yet, notwithſtanding, they behoved to evidence their repentance before their childrens right to baptiſm could be acknowledged; as was proven before. It ſeems then no leſs reaſonable, that baptized parents ſhould be obliged to do the like, ere their childrens right to baptiſm be acknowledged by the church. From the latter of theſe ſcriptures, it hath been evinced, that the children of wicked parents are, by the threatening, denied a right to the ſeal of the covenant; and that it is given, by the promiſe, only to the children of thoſe that love God; which doth plainly reſtrain the ſame to the ſeed of viſible believers *coram eccleſia*. Hereunto add that teſtimony of the apoſtle, 1 Cor. vii. 14. 'For the unbelieving huſband is ſanctified by the wife: '——elſe were your children unclean; but now they 'are holy;' from whence it doth inevitably follow, that one of the parents muſt needs be a viſible believer, elſe the children cannot be reckoned holy; and hence it is ordinary to prove the right of the infants of the faithful unto baptiſm.

Exc. 1. By the *haters* of God in the ſecond commandment, are meant idolaters only; and ſo by *lovers* of God, thoſe that cleave to the true worſhip of God: and therefore the threatening cannot be extended to the children of thoſe that do not turn aſide to idolatry, to renounce Chriſtianity. *Anſw.* Many things may be returned to this exception; as, 1. Then all baptized perſons children have not a right to baptiſm; for they may be baptized, and yet be idolaters, though they have not renounced their baptiſm. 2. Then the children of Papiſts have no right to baptiſm; for they are manifeſt idolaters, as all Proteſtant divines do hold; and yet thoſe that differ, will not allow this. But, 3. Though the contempt of this command is no doubt aimed againſt in the threatening, and the promiſe hath reſpect to the keeping of it; yet to reſtrain either the threat or the promiſe to this command, is to do violence to the words: for the words are expreſs for God's commands in the plural number, both in Exod. xx. 6. and Deut. xxvii. 10. ſo that at leaſt they belong to all the commands of the firſt table. "If you conſider duly, (ſays "Calvin,) the promiſe which we have now explained "is not peculiarly annexed to one command, but is "common to the whole firſt table of the law." Zanchius carries it further. "The true interpretation "(ſays he,) is, that this (viz. the fifth command) is the "firſt command with a promiſe, to wit, not pertaining "univerſally to all the commands." And a little after: "God doth ſo much eſteem the keeping of this "command, that he addeth to it only, and ſo to none o"ther, a peculiar promiſe." 4. That by *haters of God* are meant idolaters only, &c. is *gratis dictum*. It ſeems ſtrange, to reſtrain that odious character to thoſe only, ſeeing the hatred of God is common to all unregenerate perſons, who are *enmity againſt God*, Rom. viii. 7. and the hatred of God is moſt vigorous amongſt thoſe, where idolatry is baniſhed, and the pure word of God preached, levelling pithily againſt the ſins of the wicked. And no leſs ſtrange is it, that thoſe ſhould be accounted lovers of God who outwardly cleave to pure ordinances, while they are openly wicked in their lives: ſurely Chriſt accounts thoſe his enemies, who ſhall be brought forth, and ſlain before his eyes, and that with a double death. Wherefore we underſtand *the haters of God* to be all the *wicked* and *the lovers of God* the truly *godly*, who obey out of love, as the other diſobey out of hatred to God; as Calvin judiciouſly teacheth. "*Thoſe that* "*love me.* The fountain and origin of true righteouſneſs "is expreſſed,——The tranſgreſſors of the law are "called *enemies* and *haters of God.*—For ſeeing he can"not be ſeparated from his juſtice, the contempt of the "law argueth this hatred; becauſe it cannot be, but he "that will not ſuffer God to be his lawgiver and "judge, deſires alſo to rob him of his government." 5. laſtly, Though it ſhould be yielded, that the threatening and promiſe belong only to this command, yet what reaſon is there that they ſhould be reſtrained to one ſin and one duty only? I ſhould think at leaſt, that ſuch as do not obſerve the ordinances of God, as prayer, &c. ſhould be alſo here included.

Exc. 2. The apoſtle (1 Cor. vii. 14.) means not real believers, in oppoſition to openly wicked Chriſtians; but believers, in oppoſition to Pagans, accounting all believers who had given up their name to Chriſt in baptiſm. *Anſw.* The apoſtle means viſible believers, amongſt whom ſome were ſincere, others hypocrites; even as he means viſible holineſs, when he ſaith, their children were holy. To ſuppoſe that there were any in the church of Corinth that were not viſible Chriſtian believers, is what I cannot grant without proof; and I am of opinion, it cannot be proven from the ſcriptures. There is, as I ſaid before, a vaſt difference betwixt one that ſometimes, by his perſonal carriage, gave probable evidence of his ſaintſhip, and one that never did ſo. There were certainly many grievous enormities amongſt that people, or in that church; yet the former of theſe appears to be their caſe. The reaſon is, Becauſe, as the hiſtory of the acts of the apoſtles ſhew, none in thoſe days were baptized, but ſuch as gave probable ſigns of their ſincerity, together with their children; and of the Corinthians particularly Luke teſtifies, that 'many of them hearing, believed, and were baptized,' Acts xviii. 8. and the Lord told Paul in a viſion, that

‘ he had much people in that city,’ and ſo ‘ he abode ‘ a year and ſix months with them,’ verſ. 9. 10. and though he himſelf baptized few of them, yet it cannot be thought but that people were baptized by his direction, and that therein he did as the reſt of the apoſtles, requiring them to evidence their repentance before baptiſm; and when he was gone, Apollos a faithful brother, was with them for a time, Acts xix. 1. That others than viſible believers were baptized among them, we cannot without proof grant, eſpecially ſeeing all of them whoſe baptiſm is recorded in the ſcripture, were viſible believers, and therefore baptized. Wherefore, although that by means of their own corruptions and hypocriſy, no doubt in ſome of them, and by means of falſe teachers, ſome were led aſide into erroneous principles and diſorderly practices, they could not loſe their viſible ſaintſhip, till ſuch time as they proved utterly irreclaimable: but how they took with the apoſtle's reproofs, the apoſtle himſelf plainly tells us, 2 Cor. vii. 8. &c. And indeed, for all the faults that were among them, the apoſtle acknowledgeth them ſtill as viſible believers: writing to them, as few miniſters amongſt us, I ſuppoſe, durſt write to his congregation of baptized ones: 1 Cor. i. 2. ‘ Unto the church of ‘ God that is at Corinth, to them that are ſanctified in ‘ Chriſt Jeſus, called (our tranſlation adds, but without ‘ reaſon, to be) ſaints.’ Verſ. 3. ‘ Grace be unto you ‘ and peace from God our Father.’ Verſ. 7. ‘ Waiting ‘ for the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt:’ Verſ. 8. ‘ Who ſhall alſo confirm you unto the end, that ye may ‘ be blameleſs in the day of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.’ See verſ. 9. chap. vi. 15. 19, 20, But in our caſe the perſons we ſpeak of, are ſuch as never gave evidence of their ſincerity, in a way of probability, elſe there would not be ſo much difficulty about the buſineſs.

Arg. V. Thoſe who cannot be probably judged to be within the covenant, have no viſible right to baptiſm; but the children of openly wicked parents, cannot be probably judged to be within the covenant: *Ergo.* The major is owned to be a truth by moſt divines that are orthodox. Wendelin is very expreſs for it: ſpeaking of the ſubject recipient of baptiſm, he ſays, “ It is all, and “ only thoſe who are probably judged to be within the “ covenant of grace.” So ſaith Oliver Bowles, who nevertheleſs allows the children of all baptized perſons a right to baptiſm. “ All infants (ſays he) that in the “ judgment of charity are within the covenant, are to “ be baptized. I call that the judgment of charity, “ when we obtain all thoſe things by which it is probable “ the party to be baptized is within the covenant.” It is evident, theſe learned men ſpeak of a ſaving inbeing in the covenant, the probableneſs whereof they think is requiſite in thoſe that have right to baptiſm before the church; which is the very thing our propoſition doth import. However, I ſhall prove it. None have right to that ordinance, before the Lord, that are not really and ſavingly in covenant with God, as hath been already cleared; *Ergo,* none have viſible right to the ordinance that are not viſibly or probably within the covenant. The conſequence is manifeſt; becauſe the judgment of the church muſt be regulated by the judgment of God, ſo far as the ſame is revealed. Again, thoſe who cannot be probably judged to have a real right to the thing ſealed, or rather a real intereſt in the ſame, have no viſible right to the ſeal; but thoſe who cannot be probably judged to be within the covenant really and ſavingly, have no viſible intereſt in the thing ſealed: *Ergo.* If therefore any will plead an external being in covenant with God, as a diſtinct thing from a viſible being in covenant with him: and alledge, that the ſeal may be given on the account of this external being in covenant, they ſpeak unadviſedly; for it is no other covenant that is ſealed by baptiſm but the covenant of grace, which is entered into, or accepted by faith, neither can any be ſaid to be in it, but either really or apparently, which we call viſibly. Now, I prove the minor. Openly wicked parents cannot be probably judged to be within the covenant: *Ergo,* neither their children. The antecedent muſt needs be yielded, unleſs we ſay, that openly wicked perſons give probable ſigns of their piety and intereſt in Chriſt; that they are probably regenerated, juſtified, adopted, &c. which is in effect to ſay, that openly wicked perſons are not openly wicked, but viſible ſaints. It is in vain to ſay, that they are within the conditional promiſe, in ſo far as they are baptized; for we ſpeak now of a probable judgment of a particular perſon's being within the covenant. But if by this be meant, that they are within the compaſs of that promiſe, though they have not yet come up to the terms, then they have no more than what Pagans have, whenſoever the goſpel-offer is made to them; if the meaning of it be, they are within it in ſo far as they have really believed, then we would fain learn, how a real believer comes to be an openly wicked man; and by what means, or probable ſigns, men do judge an openly wicked perſon to be a believer. The conſequence is proved from hence, that children ſtand and fall before the church, with their immediate parents, ſo that we cannot judge a man's ſeed probably to be in covenant with God, if he himſelf be not viſibly in the covenant. I can apprehend no way how the force of this argument can be warded off, unleſs we make recourſe to the remote godly parents; which to how many inconveniences it is liable, we have heard before. Some indeed lay the whole ſtreſs on the baptiſm of the parents, one or both, and will have the judgment of charity to conclude all thoſe to be within the covenant probably, whoſe parents ſometime were baptized; which in my opinion is wonderfully wide charity, to ſay no more of it. How can a perſon's baptiſm be more uſeful to another, than to himſelf that perſonally received it? The baptiſm of ſome is followed with open wickedneſs; and that which we now ſpeak of, is that right the children of openly wicked parents can have to baptiſm; and we have proven, that the openly wicked cannot be probably judged to be within the covenant: and yet a baptized perſon may be openly wicked; conſequently the baptiſm of an openly wicked parent cannot be a ground whereon we may probably judge him within the covenant. Yet that this baptiſm, ſo uſeleſs to himſelf, ſhould be ſo uſeful to his ſeed, is a thing that would need ſtrong arguments to back it with, in order to its reception. One would expect, that ſuch as go no further than the immediate parents for the church-ſtate of the infants, ſhould ſhew as much in the immediate parent as the child hath, ſeeing nothing can give more than it hath to itſelf. Moreover if the judgment of charity muſt conclude all thoſe children to be probably in covenant whoſe parents were once baptized, then, if Simon Magus had enjoyed a child, even after his diſcovering of himſelf to have been ſtill *in the gall of bitterneſs, and the bond of iniquity,* and to *have neither part nor lot* with the people of God *in the gifts of the Holy Ghoſt,* that child would have been probably judged to be within the covenant, and ſo to have had right to the ſeal of the covenant: but that could not be, in regard Simon himſelf had then no viſible right to baptiſm; and had that diſcovery been made before, doubtleſs he had not been baptized. How many baptized perſons do as really diſcover themſelves to be ſtill *in the gall of bitterneſs,* as Simon did, by their open wickedneſs? But the unprofitableneſs of the baptiſm of openly wicked perſons while they continue ſo, has been largely diſcourſed on before.

Arg. VI. If none be viſibly priviledged with having *God to be their God, and the God of their ſeed,* (in the ſenſe of the promiſe and covenant of grace, which is ſealed to by the ſacraments,) but viſible believers: then the infants of openly wicked parents, though baptized, have no viſible right to baptiſm; the former is true: *Ergo,* the latter alſo. The ſequel is manifeſt. if ye conſider, that openly wicked perſons, though baptized, are viſible unbelievers, and that they can have no right to baptiſm *coram eccleſia* whoſe God the Lord is not: for, in baptizing infants, we do really declare that we look on God as the God of the parent, and the God of his ſeed. Now, that this great privilege viſibly belongs only to viſible believers, we hope to manifeſt by theſe following reaſons.

1. That which belongs only to real believers before God, viſibly belongs only to viſible believers and their ſeed; but this privilege belongs only to real believers before the Lord: *Ergo*, &c. The reaſon of the propoſition hath been given oftner than once in this diſcourſe, therefore I ſtand not upon it. I prove the aſſumption: Thoſe to whom this privilege is given, have ground to expect the accompliſhment of the reſt of the promiſes of the covenant to them: the reaſon is, becauſe this is comprehenſive of all, and all the reſt depend on it; for what can God promiſe or give more than himſelf to be a God to us? but none have ground to expect this but real believers: *Ergo*. Further, thoſe who are thus privileged now *coram Deo*, God will at the laſt day openly acknowledge as his people; for theſe two go together, *I will be their God, and they ſhall be my people*: but God will ſo own none but real ſaints: *Ergo*.

2. Thoſe to whom this privilege doth viſibly belong, whoſe God the Lord is, are thoſe, and thoſe only to whom the Lord hath been viſibly ſo gracious, as to 'put 'his law in their inward parts, and write it in their 'hearts:' but theſe are none other but viſible believers and their ſeed: *Ergo*. The major is clear; for theſe two are joined together in the promiſe, Jer. xxxi. 33. Heb. viii. 10. 'For this is the covenant that I will 'make with the houſe of Iſrael——I will put my 'laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; 'and I will be to them a God, and they ſhall be to me 'a people.' See now how this doth viſibly agree unto the openly wicked, that viſibly caſt God's laws behind their backs.

3. Only Abraham's viſible ſeed are thus viſibly privileged: *Ergo*, only viſible believers. The antecedent is plain. The conſequence I prove thus: None are Abraham's real ſeed ſpiritually but real believers; *Ergo*, none are his viſible ſeed but viſible believers. The ſcripture plainly holds forth, that none are really Abraham's ſeed but true believers, Gal. iii. *ult*. *And if ye be Chriſt's, then are ye Abraham's ſeed, and heirs according to the promiſe.* The apoſtle is there ſpeaking to ſuch as in the judgment of charity were Abraham's ſeed; but becauſe men may be Abraham's ſeed that way, yet none of his in the judgment of God, he tells them who they are that are the true ſeed of Abraham, even they that are *Chriſt's* by real union with him through faith; not by a bare profeſſion, or by baptiſm without true godlineſs; for there were none of them but were baptized, and profeſſed Chriſt, but that was not enough to make them *heirs according to the promiſe*, and conſequently not enough to make them ſons either. Gal. iii. 7. 'They 'which are of faith, the ſame are the children of Abraham. Verſ. 9. So then they which be of faith are 'bleſſed with faithful Abraham.'

4. Thoſe only are thus viſibly bleſſed for whom it appears Chriſt has died, and who are apparently redeemed by him from the curſe of the law; and ſuch are only viſible believers and their ſeed; for the apoſtle plainly teacheth, that theſe go before the bleſſing of Abraham, as the procuring cauſes thereof, verſ. 13. 14. *Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law—that the bleſſing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jeſus Chriſt; that we might receive the promiſe of the Spirit through faith.* Now, it is certain, that God's being Abraham's God, and the God of his ſeed, was the bleſſing of Abraham, comprehending all other particular bleſſings, which is now come on the Gentiles.

5. From the ſame ſcripture we further argue thus; That bleſſing which comes on people only through Jeſus Chriſt, and that promiſe of the Spirit (or promiſed Spirit) which is received only by faith, doth viſibly belong to none but viſible believers, ſuch as appear to be in Chriſt and endued with faith; but ſuch is the bleſſing of Abraham which comes on the Gentiles: *Ergo*. The propoſition is plain: for where there is no viſible evidence of a perſon's being in Chriſt, through whom alone the bleſſing comes; where there are no probable ſigns of faith through which it is received, that bleſſing is not, nor cannot be viſibly come on them.

6. laſtly, It ſounds exceeding harſhly, to ſay, that God is the God of a viſible unbeliever and his ſeed, in the ſenſe of the great promiſe ſealed by the ſacraments; for in ſome ſenſe he is the God of the whole creation: but ſurely it will not be denied, that this is ſomething elſe, viz. that he is their God by way of covenant. Either, then, to have God for our God in the ſenſe of the promiſe, is to have God for our God in the way of the covenant of works, or in the way of the covenant of grace. The firſt will not be pleaded; for the ſacraments ſeal not the covenant of works; beſides, God is the God of all out of Chriſt that way, of Pagans, as well as others. It is therefore meant of God's being our God in the way of the covenant of grace; and what greater bleſſing hath the moſt undoubted real believer? Conſider then how this can be digeſted, that God is the God of an openly wicked perſon; one groſsly ignorant of the principles of religion, neceſſary to ſalvation to be known; of one poſſeſſed with a dumb devil, that calls not on God in ſecret or in his family; that hath not ſo much as a form of godlineſs, but is a viſible member of Satan's kingdom, and a viſible enemy to the kingdom of Chriſt. That God is the God of ſuch a one and his ſeed, and that we are to judge ſo of him and his ſeed, as of the moſt holy and exerciſed profeſſor of religion, is what would need bands of iron and braſs to tie a body to the belief of it. Wherefore I conclude, that ſeeing God cannot be judged to be the God of any and of their ſeed, but of viſible ſaints and believers, none other's children have right to baptiſm; which muſt needs hold good, till ſuch time as it be manifeſt, that others have right to baptiſm than they whoſe God the Lord is not, and have no intereſt in that privilege and bleſſing, to which circumciſion, a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith, and conſequently baptiſm, was appended, Gen. xvii. 7, 8, 9, 10. Let none ſay, he is their God by their profeſſion, in ſo far as they were baptized in his name, and have not yet renounced it; for what ſort of a profeſſion is that which is viſibly contradicted by their practice? Surely men would lay little weight on ſuch a profeſſion of ſervice made to them by others. But God hath made faith, not profeſſion, eſpecially a profeſſion viſibly contradicted by their practice, to be the way of entering into covenant with him; and we look on a credible profeſſion only as a probable ſign of real faith, which we cannot diſcern but in its effects. Where then this credible profeſſion is wanting, there appears no faith; and conſequently there is no probable evidence of God's being the God of ſuch perſons, or of their ſeed.

Arg. VII. If the children of openly wicked parents, though baptized, have a viſible right to the ſeal of the covenant, then the church is bound to admit them to baptiſm, and actually to baptize them; but that practice of baptizing the infants of openly wicked perſons, or ſuch as are not viſible believers, as deriving their right from their parents, (in which ſenſe the propoſition is to be underſtood,) is unwarrantable: *Ergo*. The ſequel is plain: for it is as wrong, to deny any the poſſeſſion of that to which they have a viſible right, when there is no impediment laid in the way by the party who is to have poſſeſſion; as it is in the caſe of infants. Yea, it is a wrong, not to put infants in the poſſeſſion of thoſe privileges whereof they are capable, and have a viſible right to, ſeeing they are ſuch as cannot move in their own buſineſs. Thus Moſes was injurious to his ſon, in not circumciſing him at the time appointed of God; for which cauſe God ſought to kill him, Exod. iv. 24. I prove the minor; the action is luſory, even according to the principles of thoſe that differ, if the church hath no probable grounds to expect the religious education of thoſe children that are baptized, or that they ſhall be brought up for the ſervice of him in whoſe name they are baptized; but, in the caſe we ſpeak of, they have no probable grounds to expect the ſame: *Ergo*, the action is luſory, and conſequently unwarrantable. How can openly wicked perſons, whether groſsly ignorant of the fundamentals of religion, or profane in their lives having knowledge, be truſted for the bringing up of a child for Chriſt? Is it probable, that they who are viſible ſlaves to the devil themſelves, will bring up their children in and to the ſervice of God? We know not but they may formally renounce their baptiſm, and carry away their children with them to idolatry, &c. who have ſo far gone on in a practical renunciation of the ſame. Such perſons are not fit to be truſted in ſuch a weighty concern. If any ſhall ſay, that the baptizing of the children of ſuch parents is to be ſuſpended till their parents reform, or they themſelves come to ripe years, and evidence their piety by a viſible holy walk; we agree in the thing, though not in the name: for by this means the infant's viſible right is plainly made to depend on the viſible ſtate of the parent; which is indeed not to ſuſpend, but utterly to deny the thing, and all right thereto, unto ſuch infants, till ſuch time as one of theſe two things before-mentioned does appear. But how the ſuſpending of the child's baptiſm for ſhorter or longer time upon the parent's account, can be pleaded, according to the principles of thoſe that differ, I ſee not; ſeeing that were contrary to what they urge in the main point, that the ſon ſhall not bear the iniquity of the father.

But this is thought to be ſalved by bringing in of ſponſors for ſuch children; that their openly wicked parents are not to be admitted to make faith for them, but ſome other fit perſon. If ſuch a fit perſon be found, then the child is to be baptized; if not, then indeed the action is luſory, ſay they. To this I anſwer, That either the child hath its right to the ordinance from the ſponſor, or the parent. If from the ſponſor, then not from the parent; which is the very thing we plead: if from the parent, then how comes the child to be denied that which it hath a viſible right to, in any caſe, while, poor ſoul, it can do nothing to lay an impediment in the way of its poſſeſſion of the privilege it hath right to? muſt it ſo far bear the iniquity of the father? It follows then ſtill, that ſuch an infant muſt be baptized in the right of the immediate parent; and that, on the ſame account, the infant cannot be kept back from baptiſm, nothing being on its part to hinder the actual poſſeſſion. It is in vain to ſay, that the infant had from the parent *jus ad rem*, and from the ſponſor *jus in re*: for unleſs there were a *jus ſub termino* fixed by the Lord in his word, as it was in the caſe of circumciſion, when the child had no actual right in that ordinance till the eighth day, which cannot be alledged here, the infant hath a moſt immediate right by birth privilege, if it have any at all; ſo that the actual poſſeſſion of that privilege may be immediately claimed in favours of ſuch a child. And therefore that diſtinction is not appiicable to the matter in hand. Neither do we need the help of it, in ſuch a caſe, where godly parents are both dead before the child be baptized: for ſuch a child being by birth-privilege within the covenant viſibly, and ſo having a viſible right to baptiſm, in whoſe favours the actual poſſeſſion of the ſeal may immediately be claimed, the church is bound to be tutor to it, and ſee to the education of it in the ways of God, and baptize it according to its right. Even as in the caſe of a temporal inheritance, where the heir is left an infant; the magiſtrate is bound to ſee to the bringing up of ſuch a one, and that it be not defrauded of its heritage. So the church, in this caſe, gives it not any right to the ordinance that it had not before, but doth her duty in putting it in actual poſſeſſion of that which it had all right to, antecedently to their meddling with it, and takes care of its education. And this they were obliged to do upon this formal conſideration, that ſuch a one was a child of the covenant.

To conſider a little further of ſponſors for the children of openly wicked parents: In the firſt place, the practice of many is to require thoſe only in ſome more odious caſes, as when the parent is guilty of fornication, adultery, or the like; but readily, if they be civilized, though they have not ſo much as a form of godlineſs, nor ever bow a knee to God in ſecret or in their family, which doth hold them out of the number of viſible believers, and ſo ranks them amongſt the openly wicked, no ſponſors are required for their children other than themſelves. Now, what, are thoſe perſons to be truſted in the religious education of a child? Either we muſt ſay, that mere civility is religion and Chriſtianity; or elſe we muſt ſay, it is probable that theſe will bring up their children in the holy religion and for Chriſt, that have not ſo much as a form of godlineſs themſelves; which is a ſtrange ſort of probability. And what reaſon truly is there why ſuch a difference ſhould be made, in this matter, betwixt civil men that have not ſo much as a form of godlineſs, and common drunkards, ſwearers, &c. that are baptized? Are they baptized? ſo are theſe we ſpeak of. Are they civil perſons, free of groſs immoralities? ſo are ſome Pagans as well as they. If the church be ſatisfied with them on the account of their baptiſm, they muſt alſo be ſatisfied with the other ſort: if on the account of their civility, then they muſt be ſo ſatisfied with Pagans alſo; for *a quatenus ad omne valet conſequentia*: if on the account of their baptized civility, why not alſo with many of the other ſort upon the account of their drunken prayers? Nothing but bad cuſtom, I preſume, hath authoriſed the want of a form of godlineſs, neglect of prayer, and the like, in a civil baptized perſon, to go with ſuch a black character, in the face of the viſible church, as drunkenneſs and the like are marked with. Further, what if the parents will not allow another perſon to be ſponſor for the child, and will rather let it lie unbaptized than ſuffer any ſuch thing; will the church force away their children from them, and baptize them whether they will or no, ſo that the child may not be defrauded of its pretended right? Finally, in order to the church's ſecurity for the education of ſuch children, it ſeems to be of abſolute neceſſity, that they be put wholly in the power of the ſponſor; for how can a man be truſted with the upbringing of a child that hath it not wholly in his power? To promiſe otherwiſe, is to promiſe impoſſibilities, or that which might be rendered impoſſible by the parent. Surely no man will take it upon him to learn another man's ſon a trade, whereby he may gain his livelihood, unleſs ſuch a one be put in his power, ſo that the father may not call him away when he pleaſeth. If the child be ſtill at the diſpoſal of the wicked parent, the ſponſor may promiſe, but the parent will perform as he ſeeth good. Now, if the child be put wholly in the power of the ſponſor as to its education, it is plain, the formal reaſon for which the child is baptized, is not becauſe he is born of baptized parents, but becauſe he is as it were the adopted ſon of the ſponſor; ſo that the child hath his viſible right to baptiſm, not by the parent, but the ſponſor. And ſo the cauſe is yielded, and the caſe and queſtion quite altered. And the queſtion will be, Whether or no an infant which is devoted unto Chriſt by a ſtranger, having it wholly in its power, at leaſt as to its education, hath a viſible right to baptiſm? which is reſolved by Mr Baxter in the affirmative, on ſcripture-grounds, even though they were the children of Turks and Jews. Againſt which I dare not as yet reclaim, providing theſe ſponſors be viſible believers, and ſo fit to be truſted in ſuch a matter. Hence it appears, ſponſors, 1. ought to be viſible believers; 2. having the child for whom they engage, wholly in their power as to its education; 3. required in the caſe of all children that are not the ſeed of parents whereof one is a viſible believer. If matters were brought to this paſs, much, if not all the difficulty of this caſe, would be removed.

Arg. VIII. No infants but thoſe of viſible church-members have right to baptiſm *coram eccleſia*; and none but the infants of viſible believers are the children of viſible church-members: *Ergo.* The major is evident; for if the children of thoſe that are no viſible church-members have right to baptiſm, it is made a privilege common to the church with thoſe of the reſt of the world; which is abſurd. I prove the minor: If none be true members of the church but the faithful or real believers, then none are viſible church-members but viſible believers; the former is true, therefore the latter alſo; conſequently none are the children of viſible church-members, but the children of viſible believers. The reaſon of the conſequence is this, That viſible church-members are none other but ſuch as apparently are true members of the church of Chriſt; ſo that if none be true members but real believers, none can be viſible members but ſuch as appear to be true believers. Chriſt hath not two churches, one inviſible and another viſible; but one church, that in one reſpect is viſible, in another reſpect inviſible: Chriſt is not a head with two bodies, but we are *all baptized into one body*, and myſtical *Chriſt is but one*, 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13. If then the true members of the church are only believers, it is plain that the viſible members thereof are only ſuch as are apparently believers. If we judge *in theſi* that believers only are true members of the church, when we come to judge *in hypotheſi* as to this or that particular perſon, we cannot judge him a true member but as he appears to be ſuch. As to the aſſumption, the body of Proteſtant divines will bear me out in it; whoſe conſtant doctrine againſt the Papiſts is, That the wicked, hypocrites, and reprobates, who outwardly profeſs the faith, are not true members of Chriſt's church; but only the godly and faithful, who not only profeſs faith, but indeed believe, and are regenerate, are to be judged true members of the church.

Arg. IX. If none but viſible believers have right to baptiſm before the church, and infants derive their viſible right thereto from their immediate parents; then none but the children of viſible believers have right to baptiſm before the church. The antecedent hath been already proven in both parts, and the conſequence is too evident to be denied. The ſcripture is ſo plain and full, in aſſerting that no adult perſons but ſuch as are viſible believers ought to be baptized, that I can ſee no evaſion from the force of this argument, for thoſe that do not derive the infant's right from the remote parents, but require evidence of the baptiſm of one of the immediate parents; whereby they plainly ſuſpend the viſible right of the infant on the viſible ſtate of the next parent; unleſs they ſay, either that one can give what he hath not to himſelf, or that the parents baptiſm, notwithſtanding of his groſs ignorance of the fundamental points of religion, or of his openly vitious life, never having had ſo much as a form of godlineſs, be a ſufficient evidence of his faith as to us; the abſurdity whereof I will not ſtand to prove, being under no temptation to ſuſpect the truth of it, but aſſured by the Lord's word that we ought to judge of the tree by its fruits.

Arg. X. laſtly, I ſhall conclude with this, That the way we plead for ſeems to have the advantage of the other, in that it apparently hath a more direct tendency to the advancement of the great ends of the goſpel; which calls men to *join themſelves unto the Lord* through Chriſt by faith, and 'to deny ungodlineſs and worldly 'luſts, to live godly and ſoberly in this preſent world.' And this it hath, in reſpect of the parents, of the children, and of others.

1. In reſpect of the parents. We find the moſt ignorant and profane wretches almoſt that are amongſt us cannot eaſily digeſt their childrens want of baptiſm, though they underſtand not the nature of it, the ends and uſes for which it is appointed; or if they do underſtand, yet take no care to perform their vows. Now, while their children are baptized, as they offer them to baptiſm, they are hardened in their impiety, and the church is mocked with their engagements; for what truſt can be put in them, or what credit can be given to the promiſes and engagements of ſuch? It is ſad that many are truſted in this matter, to whom we could give no credit in far leſs matters. And this evil is not cured by requiring of ſponſors: into whoſe power the child is not wholly given up, as to its education, as was ſaid before. But were the children of ſuch parents debarred from the ſacrament, till ſuch time as either their parents, one of them at leaſt, ſhould reform and amend their lives, as the ſame parents are debarred from the Lord's ſupper; or they themſelves ſhould evidence their faith by their carriage at years of diſcretion, it might rationally be expected, that we ſhould ſee a reformation in the lives of many, if not of moſt, who now do never bend themſelves that way: *the haters of the Lord ſhould* (at leaſt) *lye unto him*, as it is, Pſal. lxxxi. 15. And it is a promiſe made unto the church, that *her enemies ſhall lye unto her*, Deut. xxxiii. 29. but otherwiſe, it is rather a mocking than a lying to her; for, as Urſin ſays, "they "deny in their deeds what they profeſs with their mouth, "and it is plain they lye:" for faith and a Chriſtian life cannot be ſeparated. Whoſo ſeparate them, mock God and the church. But were they thus dealt with, they might at leaſt be brought to the performance of the external duties of religion; and who knows but many, being thus laid in Chriſt's way, might be really delivered from the ſnare of the devil, who otherwiſe are led captive at his pleaſure? Experience hath ſhown theſe hopes are not vain.

2. In reſpect of the children themſelves. They ſeem the ſame way to be hardened in their ſinful courſes. When they come to underſtand their parents have always lived as they ſee them do, and yet they were admitted to baptiſm in their infancy, being born not of unbaptized but baptized perſons, having right to the ſeal of the covenant by their parents, whether mediate or immediate; unleſs God with his overcoming grace work with them, there is no probability that they will in the leaſt trouble themſelves to mind religion. And if it ſhould be ſo, that their wicked parents ſhould tell them, they were devoted to God in their infancy, what ſucceſs can their inſtructions and admonitions be expected to have, while they have ſtill before their eyes the bad example of their parents? A more forcible inducement to wickedneſs, than a thouſand of their admonitions will be to the contrary. But were they denied baptiſm, till either their parents ſhould reform, or till they themſelves by their perſonal walk ſhould evidence their right thereto, in caſe their parents be incorrigible, it would be a very probable mean to induce them to ſeek the knowledge of religion, and to ſtudy a holy walk; conſidering that they live in a place where the goſpel is preached, and the ſad caſe of theſe that are without the church is holden forth. I confeſs, theſe things have no ſmall weight with my conſcience.

3. Whence it appears, that it would very probably have no ſmall influence on others, eſpecially the younger ſort; who firſt, becauſe of their youth, think religion not fit for them; and then betaking themſelves to a married ſtate, do wholly drown themſelves in the cares of the world or other luſts, leaving all care concerning their ſouls till they come to old age, (which perhaps they never ſee,) or to a death-bed. This would at leaſt put them in mind of changing their courſe of life, and turning over a new leaf ere they change their ſingle life. I ſhall add, that by this means it would probably come to paſs that the holy ordinance of baptiſm, which is a ſeal of the ſame covenant with the Lord's ſupper, ſhould not be ſo viſibly degraded, and put ſo far below the other ſacrament, in people's eſtimation, as indeed it is, by the promiſcuous admiſſion of infants thereto;

there ſhould be a more beautiful harmony in the ſubjects receptive of both; groſs ignorance and wickedneſs ſhould get a black mark ſet on it before the world; and, finally the name of Chriſt ſhould not be ſo blaſphemed amongſt Turks, Jews, and Pagans, as it is, by reaſon of the vitious lives of thoſe that live in the viſible church.

Thus I have propoſed what arguments on both ſides have occurred to me, being deſirous to find out the truth: and though there be difficulties on both hands, ſome whereof poſſibly may not be eaſy to anſwer, yet truly, upon the whole of what is ſaid, I think the opinions of thoſe that ſay, None but the infants of viſible believers have a right to baptiſm before the church, is moſt probable; and that the infants of any ſuch as are not viſible believers, though their immediate parents be baptized, and though they have had godly remote parents, have no viſible right to baptiſm. And ſo I addreſs myſelf to conſider the arguments offered by thoſe that differ, which are mentioned above.

I. As to the *firſt* argument, That the infants of all Chriſtian parents are within the covenant; I anſwer, The phraſe of *being within the covenant* is ambiguous. 1. Improperly, it may ſignify a perſon's living under the outward adminiſtration of the covenant; that is, in a ſociety and amongſt a company where all goſpel ordinances are adminiſtered, ſo that they have the call of the goſpel to come to Chriſt, and partake of the benefits of the covenant; for to ſay, the meaning of that is, that they are thoſe to whom all ordinances are actually adminiſtered, as it would not help the cauſe, ſo it were impertinent here, while we ſpeak of thoſe to whom ſome of theſe ordinances may lawfully be adminiſtered. But this is very improperly ſaid to be a *being within the covenant*, and can give no right to the ſeals of the covenant: for why? people may be living under the outward adminiſtration of the covenant, that is, in a ſociety where all goſpel ordinances are adminiſtered, and yet neither be in reality nor in appearance within the covenant, as Jews and Pagans living in a Chriſtian town or country, having Chriſt offered to them, and the benefits of the covenant, as well as baptized perſons. So theſe Jews, Acts ii. were under the outward adminiſtration of the covenant, yet had they no viſible title to baptiſm, and conſequently were not properly within the covenant, till ſuch time as they gave evidence of their faith in Jeſus Chriſt, and repentance towards God. 2. There is a *real* being within the covenant *coram Deo:* as all are, whether adult or infants, that have the Spirit of grace. This cannot be meant here, (although it is that which only gives right before God to the ſeal;) becauſe, as Mr Bowles tells us, we cannot certainly know who are *actually* (as he terms it) within the covenant. 3. There is a *viſible* being within the covenant; that is, when a perſon doth really appear before men to be ſavingly within the covenant, or rather really and before God in it; and in this ſenſe I deny that ſuch infants as we ſpeak of, are within the covenant; yet this only is that whereby they can have a viſible right to the ſeal. The reaſon is, becauſe their parents are not viſibly within the covenant, unleſs you will reckon them to be viſibly within the covenant, who have made a profeſſed but a feigned devoting and upgiving of themſelves to God; which is openly and plainly diſcovered to be feigned, by their profane walk, or groſs ignorance. But of this before. Yet if you will, it will not be grievous to me to grant, that even this is a viſible being in a covenant with God, (though not in the covenant, viz. of grace, holden forth in the goſpel,) and a moſt proper viſible being, under their own voluntary promiſe to take God for their God; by virtue of which, God hath a kind of intereſt in them more than others that have not come that length, which ſerves to aggravate their ſin, and will heighten their miſery; ſo that they are God's people, by virtue of their voluntary obligation to take God for their God; and God alſo, by virtue of the ſame, is their God, to give them laws, exact obedience of them, and to puniſh them for their diſobedience. Yet are they not within the covenant of grace, either really or apparently; neither is God their God in the ſenſe of the promiſe on which this argument is built; and ſo they can have no right to baptiſm by their being under that covenant or promiſe, however it be called. The plain reaſon is, becauſe in that covenant, or the covenant of grace, to which baptiſm is appended as a ſeal, God promiſeth not to be our God on any other terms but ſaving faith: ſo that whoſoever believeth not really and ſavingly, is not before God within the covenant; and whoſo doth not viſibly believe, is not viſibly within it. Hence, ſeeing openly wicked baptized parents come not up, either really or in appearance, to the terms of the covenant, which is not a bare profeſſion with the mouth, or the receiving of the ſign in baptiſm, but true faith, or a real accepting of Chriſt, and God to be our God in him, they cannot be ſaid to be in the covenant, either really before God, or viſibly and apparently before the church. And this obſervation may ſerve to invalidate an argument wherein ſome do confide much, viz. That God owns himſelf to be the God of a profane people, and them to be his people. As to that which is added for proof, that ſuch are within the covenant, viz. That their parents were ſometimes ſealed with the ſeal of the covenant; I deny it follows; and there is good reaſon for it: for ſo let men turn Arians, Socinians, &c. or wallow in never ſo open and maniſeſt groſs abominations, notwithſtanding of all means uſed to turn them from their evil way, they muſt ſtill be looked on as within the covenant of grace, till they actually and formally renounce their baptiſm. But I ſay, with Riiſſenius, anſwering the Popiſh objection and argument adduced by them to prove that hypocrites and reprobates are true members of the church; becauſe they are baptized, *they have only the ſign*. It was never a ſeal to them, as I have already ſhown. It will be worth our pains to hear what a cenſure a very learned divine paſſeth againſt the aſſertors of this doctrine. "To "profane the covenant of God, (ſays he,) is to give "out and acknowledge thoſe for the confederates of "God, who are enemies to God; and ſo to make "ſuch a God as obligeth himſelf to hypocrites and "wicked ones." As for that proof of the argument *viz.* That the covenant is made, not only with the root but with the offspring; from whence it is inferred, that the ſeal may not only be effectual to the baptized, if he believe, but alſo render his ſeed capable of the external ſign, it is of no force. If the learned man that hath this argument mean by the root, the immediate parent, as I think he plainly does, then I deny the covenant is made with ſuch roots; and therefore not with the offspring either, viſibly; and have given the reaſon before. If he mean the remote parents, we have diſcourſed that already at ſome length. But truly I ſee no reaſon to talk ſo diminutively of baptiſm, as to call it the external ſign. Was ever baptiſm appointed of God 2.? for a mere external ſign? or do miniſters, in baptizing the children of profligate parents, mean that they ſhould receive only the external ſign, and not the ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith, remiſſion of ſins, &c.? If ſo, no doubt they are guilty of profaning that holy ordinance. As for the confirmation of the argument taken from 1 Cor. vii. 14. we have already vindicated that place, and ſhewn that the apoſtle ſpeaks to them as viſible believers, which needs not be repeated here.

II. I am convinced there is ſcarcely leſs force in any of the arguments adduced for this cauſe, than in the ſecond, which is, That the children muſt not bear the iniquity of their fathers, (for which Ezek. xviii. 20. is alledged;) and therefore the infants of wicked, openly wicked baptized parents, are to be baptized. *Anſw.* 1. Why then is there an infant under heaven that ought not to be baptized? The infants of the rudeſt ſavages in the world have as little ſtretched forth their hands to their fathers iniquity, as the infants of baptized perſons. 2. Whoſe iniquity did the infants of the firſt unchurched generation of the Jews, and thoſe of Smyrna, Laodicea, and others, bear? I ſuppoſe none will plead their viſible right to baptiſm. 3. The Iſraelites had God's expreſs command for cutting off all the Canaanites, Deut. xx. 16, 17. *Thou ſhalt ſave alive nothing that breatheth: but thou ſhalt utterly deſtroy them, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebuſites.* All the males among the Midianites little ones are ſlain with the parents at God's command, Numb. xxxi. 17. The children of Dathan and Abiram were ſwallowed up with their parents; Achan's ſons and daughters were ſtoned and burned with him; and ſo, as Mr Baxter ſaith, cut off from the church and life. 4. Doth not the Lord expreſsly threaten, that *he will viſit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation?* But how all this may be, and yet that it ſhould be ſuch a ſtrange thing, that the children of openly wicked parents have no viſible right to baptiſm, becauſe they are the children of ſuch parents, I ſee not any colourable pretext for it. Now, as for the reconciling of this with Ezek. xviii. 20. the opponents are obliged to ſee to it as well as we, not only in the forementioned caſes, but alſo in their dealing with the Socinians, in the matter of the imputation of Adam's ſin, and our obnoxiouſneſs to the wrath of God upon the account of it, and in the point of Chriſt's ſatisfaction; in reference to both which, theſe heretics abuſe that ſcripture; yea, not only ſo, but in the caſe of baptizing the infants of heretics and excommunicated parents, where they do neceſſarily require ſponſors; and if there be none found that will oblige himſelf to the church, and undertake the care of teaching thoſe infants, they confeſs the action is luſory, and baptiſm is polluted: ſo that, even according to their own principles, the child may bear the father's iniquity. But the reconciling of theſe may be ſeen with ſuch of our divines as write on the ſecond command, and of the Socinian controverſy. And what anſwer thoſe learned men that uſe this argument, make for themſelves in the forementioned caſes, they may beſtow the ſame on themſelves for us. Only I think, in the mean time, they ſhould prove, that our doctrine doth properly make the children to bear the iniquity of their fathers in this caſe, as if the formal ground and reaſon whereupon the Lord proceeds againſt thoſe infants, were their parents open wickedneſs: which if they do not, they do but beat the air, and fight with a ſhadow. Why may not the Lord well be ſaid to viſit the open wickedneſs of ſuch parents on their children, when he only takes occaſion from that open impiety of the parents thus to puniſh the children; yea, to puniſh them for worſe, for their own ſin, which they bring to the world with them, and lays them open to the wrath of God? As if a king had a parent and his ſon both under ſentence of death for treaſon, and the father ſhould be ſo far from ſhewing any ſorrow for his offence, that he is ſtill going on in treaſonable attempts, the king ſhould on that occaſion execute the ſentence of death, not only on the father but alſo on the ſon, who otherwiſe might have had mercy; and thus puniſh the father in his ſon, as well as in his own perſon: and yet the formal reaſon of the ſentence againſt the ſon is his own treaſon, though he owes it to his father that the ſentence is executed, but yet has no ground to complain of injuſtice in this matter. For my part, I will plead for no more in this matter; and this ſufficiently maketh the argument without force.

III. But now we come to the third argument, which is the moſt conſiderable, in my opinion, of all that is advanced in this matter by thoſe that differ. It is this: If the hereſy, impiety, or profanity of the Jewiſh parents, did not exclude their children from circumciſion; then the hereſy, impiety, or profanity of Chriſtian parents, cannot exclude their children from baptiſm; but the former is true: *Ergo.* *Anſw.* Before I come directly to anſwer this, I will propoſe three prejudices that I have againſt it. The firſt is this: That this argument concludes, that no hereſy, profanity, or impiety of Chriſtians, ſo called in oppoſition to Pagans, Turks, and Jews, excludes their children from baptiſm; ſo that the door is thereby opened to the children of the moſt groſs heretics that ever bare the name of Chriſtians, and that even though accompanied with the groſſeſt wickedneſs, unleſs perhaps they formally renounce their baptiſm: ſo that, as good right to the ſeal of the covenant have the children of the Gnoſtics, Nicolaitans, Ebionites, Cerinthians, Samoſatenians, Arians, and Socinians, and ſuch helliſh crew, as the moſt holy and pious profeſſor of the truth that is according to godlineſs. *Quis feret hæc*: what a ſad thing is it to repute practically open blaſphemers of Chriſt, and of the Holy Trinity, amongſt thoſe in covenant with God, although Turks, Pagans, and Jews belch not out ſuch blaſphemies as they do againſt the truth? 2. This is inconſiſtent with the principles of ſome of thoſe that uſe this argument. They ſay concerning the Jews ſimply, without any limitation, that their hereſy, &c. did not exclude their children from baptiſm; yet when they come to ſhew their mind concerning Chriſtian parents, they tell us only of the children of ſuch heretics, amongſt whom the formula of baptiſm is ſafe, that they are to be baptized; whereas their argument carries it, not only to thoſe, but to all heretics. And, alas! what is the formula of baptiſm to the purpoſe in Socinian congregations, where they do baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, while it is the open confeſſion of their Satanical ſynagogue, that Chriſt is a mere man, whatever divine dignity is conferred on him, and the Holy Ghoſt not a perſon? It is ſtrange there ſhould be ſuch virtue in bare words, without the true ſenſe and meaning. The Socinians in Tranſylvania ſometimes baptized *in the name of Jeſus who was crucified*, but afterwards were obliged by the Prince to baptize *in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.* If the children of thoſe who were baptized in the name of Chriſt who was crucified, had right to baptiſm, then even the children of heretics, amongſt whom the very formula of baptiſm is not preſerved, have right to baptiſm; and ſo indeed the argument concludes: if they had not, but the latter ſort had, what made the difference betwixt them who ſtill retained their former doctrine and principles, and only for pleaſing of their prince changed their words? It is like it will be ſaid, the former were not Chriſtians: and why were they not Chriſtians? becauſe they were not baptized perſons, not being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. I ſhould be loth to plead, that either of them were or are Chriſtians; but I dare not unchriſtian them upon this head, that they are not baptized, leſt I ſhould make the holy children of the faithful no Chriſtians, till they be baptized; or unchriſtian ſuch Anabaptiſts as are not baptized, till ſuch time as they may be baptized according to their principles; or unchurch the church in the wilderneſs, that for forty years wanted circumciſion: but I would make both the ſorts aforementioned no Chriſtians, on the ſame ground that John makes them Atheiſts, 1 John ii. 23. *Whoſoever denieth the Son, the ſame hath not the Father*, which is judiciouſly improven againſt them, by a late writer. And thus, as we go on, we go the deeper, finding the right of the children of very Atheiſts to baptiſm. 3. There is another prejudice I have againſt it, the lawfulneſs whereof may appear, if ye conſider this argument: If the hereſy, impiety, or profanity of the Jewiſh parents, did not exclude their children from circumciſion; then the hereſy, impiety, or profanity of the Jewiſh parents, did not exclude their children from baptiſm: the former is true. *Ergo.* The conſequence is plain: (I uſe the ſame words that the opponents do, for proof of the conſequence of their argument, only *mutatis mutandis*): for baptiſm was to them what circumciſion was to them; their circumciſion was to them a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith, and ſo was baptiſm. Now, the grace of God is not more narrow under the New Teſtament, but more large than under the Old. This argument hath the advantage of the other, in that it proceeds from the Jewiſh parents and children under the old diſpenſation, to the ſame under the new; whereas the other proceeds from the Jews under the old, to the Gentiles under the new. If thoſe things alledged by them prove their conſequence, they muſt alſo prove ours. Yet I ſuppoſe they will not grant the concluſion of this argument, viz. That the hereſy, impiety, or profanity of the Jewiſh parents, did not exclude their children from baptiſm; that the children of the Phariſees and Sadducees, impenitent murderers of the Lord of life, had a viſible right to baptiſm. However, I think Peter judged not ſo, when he does ſo peremptorily require repentance antecedently to baptiſm. One of the premiſſes muſt then be falſe: the minor is their own *in terminis*; they muſt then ſtick at the ſequel of the major. If there be any juſt ground ſo to do, we have the ſame reaſon againſt theirs, as we ſhewed before. And let me add, that it is certain it is one and the ſame covenant to which both baptiſm and circumciſion were appended as ſeals; it is one and the ſame church in which the Jews were under the Old Teſtament, and we are now under the New. The believing Jews were not taken out of one church, and put into another; but only others were graffed in amongſt them, and they continued ſtill in the ſame olive, Rom. xi. God did not pull down his old houſe, and build a new one; but only took down the partition-wall, and ſo made more room, Eph. ii. 14. Say then that the hereſy, impiety, or profanity of the Jewiſh parents did not exclude their children from circumciſion, and ſee if it will not follow, that theſe things did not exclude them from baptiſm either. I am not concerned either as to the truth of the antecedent, or of the conſequent; it is only the connection betwixt the two. It is as true a propoſition, *Si equus eſſet alatus, eſſet volabilis*; as *Paſſer eſt alatus & volabilis*. I do indeed think the conſequent falſe, and therefore am led by the hand to queſtion the truth of the minor of the argument propoſed. I cannot but obſerve that (ſo far as I have read or remember) our divines againſt the Anabaptiſts do ſtill ſet themſeves to prove that the children of *the faithful* ought to be baptized; and, in their arguing from circumciſion, do hold the concluſion in the ſame terms: and ſo indeed the argument is not liable to the former exception, if it be ſo propoſed. The children of the faithful under the Old Teſtament were circumciſed; *ergo*, the children of the faithful under the New muſt be baptized. Now, although I ſhould not anſwer the argument propounded to mine own ſatisfaction, theſe ſeem to me ſuch lawful prejudices againſt it, that until I be rid of them, I cannot fall under the force of the argument.

To come now to anſwer directly to the argument, I deny the minor, viz. That the hereſy, impiety, or profanity of the Jewiſh parents did not exclude their children from circumciſion. The grounds whereupon I deny it, beſides that in the third prejudice, are theſe. 1. God threatens the Jews as well as others, in his law given on mount Sinai, that *he will viſit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation*; which was already ſhown, that it extends to the ſeal of the covenant. And judicious Calvin underſtands it of “the Lord's taking away from the houſe of the wicked “his grace, the light of his truth, and other helps of “ſalvation.” He doth alſo declare the ſeed of the wicked to be a curſed ſeed, Deut. xxviii. 18.; of which before. 2. It was a poſitive law that God gave unto the Jews, That in caſe a city were withdrawn to ſerve other gods, that city was utterly to be deſtroyed, and all that was therein; no not the infants were to be ſpared, Deut. xiii. 12, 13, 14, 15. Now, if the idolatry of the Jewiſh parents excluded their infants from the church and life, it excluded them alſo from circumciſion; and ſo the impiety and profanity of the Jewiſh parents excluded their children from circumciſion. So Achan's ſons and daughters were ſtoned and buried with him, Joſh. vii. 24. 25, 26. How hard is it to believe, that the impiety of wicked parents among the Jews did go ſo far as to cut them off, even from the church and life; and yet not to cut them off from a viſible right to the ſeal of the covenant? 3. The Jews were to be excommunicated for hereſy, impiety, and profanity. This muſt needs be granted, unleſs we ſay, that there was no ſuch thing as excommunication amongſt them; for who could be excommunicated but ſuch? Now, even thoſe amongſt them that were excommunicated with the leaſt degree of excommunication, called NIDDUI, thoſe who were the *apaſynagogoi*, their male children were not circumciſed, as Goodwin tells us. And truly, whoſo conſiders how uſually the children ſmarted with their parents in their impiety, will not eaſily conceive of it otherwiſe. 4. This further appears, if we conſider how God viſits the profanity of the Jewiſh parents in their contempt of circumciſion, not only upon themſelves, but their ſeed; as we may learn from Gen. xvii. 14. *And the uncircumciſed man child whoſe fleſh of his foreſkin is not circumciſed, that ſoul ſhall be cut off from his people: he hath broken my covenant.* To underſtand this place, ſo as that the parent only was liable to this puniſhment, and not the child, till he come to the years of diſcretion, as Goodwin doth, ſeems to me a commentary deſtroying the text; which paſſeth a ſentence on all Jewiſh male children whoſe fleſh of their foreſkin is not circumciſed, that theſe ſhall be cut off from their people, and not that they ſhall be cut off when they are paſt the age of childhood. Till the eighth day they were not obliged, yea, they might not be circumciſed; but when that was over, and the child not circumciſed, through the parent's contempt, he is then an uncircumciſed man-child, and ſo liable to this ſentence here paſſed againſt all ſuch. Now, a parent might be guilty of this profane contempt two ways; either by reaſon of continuing impenitently in an openly wicked courſe, whereby his ſeed loſt viſible right to that ordinance; or by a profane ſlighting of it, though otherwiſe his child's title to it could not be denied; however, the child by this profanity of the parent, is cut off before he be capable to cut off himſelf; and no leſs can be meant by it, than a cutting off from viſible church-memberſhip. “If any object (theſe are Cal-“vin's words,) that the infants were not to be blamed; “——I anſwer, That even as God adopts the infant-“ſon in the perſon of the father, when the father re-“jects ſuch a benefit, the infant is ſaid to abdicate him-“ſelf from the church; for ſo much ſignifies that word, “——*To be put out from among the people whom God* “*had choſen for himſelf*. That ſome expound it, they “ſhall not be Jews,——is too coldriſe: we muſt go “further to wit, that God will not acknowledge among “his people thoſe who will not bear the mark or badge “of adoption.” However this text directly toucheth the cutting off of the child, yet it ſeems plainly to follow thence, that much more the parent was to be cut off. From which it appears, that the profanity of the Jewiſh parents did render their children no viſible church-members, and conſequently excluded them from circumciſion, as Jewiſh children, or children of ſuch profane parents: which hath the more weight, if it be conſidered, that the Lord doth not here command others to ſee to the circumciſion of ſuch a child, which might have been expected if he had any viſible right thereto, but precludes this, while he tells us, *he ſhall be cut off, or not acknowledged among his people*: ſo that ſhould ſuch a one afterwards be admitted, he comes in as a ſtranger doth, but not by birth-privilege.

I come now to conſider the reaſons adduced to prove that the hereſy, impiety, or profanity of the Jewiſh parents, did not exclude their children from circumciſion. The *firſt*, which is taken from the univerſality of the command, is anſwered already, in taking off an objection made againſt our firſt concluſion. The command does indeed oblige all to be circumciſed; but it doth alſo at the ſame time oblige them to be ſubjects theologically capable of that ordinance; as is above more fully declared. And by the ſame labour, the force of the *ſecond* reaſon, taken from the puniſhment to be inflicted on them, is removed alſo. And that ſcripture we have ſpoken to before, and improved it for our purpoſe. To the *third*, taken from the practice of Joſhua, in circumciſing all the people at Gilgal, at the command of God; I anſwer, It can no more be proven from hence, that Joſhua circumciſed every individual male among this people, than it can be proven from Matth. iii. 5, 6. that every individual perſon of Judea, and the region round about Jordan, was baptized of John, confeſſing their ſins; for there it is ſaid, 'All 'Judea, and all the region,' &c. yea it is certain, neither Joſhua himſelf nor Caleb were then circumciſed, being circumciſed before. But the perſons that were the firſt ſubjects recipient of that ordinance there, were men at age ſtanding in their own right, capable to anſwer for themſelves; and for the infants among them, they ſtood by the right of their parents, who are, without all poſſible proof, denied to be all viſible believers. How can it be proven, that ſuch were there circumciſed as were not viſible believers? The contrary is rather manifeſt, that being men at age, they were circumciſed at God's command. But if men will hold by this, that ſuch as were heretics, impious, and profane, were circumciſed by Joſhua, then we ſee more how far on this argument does lead us, not only to admit the children but even ſuch perſons themſelves at age, to baptiſm. That is obſervable in Joſhua's commiſſion, Joſh. v. 2. *Make thee ſharp knives, and circumciſe again the children of Iſrael the ſecond time.* With reſpect to Abraham and his family their being circumciſed, which was the firſt time, where the firſt ſubjects recipient of the ordinance were men at age and then the infants by right derived from them; and ſo to be continued in the church, the males always to be circumciſed in their infancy; but this order was broken off by the generation of adult perſons who came out of the land of Egypt, verſ. 5. Joſh. v. ſo that it is now a ſecond time to be ſet on foot, and ſo to go on as at firſt was appointed; firſt men at age to be circumciſed, and then their infants. But in Old or New Teſtament it cannot be inſtanced, where the firſt ſubjects recipient of the ſeal of the covenant, were not viſible believers. And is it not expreſsly ſaid, that all the people that were men of war, which came out of Egypt, and obeyed not the voice of the Lord, were conſumed in the wilderneſs? and after their circumciſion, before they removed from Gilgal, theſe people kept the paſſover? verſ. 10. Either then we muſt ſay, they were not heretics openly impious and profane, or elſe let us admit ſuch as theſe to the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper too under the goſpel: As Urſin obſerves from theſe two places, Numb. xv. 28. Deut. xvii. 12. "God commandeth the contumacious to be taken away "out of the common wealth, nor does he allow them "to be members of his people; much leſs then will he "have them to be holden for members of his viſible "church, and to be admitted to the ſacraments." And it appears, that in the wilderneſs, in a ſpecial manner, God acted himſelf the part of the magiſtrate, and put his own laws in execution. As to the *fourth* and *laſt* reaſon, That we never read of any of them excluded; I anſwer, *A non ſcripto ad non factum non valet ſequela.* We read of children excluded from the church and life by their parents impiety, and it would ſeem there were laws for the excluding of them; ſo that, by the word of God, they were excluded *de jure.* And we have heard, that the children of excommunicated parents were actually excluded.

IV. As to the fourth argument, taken from Acts ii. 38, 39. we have already explained and improved that ſcripture againſt the doctrine of the opponents. Whether by the promiſe be meant that, *I will be your God, and the God of your ſeed,* or not, is not very certain. Some learned men underſtand by the gift of the Holy Ghoſt, the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, peculiar to the firſt times of the church; and by the promiſe, the promiſe of the ſame, cited by Peter out of Joel, which he did repeat at large, verſ. 17. &c. But howſoever it be underſtood, it is clear, that this promiſe's being to them gave them not a right to baptiſm, but that repentance was not neceſſarily prerequired of them in order thereunto; as we have proved before; which quite invalidates any argument taken from hence for the cauſe that is pleaded. Again there is another thing in this text that makes it, as explained for this cauſe, altogether uſeleſs to the purpoſe; and that is, That the promiſe is no leſs ſaid to be to thoſe whom the *Lord ſhall call,* who as yet were afar off, than it is ſaid to be to thoſe to whom he ſpoke; but had the Gentiles yet uncalled a right to baptiſm too? Finally, it is to be marked, that thoſe to whom the apoſtle ſpeaks here, were not all Jews, but many of them were Gentiles, neither were they all proſelytes, as Aretius obſerves; yet to them is this ſpoken as well as to others. I have ſeen nothing as yet that ſatisfieth me as to that, in what ſenſe the promiſe is ſaid to be to thoſe perſons; but from what hath been ſaid, it plainly appears, that in whatever ſenſe it be ſaid to be unto them, it doth not follow, they had thereupon a right to baptiſm.

V. The fifth argument is, that John the Baptiſt and Chriſt's diſciples, baptized all that offered themſelves. This plainly concludes that we are to baptize all that offer themſelves; which I doubt if any ſober man will affirm, ſeeing Turks and Pagans may offer themſelves in mock to be baptized; nor would ever this have come into my head, that they baptized all that offered themſelves, as an argument for this cauſe, unleſs I had ſeen it among the arguments offered, as Mr Fulwood ſays, by divines, (what divines he means, unleſs it be Mr Prin, I cannot conjecture,) which to him were never ſatisfactorily anſwered. I grant indeed, that John and Chriſt's apoſtles did baptize whoſoever being viſible believers offered themſelves; but I utterly deny it in any other ſenſe. The proofs adduced, are lame, and not to the purpoſe; for it is plainly ſaid of the perſons whom John baptized, that they were baptized, *confeſſing their ſins.* Whether or no he did baptize the Phariſees and Sadducees, of whom mention is there made, is a queſtion, the negative whereof I think is moſt probable; ſeeing it is expreſsly ſaid, Luke vii 30. *But the Phariſees and lawyers rejected the counſel of God againſt themſelves, being not baptized of him.* And in Luke iii. while the Evangeliſt is ſpeaking of thoſe whom John baptized, particular mention is made of the people, the publicans, and the ſoldiers, their aſking queſtions of John as to what they ſhould do, and each of them gets their directions: but there is not one word of the Phariſees and Sadducees aſking what they ſhould do, nor any particular directions given to them; for which no ſatisfying reaſon appears, if we admit that they were baptized as well as the the reſt: Matth. xxi. 32.——*Ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him.* ver. 45. *And when the chief prieſts and Phariſees had heard his parables, they perceived that he ſpake of them.* As for that ſaying of John, 'I indeed baptize you with water,' ver. 11. it will no more prove that he baptized every individual perſon to whom he ſpoke, than it will prove that Chriſt baptized every individual among them with the Holy Ghoſt, and with fire; for this as well as the other, John ſpeaks to the ſame perſons. Luke tells us the occaſion of this ſpeech, and to whom he ſaid it, Luke iii. 15, 16. *And as the people were in expectation, and all men muſed in their hearts of John, whether he were the Chriſt or not: John anſwered, ſaying unto them all,* (amongſt whom the Phariſees and Sadducees were, as Matthew muſt be underſtood,) *I indeed baptize you with* *water:——he ſhall baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt.* Will any from hence infer, that he baptized every individual perſon that heard him? if they will, we ſhall infer on the ſame ground, that they were all baptized with the Holy Ghoſt. So then that word, Luke iii. 21. *When all the people were baptized*, muſt needs be underſtood of all thoſe of them who were baptized by him at that time; as the forecited word, ver. 15, 16. *All men muſed——and he ſaid to them all*, viz. that heard him at that time. But grant he did baptize the Phariſees and Sadducees, how will it be made appear, that they were not viſible believers, or that they did not with the reſt confeſs their ſins? That he calls them *a generation of vipers*, will not prove it; for that he ſaid to all the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, as well as to them: and it is to be ſpecially noticed, he calls them not *vipers*, but *a generation of vipers, gennemata echidnon, thoſe come of vipers*, or *the offspring of vipers*: this they might be, and yet not be vipers themſelves. That word, John iv. 1. doth indeed bear, that Chriſt by his diſciples baptized more than John; yet neither John nor Chriſt's diſciples baptized any but viſible believers; for it is expreſsly ſaid, that *Chriſt made and baptized more diſciples than John, ibid.*; ſo that both made them diſciples before they baptized them. Finally, I deny that the apoſtles baptized any on a bare profeſſion, or on a profeſſion which was not a probable profeſſion, or a probable evidence of true faith; as is clear from the ſcriptures inſtanced, of which before.

VI. As to the ſixth argument, taken from Ezek. xvi. 20, 21. that the children of the idolatrous Jews are called *God's children* and *born to God*: I anſwer, This will not prove that they had a viſible right to the ſeal, no more than that magiſtrates have ſuch a right, becauſe they are called *the children of the Moſt High*, Pſalm lxxxii. 6.; as ſpecious a character as is given here to the ſeed of theſe idolatrous perſons. Theſe might be God's children, as being heirs of God and the kingdom of heaven, though thus barbarouſly ſlain by their parents; yet no viſible members of the church, nor having any viſible right to the ſeal. What if I ſay, they were the firſt-born whom God challengeth a ſpecial propriety in, upon the account of the deliverance their fathers met with when the firſt-born of the Egyptians were ſlain? according to that law, Exod. xiii. 2. *Sanctify unto me all the firſt-born, whatſoever openeth the womb,——both of man and beaſt: it is mine.* It will not hence follow, as Mr Fulwood ſays, that he owneth their parents yet to remain in his covenant; for this law would have obliged the children of Iſrael, though they had openly renounced God's covenant and turned entirely apoſtates. It was the whole nation of Iſrael, that had this mercy conferred on them, and ſo it obliged thoſe that were of that nation, though not of the church. Wherefore, howſoever the parents ſhould apoſtatiſe and renounce the covenant, by this law their firſt-born was the Lord's, unleſs we will ſay, that men by their iniquity may free themſelves from being under the law of God once given to them. But truly I think, if we conſider the context, we may plainly perceive the reaſon of this deſignation given to thoſe children; and that is this: Becauſe God gave them thoſe children, but, in the giving of them, reſerved ſtill his propriety in them, and made them not abſolute lords over them, to diſpoſe of them what way they pleaſed; but they were obliged to make uſe of them for God's honour, under whom they had their right to them. So that herein, not only cruelty, but robbing of God, and diſpoſing of what was his, contrary to his revealed will, is objected to them. Now, view the context, and ſee how it favours this expoſition, ver. 17. *Thou haſt alſo taken thy fair jewels of my gold and of my ſilver, which I had given thee, and madeſt to thyſelf images*, ver. 18, 19. *Thou haſt ſet mine oil and mine incenſe before them. My meat alſo which I gave thee, fine flour*, &c. ver. 22. *Thou haſt not remembered the days of thy youth, when thou waſt naked and bare.* Nothing more ordinary with the wicked and idolaters, than to forget God's propriety in what they have, and thence to take liberty to diſpoſe of it at their pleaſure, and to thank their idols for them rather than God; therefore God will vindicate his propriety in what they have, that they may ſee their ſin, in abuſing God's gifts to them towards his diſhonour. Hoſ. ii. 5. *I will go after my lovers, that gave me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink.* Ver. 8. *For ſhe did not know that I gave her corn, and wine and oil,——which they prepared to Baal.* Ver. 9. *Therefore will I——take away my corn,---my wine,---my wool, and my flax.*

VII. The ſeventh argument is taken from the following abſurdities, that are ſuppoſed to accompany our doctrine.

1ſt, Families, pariſhes, &c. ſhould ſoon be *paganized. Anſw. Fiat juſtitia, & ruat mundus.* A man, ſay ſome, had better be a beaſt than like a beaſt. Sure I am, it had been telling ſome they had never been baptized, nor acknowledged to be church-members. But truly I think the quite contrary would follow moſt probably, viz. that this would be a mean to bring them to be viſibly *chriſtianized*, as was above declared. It is truly a ſad matter, that people have nothing but their baptiſm to diſcern them from Pagans. I confeſs, if the church ſhould give over all dealing with them, there were ſome ſhew for the abſurdity, or rather bad conſequence, before mentioned; but while it is ſtill the church's duty to preach to them in order to their converſion, there is no reaſon for it; yea, if it were ſo, by all probability, preaching would have more influence on them than now it hath. Though I dare not ſay, it is more for the honour of Chriſt to have no more in his viſible kingdom than only ſuch as are real believers, and rather to want cloſe hypocrites than have them: yet I confeſs it is my ſettled judgment, that as it is a greater credit for a maſter of a family to have a few ſervants of entire fame in his houſe than to have a great many rogues; ſo it is more for the honour of our holy head in the world, to have a few viſible believers or ſaints, viſible members of his church, than a great number of profligate wretches amongſt others, members of the ſame.

2dly, Many infants of believing parents ſhould be deprived of this ordinance. I *anſwer*, Baptiſm is not due *coram eccleſia* to the infants of any but viſible believers, if therefore a parent be a believer, and yet not a viſible believer, his child hath no right before the church to baptiſm; for *de occultis non judicat eccleſia*. But whatever men may ſpeak of peoples going to heaven, the ſound of their feet not being heard, it ſeems to be no very difficult queſtion, Whether or not a perſon come to years, can be a real ſaint, and yet want a form of godlineſs? "Although, ſays a grave author, we cannot "ſay, every one that hath a form of godlineſs, hath alſo "the power of godlineſs; yet we may truly ſay, that "he who hath not the form of godlineſs, hath not the "power of godlineſs; though all be not gold that "gliſtereth, yet all gold doth gliſter." Our Lord tells us, *By their fruits ye ſhall know them.* I ſhall add, that if a perſon be a real believer, and yet not appear ſo to be, he that judgeth him a real believer, judgeth amiſs, for he is not ſo.

3dly, As to the third, That miniſters have no certain rule, &c. it equally militates againſt the ordinary practice of admitting to, and debarring from the Lord's table thoſe that are baptized, and not excommunicated; the ſame flouriſh of words might be uſed in that caſe. But I deny that we have no certain rule here, or that we ſtand on uncertainties. The rule is certain, becauſe laid down in God's word, viz. That we are to take that perſon for a viſible believer who makes a credible profeſſion, and are to deal with him in the diſpenſing of the ſeals, as ſuch. This rule we learn from all thoſe ſcriptures that ſhew us on what grounds miniſters did baptize perſons who offered themſelves, Matth. iii. 6. Acts ii. 41. and viii. 12. 37. and ſuch like. And what though the perſon whom we take for a viſible believer be not a believer indeed, we are not miſtaken in our judgment, unleſs we go to judge ſo as we have no warrant, that is, to judge him to be certainly a true believer; if men judge ſo of others, what wonder they be miſtaken, when they arrogantly thruſt themſelves into that which the Lord hath not revealed. But we are to judge according to the rule, That a perſon making a credible profeſſion, is probably a true believer, that is, certainly a viſible believer: and herein we are not miſtaken, though the perſon we ſo judge of, be really *in the gall of bitterneſs, and bond of iniquity;* for it is certain he appears and ſeems to be a true believer, though indeed he is ſtark naught before the Lord. As for that which is added, viz. "That one thinks ſo much enough to make "one a viſible believer, &c." *Anſw.* The Lord hath plainly told us in his word whom he accounts real ſaints, and whom the church hath accounted viſible ſaints. If we ſwerve from the rule in our application, it is no doubt our ſin: who can help it, if men will needs cloſe their eyes when the works of the fleſh are manifeſt? It is certain we are commanded to ſeparate the precious from the vile, to put difference betwixt the holy and profane, and to judge of the tree by its fruits. And for infallibility of our judgments in the application, as none will pretend to it now, ſo it can as little be had the other way as this way. Suppoſe it be, that ſuch a parent was baptized; that ſuch a one hath had godly remote parents amongſt us Gentiles; unleſs we go up to Noah or Adam, no greater certainty can be here than what we have from our eyes and ears, which doth not reach to an infallibility; yea, for the moſt part, we have not ſo great certainty the other way, as in the way we plead for. But enough of this.

VIII. We come now to the laſt argument, viz. That the children of many openly ſcandalous and wicked parents, are the children of baptized church-members. *Anſw.* I conceive there is a vaſt difference betwixt an openly ſcandalous, and an openly wicked perſon; ſo that they ought not to be confounded. David and Peter in the hour of temptation were openly ſcandalous, but not openly wicked perſons. And therefore as to many openly ſcandalous I yield the argument, concluding that the children of many openly ſcandalous ought to be baptized; but then there is *ignoratio elenchi.* Laying aſide this then of many openly ſcandalous, and the argument being made to proceed only as to the openly wicked, I diſtinguiſh betwixt church-members *de jure & de facto.* It is plain we ſpeak now of viſible church-members. Thoſe that are church-members *de jure,* are thoſe who have not only a poſſeſſion of church-membership, but a right and lawful poſſeſſion of it. Thoſe are church-members *de facto* (only,) which have a viſible poſſeſſion of that privilege, but no rightful poſſeſſion; and therefore ought to be caſt out and deprived of that poſſeſſion. Now, ſuch a poſſeſſion can give no right either to the parent or child as to church-privileges, for *nullum jus fundatur in injuria:* even as an uſurper, though he hath the crown, yet neither he nor his have right to the revenues of the crown. Wherefore I diſtinguiſh the major of that argument. The children of baptized church-members, who are viſible members in point of right, ought to be baptized; and thus the minor is falſe; the children of baptized church-members, who are ſuch only *de facto,* and not *de jure,* ought to be baptized, I deny. And in this ſenſe only are the openly wicked (ſome of them, I ſay,) baptized church-members.

A MEDITATION on the DAY OF EXPIATION, and the FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

THE *day of expiation* was the only anniverſary ſtated faſt and humiliation that God gave to the church of the Jews; it was a ſorrowful day, for afflicting their ſouls: ſo that he who ate any thing that day, was liable to cutting off. The *feaſt of tabernacles* was the moſt joyful feaſt they had; ſo that the Jews ſay, That he who never ſaw the rejoicing at the drawing of water (uſed at this feaſt,) never ſaw rejoicing all his life. The ceremonial law was the Jews goſpel; and the goſpel to them and us is glory let down in words and ſyllables, the map of Immanuel's land, a looking glaſs wherein we ſee heaven, a ſcheme and draught of the houſe with many manſions. The day of expiation repreſents to me the time of this life, the ſtate of the ſaints in this world; the feaſt of tabernacles, heaven.

The day of expiation went before the feaſt of tabernacles. Why ſhould not our day of afflicting our ſouls go before our days of rejoicing? The Babylonians began their natural day at the ſun riſing, and ſo their night came laſt. The Jews began theirs at ſun-ſetting, and ſo they had their night firſt. *Wo to you that laugh now, for ye ſhall weep. Bleſſed are they that mourn now, they ſhall be comforted.* Let the evening and the morning make our day. If we have our morning firſt, the fears of the approaching night will make our ſun go down at noon. If we will take the evening firſt, when in the darkeſt hour we cry, *Watchman, what of the night?* we will get the anſwer, *The morning cometh.* It was the Pſalmiſt's choice, Pſal. xvii. 14, 15.

The day of expiation was but one day: the feaſt of tabernacles laſted ſeven days; which number of ſeven has gained the reputation of perfection. If the ſaints life here be ſorrowful, it is ſhort. Our life here is but a day, with a morning, noon and evening. And that ſun in the heavens which runs ſuch a rapid courſe, never ſtanding ſtill, either aſcending or deſcending, ſeems to be ſet in the heavens, to *teach us ſo to count our days, as to apply our hearts to wiſdom,* Eccleſ. i. 5. *haſteth to his place where he aroſe;* Heb. *panteth,* as a man running with full ſpeed, till almoſt out of breath. How quickly is the vain ſhew in which we walk at an end? Solomon (Eccleſ. iii.) will allow only *a time to be born, and a time to die,* as if life were nothing but a ſkip out of the womb into the grave; the womb of mother earth (Job i. 21,) being ready to keep us, when falling out of the womb of the mother that conceived us. No wonder our weeping and crying, wherewith we come to the world out of our mother's womb continue till we return thither; there being ſcarce time betwixt the two to dry our cheeks. But, as theſe flies bred by the river Hypanis in Scythia, we are bred in the morning, winged at noon, and dead at night. Much need to fly while our wings laſte. If our affliction be grievous, it will not laſte. Nay, but the apoſtle comparing our affliction with the weight of glory, will not allow it any weight, 2 Cor. iv. 17. where he calls it *Gr. That light thing of our affliction;* light, not only in reſpect of weight, but ſwiftneſs: that haſte-like thing of our affliction, which in a moment ſkips away. This ſhould correct the petty time-eternities that we make to ourſelves in our affliction, Pſal. xiii. 1. Nay, our *weeping endures but a night*, Pſal. xxx. 5. The feaſt comes in the morning, Pſal. xvii. ult. O but the feaſt laſts long! what ſhall or can we ſay of eternity, that everlaſting *Sabbatiſm that remains to the people of God*, that morning that knoweth no night; that ocean that knoweth no ſhore?

There were but four free days intervening betwixt the day of expiation and the feaſt of tabernacles; the former being on the 10th, the latter on the 15th day of the ſeventh month, Lev. xxiii. 27. 34. By what time the greateſt affliction ſits down with us, the greateſt joy knocks at the door. O quick harveſt of glory! O hot ſeed of tears that ſo quickly ſpring up, and ſo ſuddenly bow their heads with that weight of glory on them! to ſee bottles of tears turned, and that ſo quickly, into rivers of pleaſures, wonderful! Surely there is need of faith in our religion, to believe ſuper-rational myſteries. It is a bundle of wonders. How unlike were the Jews rejoicing and dancing at the feaſt of tabernacles, to what they were but four days before, when bowing down their heads and afflicting their ſouls, at that ſolemn yearly remembrance of ſin! *Quantum mutatis ab illo qui quondam!* If it were not that the light of glory infallibly removes all miſtakes, the ſaints there would miſken themſelves, and be apt to think it a dream. It would at leaſt be a while ere they came to themſelves.

At the feaſt of tabernacles they were to *dwell in booths made of the branches of the trees*, not in houſes, Lev. xxiii. 42. and the reaſon is given, ver. 43. *Becauſe they dwelt in booths in the wilderneſs, when the Lord brought them out of Egypt.* So their places of mourning are turned to places of rejoicing. Joy ariſing from paſt dangers, feelingly toucheth mens hearts. The more they remember their wilderneſs-booths, the more they will rejoice. This ſeems to me to point out an ingredient in the heaven of the ſaints, that would have had no place in the heaven of innocent Adam, and his ſinleſs offspring. Had not the Jews dwelt in booths in the wilderneſs, they had not rejoiced in them ſeven days in the land of Canaan. It was their going ſo low that raiſed them ſo high. Surely the ſaints are more than conquerors. God's people in heaven will not forget their wilderneſs entertainment. It will be for the glory of God to mind, and it will ſcrew up their joy, Rev. v. 9. It is ſtoried of Agathocles, who being a potter's ſon, became king of Sicily, that he uſed to be ſerved at his table with earthen veſſels; alledging the reaſon thereof from his extract. He was wiſe, to give that additional ſweetneſs to his enjoyments, which he could not have had if he had been born heir to the crown. Certainly meat can never be ſo ſweet as to a hungry man; nor can one ſo much eſteem wealth as he that has been pinched with poverty. The beſt view of the ſtars is from the bottom of a deep narrow pit. Surely the remembrance of the croſs will ſweeten the crown; and the memory of the wilderneſs will put an additional verdure on the fields of glory, when the ſaints ſhall be walking through them in their white robes, remembering the mournful blacks in which they were wont to appear. Let us not caſt at our bleſſings, nor grudge to ſow the ſeeds of glory. *Durate, & voſmet rebus ſervate ſecundis.* The Heathens, it ſeems, allowed proſperity not to be firſt, but allotted it the ſecond place. God himſelf has confirmed the order. Take your firſts then pleaſantly, though grievous. *Olim hæc meminiſſe juvabit.*

I[illegible] worthy of our conſideration, to take notice what theſe booths were to be made of: Lev. xxiii. 40. *And ye ſhall take unto you on the firſt day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm-trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook.* Compare Neh. viii. 15. ——*Fetch olive-branches, and pine-branches, and myrtle-branches, and palm-branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths.* As to *the boughs of goodly trees*, the Jews, ſays Lightfoot, interpreted that of the *pomecitron*; and ſo did carry a pomecitron apple in their hand at that feaſt. This is not clear from the text.

As to the *olive-tree*, it is a beautiful tree, that retains its greenneſs all the winter, Hoſ. xvi. 6. The *pine* likewiſe is an ever-green, continues green all the year. *Spec. mun.* This puts me in mind of that perpetual ſpring wherewith Immanuel's land is bleſſed for ever. No winter there, no caſting of leaves. The crown is immarceſſible, fades not away, as the flowery garlands given of old to victors did in a little time, 1 Pet. i. 4. We have long winters here; wherein life, leaf, and fruit, are all many times almoſt gone. Our ſprings are ſhort. Our greenneſs ſoon decays. That will make amends for all.

They were to take the boughs, *Heb.* the fruit of goodly trees, i. e. of fruit-bearing trees, or boughs with the fruit on them, Lev. xxiii. 40. The pine bears fruit, called pine-apples; of which I can give no account. But concerning the fruit of the olive, ſee Judg. ix. 9. Pſal. civ. 15. *Oil which maketh man's face to ſhine*, uſed ordinarily at feaſts. This may preſent to our view that paſſage in Chriſt's transfiguration, Matth. xvii. 2. *His face did ſhine as the ſun.* With which we may compare what the apoſtle ſays, Phil. iii. ult. that *he ſhall change our vile bodies, and make them like his glorious body.* Compare alſo Dan. xii. 3. What though our faces are now clothed with ſhame? what though they gather blackneſs? *His viſage was marred more than any man's*; yet there is now no veſtige thereof in that face which ſurpaſſeth the ſun in brightneſs, and would with its ſplendor darken that globe of light. Neither ſhall any ſpot be ſeen in the faces of thoſe who dwell in theſe booths in the promiſed land.

The pine was alſo remarkable for its durableneſs, not being ſubject to worms or rottenneſs, for which cauſe ſhips were made thereof. The ſaints have their anchor, and therefore their ſhip too, Heb. vi. 19. O who would think that ever the ſhip were ſo durable! What a blyth ſight will it be to ſee them all brought ſafe and ſound, after ſuch toſſing in the ſea of this world, to the ſhore of Immanuel's land! There they will never rot.

As for the palm-tree, the beſt of which grew in Paleſtine, it is notour it was a ſign of victory; the reaſon whereof ſeems to be that which is ſaid of it, that when oppreſſed with heavy weights, it yields not, but rather ſhooteth upward the more. The myrtle alſo was a ſign of victory, being worn garland-wiſe in triumphs. Hence (Zech. i. 8.) Chriſt is ſeen *among the myrtle-trees in the valley*; ſhewing, that the church of Chriſt, however low ſhe was brought by the enemies, ſhould come off victorious. It ſeems then, all that will come up to the feaſt of tabernacles, muſt be ſoldiers, and conquerors too. Indeed the Jews behoved to fight their room in and their way to Canaan, and they won it at length. And what is heaven but an eternal triumph? Rev. vii. 9. Let us animate us to the ſpiritual warfare. The people in Egypt, the more they were oppreſſed, the more they grew. How ſweet will all the heavy wreſtlings with fleſh and blood, principalities and powers, be to us when we get the palms in our hands!

I find the palm was wont to be given to thoſe that overcame in bloody battles, and particularly to thoſe that were victors in the bloody ſpectacles of the gladiators; the myrtle, when they had got a victory without ſlaughter of men. All the ſaints go not to glory through a ſea of their own blood. Every one gets not a fiery chariot. And we have reaſon to believe, that as all are not alike in the battle, ſo there will be degrees of glory, and the triumph of ſome greater than that of others. But, if we look ſomewhat higher to the main thing that ſtood between heaven and us, the victory to all the ſaints is a bloody, unbloody victory; bloody in reſpect of Chriſt, unbloody in reſpect of them. Some of them have ſlept, never one of them died, in the cauſe: Rom. viii. 34. *It is Chriſt that died.* The protomartyr (Acts vii. ult.) *fell aſleep.* Therein, as in a glaſs, the Lord would repreſent to all thoſe that were after to ſtrive againſt ſin reſiſting to blood, what that ſort of paſſage to heaven would be to them. Sure death's nature is changed; it is not what it was to Chriſt; it is not that which was threatened, Gen. vii. 17. Why may not the name be changed too? The Holy Ghoſt's connection, (Rev. xii. 11,) is worthy to be remarked. *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their teſtimony; and they loved not their lives even unto death.* In the victory, Chriſt's blood and their blood are not joined together: but Chriſt's blood and their word of teſtimony. Chriſt fought, they but gave the ſhout, to the obtaining of the victory. Sure *he trode the wine-preſs alone, and of* all *the people there was none* to help *him.*

As for the willows, it is known the place thereof is by the water-ſides. Hence that text, Lev. xxiii. 40. calls it *the willows of the brook.* God's people ſometimes hanged their harps on the willows that grew by the rivers of Babylon, Pſal. cxxxvii. 1, 2.; becauſe then their joy was turned to mourning, and they had no uſe for them. In Immanuel's land there is *a river, on either ſide of which grows the tree of life,* Rev. xxii. 1, 2. but no harps hang thereon. They behoved to go to the brook, and fetch their willows. I cannot find one place where the willows is ſpoke of, but it is ſtill with ſome addition of its growing by the waters, Job xl. 22. Pſal. cxxxvii. 1, 2. Iſa. xv. 7. Ezek. xvii. 5. Iſa. xliv. 4. They cannot want nouriſhment in the greateſt drought. This preſents to my view, that Immanuel's land is no land of drought; the trees of the Lord's planting are ſet by the rivers, ſo that they can never want moiſture, but ſhall have an eternal ſupply of the Spirit, by Chriſt, from the Father, whereby they ſhall ſpring as willows by the water-courſes, even thoſe floods of the Spirit's influences, Iſa. xliv. 3, 4. This promiſe is but arled in this life; it will tell out through all the ages of eternity, and will never be at an end, till the laſt drop of that river run by, which will never be.

It is alſo ſaid of the willow, that it is a great friend to chaſtity: for which cauſe forſaken lovers are allowed to wear a willow-garland. Which offers to our conſideration that character the ſcripture ſo often gives to thoſe that are to be the inhabitants of the upper houſe, who are to be preſented as a chaſte virgin to Chriſt, when the marriage is to be ſolemnized in heaven, 2 Cor. xi. 2. and *without ſpot*, Eph. v. 27. They that ſtand on mount Zion with the Lamb are virgins, Rev. xiv. 4. True it is, it is not to the ſtate of the ſaints in heaven that theſe words have the neareſt reference; but it is implied therein: the ſtate of the church in the world being held out in terms borrowed from the ſtate of the church triumphant.

When I compare that Neh. viii. 15. *Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive-branches,* &c. with that Lev. xxiii. 40. *and willows of the brook,* not *brooks:* I cannot but incline to think theſe willows grew about the brook Kidron, which ran between Jeruſalem and the mount of Olives; which, no doubt, was the mount they were directed to. Which may lead us to the conſideration of the ſpring and ſource of all the joys in heaven, even the ſorrows of Chriſt. When David was obliged to leave Jeruſalem upon the account of the rebellion raiſed by his own ſon, he paſſed over this brook Kidron in great diſtreſs, and went up by the aſcent of mount Olivet, weeping as he went, 2 Sam. xv. 23. 30. In this there was a type of Chriſt's ſuffering for the ſins of ſons and daughters. And ſo we find him, after he had been at the laſt feaſt with his diſciples, preached his farewell ſermon to them, and prayed that prayer, John xvii.; the hour being come, ver. 1. paſſing over this brook Kidron, John xviii. 1. to grapple with the wrath of God, in the garden that was on the other ſide of it. Who can imagine in what caſe he went over it? for who can conceive that weight of wrath he was to bear? A far-off proſpect of it had a terrible effect on him, John xii. 27, 28. Behold the wells of ſalvation whence we draw our joy; thoſe bitter waters of wrath that he was plunged into, that terrible cup which his ſinleſs human nature ſhivered at; the brook that he drank of in the way, Pſal. cx. ult.

Lightfoot ſaith, that the Jews ſo underſtood that rejoicing, commanded at that feaſt, as that there was in the court of the temple trumpets ſounding, dancing, &c.; that their greateſt joy began towards night, continued far on in the night, and ſome of the moſt zealous would ſtay out the whole night, Iſa. xxx. 29. compare Rev. iv. 8. *They reſt not day and night, ſaying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.*

He adds, that once every day, they went about the altar, with their myrtle, palm, and willow in their hands, ſinging Hoſanna, Pſal. cxviii. 28. In the mean time they ſet their boughs bending towards the altar. Truly the imagination of this pierceth; we will never ſee them do that again: but we will ſee the ſaints in glory compaſſing the altar always, and ſinging their Hoſanna about it, bending their palms towards the altar; acknowledging they owe all to him, even to the 'Lamb that 'was ſlain, and hath redeemed them to God by his 'blood.' I conclude with that, Rev. vii. 9.——'A 'great multitude——ſtood before the throne, and be'fore the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms 'in their hands; ver. 10. 'And cried with a loud voice, 'Salvation unto our God that ſitteth upon the throne, 'and unto the Lamb.' A plain alluſion to what is ſaid. O that we may be helped ſo to manage our day of expiation, (for it is but a day, and no expiation beyond it,) as that we may be accounted worthy to partake of the joy of the feaſt of tabernacles!

ARGUMENTS from Scripture and Reaſon, proving CONSERVATION to be a poſitive Act, or a continued Creation.

CONſervation is a poſitive act, *i. e.* an effect, or continued creation; though not a bringing of the creatures out of nothing, yet a keeping them every moment from running back into the womb of nothing: ſo that in reſpect of God they are continually *in fieri*.

This I find was the doctrine of the ſchoolmen: and both ſcripture and reaſon prove it.

ARGUMENTS FROM SCRIPTURE.

Arg. I. Heb. i. 3. *Pheron te ta panta*, &c. The apoſtle ſeems to me to have reſpect to Job xxvi. 7. *He hangeth the earth upon nothing*, ſuſtaining the ſame by his creating power. Thus the Son of God holds up all in their being by his power, that they may not fall down into that abyſs of nothing, from which the ſame power raiſed them up at firſt. I remark, 1. That the word *pheron;* whatever elſe be imported in it, there can be no leſs than conſervation and ſuſtentation, whatever way theſe be explained. And as the ſcripture ordinarily links together creation and conſervation, ſo that is not wanting in this context either; compare ver. 2. 'By whom al'ſo he made the worlds.' 2. This ſuſtentation or conſervation is a poſitive act, according to the import of the word. It is an act of power; not a ceaſing from acting, or a not deſtroying of the creature: by the word of his power they are upheld. 3. They are ſuſtained the ſame way they were created. It is the word of his power does both, Gen. i. 3. 'And God ſaid, Let there be light: 'and there was light.' Ver. 6. 'And God ſaid, Let 'there be a firmament in the midſt of the waters; and 'let it divide the waters from the waters.' Pſal. xxxiii. 6. 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; 'and all the hoſt of them by the breath of his mouth.' Ver. 9. 'For he ſpake, and it was done; he comman'ded, and it ſtood faſt.' The apoſtle ſays, he calleth things that *are not*, to *be*; calleth them, viz. by his powerful word; a moſt poſitive action. Thus alſo he ſuſtains them: therefore conſervation is a continued creation. 4. This is a continued action, *pheron*, in the preſent time; therefore a continued creation. It is not needleſs; therefore they would fall down from that in which they are kept, if they were not ſuſtained every moment, if his bearing ſhoulders ſhould ſhift them off for a moment to bear their own weight, Iſa. xlvi. 4. *I have made, and I will bear——carry*, &c. as one doth a weight or burden on his back. I will not ſay but this looks farther; but this ſuſtentation cannot be excluded, but is ſuppoſed. However, the Arminians have no ground to quarrel it; ſeeing they will allow that God made us men, though we make and continue ourſelves his people. 5. The apoſtle uſeth this to prove Chriſt to be God, as appears from the whole chapter. Compare chap. ii. 1, 2, 3. Now, if this be no poſitive act, or any thing leſs than what argues omnipotency; if all of it be the leaving of the creature to ſtand, as the maſon leaves his houſe after it is built, it would no more prove Chriſt to be God than the angels. True, I do not think an angel can annihilate the leaſt creature; yet ſure then they do not deſtroy them, they leave them in their being. But though they cannot deſtroy or annihilate the ſoul or the body, yet they can deſtroy man. The ſcriptures prove God to be God, from his poſitive acting; and idols to be no gods, becauſe they act not.

Arg. II. Rev. iv. 11. *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou haſt created all things, and for thy pleaſure they are, and were created.* Here again creation and conſervation are joined as effects, or rather acts, of the ſame almighty power; *Thou art worthy to receive——power*, *i. e.* to have thy power acknowledged; *for thou haſt created all things, and for thy pleaſure they are and were created.* Now, there can be no reaſon why he ſhould receive glory, honour, and power, becauſe things are for his pleaſure, if he did not glorify and honour his power in keeping them up. If it be a mere ceſſation of his power, and that he does only not throw them down, that may be ground for the glory of his mercy and goodneſs, but not of his power; for every attribute of God is glorified by the emanation thereof: but in this caſe there were no emanations of power; but on the contrary, a ſtopping of the ſame. But according to the right ſide of the plea, things run pleaſantly here, and that according to the ſtrain of the ſcripture, which magnifies the power of God upon the account of the ſuſtentation, as of the creation of the creatures. I cannot but take notice of the Greek, *dia to thelema ſou eiſi*, which Beza and Piſcator render *per voluntatem tuam*. Compare Rev. xxii. 11. Gr. And thus the words ſpeak home to the point, ſhewing that it is by the will of God that they are even as they were created. So that creation and conſervation are ſet on an equal level.

Arg. III. Col. i. 17. *By him all things conſiſt.* Such is the fluid nature of the creatures, that they cannot conſiſt without conſervation from the Lord, more than waters, unleſs they be held together by ſomething beſides themſelves. And this giving of them this conſiſtence, is a poſitive action; or they conſiſt by a poſitive action of God; for it is by virtue of the very ſame power, and in the very ſame way, that they were created, verſe 16. *en auto ektiſthe*; and verſe 17. *en auto ſuneſteke*. This is likewiſe uſed to prove the divinity of Jeſus Chriſt. Therefore, &c.

Arg. IV. John v. 17. *My Father worketh hitherto.* Chriſt here defends his healing on the Sabbath day the man that lay at the pool, by the example of his Father's working ſtill, and that on the Sabbath-day, as well as other days; though the Jews obſerved, by God's appointment, the Sabbath-day, in commemoration of God's reſting on that day from the work of creation. Therefore the Father's working here, is the work of providence, and particularly of conſervation, which is mainly aimed at; for the work which Chriſt defends by this example, was of that kind, even the preſerving of the life of man. This working of the Father muſt needs be a poſitive action, or the Arminians muſt give us a new lexicon. Beſides, unleſs it be ſo, this example could not juſtify our Lord's practice; for they condemned him becauſe he did not ceaſe from working, and leave the poor man as he was before the Sabbath.—Moreover, this working of the Father is a continued creation; for though he reſted the ſeventh day from all his work which he had made, Gen. ii. 2. yet he hitherto works, how? by continuing it in the conſervation of all things, ſpecies and individuals; and the work that our Lord was defending was a creature-conſervation, being a miraculous cure. Further, if this work of conſervation be nothing elſe but a not deſtroying of the work which was made, and left with a power in it to conſerve itſelf, it would no more prove the Father's working on the Sabbath-day, which Chriſt in theſe words doth aſſert, than the going of a clock on the Sabbath, which was made and ſet a going any other day of the week, will prove the maker of the clock to work on the Sabbath-day.

Arg. V. Acts xvii. 28. *For in him we live, and move, and have our being.* If we live, move, and have our being in God, conſervation is a poſitive act, and continued creation; for we ſhould fall from life and being upon the ceaſing of that life-giving power to act in us, as doth the body when the ſoul is gone. If conſervation were not a poſitive act, but negative, that is, no act at all, but a ceſſation from action, after he had given us life and being, we might be ſaid to live and be from him, but not in him, but in ourſelves. It is like it will be ſaid here, that this is to be underſtood of the effect of a paſt action of God, and that *en auto* is no more than *per illum*, as Luke xi. 20. *en dactula Theou, by the finger of God.* Indeed, no doubt the apoſtle means, that we live, move, &c. by the Lord; but I think, whoſo will allow himſelf to be encompaſſed with the light of this context, verſ. 27, 28. *He is not far from every one of us; for in him we live*, &c. muſt needs acknowledge there is ſomething more in the expreſſion, even that the omnipreſent God does ever compaſs us about on every ſide with his continued influences for life, motion, and being, as the light of the ſun doth our bodies, ſo as we ſee. not only *by*, but *in* it; which emanations of light from the ſun ſhould they be withdrawn, we ſhould in a moment be left in darkneſs. But conſider, 1*ſt*, The text doth not only ſay we *move*, but, which is more, *kinoumetha*, we *are moved* by him. Here is a paſſion, and there can be no paſſion without an action. If we are moved by him, then he moves us; that is, he acts poſitively, and leaves us not to move ourſelves, by ceaſing to act on us. Where I apprehend I have inſenſibly ſlipt into the very heart of the controverſy; *hinc illæ lachrymæ.* But this paſſion cannot be the effect of an action long ſince paſt; for action and paſſion are ſo inſeparable, that they muſt needs be at the ſame time, live and die together; for what elſe is action, but the changing of the ſtate wherein a thing is? Now, it is impoſſible a thing can ſuffer a change, if there be not ſomething at the ſame time producing that change, which is called action; and you ſhall as ſoon conceive a mountain without a valley as a paſſion without an action. Paſſion is the ſuffering of an action, and muſt needs ceaſe whenever the action ceaſeth; as the heat in my hand cauſed by the particles of fire acting on it, muſt preſently ceaſe when they are gone. So that we not only move by him, as the clock by the artificer that made it, which is all I think they will allow; but as the clock by the weights hanging at it, which when they are taken away, the clock is at reſt, and can move no more. Even ſo we live, move, and are *(eſmen)* by him, from whom at firſt we had our being. But *quorſum hæc*, ſeeing the controverſy is not about motion? *Anſw.* 1. Seeing the text ſpeaks of all the three alike, if it hold in this, it muſt hold alſo in the other. 2. If our motion depend thus on God, much more does our life and being, to which we can contribute leſs than to our motion. I apprehend the Arminians will not ſtick here; for if we would yield to them our moving ourſelves without an immediate hand of God, I ſuppoſe they would not ſtand to gratify us with the other point. 2*dly*, Conſider the apoſtle hereby proves that God is not far from every one of us; but God's giving us life, motion, and being at firſt, with a power to conſerve the ſame without his continued action, can never prove that, more than a man's making of a ſhip will prove him to be in America, when the ſhip is there, though he be in Scotland. I ſhould rather think, that the apoſtle reaſoning with philoſophers, proceeds upon the maxim *Nihil agit in diſtans;* therefore ſeeing we live, and are moved in and by him, he is not far from us. It ſeems to me that *Markan* anſwers to the Heb. *MeRaCHoK*, which ſignifies diſtance of time as well as place, Pſal. cxxxix. 2. Jer. xxxi. 3. So that the ſenſe is, God is ſtill with us, acting in us, and not at the diſtance of a number of years. This opinion ſeems to me a-kin to the Socinians denial of God's omnipreſence in reſpect of his eſſence, allowing it only in reſpect of his virtue and power: as Arminianiſm in other points is ſeen to pave the way to Socinianiſm.

Arg. VI. ult. Iſ. xlviii. 13. *I call unto them, they ſtand up together.* This call is a poſitive act, for it hath a poſitive effect. It is a continued action; *KoRE. I am calling.* It is the act of conſervation; for, 1. It is a call that makes things which are already created (compare the firſt clauſe) to ſtand, ſo that the frame of the world is not diſſolved. 2. God here proves himſelf to be the Firſt and the Laſt. The Firſt, becauſe he laid the foundations of the earth, &c. the Laſt, becauſe as he called them when they were not, ſo his call makes them ſtand up, abide, or remain, as the word ſignifies alſo. This cuts off the exception of interpreting it of gubernation: for gubernation can never prove the governor to be laſt in being in reſpect of the governed, ſeeing the latter may very well ſurvive the former. But that is ſimply impoſſible in the caſe of conſervation, ſuch as we plead for; for an effect depending in its being on the continued acting of its cauſe, can never be poſterior to its cauſe. If the creatures being wholly depend on God's continued conſervation, ſo that it muſt go to nothing when he withdraws his ſupporting power, this demonſtrates him to be the Laſt.

ARGUMENTS FROM REASON.

Arg. I. There is no neceſſary connection betwixt the creature's moments of duration: *Ergo*, &c. It follows not, becauſe I am this moment, therefore I ſhall be the next, for ſo I ſhould be an eternal neceſſary being, which is proper to God. If it be ſaid, So many moments of my duration, and no more, are connected by the decree of God; I *anſwer*, This decree is either a will to hold up ſo long, or a will to leave me to the power of conſerving myſelf, and not to deſtroy me for ſo long a time. I know no mids. If the firſt, it is the very thing we plead: if the ſecond, the thing willed here is a mere ceſſation from action, which can have no poſitive effect, and therefore it can make no connection of theſe moments. My being laſt moment is now gone; an evidence it had no connection with my being this moment, which then was not, but is now come forth from a creating power. Now, if there be no connection betwixt the creature's duration one moment and another, it is plain they are in a continual flux and ſtate of diſſolution by their very natures; and therefore there muſt be a continual poſitive conſervation of them, no leſs than creating, or they cannot endure.

Arg. II. Our duration muſt have ſome immediate cauſe. That muſt either be God, ourſelves, or ſome other creature. The laſt I think none will plead; if they will, let them ſhew who it is. If it be God, it muſt be by a poſitive act of conſervation; for it is inconceivable how it can be otherwiſe, and therefore they refuſe an immediate hand of God in our conſervation. Now, it cannot be ourſelves; for we neither do, nor can conſerve ourſelves. Which I prove thus. 1. Nothing can give what it has not; we have not our being next moment: *Ergo*, &c. *Exception.* Our being is ſtill the ſame in all moments. *Anſw.* No otherwiſe than the water of Ettrick is the ſame it was this morning. Thoſe things which may be ſeparated are not the ſame; but my being in the moment A, may be ſeparated from my being in the moment C, being annihilated in B, and created again in C. Now, there is the ſame reaſon of all. My being this moment is neceſſary; for *quicquid eſt quando eſt neceſſario eſt:* my being next moment is not neceſſary, for I may be annihilated: *ergo*, they are not the ſame. And truly, if I may now look again to ſcripture, I do not ſee how this opinion leaves the name I AM to God alone. 2. We find often we cannot conſerve a thought, how can we then conſerve our own being, which is more? 3. What man is conſcious to himſelf of his act of conſervation of himſelf? As for the conſervation of ourſelves, by meat, drink, &c. the queſtion is not anent that; theſe keep us not in being, but in well being; for if we ſhould deſtroy ourſelves in a vulgar ſenſe, yet we ſhould ſtill be ſomething till annihilated by the hand that made us. Nay, even by all theſe things we cannot conſerve thoſe particles whereof our bodies are juſt now compounded, but uſe them as conſtant badges of a perpetual flux. But how can a man conceive his conſerving of his ſoul? it is inconceivable. Surely they that are in hell do not believe they conſerve themſelves, that would every moment creep back into the womb of nothing, if the hand of Omnipotency keeping would deſert them. 4. I aſk, What way this ſelf-conſerving power is conſerved? If God by a continued act conſerve the ſame, they are in the ſame mire where they alledge we are, putting God's work in meaner circumſtances than man's. And why may they not allow the conſervation to reach us immediately? *Fruſtra fit per plura, quod æque commode fieri poteſt per pauciora.* If he does not by a continued act conſerve it, there muſt be another power for conſerving it, and another for that, and ſo *in infinitum:* which is abſurd.

Arg. III. Angels and ſouls may be deſtroyed, and we can conceive but two ways of it; either by creating ſomething wherewith they cannot co-exiſt, and we know nothing wherewith angels cannot co-exiſt, they being incapable of diſſolution as bodies are; or by withdrawing of the ſupporting power. If ſo, then conſervation is a poſitive act and continued creation.

Arg. IV. *ult.* From that opinion it would follow, That one creature depends more on another than on God; as light on the ſun, plants on the ſun and earth, &c. for they need continual conſervation from their particular cauſes. But that one creature depends more on another than on God, is abſurd. See for the whole Job xxxiv. 14. 15.

Of the Origin, Names, Texture, and Uſe of GARMENTS.

THE firſt garments were made of the leaves of the fig-tree, which is ſaid to be of thoſe trees that have the broadeſt leaves; of theſe our firſt parents made *baghoroth*, aprons, things wherewith they girded themſelves about, Gen. iii. 7. The text ſays, they *ſewed them together.* I obſerve late writers vary from this tranſlation, and will have it, that they faſtened or twiſted the tender twigs of the fig-tree with the leaves on them, about their waiſt; which ſeems to be taken up to ſatisfy our Atheiſts, becauſe forſooth they had not then needle and thread. But they anſwered as well, who alledged they uſed other things inſtead of theſe. And why might they not ſew the leaves together, though they had neither needle nor thread, while they had thorn-prickles to ſerve inſtead of needles, yea, or nails on their fingers; and rinds of trees, &c. inſtead of thread? Beſides, it would ſeem no eaſy girdle or apron that were made of twigs, though the leaves were on them; nor very fit to cover nakedneſs at all times, unleſs the leaves had been ſewed together. If it was ſo, I ſhould obſerve, God's calling them to an account, *Leruchh Hajom, in the wind of the day*, verſ. 8, at which time they might quickly be convinced their fig-leaf aprons were to little purpoſe for covering of nakedneſs. The word rendered *ſewed*, is found only in other three places, viz. Eccleſ. iii. 7. Ezek. xiii. 18. and Job xvi. 15. Nichols, in his conference, ſays, it ſignifies not to ſew together with needle and thread: for which he cites that place in Job. It is plain, in the two firſt paſſages it denotes proper ſewing; and it ſignifies no other in Job xvi. 15. We may fairly account for the tranſlation there and the ſenſe accordingly, without ſuppoſing Job to ſew ſackcloth on his loins, as one ſews a piece of cloth on a block; it being moſt frequent in the holy tongue, which is very conciſe, to denote both an antecedent and conſequent action by one word ſignifying the antecedent, as Iſa. xxxviii. 17. Heb. *Thou haſt loved my ſoul from the pit*, ver. 21. Heb. *Bruiſe them upon the boil, i. e.* bruiſe them, and then lay them on the boil. So Job ſewed ſackcloth, and, being ſewed, put it on his loins. This ſewing of the firſt garment of the firſt Adam, brings me in mind of the ſecond Adam's, which was without ſeam; and what a covering we have from him, even one that is all of one piece, while Adam has left us nothing but patched up rags.

The prime reaſon of garments is plain from the ſame paſſage, to wit, to cover the ſhame of our nakedneſs, which was not ſhameful till man had ſinned. And the holy language puts them on us ſtill as badges of our ſin and ſhame, that they may ſerve us as memorials for humiliation, and phylacteries of the doctrine of the fall.

Beged, primarily *treachery*, ſignifies *a garment*, from *bagad, he dealt treacherouſly*. I take this to point at the breach of the firſt marriage-covenant betwixt God and ſinners, the covenant of works; for the word is ordinarily uſed of the breach of a marriage-covenant. So Jer. iii. 20. Mal. ii. 14. Thus Prov. ii. ult. adulterers are called *bogedim*; compare ver. 17.——*forgetteth the covenant of her God.* And obſerve the puniſhment,——*they ſhall be rooted out of the earth*; becauſe they take ſuch methods to root themſelves in it, Hoſ. iv. 10. Remarkable is that of Solomon, that all his wives left but one ſon, and him a fool. To confirm this notion, it may be obſerved, that the word Gen. iii. 23. *vaiſhallehhehu, God ſet him forth out of paradiſe*, is the word ordinarily uſed of the ſetting off of the divorced woman, Deut. xxiv. 1. 3, 4. Among the Jews, if there could be proved any thing of villainy againſt the wife, ſhe was ſent away, *ſine tabulis*, (wherein her dowry, and what ſhe brought with her when ſhe was married, was written,) and deſtitute of all things, becauſe ſhe had played the harlot: to which there is an alluſion, Hoſ. ii. 3.—'leſt 'I ſtrip her naked.' Thus our marriage-ornaments are kept in the houſe of our huſband, and we ſent away only with the badges of our treachery.

Yea robes are but *megnile*, Ezek. xxvi. 16. from *magnal, he treſpaſſed*, to put us in mind of *to tou enos paraptoma, that offence of that one*, Rom. v. But the *megnil* was one of the High Prieſt's garments belonging to him alone, Exod. xxviii. In which we may ſee our High Prieſt clothed with our tranſgreſſions, coming in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and, as Joſhua, ſtanding before the Lord in the filthy garments of our guilt. Whence in the day of the ſpiritual marriage we get on his *robe of righteouſneſs, megnil tzedakah*, and are *decked as prieſts* (as the word ſignifies, Iſa. lxi. 10) whoſe garments were *for glory and beauty*, Exod. xxviii. 2.

A garment they alſo call *ſimlah*, and, by a tranſpoſition of a letter, *ſalmah*: from *ſemol*, the left hand; *ſiniſtra*, the unlucky hand. Thus they are put on us as badges of our going wrong, turning out of the way, and falling from our honour. Scripture-antiquity has given the preference to the right hand, and ſo the profane likewiſe; though ſome ſtand for the ancients preferring the left, of which ſee Rivet on Pſal. cx. Xenophon tells us, that Cyrus ſet thoſe whom he minded moſt to honour, on his left hand; but withal gives the reaſon of his doing ſo, Becauſe in that poſture men were leaſt liable to ſnares, which ſeems to argue it was an invention of his own. It is ſomewhat ſurpriſing, that the Greeks called the left hand *ariſteran, the beſt*: but in the Pagan rites of divination the left hand was the beſt, becauſe the giver's right hand in beſtowing a benefit is oppoſite to the receiver's left hand. Thus, *avis ſiniſtra intonuit lævum.* are good luck. Hence, as Lipſius thinks, the Greeks ſo called the left hand. Theſe confirm the preference of the right hand: Jacob lays his right hand on Ephraim, and his left on Manaſſeh, ſeeing Ephraim was to be the more honourable. And the ſheep are ſet on Chriſt's right, the goats on his left hand, at the laſt day. The left hand alſo was the place aſſigned to the accuſed in the Jewiſh courts, while the accuſer ſtood at his right hand; hence, Pſal. cix. 6. Zech. iii. 1. Satan is repreſented in the poſture of an accuſer. And on the right hand of the judge ſat one who wrote the ſentence of abſolution; which may give further light to that of Chriſt's ſitting on the right hand of God; compare 1 John ii. 1. and on the left, one who wrote the ſentence of condemnation. On which account our garments may well bear the character of the left hand. The cuſtom among the Greeks was, that the accuſer ſtood in a pulpit on the left hand of the tribunal, the accuſed in another upon the right, ſo that they were one juſt over-againſt another. And it ſeems this alſo was the cuſtom amongſt the Romans, to ſtand face to face in judgment, Acts xxv. 16. And it ſeems it was alſo in uſe amongſt the Hebrews, as well as the other cuſtom, 1 Kings xxi. 10. So ſaith Leigh. But that confounds the accuſer and witneſſes. But theſe two men of Belial, ver. 13. are expreſsly called *witneſſes*; and whereas the accuſer and accuſed ſtood, theſe witneſſes ſat, ib. Their cuſtom then it ſeems was, that both the parties ſtood before the judge, Zech. iii. 1. the accuſer on the right hand, ib. and the witneſſes ſat, and that before the accuſed, 1 Kings xxi. 10 *negedo, over againſt him*; unto which David ſeems to allude, Pſal. li. 3.——*ever before me.* And ſo it is more fully declared, Hoſ. vii. 10. *And the pride of Iſrael doth teſtify to his face.* Hence our garments to us are as a face-covering of the condemned.

Laſtly, It is called *Lebuſh*, which the Talmudics, as

Buxtorff relates, ſay is *quaſi Lo buſhah, not ſhame,* becauſe by clothing it comes to paſs that man is not aſhamed of his nakedneſs. I ſhould rather think it is *Leboſh* or *boſhah, for ſhame.* We have put in the letter, and made that word *bluſh*; the native conſequent now of nakedneſs diſcovered. All nakedneſs is not ſhameful yet, but of thoſe parts that nature will have covered. So our firſt parents made them aprons. Which conſideration muſt needs preſent to our view original ſin propagated by natural generation. To this nakedneſs of Adam after he had ſinned, that ſhame of our nakedneſs, Rev. iii. 18. which the ſecond Adam offers us white raiment to cover, hath reſpect. The ſhame of nakedneſs is a deep impreſſion on all mankind to atteſt the fall; and ſo remains with them, that even ſavages have Adam's art of covering what the ſcripture calls nakedneſs. It is worth the notice to this purpoſe what Valerius Maximus tells of the Roman people, at the Ludi Florales, where ſhameleſs ſtrumpets run up and down naked, that while Cato was looking on, the people were aſhamed to deſire that thoſe ſhameleſs creatures ſhould be ſtripped; which when he knew, he went away from the theatre, that he might not ſtand in the way of what was the cuſtom. And hence it is threatened as the greateſt diſgrace, Iſa. xlvii. 3. Ezek. xvi. 37.; and therefore was inflicted on the Egyptian captives, Iſ. xx. 4. which may give light to that, Rev. xvi. 15. 'Bleſſed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, leſt he walk naked, and they ſee his ſhame;' denoting that everlaſting contempt they ſhall get poured on them at the coming of Chriſt, who ſhall be found naked as Adam was when God came to him to call him to an account. It is alſo to be added, that there was one who walked the round through the temple-guards every night, and if he found any aſleep, he had liberty to ſet fire to his garments, and ſtruck him: to which there is here a manifeſt alluſion. Compare, 'Behold, I come as a thief.' Hence we may conclude, that the nakedneſs of Saul, 1 Sam. xix. 24. when he propheſied before Samuel, and that of Iſaiah, chap. xx. 2. was not abſolute nakedneſs. That before noted, may be one reaſon among many, why the devil is called *the unclean ſpirit*, and it is not to be thought ſuch a geſture could proceed from the motion of the Holy Spirit. But the Hebrews call him *naked* who hath caſt off his upper garment. And ſo the Greek plays, called *Gymnici*, where they caſt off their cumberſome clothes, that they might the more nimbly perform their games; for it cannot be thought, they were abſolutely naked. To this the apoſtle alludes, Heb. xii. 1. 'laying aſide every weight, and the ſin that doth ſo eaſily beſet us;' *apothemenoi, putting off*, as one doth a garment, Eph. iv. 22.; *euperiſtaten amartian*: Sin is compared to their large and long garments coming down to the heels, that were laid aſide as unfit for a race, ſeeing they were ſo apt to fold about the legs, and hinder them in their courſe. *Germanos Mela plerumque nudos egiſſe dicit: Interpretatur id Tacitus, rejecta veſte ſuperiori,* ſays Grotius. Hence we may alſo ſee why Chriſt hung naked on the croſs, even becauſe he was to ſatisfy the juſtice of God for that ſin which had made Adam naked. What a fearful ſight of the fall was to be ſeen on the croſs? and what a killing piece of ſuffering was this? Goodwin out of Artemidorus ſhews, that thoſe that were crucified ſuffered naked, that they were firſt ſtripped of all their clothes, and then faſtened to the croſs. And with this the ſcripture agrees, Matth. xxvii. 35. Heb. xii. 2. *He endured the croſs, and deſpiſed the ſhame.*

Theſe were the firſt garments, taken on to cover the ſhame of nakedneſs, after they were ſtripped of their garments of innocency, and, as ſome think not improbably, of a glorious brightneſs that was upon their bodies before the fall; upon the removal of which they ſaw they were naked, and ſo betook themſelves to the leaves of a tree to cover their nakedneſs. In which the providence of God is remarkable, that the cover they make themſelves, was not only a badge of their ſin, but of the very kind of their ſin; while they that had ſinned in the eating of the fruit of a tree, have the leaves of a tree for the covering of the ſhame of their nakedneſs ariſing therefrom. And what a melting conſideration is it, to imagine Adam and his wife ſiſted before the Lord, to anſwer for their eating of the forbidden fruit, and that in a garb of the leaves of a tree, which ſome think was the very kind of tree on which the forbidden fruit grew, even as a thief brought to judgment with what he has ſtolen hanging about him?

The next garments were of the ſkins of beaſts, which have been long in uſe, as the Greek word *bimation*, from *himas*, leather, gives ground to ſuppoſe. The ancient Germans covered themſelves with jackets that came down ſcarcely to their haunches; were faſtened with a claſp: and were made either of coarſe cloth, or ſkins with the pile on the outſide. The ſlaves had them ſometimes of the rind of a tree; and they lay on boar ſkins. *Mezer. hiſt. de France, p.* 27. 28. And to this day the Finlanders, it ſeems, wear coats of ſkins, they being often ſeen on the coaſts of Orkney in their little boats of ſeal-ſkins, or ſome kind of leather, with their leathern coats on them; as Mr Brand ſays in his deſcription of Orkney. Many of the worthies under the Old Teſtament were made to wander up and down in ſheeps-ſkins, and goats-ſkins, Heb. xi. 37. The author of the ſupplement of Pool's annotations *in loc.* ſays, this was the common apparel of the prophets, as of Elijah, 2 Kings i. 8. Zech. xiii. 14. What authority there is for that I find not. But I think the text points out theſe not as the ordinary array of them that were then, but as taken up in a deſtitute caſe, for lack of better; as they had dens and caves, ver. 38. inſtead of their houſes, which they durſt not keep. It is there added, that they wore thoſe ſkins as they came off the beaſts back, undreſſed. But the prophets garments from the ſcriptures, ſeems not to have been of ſkins, but of hair. So 2 Kings i. 8. Elijah is called *a hairy man*, and his girdle is ſaid to be of *leather*, as of matter different from that whereof his gown was made; which is explained in the other Elias, Matth. iii. 4. whoſe garment is expreſsly ſaid to have been of camels hair, which being coarſely wrought, might have the hairs ſticking out in it; on which account Elias might be called a hairy man. The rough garment, Zech. xiii. 4. is *addereth ſegnar, a garment of hair.* Compare with this, Rev. vi. 12. where 'the ſun became black as ſackcloth of hair,' whence it may be gathered, that ſackcloth of hair was in uſe in time of mourning: and what was extraordinary to the people, may be allowed as ordinary to the prophets. From what is ſaid, it appears the prophets garments were of hair; and that garment is called in Iſ. xx. 2. 'the prophet's ſackcloth.' For if that garment of Iſaiah's was his habit only in time of mourning, as ſome would have it, how comes it that he is injoined to caſt it off when he is to appear as a mourner, to wit, naked and barefoot? 2 Sam. xv. 30. And it is plain the ſcripture expreſſeth a joyful turn in a perſon's caſe by caſting off of ſackcloth in that ſenſe, Pſal. xxx. 11. But Iſaiah might well be ſaid to be naked, caſting off his prophet's coat, as Peter, John xxi. 7. caſting off his fiſher's coat. In the time of Antichriſt, the witneſſes propheſy in ſackcloth, as being the ſucceſſors truly of the ancient prophets; and particularly there ſeems to be an alluſion in it to Elijah's propheſying, in time of the appoſtaſy and idolatry of his day, in ſackcloth of hair; as there is inconteſtably an alluſion to Elijah's caſe, Rev. xi. 6. *Theſe have power to ſhut heaven.*

I am ſo far convinced of the truth of that opinion, that theſe were the ſkins of beaſts offered up in ſacrifice, that I cannot think it probable, as Nichols in his conference ſays, that they were not made for them till the winter after. The covenant being made, and the Meſſias promiſed, it is moſt reaſonable to think it was confirmed by ſacrifice; in reſpect of which ſacrifice Chriſt may be called *the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world.* And upon this original ſacrifice, that ſacrifice, Gen. iv. Heb. xi. 4. is brought in as a piece of ordinary inſtituted worſhip. Did not *Anton. van Dale de oraculis Ethnicorum* repute for a fable the ſtory of the pilot Thamus, hearing by night a voice ordering him to cry, *The Great God Pan is dead,* at the death of Chriſt the great Shepherd; I would with a great deal more pleaſure obſerve what *Valer. Max. lib. 2. cap. 2.* tells of the Lupercals, wherein Pan was honoured with ſacrifices, and games ſo called. The Lupercals, ſays he, were begun by Romulus and Remus then, when being overjoyed that Numitor had allowed them to build the town there where they were brought up, they did ſacrifice goats, (which were two,) and having ate and drank liberally, they diverted the company of ſhepherds, and merrily ran up and down, *cincti pellibus immolatarum hoſtiarum,* ſwitching every one they met with in their merriment. One would think the devil had taken this, from whence he has drawn many other rites in to his ſervice.

But on ſurer grounds we may obſerve, that our firſt parents made their firſt garments, and God made the next, which were effectual for the uſe of garments. Whence we may learn the utter inſufficiency of our own righteouſneſs to cover ſpiritual nakedneſs, and the abſolute neceſſity of the righteouſneſs of God, the imputed righteouſneſs, with its fitneſs every way to clothe the ſinful ſoul. And when I conſider how, when the antitype was ſacrificed, they parted his garments, and on his veſture did they caſt lots, I am the more convinced that our firſt parents were clothed with the ſkins of the firſt ſacrifice. We may alſo hence take a view of our natural inclination, upon the firſt view of our nakedneſs, to provide a covering for ourſelves of our own making, and to hold by it, till, being ſifted before a righteous God, we ſee it will not avail; at which time Chriſt is ſeaſonably diſcovered, and the proud heart being humbled, will at length *ſubmit* to an imputed righteouſneſs, Rom. x. 3. Finally, thoſe Adam and his wife made, were ſewed together; as for the other, Moſes only ſays God made them.

The original of veſts, *a vellere,* I find not. The Pagans have made Minerva the goddeſs of weaving, and generally of lanifice. So Buchanan calls weaving the Paladian art, *ad Ad. Otterb.* And the Greeks ſeem to have derived their *ergon* from *arag, to weave,* as if it were a work by way of eminency, which it is indeed. Voſſius takes Naamah to be the Heathen Minerva or Venus. And the Arabians ſay, that the ſame Naamah invented colours and painting, as Jubal did muſick. And it is very probable, as lanifice is ſtill moſtly left to the women, ſo the invention of weaving is due to that ſex. Weaving was a piece of houſe-wifery, and the uſual employment of women in their houſes amongſt the ancient Greeks, *Arch. Attic.*; and that not only of thoſe of the meaner, but of the higheſt and moſt honourable character amongſt them. Penelope's web is famous to a proverb. And Creuſa in Euripides, daughter of Erichtheus king of Athens, had a bearing cloth of her own weaving for Ion. This was the cloth in which they wrapt the new born child after it was waſhen, which Iſrael wanted, Ezek. xvi. Auguſtus Cæſar, ſays Suetonius, trained up his daughters and nieces to card, ſpin, and make cloth. Yea, he readily wore none but what was made within the houſe by his wife, ſiſter, daughter, or nieces. Which obſervation may make that character of a wife for a king, Prov. xxxi. ſeem leſs ſtrange to us. And it would ſeem that a virtuous woman is a weaver as well as a ſpinſter, ſeeing ſhe makes herſelf tapeſtry, verſ. 22. ſee verſ. 24. being ſkilled in weaving, and having her loom, of whatever ſort it was, in her chamber, as Delilah, Judg. xvi. 13, 14.

A PARAPHRASE on the Epiſtle of PAUL to the GALATIANS.

CHAP. I.

1. PAUL an apoſtle (not of men, neither by man, but by Jeſus Chriſt, and God the Father, who raiſed him from the dead,)

2. And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia;

3. Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

I. The preface v. 1. 2. the party from and to whom. v. 3. the ſalutation. v. 4. a deſcription of Chriſt. v. 5. a doxology to the Father.

Ver. 1. PAUL an apoſtle, not an apoſtle of men, as an ambaſſador of a ſtate, but an apoſtle of the Great GOD; and that not mediately, by man, as ordinary church-officeers, but called thereto immediately by God-man Jeſus Chriſt, and by God the Father, who raiſed Chriſt from the dead, and ſo gave an infallible teſtimony to the doctrine of Chriſt; who, being raiſed from death, may well be allowed to ſend out me for an apoſtle, as he did others while he was yet bodily preſent on the earth: ver. 2. And all the profeſſors and miniſters of the church that are with me at the writing hereof, (who do approve of this my epiſtle, to me dictated by the Spirit:) Unto the congregations of the country Galatia; whom I ſtill hold for true churches, notwithſtanding of the errors embraced by them. verſ. 3. The good-will and favour of God, and all ſort of true peace and proſperity, be to you, from the Father as the fountain of all grace, and from Chriſt as the only conduit by which both flow or can flow to ſinners.

4. Who gave himſelf for our ſins, that he might deliver us from this preſent evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

5. To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Ver. 4. Whom ſeeing I have named, I cannot but commend; the rather that we may ſee we have ſo much in him for our perfect happineſs, as that we need not look to our own works for an eek; for he gave himſelf to the death for expiating of our ſins, which cannot be but ſufficient for that end; and one great deſign of his dying for us was, that he might deliver us from the ſnares which the wicked men of this preſent world lay for us; which is too ſadly verified in your being inſnared by the falſe teachers among you. This Chriſt did according to the will and decree of the Father, who was concerned for the redemption of the elect, ſo that he gave a commiſſion to the Son for that purpoſe. verſ. 5. And therefore let him have the glory of our redemption, by our lips and lives; and ſeeing time is not ſufficient for the work of his praiſe, let it be echoed out of the ſaints mouths for all eternity. So be it.

6. I marvel, that ye are ſo ſoon removed from him that called you into the grace of Chriſt, unto another goſpel.

7. Which is not another; but there be ſome that trouble you, and would pervert the goſpel of Chriſt.

II. The body of the epiſtle. 1. He aſſerts the truth of his doctrine; uſhered in v. 6, 7. with a ſoft reproof; v. 7. blaming their teachers rather than them.

Verſ. 6. I am ſurprized to hear, that ye are embracing the doctrine of the neceſſity of the obſervation of Moſes's law, and mixing the works of the law, whether ceremonial or moral, with the righteouſneſs of Chriſt in point of juſtification; and for to make way for that, over the belly of the doctrine I taught you, ye hearken to falſe teachers, queſtioning my apoſtolic office, and ſuggeſting that I had the doctrine of the goſpel only from the ſecond hand, which I have ſince corrupted: I marvel, I ſay, that ye have embraced theſe doctrines, whereby you making defection (being carried thereto by others) from God, who by my miniſtry, called you to Chriſt's goſpel, the goſpel of free grace, are carried off, and that very ſuddenly, (which aggravates your ſin,) unto a pretended goſpel: verſ. 7. Which is not a goſpel at all; for it brings bad, inſtead of good news. But I cannot lay all the blame on you: there are ſome among you, who as winds do trouble waters, ſo they trouble your churches by their new doctrine, ſtirring up diviſions, and bringing many to that, they know not what to believe, or whom; and they no leſs trouble your conſciences, drawing you off from the perfect righteouſneſs of Chriſt, whereby it comes to paſs that ye can never have ſolid peace within; and they would overturn the goſpel, ſetting up a doctrine inconſiſtent with the doctrine of the goſpel.

8. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other goſpel to you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accurſed.

He aſſerts it 1. by anathematizing thoſe that ſhould preach another goſpel.

Verſ. 8. But ſo fully am I perſuaded of the truth of the doctrine I have preached to you, and of the perfection and ſufficiency of it for true happineſs, that I doubt not to anathematize and declare ſeparated from Chriſt, accurſed of God, and to be deſtroyed, myſelf or an angel from heaven, if either of us ſhould preach another goſpel way of juſtification or ſalvation.

9. As we ſaid before, ſo ſay I now again, If any man preach any other goſpel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accurſed.

Verſ. 9. It is not paſſion and unruly rage that makes me talk thus, but my zeal for God; and therefore with all ſoberneſs I denounce the ſame againſt any man that ſhall adventure ſo to do. Ye formerly received the very ſame doctrine that I preached, and therefore ſo let it be to him who preaches what is inconſiſtent with your former principles.

10. For do I now perſuade men, or God? or do I ſeek to pleaſe men? for if I yet pleaſed men, I ſhould not be the ſervant of Chriſt.

Verſ. 10. Wonder not I am ſo bold in devoting to a curſe thoſe that preach other doctrine than I: for though when I was a Phariſee, I perſuaded people to hear and follow the dictates of men, which humour yet remains with your teachers; yet now my only buſineſs is, to perſuade men to hear and follow the dictates of God himſelf; ſo that it is God's cauſe, not my own, or mens. Neither do I ſeek to humour men, as thoſe teachers of yours bend their doctrine to curry favour with the Jews; which was my own way in the time of my blindneſs; but if that were my way ſtill, I ſhould not be about Chriſt's work, and ſo I ſhould be not the ſervant of Chriſt, but of men.

11. But I certify you, brethren, that the goſpel which was preached of me, is not after man.

2. Upon the ground of his divine and immediate call, which he clears by

Verſ. 11. But I am the ſervant of Chriſt; for I aſſure you, the doctrine I preached to you, was not from earth but from heaven.

12. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt.

Verſ. 12. For I neither received it from men as the authors of it, though men would be found the higheſt ſpring of the new doctrine among you, if you would impartially examine the author of it; neither was I taught it mediately, by the help of any apoſtle, or other man, as ſome alledge; but I had it by immediate revelation from Jeſus Chriſt at the time of my converſion.

13. For ye have heard of my converſation in time paſt, in the Jews religion, how that beyond meaſure I perſecuted the church of God, and waſted it:

14. And profited in the Jews religion, above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

a narration, or ſhort hiſtory of his life to chap. ii. v. 5. 15.

Verſ. 13. The truth of which will convincingly appear from a ſhort hiſtory of my life; for ye have heard of my former converſation, while I was a Jew; and I grudge not to confeſs it to my own ſhame and God's glory, how I was an eminent perſecutor of the church; and like an enemy going through a land with fire and ſword, leaving nothing but deſolation behind him, ſo I waſted the church, getting ſome killed, others ſcattered. ver. 14. And I wanted not parts to my hoſtile mind: for though I ſhall not ſay I profited more in the Jewiſh religion than thoſe that were elder than myſelf, or than all thoſe that were of the ſame ſtanding with me, or thoſe in other nations; yet I may without breach of modeſty ſay, that I was more learned in Judaiſm, than many of my ſtanding in mine own nation. And the worſt part of that religion, even unwritten traditions, to which Chriſt was a great enemy. I beſtowed the cream of my zeal upon; which zeal had arrived to an exceeding high pitch.

15. But when it pleaſed God, who ſeparated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,

16. To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Heathen; immediately I conferred not with fleſh and blood:

17. Neither went I up to Jeruſalem, to them which were apoſtles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damaſcus.

Ver. 15, 16, 17. Yet notwithſtanding of all this, when the time appointed of God for my converſion came, and it pleaſed God (who from my mother's womb had ſeparated me to the apoſtolic office, in ſo far as his providence had from that time been ſecretly working to ſhape me out for the work, bringing me into the world by ſuch parents giving me a healthſul conſtitution, and the benefit of human learning; who alſo by his powerful and overcoming grace called me to himſelf, who had been running away from him: when it pleaſed him, I ſay) to give me the ſaving knowledge of Chriſt, which in an extraordinary way, without the preached word, did immediately break into my ſoul; to the end I might not only be ſaved thereby myſelf, but might preach the ſame Chriſt unto the Heathen world; then I was ſo perſuaded of the divinity of the doctrine revealed, and ſo clear as to my call to the miniſtry, that I would not conſult mine own reaſon, nor any man whatſoever, as to my duty in this caſe; neither did I return from Damaſcus to Jeruſalem, to meet with the other apoſtles to get a permiſſion from them to preach, or to get my call confirmed by them: but without diſputing the call of God, having firſt ſtaid certain days in Damaſcus and preached, Acts ix. 19.---22. I went, not without great hazard and pains, to preach to the Heathen Arabians, and returned from Arabia afterwards, and came to Damaſcus, Acts ix. 23.

18. Then after three years I went up to Jeruſalem, to ſee Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

Ver. 11. Then three years after my converſion I went up from Damaſcus to Jeruſalem, to make a viſit to Peter, not to learn any thing of him, but to give a teſtimony of agreement in the ſame doctrine, he being the great apoſtle of the Jews, and I of the Gentiles; and it was but ſhort time I abode with him, ſo that I had not time to learn.

19. But other of the apoſtles ſaw I none, ſave James the Lord's brother.

Ver. 19. Neither learned I of the reſt of the apoſtles, for I ſaw none of them but James, our Lord's kinſman according to the fleſh.

20. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lye not.

Ver. 20. Now, as to the truth of theſe things, ſeeing God's glory and your edification requires it, I confirm it by an oath, declaring before God as a judge and witneſs, in the matter, that I am ſpeaking nothing but truth.

21. Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;

22. And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea, which were in Chriſt:

23. But they had heard only, That he which perſecuted us in times paſt, now preacheth the faith which once he deſtroyed.

24. And they glorified God in me.

Ver. 21. Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria, and particularly into Cilicia, my native country, and preached the goſpel there. ver. 22. And though the Chriſtian churches in Judea, viſible members of Chriſt's body, were not acquainted with me, having been but occaſionally ſometimes in Jeruſalem, and made no conſiderable ſtay, and having made it my buſineſs familiarly to converſe with thoſe of my own charge, rather than them to whom I had not ſuch a ſpecial relation: ver. 23. Yet when they had heard the news of my converſion, and of preaching that doctrine which once I endeavoured to deſtroy, by perſecuting the profeſſors thereof, ver. 24. They acknowledged the mercy and power of God appearing in his dealing with and by me; and conſidering me as a convert and ſucceſsful preacher, they gave God glory upon my account.

CHAP. II.

THEN fourteen years after, I went up again to Jeruſalem, with Barnabas, and took Titus with me alſo.

Ver. 1. THEN fourteen years after my converſion, I made another journey to Jeruſalem, with Barnabas my ordinary companion in my travels, and I took Titus the evangeliſt with me alſo; as two witneſſes which might teſtify to the apoſtles at Jeruſalem what doctrine I preached amongſt the Gentiles, and with what ſucceſs and viſible ſeals of my miniſtry; and who might alſo teſtify again to the Gentiles what ſhould paſs in the deſigned conference.

2. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that goſpel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, leſt by any means I ſhould run, or had run in vain.

Ver. 2. And I went up by an impulſe of the Spirit of God, revealing that particular to be my duty; and when I came there, in a friendly and familiar way I declared to the churches of Judea the goſpel and doctrine which at this preſent I preach, (for I preach no other doctrine now than what I always preached ſince I was an apoſtle;) but Chriſtian prudence obliged me, not to give this declaration of my doctrine preſently before the whole multitude, leſt unneceſſary ſcruples and debates might be raiſed amongſt the vulgar; nay this declaration I thought neceſſary to make, not to any of the apoſtles, but thoſe who were of greateſt reputation in the church; and the great deſign of my entering upon this conference with them was, to preſerve the fruit of my preaching in time paſt, and to ſecure it for the time to come; for if once that had obtained amongſt the Gentiles, that I preached other doctrine than the chief apoſtles, my labours in the goſpel would have been loſt, both for the time paſt, and the time to come.

Comp. Acts xxv. 14.

3. But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumciſed:

4. And that becauſe of falſe brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to ſpy out our liberty, which we have in Chriſt Jeſus, that they may bring us into bondage.

Ver. 3. But in that meeting, Titus, an uncircumciſed Greek, was freely admitted to the apoſtle's ſociety; and ſo far were they againſt the neceſſity of the obſervation of the ceremonial law, that they did not require him to be circumciſed; which they would certainly have done had they thought that circumciſion was neceſſary to be obſerved. Ver. 4. And in this particular caſe they did thus carry: not becauſe they thought that circumciſion was yet ſimply unlawful, but becauſe they would not give an occaſion of triumphing to ſome falſe brethren, who held the neceſſity of obſerving the ceremonial law, and who had been brought into this meeting without the apoſtle's knowledge, and came into it, not with any good deſign, but as ſo many ſpies, to ſpy out our Chriſtian liberty, and to rob us of it, and bring us again under the bondage of the ceremonial law; for if Titus had been circumciſed here, they would have made uſe of that practice, as a certain confirmation of the neceſſity of circumciſion, and the obſerving of the whole ceremonial law.

5. To whom we gave place by ſubjection, no not for an hour; that the truth of the goſpel might continue with you.

Ver. 5. But being aware of this their deſign, we, the reſt of the apoſtles, at the meeting, and I, would not ſubject our Chriſtian liberty to them, nor yield to them in that point, no not in uſing circumciſion but that once. The reaſon of our ſtiffneſs in this was, that the doctrine of the goſpel might remain with you Galatians and other Gentiles, pure and uncorrupted, and not mixed with Jewiſh leaven; for had they got their will in this particular, they would have had a ſpecious pretence againſt Chriſtian liberty.

6. But of theſe who ſeemed to be ſomewhat (whatſoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's perſon) for they who ſeemed to be ſomewhat, in conference added nothing to me.

7. But contrariwiſe, when they ſaw that the goſpel of the uncircumciſion was committed unto me, as the goſpel of the circumciſion was unto Peter;

8. (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apoſtleſhip of the circumciſion, the ſame was mighty in me towards the Gentiles;)

9. And when James, Cephas, and John, who ſeemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowſhip; that we ſhould go unto the Heathen, and they unto the circumciſion.

Ver. 6. But of the apoſtles of greateſt credit, in compariſon of whom I am deſpiſed by ſome, as nothing in compariſon of them, I indeed learned nothing. Say not, they were apoſtles before me, and had ſeen Chriſt in the fleſh, and therefore I am nothing in compariſon of them. Whatever advantages they had of me, I notice not, neither does God judge of men according to theſe external things. I am an apoſtle now as well as they, and preach the goſpel as well as they. I do not deny but they have theſe advantages of me: but that is nothing to the matter in hand; their having them makes not my office nor my doctrine leſs divine than theirs: for in conference about our calls and doctrine they added nothing to me; they found no error to correct, nor defect in my doctrine or call to make up. Ver. 7. But indeed they were ſo far from adding any thing to me, that they forthwith gave me the right hand of fellowſhip, when they ſaw, by undoubted evidence, that God had committed to me the diſpenſation of the goſpel (as a rich treaſure) unto the Gentiles, even as he had committed unto Peter the diſpenſing of the goſpel unto the Jews. Ver. 8. This they clearly underſtood from this, that the ſame God who had given his aſſiſtance to Peter, and had made uſe of him as a bleſſed inſtrument in his hand to the converſion of the Jews, by his overcoming grace, had done no leſs by me towards the Gentiles, whoſe converſion they looked upon as a ſeal of my apoſtleſhip. Ver. 9. And when James, Peter, and John, who were reputed the upholders of the church, under God, perceived the gifts, ordinary and extraordinary, wherewith God had fitted me for the apoſtolic office; when (I ſay) they ſaw my call to the work, and my gifts fitting me for it, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowſhip, ſhaking hands with us in token of our agreement in doctrine, and amicably dividing of our charges for carrying on the work of our common Maſter; that they might go on to preach (for ordinary) to the Jews, and we to the Gentiles.

10. Only they would that we ſhould remember the poor; the ſame which I alſo was forward to do.

Ver. 10. Only they deſired Barnabas and me, to make a collection through the Gentile churches, for the relief of the poor Jews who were turned Chriſtians; which I did *(εσπουδασα)* with all diligent ſtudy to make effectual.

11. But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withſtood him to the face, becauſe he was to be blamed.

Ver. 11. But when Peter, ſome time after this conference, was come to Antioch, where was a church of the Gentiles uſing their Chriſtian liberty, I freely and boldly to his face oppoſed him, becauſe he was indeed blame-worthy.

12. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come, he withdrew, and ſeparated himſelf, fearing them which were of the circumciſion.

Ver. 12. For he did make uſe of his Chriſtian liberty, freely eating with the Chriſtian Gentiles, having no regard to the difference of meats, nor of Jews and Gentiles, eſtabliſhed by the ceremonial law; this liberty (I ſay) he uſed all the time he was in Antioch, before the coming down of certain Jews from Jeruſalem, where James had his ordinary reſidence; which Jews were zealous for the obſerving of the ceremonial law; but when they came, Peter withdrew from the Gentile and uncircumciſed Chriſtians, would not keep up fellowſhip with them, but ſet up a ſeparate meeting from the uncircumciſed Chriſtians; to which offenſive courſe he was led, by a prepoſterous fear of thoſe bigotted Jews, leſt they ſhould have been offended by his liberty.

13. And the other Jews diſſembled likewiſe with him; inſomuch that Barnabas alſo was carried away with their diſſimulation.

Ver. 13. This was great diſſimulation in Peter, to aſſert, by his practice, the neceſſity of obſerving the ceremonial law; which he knew notwithſtanding, by divine revelation, was now of no force, Acts x. and xi.; and the other Jews, who had before uſed Chriſtian liberty, they fell into the ſame diſſimulation: and ſuch was the ſpeat at that time, that even Barnabas himſelf was not able to withſtand his and their example, but he diſſembled alſo, withdrawing and ſeparating himſelf.

14. But when I ſaw that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the goſpel, I ſaid unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, liveſt after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compelleſt thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

15. We who are Jews by nature, and not ſinners of the Gentiles,

16. Knowing that a man is not juſtified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jeſus Chriſt, even we have believed in Jeſus Chriſt; that we might be juſtified by the faith of Chriſt, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law ſhall no fleſh be juſtified.

Ver. 14. But when I ſaw their practice crooked, and contrary to the doctrine of the goſpel in this point, I ſaid unto Peter before all the reſt carried off by his bad example, Seeing thou thyſelf, though a Jew, and ſo bound, if any were, to obſerve the ceremonial law, yet doſt not obſerve it, but for ordinary liveſt after the manner of the Gentiles, making no difference of meats clean or unclean, as appears by thy former practice in this place; how canſt thou force upon the necks of the Gentiles that yoke which thou thyſelf haſt caſt off, by your ſeparating from the Gentiles on this account, thereby obliging them either to embrace the ceremonial law, or elſe to be deprived of fellowſhip with you and your adherents? ver. 15. And now, (to fall upon the main point,) ye may obſerve, O Galatians, from the hiſtory of Peter's carriage, particularly before theſe zealots came from Jeruſalem, and from my reproving him, and his not defending of the fact, that we who are born Jews, and not of the profane nations without God's covenant, we to whom the ceremonial and judicial laws were given particularly, and who received the decalogue upon mount Sinai, that we, (I ſay,) ver. 16. being perſuaded in our conſciences, that no man circumciſed or uncircumciſed, is declared or reputed righteous before God, upon the account of his own works, done in obedience to the law of God ceremonial, judicial, or moral, but by faith in Chriſt, receiving him and his righteouſneſs; even we (who (if any) might have purſued a law-righteouſneſs) have renounced our own works for juſtification, and have, by faith, betaken ourſelves to Chriſt for a righteouſneſs, that ſo we might be juſtified by faith in Chriſt, and not by works: and with what confidence then can the Gentiles ſeek righteouſneſs by the works of the law, a great part of which was deſigned only for us Jews? Now, that we have done ſo, ye ſee is plain; and that we might and ought to have done ſo, and you alſo, is plain from the Old Teſtament, which teſtifies, that by the works of the law no man, Jew or Gentile, can be juſtified before God, Pſal. cxliii. 2.

2. That juſtification is not by works, but by faith. Arg. 1. v. 15. 16.

17. But if while we ſeek to be juſtified by Chriſt, we ourſelves alſo are found ſinners, is therefore Chriſt the miniſter of ſin? God forbid.

Verſ. 17. Ye will readily object, That our doctrine has little advantage by what I have narrated of Peter and others, their obſerving the ceremonial law over the belly of their light; it ſeems they have learned that art of groſs diſſimulation at the ſchool of your goſpel. But I ſay, what though we ourſelves have been found *(eurethemen)* ſinners and groſs diſſemblers, (we, I ſay, that know our freedom from the law, and that there is no juſtification by the law,) even then while we were ſeeking juſtification by Chriſt? does it therefore follow, that the doctrine of the goſpel burying the ceremonial law, teaches men to ſin? God forbid.

18. For if I build again the things which I deſtroyed, I make myſelf a tranſgreſſor.

19. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

Verſ. 18. For if I, or Peter, or any man, do by our practice build up again the ſin which we have deſtroyed by our doctrine, and practice conform thereunto; in that caſe we ourſelves, or (to hold out this ſuppoſition in my own perſon) I am the tranſgreſſor who ſhould be blamed, and not the goſpel which I preach. This is clear, if ye conſider, ver. 19. that the goſpel natively tends to my leading a holy life, and the goſpel is not to be blamed for my ſinful ſlips; for I am now dead to the law, and look upon the relation betwixt it and me as ceaſed; not that I may live as I liſt, but that I may live to God in the duties of obedience and thankfulneſs to God; and this is what the goſpel teacheth me: and to this actual death to the law, I was brought by the law itſelf, which proved ſuch a rigorous huſband to my conſcience, that it would be ſatisfied with nothing I could do; which neceſſitated me to give over thoughts of ever pleaſing it, and ſo to betake myſelf to my new huſband Chriſt.

20. I am crucified with Chriſt: nevertheleſs I live; yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.

Verſ. 20. Yet have I done the law no injury, but am dead to it in point of right: for by faith I am crucified in the perſon of Chriſt my head and repreſentative; ſo that the law having got all it could demand, it has no more to crave of me than it has of Chriſt. But notwithſtanding of this crucifixion I am alive, I live to God. But no thanks to me for this life; I have it not but becauſe of my union with Chriſt, who is the ſoul of my ſoul, and the vital principle in me: and that life of ſanctification which I now live while I am in this mortal body, I live by faith in the Son of God; by which I draw vital influences from him the fountain of life, who loved me with an everlaſting love, and from that undeſerved love was pleaſed to give himſelf to the death for me, that by his dying I might live.

21. I do not fruſtrate the grace of God: for if righteouſneſs come by the law, then Chriſt is dead in vain.

Verſ. 21. I think this was wonderful love; and I do therefore endeavour to make a ſuitable return, lippening my ſalvation to the death of Chriſt, and to that only, and ſo I do not render God's grace in ſending Chriſt to die for me, in vain. If I ſhould do otherwiſe, I ſhould make it a vain needleſs thing: for if our righteouſneſs be by our works, for what end did Chriſt die for us?

Arg. 2.

C H A P. III.

O Fooliſh Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you ſhould not obey the truth, before whoſe eyes Jeſus Chriſt hath been evidently ſet forth, crucified among you?

O Fooliſh Galatians, what deviliſh artiſt has deluded your ſpiritual ſenſes, and caſt miſt before your eyes, to dazzle them, and make things appear which you do not indeed ſee, ſo that you do not obey the commanding light of the truth of the goſpel? In which ye are moſt inexcuſable, ſeeing by my miniſtry the doctrine of Chriſt was as evidently preached to you, as if the myſtery of Chriſt had been painted on a board before your eyes, and he had been crucified again amongſt you.

A ſharp reproof.

2. This only would I learn you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

3. Are ye ſo fooliſh? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the fleſh?

4. Have ye ſuffered ſo many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.

Verſ. 2. Ye are very fond of the doctrine of juſtification by works; but pray you tell me this one thing, Ye have received the Spirit of God to dwell Arg. 3. in you as the principle of ſaving grace and miraculous operations, according to the promiſe thereof in the prophets; but whether did you receive this Spirit by the doctrine continually buzzing in your ears the works of the law, or by the doctrine of faith in Chriſt which ye heard? Your own conſciences will tell you, it was the latter, not the former way; and is it poſſible that doctrine ſhould be falſe by which God communicated to you his Spirit? ver. 3. Wonderful folly! when ye firſt embraced Chriſtianity, ye received the Spirit of God, which, as a ſeal of the truth of that doctrine ye heard, taught you to look for juſtification by faith alone; ſo that it muſt be indwelling corruption that ſets up for another way; and what more unworthy of a wiſe man, than to think the Spirit began the work, but corruption muſt give it the finiſhing ſtroke, and teach you a doctrine better, though contrary to that which the Spirit ſealed? Ver. 4. I know ye ſuffered many hard things for adhering to the goſpel-doctrine, eſpecially by the Jews, whoſe rage was kindled to raiſe perſecution againſt the Chriſtians, becauſe they thought the goſpel was deſtructive of the law; and have ye ſuffered all theſe things in vain, ſo as to loſe the reward by your after diſowning of the truth ye ſuffered for? Shall I ſay ye have ſuffered in vain? I would fain hope yet it will be otherwiſe, by your taking up again the ſame cauſe ye ſuffered for before.

5. He therefore that miniſtereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

6. Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteouſneſs.

Ver. 5. Ye did receive the Spirit at firſt among you by means of the doctrine of evangelical righteouſneſs; I will aſk you then another queſtion, Some among you do receive the Spirit at this day, and there are yet miracles wrought among you; now, what ſort of teachers is it whoſe miniſtry God thus ſeals by conveying ſaving grace into the hearts of the hearers, and by miracles? Is it they who preach juſtification by works, or thoſe that preach juſtification by faith? Ye cannot but acknowledge it is the latter, not the former ſort. Truly ſaving benefits are communicated to none any other way than they were before; they are received by faith ſtill: Arg. 4. ver. 6. Even as Abraham received, who believed God in that promiſe, (ver. 8.) and that was reckoned for righteouſneſs to him; not faith in itſelf, which with other works is alſo excluded, but that righteouſneſs of Chriſt which Abraham's faith did lay hold upon, was reckoned by the Lord for his righteouſneſs.

7. Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith, the ſame are the children of Abraham.

Ver. 7. I would have you know, then, that ſeeing Abraham was juſtified by faith, thoſe that ſeek juſtification by faith, they are the ſpiritual children of Abraham, heirs with him of the ſame ſpiritual inheritance, though they be Gentiles, and none of his natural ſeed.

8. And the ſcripture foreſeeing that God would juſtify the Heathen through faith, preached before the goſpel unto Abraham, ſaying, In thee ſhall all nations be bleſſed.

Ver. 8. And this will plainly appear, if it be conſidered, that the Spirit of God who ſpeaks in the ſcriptures, ſaw long before it was accompliſhed, that God would juſtify the Heathen by faith; and therefore long ago he preached to Abraham the ſame goſpel we now preach, which was holden forth in this promiſe, viz. That all nations, Jews and Gentiles, ſhould be bleſſed in him, in ſo far as of him ſhould come that bleſſed ſeed Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhould purchaſe all bleſſings to be beſtowed on them, and not leave them to be procured to them by their own works.

9. So then they which be of faith, are bleſſed with faithful Abraham.

Ver. 9. So then it follows, that they which ſeek juſtification by faith, are bleſſed with the ſame bleſſings as believing Abraham, and ſo are his children and no other.

10. For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curſe: for it is written, Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

Ver. 10. For as many as adhere to the law, ſeeking to be thereby juſtified, they are under God's curſe, and ſo have no ſhare in Abraham's Arg. 5. bleſſing. That they are under the curſe, the ſcripture teaches, where it is written, That every one who gives not perfect and perpetual uninterrupted obedience to the law, is under the curſe, being by the ſame law devoted to deſtruction. So we ſee that all men adhering to the law for juſtification, are curſed by the law.

11. But that no man is juſtified by the law in the ſight of God, it is evident: for, The juſt ſhall live by faith.

Ver. 11. But that no man is juſtified by the law before God, (however their works may juſtify them before men,) is evident from that of the Arg. 6. prophet Habakkuk, He that is juſt by faith, even he ſhall live a live a life of juſtification, ſanctification, and comfort, and that for ever; he ſhall never loſe it.

12. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doth them ſhall live in them.

Ver. 12. But the law does not hold forth juſtification or life by faith, but by works; for thus ſpeaks the law, The man that doth thoſe things which the law commandeth him to do, he ſhall live by virtue of his works; and this no man can do, and therefore no man can be juſtified by the law: nor is law-righteouſneſs the righteouſneſs pointed at by the prophet as the righteouſneſs which will give life.

13. Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us: for it is written, Curſed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

14. That the bleſſing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jeſus Chriſt; that we might receive the promiſe of the Spirit through faith.

Ver. 13. Perhaps ye will ſay, That if the law be ſo rigorous, as we pretend, that it will Obj. 1. not juſtify a man but him that fulfils it every way perfectly, and curſes others, we ourſelves muſt be curſed too, or elſe the law's threatening is made void. I anſwer, That Chriſt has freed us from the curſe of the law; and that not by making it void, but by his bearing the curſe that the law denounced againſt us. And that Chriſt did bear the curſe, is evident from his curſed death which he died, being hanged on the tree of the croſs; which kind of death had, by the great Law-giver, a ceremonial curſe annexed thereto; and all the ceremonies having a reſpect to Chriſt, the curſe fell on him in the greateſt reality, which lay but typically on malefactors, that were hanged on a tree, verſ. 14. And Chriſt bare the curſe of the law, to the end that the ſame bleſſings which were entailed on Abraham, the father of the faithful, by promiſe, might be given to the Gentiles through Chriſt, coming into the world, dying and by his death taking down the partition wall, and making Jew and Gentile all one, according to the promiſe, 'In thee ſhall all nations be bleſſed.' And further, he bare the curſe, that we, both Jews and Gentiles, might receive the Spirit, comp. verſ. 2. which was promiſed to be poured out in goſpel days in larger meaſure than ever before; that we might, I ſay, receive the Spirit through faith, not by the works of the law.

15. Brethren, I ſpeak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man diſannulleth, or addeth thereto.

Obj. 2.

Verſ. 15. Brethren, I will borrow a ſimilitude from human affairs, to let you ſee that the giving of the law by Moſes did not bring in a new way of juſtification, different from that of the promiſe made to Abraham, or covenant of grace. Though a covenant be made only between man and man; yet if it be confirmed by oath of parties, or other uſual ways of confirmation, neither of the parties can juſtly make that covenant void, nor add any clauſe thereto deſtructive of the former.

16. Now to Abraham and his ſeed were the promiſes made. He ſaith not, And to ſeeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy ſeed, which is Chriſt.

Verſ. 16. Now the promiſes of the inheritance, &c. were made of God to Abraham and to his ſeed. God making theſe promiſes, ſaith not, And to Abraham's ſeeds, as if the promiſe had reſpect to ſeveral ſorts of Abraham's ſeed, ſome to be juſtified one way, ſome another way: but as including all his children together in one, he ſaith, To thy ſeed, which is Chriſt myſtical, believing Jews and Gentiles gathered together into one body, making up Abraham's one ſeed; to which the promiſes are made, as well as to Abraham himſelf.

17. And this I ſay, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Chriſt, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after cannot diſannul, that it ſhould make the promiſe of none effect.

18. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promiſe; but God gave it to Abraham by promiſe.

Verſ. 17. This then I ſay, for application of that known maxim in human affairs to the buſineſs in hand, That ſeeing the covenant of grace, or thoſe abſolute promiſes, verſ. 16. made to Abraham and to his one ſpiritual ſeed, before the giving of the law confirmed and made ſure by the oath of God to Chriſt myſtical, that one ſeed; the law of Moſes, which was given four hundred and thirty years after the promiſes above ſaid, cannot make void the covenant, ſo as to render the abſolute promiſe of righteouſneſs and life of none effect, and to no purpoſe; it never being fulfilled, but a new way introduced, viz. by the law, which would undoubtedly make the promiſe uſeleſs: verſ. 18. Becauſe if the inheritance of glory, typified by the inheritance of Canaan, be by the law, it is not by that abſolute promiſe, for theſe are inconſiſtent. But ſure it is, for God gave the inheritance to Abraham by virtue of that promiſe, and therefore it was not by the law.

19. Wherefore then ſerveth the law? It was added becauſe of tranſgreſſions, till the ſeed ſhould come, to whom the promiſe was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a Mediator.

20. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one; but God is one.

Obj. 3.

3. That Moſes's law, particularly the ceremonial is abrogated.

Verſ. 19. Ye will ſay, For what end was Moſes's law given then, if it was not that we might get life by it? I anſwer, That, purely with reſpect to the Iſraelites, to diſcover their tranſgreſſions to them, Moſes's law was adjoined to the promiſe made to the one ſeed, not as a part of the covenant, but as a thing extrinſical to it, yet ſubſervient thereto; which was only to remain adjoined to the covenant or promiſe till ſuch time as the one ſeed ſhould come, Jews and Gentiles being gathered together into one body, and one ſpiritual ſeed by Chriſt; to which one ſeed the promiſes were made, as I have before ſhewed. And that Moſes's law was thus, and no other way added to the promiſe, appears from its being ordained and given by the miniſtry of angels. Moſes ſerving as mediator betwixt God and the people in the giving of the law. Verſ. 20. But ſo it is, that this Mediator of the law, to wit, Moſes, is not the Mediator of the one ſeed, to which the promiſe was made; and yet God is the covenanted God of the one ſeed, he being that one God of all, in whom both believing Jews and Gentiles have a common intereſt, as making up the one ſeed of Abraham, to which he promiſed to be a God, ſaying, *I will be thy God and the God of thy ſeed.* Therefore it clearly follows, that Moſes's law had reſpect to no other but the Iſraelites, and that only a temporary reſpect, even to them; and that God is the covenanted God of believing Jews and Gentiles, Moſes's law being entirely laid aſide, having already ſerved out its time.

Rom. iv. 16.

21. Is the law then againſt the promiſes of God? God forbid; for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteouſneſs ſhould have been by the law.

22. But the ſcripture hath concluded all under ſin, that the promiſe by faith of Jeſus Chriſt might be given to them that believe.

Verſ 21. But ye will object, If God be the covenanted God of Abraham's one ſeed, but Moſes not the mediator of that one ſeed, the law will be contrary to the promiſe, ſeeing the law promiſes life only to works, and yet God will be a God to people without any reſpect to works. I anſwer, That were a blaſphemous aſſertion to ſay, The law is contrary to the promiſes, for that would make God inconſiſtent with himſelf: but the law was given for no ſuch end as to give life to ſinners; for if that law had been given by Moſes, as a law able to give life to ſinners, truly then righteouſneſs had been by the law. verſ. 22. But that written law of Moſes, is ſo far from giving righteouſneſs, that upon the contrary, it hath, by its rigorous commands, and ceremonial rites, concluded in a priſon, our perſons, thoughts words, actions, in a word, *ta panta Gr.* our all under ſins. It has irrefragably demonſtrated all to be ſinful, to the end that the righteouſneſs and life promiſed in the abſolute covenant, might be given to them that believe, they receiving the ſame by faith. So that the law of Moſes was notably ſubſervient to the promiſe, and not contrary to it.

23. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, ſhut up unto the faith, which ſhould afterwards be revealed.

Ver. 23. But before the doctrine of faith in Jeſus Chriſt was revealed clearly in the goſpel, being ſevered from thoſe things wherewith it was inveloped under the legal diſpenſation, we Jews were kept, as by a guard, under the laws of Moſes, and ſhut up, as in a priſon, by the commands and threatenings of the moral law and by the rites of the ceremonial law, which ſtill held guilt and death before our eyes; that the revelation of the doctrine of faith, which was clearly to be propoſed in the goſpel, might be as welcome to us, as the opening of priſon-doors to poor priſoners.

24. Wherefore the law was our Schoolmaſter to bring us unto Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by faith.

Ver. 24. Whence it follows, that the law of Moſes ſerved the church in its infant-ſtate, as a ſchool-maſter to teach us the need we had of Chriſt, and ſo to bring us to him, that we might be juſtified by faith in him.

25. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a ſchoolmaſter.

26. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Chriſt Jeſus.

Ver. 25. But now ſeeing the clear revelation of the doctrine of faith is made in the goſpel, we are no more under that ſchoolmaſter. ver. 26. For all of you, whether Jews or Gentiles, believing in Chriſt, are now ſons of God, come to age, having the clear knowledge of the myſtery of Chriſt by the goſpel, and ſo not ſtanding in need of that legal pedagogue: ye hear and know that Chriſt was crucified, &c. ſo that ye need not ſacrifices to hold forth the death of the Meſſias to you, &c. And ye are ſons of God, and that ſons come to age, by reaſon of your faith in Chriſt Jeſus, who is already come; your faith having the pre-eminency of the faith of the ſaints under the legal diſpenſation; that whereas the object of their faith was Chriſt who was to come, the object of yours is Chriſt come already.

27. For as many of you as have been baptized into Chriſt, have put on Chriſt.

Verſ. 27. Ye need not doubt your ſonſhip, becauſe of the want of circumciſion: for baptiſm has come in to its room: and as many of you as have been baptized (I ſpeak of you according to the judgment of charity, none of you having been baptized by the miniſters of Chriſt, but ſuch as made a credible profeſſion of ſaving faith:) as many of you, I ſay, as have been baptized in token of your ingrafting to Chriſt, are united to Chriſt the Son of God; of the which union your baptiſm is a ſeal.

28. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Chriſt Jeſus.

Ver. 28. The one ſeed is now come, the partition-wall is taken down; though before it was otherwiſe, yet now it is no matter whether ye be Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, male or female. The believing Gentile, without any more ado, has as great privileges as the Jews. And though bond-ſervants and women were reſtrained from the enjoyment of ſome privileges under the Old Teſtament, which free perſons and men were admitted to, (Lev. xxii. 10. Gen xvii. 10.) it is not ſo now; women are baptized, though they were not circumciſed; bond-men may eat of the goſpel holy things, and freely partake as well as the free, though they were debarred from eating of the holy thing under the law: for why? ye are now all one body and one ſpiritual ſeed, made one in Chriſt, to whom all of you are joined by faith.

29. And if ye be Chriſt's, then are ye Abraham's ſeed, and heirs according to the promiſe.

Ver. 29. Now, ſeeing ye are Chriſt's, which intereſt of his in you is ſealed by baptiſm, ye are the ſpiritual children of Abraham; yea, all of you together are that one ſeed of his to which the promiſes were made, and ſo ye are heirs of the heavenly inheritance, according to the promiſe thereof made to you as Abraham's ſeed, without any reſpect to the law.

CHAP. IV.

NOW I ſay, that the heir as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a ſervant, though he be lord of all;

2. But is under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the father.

NOW, for the further clearing of the abrogation of the law, this I ſay, that the heir (in human affairs,) as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a ſervant, in reſpect of liberty, and actual poſſeſſion of the inheritance, though in the mean time he is lord of all his father's inheritance, in reſpect of right and title thereto. ver. 2. But he is ſtill under the government of tutors and curators, until the time come that his father, in his will or teſtament, has ſet forth his liberty, and entering to the actual poſſeſſion of his inheritance.

3. Even ſo we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:

4. But when the fulneſs of the time was come, God ſent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law,

5. To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of ſons.

Ver. 3. Even ſo we, the church of God, while we were in our minority, under the Old Teſtament, though heirs, yet, as ſervants, were in bondage, and that under the grievous yoke of ceremonies and carnal rites, whereby we were rudely inſtructed, even by corporal things, as figures of ſpiritual things. ver. 4. But when the time ſet by our heavenly Father was fully come, God ſent forth his Son Chriſt, being without father as man, but made by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, of the ſubſtance of the Virgin Mary; being alſo, though Lord of the law, yet, in our ſtead, made ſubject to the law, or covenant of works, its threatenings and commands; whereof the ceremonial law, to the Iſraelites, made up a conſiderable part. ver. 5. And Chriſt was thus made under the law, that they that were under the law might be delivered from it; that all that ſhould believe, might be freed from the commands of the law of works, as the condition of life, and from the threatenings of the law upon their diſobedience; and the Jews who were under the ceremonial law, might be delivered from that yoke of ceremonies, Chriſt the ſubſtance of them being come: and that we, both Jews and Gentiles, believing in Chriſt, might receive a more clear maniſeſtation of our ſonſhip to God under the New Teſtament diſpenſation; even as the heir, when he becomes major, and actually enters to the poſſeſſion of his inheritance, appears no more in the condition of a ſervant, but a ſon.

6. And becauſe ye are ſons, God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father.

Ver. 6. And becauſe ye are now ſons come to age, God has ſent forth in a more plentiful meaſure his own Spirit into your hearts; whereby ye have a more ready acceſs to God, and familiarity with him, whether ye be Jews or Gentiles, than believers under the Old Teſtament had; there being as great a difference betwixt your and their acceſs to and familiarity with God, as between that which the heir, being a child, has with his father, while he is under the rod, and that which he hath, being a man, come to years.

7. Wherefore thou art no more a ſervant, but a ſon; and if a ſon, then an heir of God through Chriſt.

Verſ. 7. Wherefore, ſeeing ye have received this plentiful effuſion of the Spirit of adoption, ye are no more as ſervants, as the child under age is; but ye are ſons, paſt your minority; and if ſons, then heirs of God himſelf as your inheritance; to which privilege you are advanced through Chriſt, to whom by faith ye are united. From all which it is evident, that your cleaving to the ceremonial law is as unreaſonable, as if you, being come to years, ſhould return to the ſtate you were in while in your non-age.

8. Howbeit, then when ye knew not God, ye did ſervice unto them which by nature are no gods.

4. He ſets himſelf to work on their affections.

Verſ. 8. Howbeit, then when ye knew not the true God, ye ſerved idols, which are gods only in mens opinion, and not by their own nature; and ye were neither born nor bred up under the ceremonial law, but in Pagan idolatry, ſo far were ye from ſonſhip to God, which ye are now advanced to.

9. But now after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye deſire again to be in bondage?

10. Ye obſerve days, and months, and times, and years.

11. I am afraid of you, leſt I have beſtowed upon you labour in vain.

Verſ. 9. But now ſeeing ye know the true God, or rather are known of God, the acquaintance being entirely due to God's free grace, what a return is this ye make to God for his kindneſs, to return again to ceremonial obſervances, which are ſuch as can neither juſtify you, nor afford true conſolation, but in theſe reſpects are weak, yea and beggarly, as a coffer from which the jewel is gone, Chriſt being now come, and therefore no more to be ſeen in them; to which nevertheleſs ye will needs again be in bondage? verſ. 10. I ſpeak not of this your foul retreat without ground; for ye do obſerve days after the Jewiſh manner, viz. their ſabbaths and new moons, their months, as the firſt and ſeventh anniverſary feaſts, and ſabbatical years. verſ. 11. Upon which account I am afraid my labour among you may be in vain: for what will it profit to return from Paganiſm to Judaiſm?

12. Brethren, I beſeech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.

Verſ. 12. Brethren, I beſeech you, let me have room in your affections; for I aſſure you, that ye have a place in my heart as my other ſelf; and while I ſo ſharply reprove you, I perſuade you I am not reſenting any perſonal injury, but the injury ye are doing to Chriſt and his truths.

13. Ye know how through infirmity of the fleſh, I preached the goſpel unto you at the firſt.

14. And my temptation which was in my fleſh, ye deſpiſed not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Chriſt Jeſus.

Verſ. 13. Ye know how that, at the firſt when the goſpel came to you, I preached it to you, being in a contemptible outward condition by reaſon of the afflictions I endured in the work. verſ. 14. And that trial of mine wherewith God was pleaſed to try me, in reſpect of my various bodily afflictions and perſecutions, ye did not haughtily overlook and deſpiſe, nor did ye reject me and my miniſtry for them; but, upon the contrary, ye received me as a meſſenger of God, yea, as Chriſt himſelf, looking upon me as his ambaſſador, as knowing Chriſt ſpoke to you by my mouth.

15. Where is then the bleſſedneſs you ſpake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been poſſible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes and have given them to me.

16. Am I therefore become your enemy, becauſe I tell you the truth?

Verſ. 15. But where is that happineſs ye thought ye had in my miniſtry, where is it now; I am ſure the the time was ye thought yourſelves very happy in me; for I can bear witneſs, that ſometime your reſpect to me was ſo great, that you would have parted with any thing ye had for my encouragement. Verſ. 16. Ye looked on me then as your great friend; but now will ye look upon me as your enemy, becauſe I tell you that which is truth; ye ſhould herein be very injurious to me; for my telling you the truth, is an argument of my laſting affection towards you.

17. They zealouſly affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that you might affect them.

18. But it is good to be zealouſly affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am preſent with you.

Verſ. 17. The legal teachers among you have a great deal of zeal for you indeed, but it is not of the right ſtamp; yea, they would exclude you out of my affections, that ye might be zealous for them and their doctrine. verſ. 18. But I would put you in mind, that as ye have been zealous for my doctrine before, ſo it is good to be conſtant in your zeal for ſuch a good thing; and it is not good, but very bad, to have been zealous for it only when I was perſonally preſent with you.

19. My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, untill Chriſt be formed in you.

20. I deſire to be preſent with you now, and to change my voice, for I ſtand in doubt of you.

Verſ. 19. O Galatians, whom I love as my little children, for whoſe converſion I laboured at firſt, as a woman laboureth to bring forth a child, and of whom I am as it were travailing in birth again, untill the image of Chriſt, defaced by error in you, be reſtored to its former luſtre; verſ. 20. I would fain be preſent with you, to ſpeak with you, face to face, and to accommodate my ſpeech more cloſely to your preſent caſe; for being abſent, I am in ſeveral doubts about your caſe; which might be cleared by converſe with you.

21. Tell me, ye that deſire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?

22. For it is written, that Abraham had two ſons; the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free-woman.

23. But he who was of the bond-woman, was born after the fleſh; but he of the free woman, was by promiſe.

Verſ. 21. Ye that deſire to be under Moſes's law, tell me, Do ye not hear Moſes's law? This of itſelf might convince you of your error. verſ. 22. For it is written in the book of Geneſis, that Abraham had two ſons, Iſhmael by Hagar a bond-maid, and Iſaac by Sarah a free-woman. verſ. 23. But there was a difference in their nativity: for Iſhmael was born according to the courſe of nature, of a young woman fit naturally for conception; but Iſaac was born by virtue of a ſpecial promiſe, Gen. xviii. 10. his mother being barren, and alſo paſt the age of child bearing.

6. He illuſtrateth the whole former diſpute by the typical hiſtory of Abraham's family.

24. Which things are an allegory; for theſe are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.

25. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and anſwereth to Jeruſalem which now is and is in bondage with her children.

Ver. 24. Which things are a typical hiſtory: for theſe two women repreſent the two covenants, with the churches thereto adhering reſpectively; the one from mount Sinai, to wit, the covenant of works, which was given there, and where the Jewiſh ſynagogue, under that covenant, had its beginning: this bringeth forth children indeed, but ſuch children as are mere mercenary worſhippers, and under the bondage of that covenant, its curſes and commands; and this is that repreſented by Agar the bond-woman, and that very conveniently. ver. 25. (*Gr. To gar Agar, Sina oros eſtin en te Arabia*, &c.) For as to that allegorical Agar, the mountain Sinai is in Arabia, where lived Agar and her ſon; and the ſame Sinai anſwers well to the earthly Jeruſalem, the new Jewiſh ſynagogue, nothing being heard from either of them, but *Do and live:* but Sinai ſtill but ſerves with the legaliſts her children, Sinai and her covenant, becauſe it was never deſigned but to be ſubſervient to the covenant of grace, as Hagar to Sarah; her children, the legaliſts, following the ſtate of the *venter*, *i. e.* the womb from whence they came, are but in the ſtate of bond-ſervants; not in the ſtate of ſons and heirs, more than Iſhmael had Iſaac's privilege.

26. But Jeruſalem which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all.

27. For it is written, Rejoice thou barren, that beareſt not; break forth and cry, thou that travaileſt not: for the deſolate hath many more children than ſhe which hath an huſband.

Ver. 26. But the other covenant, the covenant of grace, with the church adhering thereto, to wit, the church of believers in Chriſt, which is the heavenly Jeruſalem, enjoying the reality of all the typical external privileges which the earthly Jeruſalem had, which covenant and church is the mother of us all, Jews or Gentiles, that believe in Chriſt, even ſhe is free; the covenant is ſerved, but ſerves not as Sarah: the church is miſtreſs of the family, being Chriſt's ſpouſe; and her children ſons and heirs, as Sarah and her Iſaac. ver. 27. I ſay, the Chriſtian church is that free mother of us all; for Iſaiah in his 54th chap. ver. 1. with an eye to that typical hiſtory of Hagar and Sarah in Abraham's family, after he had ſpoke of the ſufferings of Chriſt, immediately addreſſeth himſelf to her, as ſhe was in her very firſt days before the preaching of the goſpel by the apoſtle, ſaying, Rejoice thou that, as Sarah, art yet barren, thy children making no figure in compariſon of the ſynagogue, break forth over all thy diſcouragements, and cry for joy, though thou travaileſt not yet to bring forth children, as thou ſhalt do ere long by the preaching of the apoſtles, after the effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt on them: for though thou ſeem deſolate as a widow, thy huſband being yet in his ſtate of humiliation, and ſo very little known, thou ſhalt have many more children, even ſuch as ſhall join themſelves to thee as members, than the Jewiſh ſynagogue, which only ſeems to have God for her huſband. This ſhall be as ſure to thee, as if thou hadſt all theſe children about thy hand already.

28. Now we, brethren, as Iſaac was, are the children of promiſe.

Ver. 28. Now, brethren, to apply the whole unto us, ye ſee, we who adhere to the covenant of grace are ſuch children as Iſaac, even children of promiſe; born unto God by virtue of the abſolute promiſe; not by the ſtrength of nature, or by our own works.

29. But as then he that was born after the fleſh perſecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even ſo it is now.

30. Nevertheleſs, what ſaith the ſcripture? Caſt out the bond-woman and her ſon; for the ſon of the bond-woman ſhall not be heir with the ſon of the free-woman.

Ver. 29. But as then Iſhmael perſecuted Iſaac, ſo now the legaliſts, children of the covenant of works, perſecute the children of the covenant of grace. ver. 30. Nevertheleſs, what ſaith the ſcripture? even, Caſt out Hagar and Iſhmael, for he ſhall not be heir with Iſaac. The ſame ſentence is paſſed againſt the Jewiſh ſynagogue, and all that adhere to the covenant of works; they ſhall be rejected and caſt out of the ſociety of ſaints, for they ſhall never partake of the heavenly inheritance with thoſe that believe in Chriſt.

31. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free.

Ver. 31. Therefore, ſeeing we are children of promiſe, as Iſaac, we are not under the legal covenant, but the covenant of grace, and ſo are free: and therefore have nothing to do with the law.

CHAP. V.

STAND faſt therefore in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

2. Behold, I Paul ſay unto you, that if ye be circumciſed, Chriſt ſhall profit you nothing.

3. For I teſtify again to every man that is

circumciſed, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

FROM the whole of that I have ſaid, I exhort you to ſtand faſt in the liberty purchaſed to us by Chriſt, as ſtout ſoldiers keeping their ground where the captain has ſet them; and let no man wreathe that ſervile yoke of the legal covenant about your necks again. And to preſs you to this, ver. 2. Behold, (in oppoſition to all that the ſeducers among you ſay for it,) I Paul, an apoſtle of Chriſt, ſay, that if the Gentiles ſhall be circumciſed, looking on that rite as neceſſary to your juſtification, ye ſhall have no benefit by Chriſt. ver. 3. For I, as Chriſt's meſſenger, do further teſtify to every man who is circumciſed, laying any ſtreſs on it for his juſtification, that by his very receiving of circumciſion under that notion, he is obliged perfectly to obey the whole law, under pain of the curſe; which is inevitable to him, in regard no man is able ſo to obey it. He is, I ſay, thereby obliged to give ſuch obedience; in regard whatever evangelical uſe circumciſion had to believers, yet it is to him the ſacrament of the legal covenant, binding him to the obſervance of the ſame covenant, according to the tenor of it, which promiſes life to perfect obedience, and otherwiſe denounceth the curſe.

4. Chriſt is become of no effect unto you, whoſoever of you are juſtified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

5. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteouſneſs by faith.

6. For in Chriſt Jeſus, neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but faith which worketh by love.

Verſ. 4. Whoever of you ſeek to be juſtified by the law, can have no benefit by Chriſt; for by your ſeeking juſtification by the law, ye renounce and fall from the free favour of God as the fountain of juſtification, and ſo ye renounce Chriſt alſo, and therefore muſt ſtand and fall according to your works. verſ. 5. Ye that do ſo, are certainly fallen from grace; for we that ſtand cleaving to it, look for no good by our works, or by the law; but through the Spirit of God working in us, we look for, and expect heaven, which is given only to the perfectly righteous; we expect it I ſay by faith only. verſ. 6. And this we do, becauſe we know, that, in the kingdom of Chriſt, neither circumciſion nor uncircumciſion availeth ought to juſtification, and a right to glory, (whatever circumciſion may avail for in the law's dominions, or whatever ſtreſs that way fooliſh Gentiles may lay upon their uncircumciſion;) nothing avails here for theſe ends but faith; not that which is dead and idle, but that faith which is operative. So that ye need not fear want of work by caſting off of the legal covenant; if ye have faith of the right ſtamp, even that which is juſtifying, it will put you to work good works; and that not from a mercenary principle, fear of puniſhment, and hope of reward, as thoſe that live under the influence of the legal covenant; but out of a principle of love becoming ſons.

7. Ye did run well, who did hinder you, that ye ſhould not obey the truth?

8. This perſuaſion cometh not of him that calleth you.

9. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

Verſ. 7. Time was when you did forwardly embrace and cleave to my doctrine, ſo that you was making pleaſant progreſs in religion; who has now ſtopt you in your courſe? whoever it was, it is unaccountable ye ſhould be ſtopt in giving obedience to the truth. verſ. 8. However fully ye ſeem to yourſelves to be perſuaded of your opinion, that perſuaſion is from another hand than his, who by my goſpel called you out of Paganiſm to Chriſt. It is not from God. verſ. 9. To tell you the myſtery of it, As a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, even ſo a few ſeducers that have crept in among you, have corrupted by their falſe doctrine, the whole churches of Galatia, which are as one lump.

10. I have confidence in you through the Lord, that you will be none otherwiſe minded, but he that troubleth you, ſhall bear his judgment, whoſoever he be.

Verſ. 10. I have confidence concerning you, when I conſider the conſtancy of God's grace, that ſome time you will think no other thing than I have juſt now told you of the riſe of this perſuaſion, and that you will be of the ſame mind with me in that matter, and ſo will return to the truth ye have deſerted: but be who he will that troubles you, and loads you with that yoke of bondage, God ſhall lay a burden on him of another ſort, even a burden of puniſhment here or hereafter, *(baſtaſei to krima.)*

11. And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumciſion, why do I yet ſuffer perſecution? then is the offence of the croſs ceaſed.

Verſ. 11. But as for me, brethren, it is ſtrange that any ſhould have the impudence to ſay, that I preach the neceſſity of circumciſion, becauſe forſooth I circumciſed Timothy: for if I preach that doctrine, how come I to be perſecuted of the Jews as an enemy to Moſes's law? yea ſurely, if I preached that doctrine, then the offence that the Jews take at the doctrine of the goſpel, holding forth Chriſt's ſufferings, embraced by faith, as the only way of ſalvation, is ceaſed; which I find daily the contrary of, by their reſtleſs malice againſt me.

12. I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

13. For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only uſe not liberty for an occaſion to the fleſh, but by love ſerve one another.

14. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf.

Verſ. 12. I would that they which ſo trouble you with the doctrine of cutting off the foreſkin, were themſelves cut off from the ſociety of the church with the circumciſing knife of excommunication; though indeed to do it actually at this time, while ye are in ſuch a ferment, would not tend to edification. verſ. 13. I wiſh not this without good reaſon; for, brethren, God has called you to liberty, but they have called you back again to bondage. God has indeed called you to liberty, only I would caution you againſt the abuſe of Chriſtian liberty; do not ſo make uſe of your liberty, as to make it a pander to your corruption, taking occaſion of licentiouſneſs from it: but on the contrary, (though now ye are all in confuſion among yourſelves,) learn to advance one another's welfare, (as if each of you were ſervant to his neighbour,) by mutual love. verſ. 14. For this is the moſt compendious way of fulfilling the law, the law being fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour with the ſame ſincerity thou loveſt thyſelf. This argument may well take with you that are ſo zealous for fulfilling the law.

The love of our neighbour preſuppoſes love to God.

15. But if ye bite and devour one another,

take heed that ye be not conſumed one of another.

Verſ. 15. But on the other hand, if ye, like ſo many wild beaſts go on to bite one another by reproaches, and to devour one another by violence, take heed it end not in a total devaſtation of your ſociety, by your own hands.

16. This I ſay then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye ſhall not fulfil the luſt of the fleſh.

17. For the fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the fleſh; and theſe are contrary the one to the other; ſo that ye cannot do the things that you would.

Ver. 16. But for remedy of theſe evils, I ſay, Walk ye, and frame your converſation according to the dictates of the Holy Spirit dwelling in you; and ſo although your corrupt part will have its luſt, in ſinful motions, yet ye ſhall be thereby kept from conſenting thereto, which perfects and fulfils that ſinful motion. verſ. 17. For the corrupt nature luſteth againſt the Spirit, deſiring thoſe things which are grievous to the Spirit; and the Spirit againſt corrupt nature, in ſo far as he ſtirs up in the ſaints, deſires of thoſe things that are grievous to the corrupt nature; and thoſe in the gracious ſoul lie againſt one another, as ſoldiers in a trench againſt a fort; on deſign that ye may not *(ina me ha an thelete, tauta poiete)* do whatever things ye would, whether as gracious or as corrupt; ſo that, if you take part with the Spirit, ye will get the upper hand, though the fleſh will ſtill luſt in you, and ſo make a blot in the faireſt lines you write.

18. But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

Ver. 18. But, for your comfort in this caſe, I tell you, that if ye be led by the Spirit of God, walking after, and ſetting yourſelves to follow his dictates, ye are not under the law as a covenant of works; for the Spirit is given to none under that covenant, as I told you before, chap. iii. 2.; and if ſo, then ye are not under, nor liable to the curſe for your ſlips.

19. Now the works of the fleſh are manifeſt, which are theſe, adultery, fornication, uncleanneſs, laſciviouſneſs,

20. Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, ſtrife, ſeditions, hereſies,

21. Envyings, murders, drunkenneſs, revellings, and ſuch like: of the which I tell you before, as I have alſo told you in time paſt, that they which do ſuch things, ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Ver. 19. Now ye may know whether ye be led by the Spirit or by the fleſh, by your actions and courſe of life; for as to the fleſh, though that corrupt principle lies very inwardly and is hid, yet the works of it are manifeſt, any body may diſcern them. Theſe works are, adultery, fornication, all other ſorts of filthy luſts of that kind; wantonneſs, ver. 20. Idolatry, witchcraft; feuds *(echthai,)* quarrellings proceeding therefrom; emulations, whereby men deſire to outſtrip others in what is commendable, juſt becauſe they have no will to be overclouded by them; wrath, or inordinate anger; contentiouſneſs; ſedition, or diſſention, in which men ſeparate from one another; errors oppoſite to ſome ſubſtantial truth in religion, pertinaciouſly maintained; ver. 21. Envyings at the good of others; murders, drunkenneſs, revellings, or exceſs of belly cheer, joined with laſcivious behaviour; and ſuch like vices. Of which I now warn you aforehand, as I have before told you by word of mouth, when I was preſent with you, that thoſe who impenitently perſiſt in theſe things, ſhall never inherit the kingdom of heaven.

22. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, faith.

23. Meekneſs, temperance: againſt ſuch there is no law.

Ver. 22. 23. But the ſavoury product of the Spirit in men, is love to God and our neighbour; ſpiritual joy; * peaceableneſs, whereby we are diſpoſed to do no wrong to any man; long-ſuffering, whereby we patiently bear if they wrong us; gentleneſs, whereby we are affable and pleaſant to them, and eaſy to be intreated; goodneſs, whereby we are ready to communicate any good we have to any man; fidelity, meekneſs, and temperance, which bridles fleſhly appetite and deſires. No law ſtrikes againſt ſuch things, but they are commanded by the law. In order to your trial, ye have heard what are the works of the Spirit, and what are thoſe of the fleſh.

* Mark the gradation in theſe four following.

24. And they that are Chriſt's, have crucified the fleſh, with the affections and luſts.

Ver. 24. But ſo it is, that all they that are Chriſt's by his Spirit dwelling in them, have ſerved their corrupt nature, together with its uneaſy paſſions and pleaſant deſires, as they ſerved Chriſt; that is, they have crucified them, they have nailed them to Chriſt's croſs, and given them death's wounds, ſo as though they be not utterly extinct as yet, they nevertheleſs are a-dying.

25. If we live in the Spirit, let us alſo walk in the Spirit.

Ver. 25. If then we pretend to have the Spirit in us as a principle of ſpiritual life, let us evidence it by our taking part with the Spirit againſt our corruptions, and framing our life according to his dictates.

26. Let us not be deſirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

Ver. 26. I fear ambition has been very hurtful to you; ſo I would exhort you, in order to your returning to a ſound mind, that ye would not be ambitious or deſirous of applauſe among men, which is but vain and empty glory; provoking one another by mutual diſdain, as if others were nothing in compariſon of you; and envying one another, deſiring none to be eſteemed but for yourſelves.

CHAP. VI.

BRethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are ſpiritual, reſtore ſuch an one in the ſpirit of meekneſs; conſidering thyſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted.

BRethren, if any of your fellow-church-members who have ſometimes given evidence of their having the Spirit, be ſurpriſed in a fault, whether in principle or practice, by the fleſh's prevailing againſt the Spirit; I exhort you who are ſtrong, who ſtand by the Spirit's prevailing againſt the fleſh, that ye would endeavour the recovery of ſuch, as a ſurgeon ſets right a disjointed member; (for thoſe, by their fall, are disjointed members of Chriſt's body;) and that ye would do this in meekneſs, purging your admonitions and reprooſs to them, of fleſhly paſſions: and to preſs and help you to this, ye would, in the mean time ye are about that work, conſider yourſelves, how the root of all ſin is in you; leſt, if ye forget to look to yourſelves in theſe glaſſes of human frailty, God be provoked to make you a glaſs to others, ſuffering you for ſelf-conceit to be tempted and ſuccumb.

2. Bear ye one another's burdens, and ſo fulfil the law of Chriſt.

Ver. 2. Take a liſt of one another's burdens, ſympathizing with them under their miſcarriages, as if they were your own, being affected with them; and thus anſwer the command of loving one another, which is Chriſt's law, recommended to us in a ſpecial manner by his precept and practice. This Chriſtian ſympathy will be an evangelical fulfilling of that excellent law.

3. For if a man think himſelf to be ſomething, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himſelf.

Ver. 3. Thoſe that have fallen, they doat on Moſes's law; ye that ſtand do ſay ye will hold by Chriſt's law: pray you then give this proof of your ſincerity in theſe pretenſions; for if a man think himſelf ſomething, and above others, while, in the mean time, in his practice he is no more than his neighbours, that man is *(heauton phrenapata)* a ſoul-deceiver of himſelf; ſo ye, if ye hold by Chriſt's law in your principles, but flinch from it in your practice, ye deceive yourſelves, valuing yourſelves upon principles contradicted by your practice.

4. But let every man prove his own work, and then ſhall he have rejoicing in himſelf alone, and not in another.

5. For every man ſhall bear his own burden.

Ver. 4. But let every man try his work and practice by the touchſtone of God's word; and then, if he find it will abide the touchſtone, he ſhall have ground of rejoicing, and counting himſelf happy in his ſtate; he ſhall have it, I ſay, in himſelf thus approven by God's word, ſo that he ſhall not need to fetch in that ſilly joy and rejoicing in his own ſtate, from other men's falls, as ſome do who think themſelves right enough becauſe they are not ſo bad as ſome others that they ſee, ver. 5. Let every man try his work: for at the day of judgment every man ſhall give an account of his own actions to God; and the beſt will find they have burden enough, when they come before a holy God, who will never paſs a comfortable ſentence on any, juſt becauſe they were not ſo bad as others.

6. Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth, in all good things.

Verſ. 6. Let the people who are taught, communicate to their miniſters who teach them, in all temporal good things neceſſary for their comfortable maintenance.

7. Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap.

8. For he that ſoweth to his fleſh, ſhall of the fleſh reap corruption; but he that ſoweth to the Spirit, ſhall of the Spirit reap life everlaſting.

Verſ. 7. Do not deceive yourſelves; when ye have no will to be at the expence of maintaining your godly paſtors, ye can find out many fair pretences for it to ſtop their mouths, whereby they are mocked; but ye have to do with God, who will not be ſo mocked by you: for as a man ſhall reap the ſame grain that he ſoweth, ſo ſhall ye at the great day get a reward ſuitable to your actions in this life. verſ. 8. For he that liveth according to the fleſh, ſhall get eternal deſtruction, as the product of his ſinful actions; but he that liveth according to the Spirit, ſhall get eternal life, as the product of his good works.

9. And let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint not.

Verſ. 9. And being entered on a courſe of doing good works, let us not ſhrink back from it, as cowards in war; for though we do not reap the fruit of it preſently, more than the huſbandman does, yet we ſhall reap the fruit of it, even eternal life, in the time deſtinate for reaping, viz. the harveſt of the world, if we do not faint and give over, like a man ſunk under a burden, his ſpirits being waſted, and his members thereby being as it were all looſed.

10. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, eſpecially unto them who are of the houſhold of faith.

Verſ. 10. Therefore, as we have opportunity to do good, let us do good, ſpiritual and temporal, to all men; but in a ſpecial manner to the godly, who are members of Chriſt's family, which is joined together by the bond of faith.

11. Ye ſee how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.

Verſ. 11. Ye ſee how large a letter I have writtento you with mine own hand, and thereby my affection to you, for though I have written larger letters to others, yet they were written with other hands than mine own.

12. As many as deſire to make a fair ſhew in the fleſh, they conſtrain you to be circumciſed; only leſt they ſhould ſuffer perſecution for the croſs of Chriſt.

13. For neither they themſelves who are circumciſed, keep the law; but deſire to have you circumciſed, that they might glory in your fleſh.

14. But God forbid that I ſhould glory, ſave in the croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

15. For in Chriſt Jeſus neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but a new creature.

16. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Iſrael of God.

Verſ. 12. As many as deſire to make a fair outward ſhew of religion in the body, while they neglect religion in their ſpirits, they by the doctrine of the neceſſity of circumciſion, conſtrain you to be circumciſed, only that they may ward off from themſelves the blow of perſecution by the Jews, who would be ſtirred up againſt them, if they ſhould preach the ſincere doctrine of Chriſt's ſufferings. verſ. 13. It is not out of true reſpect to the law that they urge it; for even they themſelves that are circumciſed, do neither keep the moral law, nor the ceremonial law, where it croſſeth their intereſt; but they deſire to have you circumciſed, that they may ſatisfy their ambition, and may glory in making ſo many proſelytes to their opinion, receiving circumciſion in the fleſh, which we have preached down. verſ. 14. But far be it from me to glory in any thing but the ſufferings of Chriſt, by which I am ſo mortified, that I care no more for the world's good opinion, or any thing in it, than men uſe to care for or value a crucified perſon, who is pronounced to be curſed; and on the other hand, the world cares as little for me, even upon the very account of Chriſt's croſs which I preach, and put my whole confidence in. verſ. 15. I glory only in the croſs of Chriſt; for I take it for an infallible rule, That in the kingdom of Chriſt, neither circumciſion nor uncircumciſion is ought worth; but that the new creation, or regeneration, is the great buſineſs requiſite to evidence our intereſt in Chriſt. verſ. 16. And as for thoſe that turn the edge of their endeavours this way, living according to this rule, I, as an apoſtle of Chriſt, bleſs them from the Lord, (though falſe teachers ſhould curſe them;) Peace of all kinds be on them, and the mercy of God be their ſure refuge; and let theſe be on all the Spiritual Iſraelites, true believers, which God will account his Iſrael, though they be not circumciſed.

17. From henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jeſus.

18. Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with your ſpirit. *Amen.*

Verſ. 17. From henceforth let no man trouble me, quarrelling my call or my doctrine, particularly alledging that I myſelf teach the neceſſity of circumciſion; for in my body I bear ſuch ſcars received from perſecutors, as are marks of my being a ſervant of Chriſt, even as ſervants bear their maſters mark: and theſe received by me for preaching Chriſt ſincerely, ſhew, that I have not pleaſed the Jews in preaching circumciſion. verſ. 18. Brethren, all the ſaving benefits purchaſed by Chriſt be with your ſouls. *Amen.*

PRACTICAL DISCOURSES.

GOSPEL-COMPULSION.

A SERMON preached immediately before the Celebration of the Lord's Supper, at Ettrick.

LUKE xiv. 23.

Compel them to come in.

AND are they not happy that are in? Is your rock as their rock, O ſinners, yourſelves being judges? And why will not you come in too? Chriſt's houſe is not yet filled. Many have come in, but there is room for more, verſ. 22. And we are ſent to *compel* you *to come in*. So we have it in charge in our text.

The ſcope of this parable (which, upon the matter, is the ſame with that of the marriage feaſt, Matth. 22.) is to ſhew the rejection of the Jews for their rejecting of Chriſt, and the calling of the Gentiles into their room. The ſupper to which they are bidden here, is Jeſus Chriſt, with all his ſaving benefits; he is the maker, and the matter of this ſupper alſo. In the morning of time, in the patriarchal ages, men were invited to this feaſt; for even then there were not wanting preachers of righteouſneſs, 2 Pet. ii. 5. In the mid-day, under the law, they were invited to it, by prophets, prieſts, and Levites. And here in the evening, in the laſt times, the times of the goſpel, they are called to it as a ſupper; the diſpenſation of the goſpel being the laſt diſpenſation of grace to the world. The Jews were they that got the firſt offer, but they would not come; they made their excuſes, as ye may read, ver. 17. 18, 19, 20, of this chapter. The Gentiles get the next offer; the ſervant is ſent out to the *ſtreets* and *lanes*; the miniſters of Chriſt preach the goſpel to the poor Gentiles, and they receive it. But all come not in at once: therefore the ſervant is ſent out into *the high-ways and hedges*, where the moſt miſerable ſort of people are to be found; and even theſe muſt be compelled to come in. Poſſibly, this double ſending forth of the ſervant, may point the Lord's way in the diſpenſation of the goſpel to the Gentile world: the goſpel being firſt preached to thoſe of them who had renounced the idolatry of their country, and worſhipped the true God; and ſometimes aſſembled with the Jews in their ſynagogues to learn of them the knowledge of God, though they did not embrace the ceremonial part of their religion: theſe might well be repreſented by the *poor, maimed, and blind*, ſitting in *the ſtreets and lanes of the city*. But afterwards it was carried to the moſt dark corners of the earth, where there was no reſpect either to the Jewiſh or Chriſtian religion, but all were ſunk together in moſt groſs ignorance and idolatry; which might fitly be repreſented by *the high-ways and hedges*. See Acts x. and xiii. 42. 46. 49.

In the text we have three things. (1.) The great deſign miniſters ſhould have before their eyes in preaching of the goſpel; and that is, to bring ſinners in to Chriſt. It muſt not be to draw them to a party, but to draw them to Chriſt. It is not to make them only change their work, they continuing ſtill without, by preaching mere morality to them; but it is to make them change their maſter too, to get them into Chriſt by faith. (2.) Conſider whom they are to deal with in order to bring them in; even thoſe that are ſitting in the high-ways and hedges, like beggars in rags and ſores, the moſt unworthy and vile ſinners. (3.) The method they muſt uſe to get them in; *Compel them* to come in, not by uſing bodily violence towards them. Chriſt put the ſword of the Spirit in the hands of his miniſters, but not the temporal ſword. Dragooning, torturing, murdering, may be fit means to bring in men to Antichriſt, but not to bring them in to Chriſt. The compulſion in the text is a moral compulſion, ſuch as thoſe uſe who invite men to feaſts, who are not wont to cudgel them in, but ſeriouſly and earneſtly to deal with them until they conſent. So ſhould miniſters compel ſinners to come in to Chriſt, dealing with them ſeriouſly and affectionately, ſo as ſinners may ſee they are in good earneſt upon their Maſter's errand. We muſt give them the charming invitations and offers of the goſpel, upon the one hand, and lay before them the terror of the Lord, on the other hand, that if men will go to hell, they may go with a witneſs. Withal, here is intimated that efficacy of the Spirit, which goes along with the word, to the converſion of the elect; which does not force, but ſweetly neceſſitates them to come in.

DOCT. *It is the great work of miniſters to compel ſinners, in a goſpel-way, to come in to Chriſt.*

The beſt way that I can handle this text, is to aim at that which is given in charge in it. And in order to this, conſider with me the import of it.

I. Sinners naturally are out. Were it not ſo, they needed not be compelled to come in. Hear all ye this day that are out of Chriſt, what are ye out of, and where ye are.

Firſt, Sinners, do ye know what ye are out of? (1.) All ye that are out of Chriſt, are out of God's family, Ehp. ii. 18, 19. God's houſhold is the houſhold of faith ye are none of it. His houſe may be an empty houſe, for you. Adam ran out of the houſe, and all his poſterity with him; and ye are ſtill there, where Adam left you. And is not that a ſad caſe, to be out of God's family? Though ye are in your mother's houſe, ye cannot call him Father, ſeeing ye are not in Chriſt his Son: ye can have no claim to the portion and inheritance of the children, Gal. iv. 30. (2.) Ye are out of God's covenant of peace, and ſo *without hope* of ſalvation, while in that ſtate, Eph. ii. 12. Ye read of a glorious chariot, Cant. iii. 9, 10. It is the covenant of grace, the covenant of peace, as it is held forth in the everlaſting goſpel; for that is *the word of truth, meekneſs, and righteouſneſs*, upon which Chriſt rides and proſpereth. The firſt chariot, wherein Adam and his children ſhould have been carried to heaven, was the covenant of works: Adam had the guiding of it; but it did not drive far, till it was broken to pieces. Now, there is a new one made, in which Chriſt is carrying all his people to glory; but ye are out of it. King Solomon, the Mediator Chriſt, made it; it could not be made without him. He made it for himſelf, to manifeſt his own glory, and the exceeding riches of his grace by it; and for the daughters of Jeruſalem, to carry his bride home to his Father's houſe, in it. It was made of the durable wood of Lebanon; for he will have it to be an everlaſting covenant, that ſhall never be broken. It has pillars of ſilver, thoſe excellent promiſes that are peculiar to the covenant of grace, as the promiſes of pardon, perſeverance, &c. for it is eſtabliſhed upon better promiſes. And becauſe there is no ſmall weight in this chariot, when a ſinner is in it, he hath made the bottom thereof of gold ſolid and ſtrong, ſo that none that are in it (though heavier than mountains of braſs) ſhall fall through it: for *the foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal, The Lord knoweth them that are his*, 2 Tim. ii. 19.; they are ſecured by God's eternal decree of election. No ſtorms of wrath can fall upon them that are in it; for it hath a covering of the purple blood of Jeſus Chriſt. The midſt thereof, the inner part of it, is paved with love: love lines the chariot, it is above them, it is on every hand of them; yea, it is underneath them, ſo that if they do fall in it, they ſhall not get ſuch a grievous fall, but they will be able to riſe again. Happy they that are in it! But, alas! ſinners, ye are out of it. Ye are lying there where the firſt chariot laid you when it broke. (3.) Ye are out of God's favour, being out of Chriſt. Now, that is dreadful; for our God is a conſuming fire. And there is no ſhelter from the wrath of God, but under the covert of the blood of the Mediator, Eph. ii. 13. The deſtroying angel is coming through, and there is no blood ſprinkled on your door poſts. God is in Chriſt, reconciling the world to himſelf; if ye do not come in, and meet him there, what can ye expect but that he will meet you without, as a bear bereaved of her whelps, rent the caul of your heart, and devour you like a lion? Hoſ. xiii. 8. What do your duties avail, while ye are out of Chriſt? can they procure you God's favour? Your tears will never come into his bottle, nor will your prayers reach his ears, John xiv. 6.

Secondly, Know ye, ſinners, where ye are? I will tell you where ye are. (1.) Ye are on the devil's paſture, the mountains of vanity, about *the lions dens, and the mountains of leopards*, where Satan feeds his herd. Ye are out of God's houſe, wandering abroad for bread, begging at the world's door, ſaying, where is it? Ye know not Chriſt, the bread of life; and therefore the dung of worldly profits and pleaſures is ſo valuable in your eyes. But tell me, ſinner, are you ever ſatisfied? You would *fain fill your belly with the huſks* of the world; but do they fill you indeed? is not the ſubſtance ſqueezed out of theſe things, ſo as ye find them but empty huſks? In all your traverſing of the mountains of vanity, came ye ever to the place of which you could ſay (and ſtand by it,) This is my reſt, and here I will ſtay? no, nor never ſhall, till ye come to Chriſt, Iſ. lv. 2. (2.) Ye are in hell upon earth. To be in hell is to be without, Rev. xxii. 15. and ye are not come in, ye are *condemned already*, John iii. 18. bound in the priſon, Iſ. lxi. 1. What is the difference betwixt you and them that are in hell? Ye are both priſoners; only ye are in the outer priſon, they are in the inner priſon. Ye are both away from Chriſt; only ye will depart from him. They muſt depart from him. The fire of God's wrath is ſet on in the conſciences of both; only it is not as yet blown up and made to flame in you, by *the breath of the Lord, like a ſtream of brimſtone to kindle it*, as it is in them; but ye know not how ſoon it may be ſo. But there is yet another difference; they are priſoners paſt hope, ye are *priſoners of hope*. Therefore we proceed to another point.

II. It is the great errand of the friends of the Bridegroom to bring them in that are out. Sirs, ye that are out, ye are where ye ſhould not be, ye are on forbidden ground. We ſhould have you in; we would have you come in to Chriſt, to unite with him, by believing in him, accepting of him in all his offices.

Firſt, We declare unto you, that our Lord is inveſted with the ſole authority and commiſſion to be the great Prophet, the Preacher and Teacher of the way to Immanuel's land, Acts iii. 22, 23. He has ſet up his ſchool amongſt us, but he hath few diſciples; and we are come to compel you to come in, that his houſe may be filled. Satan has many diſciples; carnal wiſdom has many ſcholars. Alas for it! O leave them. Our Lord alone is he that is given of the Father to be the great Leader to the heavenly Canaan, Iſ. lv. 4. None ever came, or ſhall come there, but his followers; come in then, give up yourſelves to him to be guided by him. Ye would all be happy, ye would all be at heaven at laſt; but ye are wandering in a wilderneſs, where there is no way; and ye will ſurely loſe yourſelves, if ye take not him for your leader. The way to glory is a difficult way, and ye are not acquainted with it; nay ye are blind travellers, ready every moment to fall over ſome precipice. O will ye take a guide? Ye are now ſtanding (as it were) in a place where two ways meet, uncertain which of them to take. Your own wiſdom, which is folly, points out a fair broad way, ſaying, *whoſo is ſimple let him turn in hither*, Prov. ix. 16. but turn not in thither, for *the dead are there, and* *her gueſts are in the depths of hell*, verſ. 18. The Wiſdom of the Father, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, points but to you a *narrow way*, but it *leadeth to life*: and he is this day ſaying to you, 'Whoſo is ſimple, let him 'turn in hither,' verſ. 4. Come in then, renounce your own wiſdom, give up yourſelves to him, to be led and guided by him. *Hear and your ſouls ſhall live.*

Secondly, Sinners, do ye know that ye are guilty, and that ye can have no acceſs to an unatoned God? There was a breach made betwixt God and man by ſin. Juſtice demands a ſacrifice; an atonement muſt be made. The ſinner himſelf is unclean, he cannot be the prieſt, and he is not able to provide a ſacrifice, for the cattle on a thouſand hills are not ſufficient for a burnt offering. Wherefore Jeſus Chriſt became our Prieſt; his human nature was the ſacrifice; his divine nature the altar that ſanctified the gift; the wrath of God was the fire that burned the ſacrifice; the blood was carried in to the moſt holy place, when Chriſt aſcended into heaven, and ſat down at the Fathers right hand, to intercede for ſinners, upon the ground of his ſatisfaction. Now, here is the atonement; and we would have you to fall in with this device of ſalvation by a crucified Chriſt, renouncing your own righteouſneſs, that you may mount to heaven by the ladder of Chriſt's mediation. In the earthly paradiſe God ſet up a ladder by which all mankind might get up to the heavenly paradiſe. It was the covenant of works; a ladder able to bear the weight of all the world at once; but ſo contrived, that if but the leaſt pin in it were looſed, all would break together. All mankind mounted it, even the firſt Adam, and all his children in his loins; but he having looſed one pin thereof, in a moment the ladder broke, and he and all his fell down into a gulf of miſery, and an horrible pit, where they might ſee heaven afar off, but no way to get to it more. This dreadful break rejoiced the devils; it aſtoniſhed the angels; they ſaw that they could not mend it, nor make another, and they were wiſer than to attempt it. The Son of God ſaw there was none amongſt all the creatures to help, and therefore his own arm brought ſalvation. Another ladder is made, Jeſus Chriſt God-man, the Mediator betwixt God and men, the way to the Father, Gen. xxviii. 12. The foot thereof is *ſet on the earth*, for he is man; the ladder was ſet ſo low as ſinners might reach it; it was ſet very low, even in *the lower parts of the earth*, (Eph. iv. 9.) the region of death. The top *of it reached to heaven*, for he is God; the ladder is ſo high, that it can ſet the ſinner up to heaven. It can neither looſe nor break with the utmoſt weight upon it; for it is knit together with the blood of infinite value, ſhed to the utmoſt of what juſtice demanded, Heb. ix. 14. Come, ſinners, lay all your weight on it, and fear not. The firſt ladder could bear nothing but mens perſons; it could not bear one ſinner with a burden of guilt on his back, but it would break under him; but this will bear you, and your burden of guilt too, though it would be *heavier than the ſand of the ſea*. Ah! there are but few upon this ladder, we would compel you to come on. Have ye a mind to lie ſtill in the gulph? have you taken your laſt ſight of heaven? have ye bid an eternal farewell to glory? or have ye not done it? then why will ye not be compelled to come on? O come before the ladder be drawn up. I know what ye are thinking in effect, ye that will not be compelled to come on; ye are thinking, like a thief and a robber, to climb up ſome other way. I know what ye are doing; ye are doing one of two; ye are either mending the old ladder, and making the beſt ye can of the broken pieces, by your morality and legal walk; or ye are making a new one of your own, a ladder of uncovenanted mercy, truſting to the mercy of God, without uniting with the Mediator. But ſet ye the feet of them as low as ye will, God's juſtice will never ſuffer the tops of them to reach heaven. Lay your weight on them then, if ye will do no otherwiſe; venture your ſouls on them, venture eternity on them, and climb up; but know aſſuredly, though ye ſhould get up ſo high by them, as ye could knock at heaven's door, and ſay, *Lord, Lord, open to us*, there they ſhall fail you, there they ſhall break, and tumble you down into the loweſt hell, John xiv. 6.

Thirdly, Chriſt has got a kingdom from his Father, Pſal. ii. 6, 7, 8. but he has few real ſubjects. He has ſet up his ſtandard here this day, and we are come to compel you to come in, and ſubmit to him as your Lord and King. Ye are under ſtrange lords, and have long refuſed allegiance to your true Lord. O renounce all your idols now, and give yourſelves away to him, to be from henceforth his only, his wholly, his for ever. Come in now, and *kiſs the Son*, Pſal. ii. 12. Bow the knee to him; put the crown on his head, Cant. iii. 11. Open the everlaſting doors of your hearts, that the King of glory may come in, Pſal. xxiv. 7. If any poor ſoul be ſaying within itſelf, Alas! the armies of hell within my breaſt are not eaſily diſpoſſeſſed; it is true indeed; but yet I hope you are not ſo cloſely blocked up, but that intelligence may be got betwixt Chriſt and you; ye hear his offer to be your King, will ye give your conſent to it? I will aſk you but two queſtions to clear this matter. (1.) If you can do no more, yet will you give him your good-will of the Kingdom? Are you willing to part with your luſts, though you be not able to put them away? Though you cannot ſhake the yoke of bondage off your own neck, will you give Chriſt your good-will to take it off, and lay his own upon you? As a king *he will ſubdue our iniquities*, Micah vii. 19. (2.) Can your heart conſent to the abſoluteneſs of his government? He muſt be an abſolute monarch, his will in all things muſt be thy law. And why ſhould he not be ſo? for he can do no wrong, Pſal. xlv. 6, 7. Will you conſent that he model the kingdom in thy heart as he will? Shall he ſet up and caſt down there as he pleaſeth? have you no ſecret reſerves, no luſt that is but a little one, and muſt be ſpared; no prince of the blood of hell, that he muſt *deal gently with for your ſake*? If it be ſo, *Come in, thou bleſſed of the Lord, wherefore ſtandeſt thou without?* Thy conſent to him as he offereth himſelf, is thy coming in.

III. Sinners may come in. Know then ye have the Maſter of the houſe his good leave to come in. Were it not ſo, he would not ſend out his ſervants to compel you to come in. Nay, ſirs, he could keep his doors bolted againſt you, if it were not his will ye ſhould come in: and if ye would be ſo bold as to come and knock at the door, or offer violence to it, he could ſpeak a word that would make you fall backward. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt gives fair liberty to all of you, even the worſt of you, to come. Ye that are bearing the devil's mark in your fore-heads; ye openly profane perſons, that ſit as it were in the devil's high-ways: ye that are bearing his mark in your right hand, which ye can hide when ye pleaſe, ye vileſt hypocrites, who are hid about the devil's hedges: ye are all welcome for Chriſt's part, he will not caſt the door on your face. Surely there can be no leſs imported in his charge to compel you to come in. And therefore I would have you ſtep forward. Conſider, (1.) Is it nothing to you that ye have leave to come in? It was not ſo always. If before Chriſt was revealed, the ſinner had offered to have come in, he would have met with the flaming ſword of juſtice, that would have driven him back to his dungeon of miſery and darkneſs. If Chriſt had not been ground betwixt the upper and nether mill ſtones of the Father's wrath, he could not have been bread to ſinners, though they had been hungering after him. (2.) The fallen angels have not leave to come in, and never had ſince they went out, Jude ver. 6. If it were poſſible they could believe in Chriſt, and be content to come in to him, they would get the door caſt in their face; for they never got leave to come in. The door was barred on them, and the bar was never drawn, nor will ever, Heb. ii. 16. And God was no more debtor to us than to them. (3.) Be your caſe what it will, this is ſufficient to determine you to come in. If ye remain without, ye are ruined, and all the doors of hope are cloſed on you, except this, Acts iv. 12. The door is open, ye are not forbidden to come in, ye periſh if ye come not in; could we ſay no more, but it may be ye may get in, this might determine you to give it a fair trial, if ye would but act rationally. *Laſtly*, This leave to come in will not laſt always with you. 'When once the Maſter of the houſe 'is riſen up, and hath ſhut the door,' there will be no more leave to come in, Luke xiii. 25. They that are in hell this day, cannot get in though they would never ſo gladly; there is no paſſing of the gulph fixed betwixt Chriſt and them, Luke xvi. 26. The firſt Adam cloſed the door upon us, but there was a ſecond Adam to open it; if the ſecond Adam cloſe the door on us, there is not a third to open it, 2 Cor. iv. 3. *But if our goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt.* The apoſtle here has reſpect to what he had ſaid of the vail on Moſes's face, chap. iii. 13. the vail ſpread over the Old Teſtament, ver. 14. but the goſpel removes this vail, ver. 16, 17, 18. *But* ſays he, *if our goſpel alſo be vailed, it is vailed to them that are loſt*: there is not another diſpenſation of grace to be expected to take off that vail. It is God's laſt grace to the world, Heb. i. 1, 2. The Lord has been making a feaſt for the world theſe five thouſand years, and now the laſt ſervice is on the table. The laſt ſhip for Immanuel's land is now making ready to ſail; therefore ye muſt put to ſea, now or never, Heb. x. 26, 27.

IV. Sinners are deſired to come in. They not only have leave to come in, but they are deſired by the Maſter of the houſe to come in. Ariſe then, ye worſt of ſinners, the *Maſter calleth you.* Ye are called, not to a funeral, but a feaſt; not to a priſon, but to the gueſt-chamber, where he may entertain you with all the delicates of heaven. If ye were not deſired, why would he ſend his ſervants to compel you to come in? and will ye refuſe when ye are deſired? Conſider, I pray you, (1.) It ill becomes you, vile worms to ſit his call. I am ſure he might be for ever happy in himſelf, though ye and I both were, where in ſtrict juſtice we ſhould be, in the bottomleſs pit. He needs none of us. What are we that he ſhould be pleaſed to trouble himſelf about us, whether we ſink or ſwim! The angels adore him, his Father honours him, and vile wretches, whom he invites, have the face to refuſe him whom the Father *heareth always.* (2.) There are many as good as you, whom he never deſired to come in. He does not call you becauſe he has none other to call, who might fill his houſe. He might remove this goſpel from you, and ſend it into the dark places of the earth, and compel the Pagans to come in. Should he do it, it is very likely his offers would be better entertained amongſt them, than amongſt us. Some divide the world into thirty parts, and find that nineteen of theſe are poſſeſſed by Pagans, ſix of them by Jews, Turks, and Saracens, and only five by Chriſtians; and of theſe five parts Chriſtian, many are Antichriſtian, lying yet under the darkneſs of Popery. And has the Lord choſen us out from among ſo many, to give us the invitation to come in, and ſhall we refuſe? *Laſtly*, How will ye look him in the face when ye appear before his tribunal, if ye will not come in now at his deſire? How will ye look back on rejected love? What will ye do when he comes in wrath to you, that will not come to him now, upon his call?

Object. But ſome will ſay, Is it poſſible that he calls me, even vile and wretched me? *Anſw.* We have general invitations clogged with no conditions, free offers made to all that will come, Iſ. lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17. And the Lord expreſsly ſhews, that no vileneſs nor unworthineſs ſhall ſtop any that will come, Iſa. i. 18. Jer. iii. 1. and what would ye have more! We are ſent this day in our Maſter's name, to compel you all to come in, be your caſe what it will. And if that would perſuade you we ſhould come to you, one by one, and tell you, that it is you, and you, and you, that Chriſt calls to come in. But if ye believe our doctrine from the word, concerning the miſery of your natural ſtate, without hearing your name and ſirname in particular, why would ye require more in the doctrine concerning the remedy.

V. Sinners muſt come in. Compel them to come in. Sirs, ye not only may come, but ye muſt come, even the worſt of you. Ye are not only deſired to come in, but ye muſt not abide without. Conſider,

Firſt, This is his commandment, that ye believe, 1 John iii. 23. Ye are peremptorily commanded to come in. God is peremptory with you, and ſo muſt we be peremptory with you too. Therefore I tell you, ye muſt come; and I charge you in his name to come in, and not ſit his peremptory command. Lay your hands to your hearts then, and ſee what ye will do; whether ye will ſtill abide without, and obey the devil, and your doubts, fears, and jealouſies of Chriſt, or come in upon God's command. Have ye any regard to the authority of God, have ye any reſpect at all to his command, then give a peremptory anſwer, within your own breaſts, juſt now, whether ye will come in or not. Are ye peremptory, that ye will not come, like thoſe ſullen deſperate ſinners, Jer. ii. 25. *No, I have loved ſtrangers, and after them will I go*; then what ſhall we ſay or do for you? Lord, compel them to come in. Oh! will ye harden yourſelves againſt the Lord; will ye ſtretch out your hand againſt God, and ſtrengthen yourſelves againſt the Almighty? For Chriſt's ſake, for your ſoul's ſake, recal that word.

Secondly, But if ye dare not be peremptory that ye will not come, then be peremptory ye will come; for your coming is ſo commanded, that it will admit of no excuſe. Thoſe that were firſt bidden to this ſupper, they would not come, but they ſent their excuſes; but were their excuſes ſuſtained? no; God would not take them off their hand, but paſſeth a peremptory ſentence againſt them, verſ. 24. *None of thoſe men which were bidden, ſhall taſte of my ſupper.* We dare admit no excuſes in this matter, bring them from whence you will, whether from the heaven above you, the hell within you, or the world about you; whether from God's greatneſs, your own vileneſs, or world's incumbrances. Whatever your caſe be, ye are commanded of God to come; and his commands are not to be diſputed, but obeyed. Wherefore, if ye will not be peremptory that ye will come, we muſt report to our Lord that ye will not come.

Thirdly, This duty is ſo peremptorily commanded, that ye muſt come, and come preſently; it admits of no delay. 'To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not 'your hearts. Now is the accepted time.' We dare not allow you a day, nay not an hour, to think on it, whether ye will come or not; leſt the next day, or the next hour, ye be caſt into hell, or a hell be caſt into you, for ſitting the offer made to you this moment, which is gone before I can name it. Wherefore delay no longer, but this moment open the everlaſting doors, that the King of glory may come in.

Fourthly, This is the duty God has commanded you; John vi. 29. *This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath ſent.* Ye can do the Lord no greater pleaſure than to come in. Would ye exalt him this day? then come on his call, Hoſ. xi. 7. would ye put the crown on Chriſt's head? would ye make it a *day of the gladneſs of his heart*? then come in, Cant. iii. 11. It is a great eaſe for full breaſts to be ſucked: the breaſts of mercy and love are full; come, ſtarving ſinner, do him the pleaſure to ſuck the breaſts of his conſolations. This is the great comprehenſive duty: if ye do not this, ye do nothing. What mean ye to be nibbling at the works of God, neglecting this, which is the work. Ye are keeping your windows cloſed in the day-light, and ſetting up a candle here and there, within your houſe; yet there are terrible dark corners within the houſe ſtill;

open your windows, I beſeech you, and let in the ſun (*the ſun of righteouſneſs*) and that will be inſtead of all, and better than all. Would ye, all at once, be wiſe, righteous and holy? then come in to Chriſt, 1 Cor. i. 30. Ye that can do nothing, come to Chriſt, and ſo ye ſhall do all, Philip. iv. 13. Would ye honour God? would ye honour his law? then come to Chriſt. But if ye come not to Chriſt, do what ye will, ye do nothing. Should ye henceforth keep all the ten commands, but neglect this, all you do would get a black note of condemnation from heaven written on it. Remember, I pray you, that "he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father," John v. 23. All your other duties are but cyphers without this; and multiply them as ye will, the ſum in all will be but nought, if this duty do not ſtand upon their head.

Laſtly, It is a duty commanded, with certification of God's eternal diſpleaſure and wrath againſt thoſe that will not come: Mark xvi. 16. *He that believeth not, ſhall be damned.* Pſal. ii. 12. *Kiſs the Son leſt he be angry, and ye periſh from the way.* And therefore I, as an ambaſſador for Chriſt, do in his name, command and charge you, and every one of you, to come in, under the pain of God's diſpleaſure, under the pain of vengeance, even the Mediator's vengeance; certifying that if ye will not come, our Lord Jeſus will come out of heaven againſt you, and ye ſhall be ſlain before him, Luke xix. 27. To be ſlain, and die before Chriſt, who died to ſave ſinners, is a thouſand deaths in one; it is a hell upon a hell. But thoſe *that obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord*, even that Lord whoſe goſpel they have not obeyed, 2 Theſſ. i. 8, 9. Ah! would he be pleaſed but to confine his preſence to heaven, and only allow thoſe that now deſpiſe and ſlight him, the favour of being puniſhed from the preſence of the Lord; ah! would he but make their deſtruction come to them at ſome diſtance, would he dart the arrows of his wrath into them from afar; nay, but he will have a throne of juſtice in hell, that they may be puniſhed *from the preſence of the Lord*, who while in the world fled from him on a throne of grace in the goſpel. O conſider in time what ye do: no fire will burn ſo violently as that which breaks forth from the altar; no flame of wrath will pierce into a damned ſoul, like that which is blown up by the breath of a ſlighted Mediator.

VI. and *laſtly*, Sinners ſhall come in. Compel them to come in. Leaving ſecret things to the Lord, I muſt tell you, ſinners, Chriſt will not want as many as will fill his houſe. And ſtruggle as long as ye will, in ye ſhall come. His houſe ſhall be filled. The Mediator has bought the furniture of his houſe too dear to want any of it, and to leave ſo much empty room in it. I hope there are ſome here that are the purchaſe of blood, which men and devils will not get kept back from Chriſt. His Father has engaged by covenant, that his houſe ſhall be filled, Pſal. xxii. 30. *They ſhall come*, See Iſ. liii. 10, 11. Nay, is not Chriſt's hand at the hearts of ſome juſt now? Do not ſome of you find a moving of the iron gate of your hearts, towards an opening of it to Chriſt? Have you not felt ſomething within working to compel you to come in, are not ſome almoſt in already? Thruſt forward; there is no ſafety till ye be not only almoſt, but altogether Chriſtians.

Come in to Chriſt then, ye old people, that are bowing down to meet the grave. Ye have delayed long, delay no more. Though it is very rare, yet it ſometimes falls out, that a man is born when he is old, Joel ii. 28. Come in, ye of middle age. Are ye out of Chriſt in your *beſt eſtate*; Surely then your beſt ſtate is a bad ſtate, a miſerable ſtate. Ye are buſy providing for your families, but what are ye doing for your ſouls? Ye are laying up for old age, which, it may be, you will never ſee; what are ye laying up for eternity? Come in, ye young people; ye are too old to be out of Chriſt. Do not think religion is only for the hoary head, the wrinkled brows, and hollow eyes; there are more with green heads than with gray hairs in the grave. Therefore come in, and delay not. The older ye grow putting off the work of religion, your hearts will grow the harder to work upon. Come in, ye profane wretches, that are far from righteouſneſs; come, ye hypocritical profeſſors, that are not far from the kingdom of God; come, ye trembling ſouls, that are hard at it, and yet dare not come in. O why will ye not come in? I think it muſt be either becauſe ye will not, or becauſe ye dare not. I fear there are ſome amongſt us that will not come in; they have no mind to quit their luſts, they muſt follow their old courſes, coſt what it will; they ſee no beauty in Chriſt for which he is to be deſired. I ſhall ſay little more to ſuch. If ye be reſolute for ſin, hell, and death, and that no Chriſt, no heaven, no hell, ſhall keep you back from the broad way; who can ſtop you? But be it known unto you, and be it recorded in the black book of your conſciences, which ſhall be opened at the day of judgment, That ſalvation was in your offer this day, that we endeavoured to compel you to come in to Chriſt, but ye would not; and that therefore your blood ſhall be on your own heads.

As to you that dare not come in, why dare ye not after all ye have heard? are ye afraid to come in on Chriſt's call? dare ye not embrace his invitation? dare ye not obey the great command of God?

Object. But my ſins are innumerable, and moſt heinous; can there be any room for me? dare ſuch a vile and unworthy wretch as I come in? *Anſw.* If your ſins were each of them as big as a mountain, were they as numerous as the ſand of the ſea; yet the blood of Chriſt being the blood of the Son of God, is able to purge them away, 1 John i. 7. Lay over all your guilt and unworthineſs on him who is altogether lovely: ſooner ſhall the rocks ſink under the weight of a bird lighting down upon them, than that blood ſhall fail you. Remember none are compelled to come in, none are called, but the vile and unworthy, Matth. ix. 13. Should your diſeaſe keep you from the phyſician, dare ye not come to the fountain to waſh, becauſe ye are unclean? for whom is the fountain opened, but for unclean ſinners? The goſpel-ſupper, though a coſtly one indeed, was provided for none, but thoſe that were unworthy of a drop of water, and far more, unworthy of Chriſt's blood. Be aſſured, beloved, the queſtion betwixt Chriſt and you is not, Whether or not Chriſt will ſtoop ſo low as to waſh ſuch a foul ſoul in his own blood? that is a queſtion determined already, Iſ. i. 18. Zech. xiii. 1. But the queſtion that remains to be decided, is, Whether or not, after Chriſt has ſtooped ſo low as to be willing to do that, the vile unworthy creature will give him the affront of ſtooping in vain? What ſay ye to that queſtion? Ye have affronted the law of God; will ye affront the Son of God too, refuſing his offer? If vileneſs and unworthineſs could have kept ſinners out from Chriſt, never one of Adam's ſons had come in. Did not Chriſt find all the fair ones that are now in glory, lying in their blood, are there any now walking in white, but thoſe who were waſhed in the blood of the Lamb? Turn over the Bible, look into the hiſtory of ages that are paſt, ſee if ye can find any one that died at his door, who could not be admitted becauſe he was ſo vile, wretched, and unworthy.

Object. But there was never a caſe like mine. *Anſw.* There have been very bad caſes in Chriſt's hand, which he has cured; and never did the cure of any caſe put in his hand miſgive. What think ye of Mary Magdalen's caſe, out of whom he caſt ſeven devils? Mark xvi. 9. Was not Paul's caſe, who was a blaſphemer and a perſecutor, and yet found mercy, a caſe that may be compared with yours? 1 Tim. i. 13. Sure I am, the workings of ſovereign grace upon him, were deſigned to encourage the worſt of ſinners to come in, ver. 16. Manaſſeh, though he had the benefit of a religious education by his godly father, was an horrid idolater, a conſulter with the devil, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 6. a bloody murderer, 2 Kings xxi. 16.; yet he came in, and was received graciouſly, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12. 13. And what do ye think of the caſe of Adam, who at once murdered all his children, ruined the ſouls of all mankind, and ſinned againſt greater light than ever ye could do? But let us yield it to you this once, that never one's caſe was like your's; and let us add to it, and never ſhall one be like it hereafter, it is ſo very bad: then I think ye have, as the penitent thief on the croſs had, an occaſion of glorifying our great Redeemer, peculiar to yourſelf, wherein none of the veſſels of glory have ſhared, or ſhall ſhare with you. Come in then, thou whoſe caſe is a marrowleſs caſe, whoſe caſe has no parallel; you have the advantage of an occaſion to honour Chriſt with the cure of a caſe ſo deſperate, that the like of it was never in his hands before. *Remember not the former things, neither conſider the things of old*, Iſa. xliii. 18.; come in to Chriſt with your new caſe, and *behold*, (ſays our Lord,) *I will do a new thing*, ver. 19. His blood has not yet gone ſo far as it can go. Grudge him not a new jewel in his crown of grace, that will ſhine brighter than any yet put into it. Come in, then, and take the place appointed for the *chief of ſinners*, deepeſt in the debt of free grace, if it be yet empty. I aſſure you, they that have come in already think it is not, but that they themſelves have filled it up. If it be indeed as thou ſayeſt, then they are miſtaken; come you in, and you ſhall get it.

Object. But, alas! I cannot believe, I cannot come in to Chriſt. *Anſw*. To clear your way in this matter; ſee that ye ſet yourſelves to come in to Chriſt in a promiſe. Chriſt is held forth to ſinners in the promiſes of the goſpel, Iſa. lv. 1. John vi. 37. Rev. iii. 20. and chap. xxii. 17. If ye would come to his ſeat, come to the promiſes; he is in the ſtill ſmall voice; ye will find the babe wrapped up in theſe ſwaddling-clothes. They that overlook the promiſe, and try to believe and come in to Chriſt, go the wrong way to work: that is like a woman's conſenting to marry a man, of whoſe conſent to take her ſhe has no declaration. But the goſpel promiſe is the contract ſent down from heaven, ſigned already with the Bridegroom's hand: do ye take and read it over, ſign it, by your heart's conſenting thereto; and then Chriſt is yours, and ye are his. But cloſe with Chriſt in the promiſe as a free promiſe, as indeed it is, Iſa. lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17. Many bar the doors of the goſpel-promiſe with bars of their own making, and then they cry out and complain that they cannot enter in by them. O! ſay ſome, if I had ſo much love, repentance, and brokenneſs of heart, then I could believe. But I adviſe you to believe, that ye may get theſe things, Zech. xii. 10. Acts v. 31. Now, though the promiſe be written in the Bible only, it is as ſurely Chriſt's conſent to be yours, as if ye had a voice from heaven for it, yea and more ſurely. But you will ſay, I dare not meddle with the promiſe. *Anſw*. Then meddle not with Chriſt, but periſh; for there is no meddling with him, but in the goſpel-promiſe. But why is a drowning man ſo fearful, that he dare not catch hold of a cord, even a ſilver cord, thrown in to hale him to land? Nay, beloved, be not ſo fooliſh; though the promiſe be, in your eyes, like Moſes's rod, turned into a ſerpent; yet take it by the tail, and it will become a rod in your hand, Hoſ. xi. 10. *The children ſhall tremble from the weſt*; as the *Iſraelites trembled after Saul*, that is, *followed him trembling*, 1 Sam. xiii. 7. So then Chriſt's bride may ſign the contract with a trembling hand, love her Lord with a trembling heart, and follow him with trembling legs. And O that all of you would ſay, though it were with a trembling voice, *Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God*. If ſo, ye would not be in vain compelled to come in.

CHRIST the SAVIOUR of the World.

A

SERMON preached immediately before the Celebration of the Lord's Supper, at Ettrick, June 7. 1724.

1 JOHN iv. 14.

And we have ſeen, and do teſtify, that the Father ſent the Son to be *the Saviour of the world*.

JOHN, the beloved diſciple, in his epiſtles, is ſtill breathing love; love is the ſtring he delights peculiarly to harp upon: ſo he is either magnifying God's love to us, or preſſing our love to God and one another. And his darling ſubject, love, is no narrow one, but moſt comprehenſive; it comprehends both the goſpel and the law, both faith and works. The love of God to man, is the great doctrine of the goſpel, the object of faith; and love to God and to one another, is the great doctrine of the law of the ten commandments, and the object of holy practice. And there is a near relation between the two; God's love is the fountain, our love the ſtream; the former the original holy fire, the latter the flame kindled by it. Accordingly, in the text, there is a diſplay of the love of God, for moving us to love one another; the which diſplay of divine love is the ſubſtance of the goſpel.

Here then we have the goſpel, which all the apoſtles were in one voice to preach unto the world; *We have ſeen, and do teſtify, that the Father ſent the Son* to be *the Saviour of the world*. And therein we may conſider,

1. The goſpel or glad tidings itſelf, viz. That *the Father ſent the Son* to be *the Saviour of the world*. Here is glad news to the world, Chriſt's miſſion. The promiſe of this miſſion was made to fallen Adam in paradiſe; believers under the Old Teſtament lived and died

in the faith of it. But the apoſtles teſtified it as a thing performed; *the Father ſent, or hath ſent* the Son. The party ſent, is *the Son of God*, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; no other was fit for this miſſion. The party ſending, from whom he had his commiſſion, was *the Father*, the firſt perſon of the glorious Trinity. None of a lower dignity could ſend one of his dignity. The character in which he was ſent, is, *the Son Saviour of the world.* So the words are without any ſupplement; of which there is no need here. So Chriſt is ſaid to have come a teacher from God, John iii. 2. i. e. in the character of a divine teacher. As one is ſent ambaſſador to ſuch a court, that is, conſtituted by his prince ambaſſador to that court, and accordingly ſent away in that character; ſo Chriſt was conſtituted, nominated, and appointed by his Father Saviour of the world, and ſo ſent away into the world in that character. The world is the world of mankind indefinitely, ruined by Adam's ſin, John iii. 16. *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.* Therein God's love toward man appeared, Tit. iii. 4.

2. The certainty of this goſpel or glad tidings. All the apoſtles witneſſed with one mouth this great truth; and they witneſſed the ſame as eye-witneſſes, having ſeen the Saviour, and converſed with him, and read his commiſſion for that effect, and beheld Heaven's ſeal again and again ſet to it, in his miracles. And this matter of their witneſſing from their eye-ſight, was ſo much ſtood upon, that the apoſtle Paul, who was not called to be an apoſtle till after Chriſt's aſcenſion, was allowed firſt to ſee with his eyes, before he ſhould bear witneſs, Acts xxvi. 16.——*I have appeared unto thee for this purpoſe, to make thee a miniſter and a witneſs both of thoſe things which thou haſt ſeen, and of thoſe things in the which I will appear unto thee.*

DOCT. *It is the great truth and teſtimony of the goſpel, that the Father has ſent his Son Jeſus Chriſt in the character of Saviour of the world.*

In proſecuting of this doctrine, I ſhall,

I. Take notice of ſome things imported in this teſtimony.

II. Open this character, *Saviour of the world*, in which Chriſt was ſent.

III. Apply.

I. I ſhall take notice of ſome things imported in this teſtimony.

1. The world needed a Saviour; otherwiſe one had not been provided for them by him who does nothing in vain. It was a ſick world, caſt into a deſperate illneſs by eating of the forbidden fruit; and needed a phyſician to cure the diſtemper, Matth. ix. 12. 'Jeſus 'ſaid unto them, they that be whole need not a phyſi-'cian; but they that are ſick.' It was a curſed world, ſtaked down under wrath by the ſentence of the broken law; and needed a Saviour to remove the curſe, and bring in the bleſſing, Acts iii. 26. 'God having raiſed 'up his Son Jeſus, ſent him to bleſs you,' &c. It was a loſt world, loſt to God, loſt to themſelves, loſt to all good, loſt and periſhing under the wrath of God; and it needed one to ſeek and ſave them, Luke xix. 10. 'For the Son of man is come to ſeek and to ſave that 'which was loſt.'

2. None of inferior dignity to the Son of God could be the Saviour of the world. No man nor angel was able to ſuſtain the character of Saviour of the world: the work which lay to that office, was above the reach of the whole creation, Rev. v. 3. 'And no man in hea-'ven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able 'to open the book, neither to look thereon.' Here was a trial of the divine love to man; his caſe was hopeleſs and helpleſs from all the creatures: and it iſſued in that, 'God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten 'Son,' John iii. 16.

3. Chriſt was ſent Saviour of the world from heaven's proper motion. The plot to ſave man, was concerted entirely without him. The world did not meet and ſend one to the court of heaven, with a petition for a Saviour, that a Saviour was granted to their earneſt intreaties and ſupplications; but the Father, of preventing free love, ſent his Son Saviour of the world. The world's need ſpoke loud, but they themſelves were quite ſilent; and yet their needs ſpoke no louder than thoſe of the fallen angels: and ſovereign free grace heard the voice of man's need, while it ſtopt its ears to the voice of the fallen angels, Tit. iii. 4. 'But the kindneſs and 'love of God our Saviour toward man appeared.'

4. Chriſt is fully furniſhed for the ſaving of a loſt world. His being ſent in that character, ſpeaks his ability to anſwer it, Heb. vii. 25. 'Wherefore he is able 'alſo to ſave them to the uttermoſt, that come unto God 'by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion 'for them.' There is no caſe to be found in the world but what there is a remedy to be found in Chriſt for. Whoſoever in the world ſhall die, they ſhall not die becauſe there was no help for their caſe in the Saviour, but becauſe they did not employ him, or put their caſe in his hand. The Saviour of the world, is certainly able to ſave the world; ſince he was ſent of God in that character.

5. *laſtly*, The ſalvation of loſt ſinners of the world of mankind, is very acceptable to the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus, as well as to himſelf, otherwiſe he had not ſent his Son Saviour of the world, 1 Tim. ii. 3, 4. 'For this is good and acceptable in the ſight of God 'our Saviour; who will have all men to be ſaved.' Hence it is called the pleaſure of the Lord, Iſ. liii. 10. ——*The pleaſure of the Lord ſhall proſper in his hand.* So he is ſaid to make the marriage for his Son, and to ſend forth to bid to that marriage, Matth. xxii. Whence it is evident, that there is no impediment to the ſalvation of ſinners by Jeſus Chriſt, on Heaven's part; it is pleaſing to the Father, to his Son, and to his Spirit.

II. I ſhall open this character, *Saviour of the world*, in which Chriſt was ſent: and for that end inquire into two things. 1. In what ſenſe Chriſt is Saviour of the world. 2. What is the buſineſs committed to him as ſuch.

Firſt, In what ſenſe Chriſt is Saviour of the world. A Saviour is a name of honour, and a name of buſineſs. It is an honourable thing to ſave and help the miſerable; to be deſtined, appointed, and called to that employment; but the honourable poſt has buſineſs annexed to it; it will not do without activity, which ſucceſs is expected to attend, as in the caſe of a teacher, phyſician, and the like. Now one may be a ſaviour, even as a teacher or phyſician of a ſociety, two ways. (1.) In reſpect of office, as being called to and inveſted with the office of ſaving, teaching, or curing of that ſociety. And thus one is ſaviour, teacher, or phyſician of that ſociety, before ever he ſave, teach, or cure any of them. In this reſpect one may be called an official ſaviour, teacher or phyſician. (2.) In reſpect of the event and ſucceſs, as actually and eventually ſaving, teaching, and healing. As the former ariſeth from an appointment put upon ſuch a one; this ariſeth from the work he manageth in virtue of that appointment. In this reſpect one may be called an actual and eventual Saviour. Thus it is ſaid, Neh. ix. 27.——*And, according to thy manifold mercies, thou gaveſt them ſaviours, who ſaved them out of the hands of their enemies.* This premiſed we ſay,

1. Our Lord Jeſus is the actual and eventual Saviour of the elect only, in whoſe room and ſtead only he died upon the croſs, according to the eternal compact paſſed between him and the Father, in the covenant of grace, otherwiſe called the covenant of redemption; for theſe are not two, but one and the ſame covenant. Thus the apoſtle calls him the Saviour of the body, Eph. v. 23.

that is, of the elect, who make up the body, whereof he was appointed the head from eternity, and in whoſe name he contracted with the Father in the eternal covenant. And he is their Saviour eventually, as actually ſaving them, Matth. i. 21. ‘ And ſhe ſhall bring forth a ‘ ſon, and thou ſhalt call his name Jeſus; for he ſhall ‘ ſave his people from their ſins.’ None but theſe will ever truly employ him as a Saviour, or put their caſe in his hand; and there are none of them, but will certainly employ him ſooner or latter, Acts xiii. 48.—‘ As ‘ many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.’ John vi. 37. ‘ All that the Father giveth me, ſhall come to ‘ me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe ‘ caſt out.’

2. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the official Saviour, not of the elect only, but of the world of mankind indefinitely; ſo our text calls him *Saviour of the world.* Agreeable to which, God in Chriſt is called *the Saviour of all men*, but with a ſpeciality, *the Saviour of them that believe*, 1 Tim. iv. 10. The matter lies here: Likeas a prince, out of regard to his ſubjects welfare, gives a commiſſion to a qualified perſon to be phyſician to ſuch a ſociety, a regiment, or the like; and the prince's commiſſion conſtitutes him phyſician of that ſociety; ſo that though many of them ſhould never employ him, but call other phyſicians, yet ſtill there is a relation betwixt him and them; he is their phyſician by office; any of them all may come to him if they will, and be healed: So God looking on the ruined world of mankind, has conſtituted and appointed Jeſus Chriſt his Son Saviour of the world: he has heaven's patent for this office; and whereſoever the goſpel comes, this his patent is intimated. Hereby a relation is conſtituted betwixt him and the world of mankind; he is their Saviour, and they the objects of his adminiſtration: ſo that any of them all may come to him, without money or price, and be ſaved by him as their own Saviour appointed them by the Father.

That Chriſt is thus the Saviour of the world appears, if ye conſider,

1ſt, Scripture-teſtimony, which is plain. Our text expreſsly calls him ſo: and ſo do the believing Samaritans profeſs their faith in him, John iv. 42.——*We have heard him ourſelves, and know that this is indeed the Chriſt, the Saviour of the world.* You have the appointment of Heaven very plain thereanent, John iii. 16. *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life*; even as the brazen ſerpent lifted up on the pole in the wilderneſs, was the ordinance of God for healing to the ſtung perſons of the whole camp of Iſrael. Hence Chriſt's ſalvation is called the common ſalvation, Jude ver. 3.; a ſalvation which any of mankind-ſinners may lay hold on. So the Saviour's birth is ſaid to be *glad tidings for all people*, Luke ii. 10, 11.; which it could not have been, if he had not been a Saviour for all people. Wherefore he himſelf teſtifies, that he came to ſave the world, John iii. 17. *God ſent not his Son into the world, to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be ſaved*, chap. xii. 47. *I came not to judge the world, but to ſave the world.* This was his office; to ſave ſinners indefinitely; not this or that ſort of ſinners, but ſinners of mankind indefinitely, without exception, 1 Tim. i. 15. *This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners*: the loſt, Luke xix. 10. ‘ The Son of man is come to ſeek and to ſave ‘ that which was loſt; 2 Cor. v. 12. *God was in Chriſt, reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them.* To the ſame purpoſe he declares himſelf *the light of the world*, namely, by office, John viii. 12. that whoſoever will employ him may have *the light of life.*

2*dly*, If it were not ſo, he could not warrantably be offered with his ſalvation to the world indefinitely, but to the elect only; more than he can be offered lawfully to fallen angels, who are not within his commiſſion as a Saviour. For the miniſterial offer can never lawfully carry the matter beyond the bounds of Chriſt's commiſſion from his Father. But Chriſt and his ſalvation may be warrantably offered to the whole world of mankind ſinners, with aſſurance that whoever of them will employ him to ſave them, he ſhall be ſaved: Mark xvi. 15, 16. *Go ye into all the world, and preach the goſpel to every creature. He that believeth ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not ſhall be damned.* Moreover, if it were not ſo, the unbelief of hearers of the goſpel, not elected, their not coming to Chriſt for ſalvation, could not be their ſin; for it can never be one's ſin not to do a thing he has no warrant for; not to employ one to ſave him, whom God never appointed to be his Saviour. So it is not the ſin of fallen angels, that they believe not in Chriſt for ſalvation, becauſe they are not within the Saviour's commiſſion, nor of thoſe who heard of Chriſt; becauſe his commiſſion was never intimated to them. But not believing in Chriſt the Saviour, is the ſin that ruins the hearers of the goſpel who do at all periſh, John iii. 19. *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds were evil.* Finally, if it were not ſo, the elect themſelves could never believe in Chriſt, till in the firſt place their election were revealed to them; which is contrary to the ſtated method of grace; for they can never believe on Chriſt for their ſalvation, till they ſee him to be a Saviour for them.

There are two things further to be remarked on this head.

1. The ground on which Chriſt might be conſtituted Saviour of the world by office. And that was the ſufficiency of the merit of his death and ſufferings: for though Chriſt died only in the room and ſtead of his elect, on the croſs ſuſtaining their perſons only, according to that, John x. 15. *I lay down my life for the ſheep*; yet the price paid for them, being of infinite worth, was ſufficient in itſelf to ſave the whole world. The bread provided for them, viz. a crucified Chriſt, was ſufficient to give life to and feed, not them only, but the whole world of mankind: and therefore he might be appointed Saviour of the world, John vi. 33. 51. *The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. I am the living bread, which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he ſhall live for ever: and the bread that I will give, is my fleſh, which I will give for the life of the world.*

2. The reaſon why he actually was conſtituted Saviour of the world. Among ſeveral reaſons that might be given for this, I ſhall only obſerve here this one, namely, That it was put upon him as a piece of honour, the reward of his great ſervice, in laying down his life for and inſtead of thoſe who were the objects of his Father's electing love, Iſ. xlix. 6. 8. *And he ſaid, It is a light thing that thou ſhouldſt be my ſervant, to raiſe up the tribes of Jacob, and to reſtore the preſerved of Iſrael: I will alſo give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayſt be my ſalvation to the end of the earth. Thus ſaith the Lord, in an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of ſalvation have I helped thee: and I will preſerve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people.* The Father for that cauſe inveſted him with *all power in heaven and earth*, Matth. xxviii. 18. John v. 21, 22. *As the Father raiſeth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even ſo the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.* And it was a reward ſuitable to his work.

Secondly, What is the buſineſs committed to him as Saviour of the world. Not to deſcend into particulars here, we may take it up in theſe two.

1. It is to ſave ſinners from their ſin, Matth. i. 21. ‘ Thou ſhalt call his name Jeſus: for he ſhall ſave his ‘ people from their ſins.’ Satan ruined the world by bringing ſin upon them: thereby they were bound by the cords of guilt, the image of God in them was

defaced, they were polluted and made loathſome, and ſhut up in the hands of a ſtrange lord. God has appointed Chriſt Saviour of the world, that the ſinners may come to him, and be delivered from their ſins. 1 John iii. 8. *He that committeth ſin, is of the devil; for the devil ſinneth from the beginning. For this purpoſe the Son of God was manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the devil.* It was an inveterate diſeaſe, the cure of which was quite beyond the reach of any mere creature, as far as the raiſing of the dead is; ſo he was was appointed Saviour in the caſe, Pſal. lxxxix. 19. 'I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one choſen out of the people.'

2. It is to ſave ſinners from miſery, to free them from deſtruction, Hoſ. xiii. 9. 'O Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf, but in me is thine help.' They are by ſin made objects of wrath, laid under the curſe of the broken law, liable to revenging wrath for time and for eternity; he is appointed to ſave them from all this, upon their coming to him, and employing him for that purpoſe, Iſ. xxxii. 2. *And a man ſhall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempeſt; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the ſhadow of a great rock in a weary land.* Sin let in a deluge of miſeries on the world, which flow about the ſinner continually in greater or leſſer meaſure: he is a Saviour to dry it up to them, 1 Cor. i. 30. 'But of him are ye in Chriſt Jeſus, who of God is made unto us wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and redemption.'

USE I. Of Information.

1. Behold here, and believe the great love of God to a loſt world, in providing a Saviour, and ſuch a Saviour, for them, even his own Son. The ſcripture ſpeaks of this in a very high ſtrain, John iii. 16. God ſo 'loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son,' &c. There was a man-love in God, Tit. iii. 4. *But the kindneſs and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,* a love of the kind, mankind. It has appeared in two eminent inſtances. 1. In ſecuring, by an irreverſible decree, the ſalvation of ſome of them. 2. In providing a Saviour for the whole of the kind, conſtituting his own Son Saviour to the loſt family of Adam indefinitely. Believe it with application to yourſelves. If upon this a ſecret murmur begins to go through your heart, But it was not for me; cruſh it in the bud, for it is a bud of hell. If you are not one of the devil-kind, but of ſinful mankind, it was for you. The Father gave Chriſt a Saviour for you, that if you would believe on him, you ſhould not periſh: he ſent his Son from heaven with full inſtructions and ample powers to ſave you, if you will believe. And is not this love? Believe it, and it will be the way to let you in to a ſight of more love.

2. Behold here a broad and firm foundation of faith for all and every one of you; that you may come to Chriſt, whatever your caſe is, and claim his righteouſneſs and his whole ſalvation for yourſelves; that you may betake yourſelves to him as the refuge appointed for you by the Father, from ſin and wrath, with as much freedom as a ſtung Iſraelite might have looked to the brazen ſerpent; that you may wholly truſt on him, that he will ſave you from ſin and wrath. For he was ſent of the Father Saviour of the world; and if by the Father's appointment he is Saviour of the world, he is by office your Saviour, and my Saviour, ſince we are members of that world of mankind: ſo that we may by faith claim his ſaving us from ſin and wrath: as a ſcholar bred in a place, may claim teaching of him who is appointed maſter of a free ſchool in that place; as thoſe of a congregation may claim preaching of their miniſter; and as the wounded in battle may claim healing of their own phyſician, who has a commiſſion to be phyſician to their regiment. For *we teſtify, that the Father ſent the Son Saviour of the world.*

3. Sinners living in their ſins, pining away, and about to periſh eternally in them, are without excuſe. For *we teſtify, that the Father has ſent the Son Saviour of the world:* John xv. 22. *If I had not come, and ſpoken unto them, they had not had ſin: but now they have no cloke for their ſin.* Sinners are deſtroyed with their living and raging luſts, they are run down with them as with running ſores, their ſouls are bleeding to death with them as with mortal wounds: in this caſe they hold on over the belly of their convictions; and they ſay, they cannot help it. One cannot help his ſwearing; another, his ſenſuality; another, his pride, paſſion, covetouſneſs, groſs ignorance, his old corrupt unrenewed heart. But the truth is, ye will not have it helped, John v. 40. *Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.* If ye cannot help it, ye have a Saviour can help it, if ye would employ him. Know it of a truth, if any of you ſhall periſh, and if ye go on in your ſins ye ſhall periſh, ye ſhall not periſh for want of a ſaviour. At the tribunal of God, the devils may ſay, We could not be ſaved from our ſins; for there was no Saviour appointed for us: the Pagans may ſay, We could not be ſaved; for though we were within the compaſs of the ſaviour's commiſſion, yet we never heard of it, it was never intimated to us. But what will ye get to ſay, for that ye are not ſaved from your ſins; when your ſaviour ſhall ſit judge upon you, and condemn you to ſuffer the vengeance of eternal fire, for that you would have none of him, nor his ſalvation; ye would not be ſaved from your ſins, would not put your caſe in his hand; though he had his Father's commiſſion to be ſaviour of the world, and your ſaviour, and it was read to you, ye would not receive him as your ſaviour, but would rather die in your ſins than employ him?

4. Believers themſelves may be aſhamed and confounded, for that iniquity prevails ſo againſt them. Alas! it is a ſad ſign the Saviour is little employed among us. Little living by faith, makes little holineſs of life. O look to that ſin that ſo eaſily beſets you, that has ſo often wrecked your ſoul's caſe; believe you have a Saviour for it, and employ him.

USE II. For *Trial.*

Try whether the ſaviour of the world by office, is your actual ſaviour; whether or no he has ſaved you. Think not that Chriſt puts off his ſaving of ſinners till they come to heaven; true they are not completely ſaved till they be there; but if your ſalvation by Chriſt is not begun here you ſhall never get it there: Tit. iii. 5, 6, 7. *Not by works of righteouſneſs, which we have done, but according to his mercy, he ſaved us by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt; which he ſhed on us abundantly, through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour: that being juſtified by his grace, we ſhould be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.* And ye have no right before the Lord to his table, if he has not been a ſaviour to you actually and eventually, in having ſaved you from ſin and wrath initially, though not completely; for if it is not ſo, it is an evidence you have not received him as your ſaviour; for no ſooner is he employed by a ſinner, but he begins to ſave that ſinner.

Mark 1. If Chriſt is really begun to ſave you, ye will have the ſaved man's thoughts of ſin, and of the wrath of God. If a drowning man were pulled alive out of a water, or a filthy ſtinking puddle; and ſtanding at the ſide of it, looking to it after that gliff, what would be his thoughts of that water, that puddle, where he was over head and ears, and almoſt gone? Such will be your thoughts of ſin, and of the wrath of God. Ye will have awful and reverend thoughts of the wrath of God above all awful things: Heb. xii. 28, 29. *Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may ſerve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a conſuming fire.* Matth. x. 28. *Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the ſoul: but rather fear him which is able to deſtroy both ſoul and body in hell.* Of all terrors it will be to you the moſt terrible. Thoſe in the ſtate of wrath, they are either ſo as they have loſt their ſenſes in it; they know not where they are, they are dreaming of ſome pleaſing place; and ſo they go on peacefully in their ſins, undiſturbed with thoughts of wrath: or elſe they have ſome terrible apprehenſions of it; but there is ſomething more terrible; and therefore they will rather ſin than ſuffer the hardſhips attending duty, yea attending mortification; or elſe their heart is fire-hot with the terror of the wrath of the Son of God, and in the mean time at leaſt key-cold of love and child like-affection to the God whoſe wrath it is. But the ſaved ſoul looks on it as of all things the moſt awful, but in the mean time with a child-like reverence of and affection to that God whoſe wrath it is.

Mark 2. Ye will have a tranſcendent eſteem of and love to your Saviour, 1 Pet. ii. 7. *Unto you which believe he is precious.* His conſcience-purifying blood, his ſoul-ſanctifying Spirit, will be more valuable to you than a thouſand worlds. Ye will deſire them above all things, pant and long after them, and ay more and more of them; and in compariſon of them, all the world will be but trifles in your eyes, which ye would be content to part with to gain them: Matth. xiii. 46. 'The merchant-man when he had found one pearl of great price, 'he went and ſold all that he had, and bought it.' Luke xiv. 26. 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and ſiſters, yea, and his own life alſo, he cannot be my diſciple. Phil. iii. 8, 9. Yea doubtleſs, 'and I count all things but loſs, for the excellency of 'the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord; for whom I 'have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and do count them 'but dung that I may win Chriſt, and be found in him, 'not having mine own righteouſneſs, which is of the 'law, but that which is through the faith of Chriſt, the 'righteouſneſs which is of God by faith.'

Mark 3. *laſtly*, Ye will be groaning under the remains of the diſeaſe of ſin ye are ſaved from; your conſcience will witneſs ye would fain be wholly rid of it, Rom. vii. 24. 'O wretched man that I am, who 'ſhall deliver me from the body of this death!' Your ſouls will be longing for the complete ſalvation; that the enemies you ſee to day, ye may ſee no more for ever; that ye may get a complete victory over all your corruption: Rom. viii. 23. 'We ourſelves grone within ourſelves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

USE *laſt*.

Receive the Lord Jeſus, then, O ſinners, in that character wherein his Father ſent him, as the Saviour of the world, and your Saviour. Ye are loſt in your ſins, and loſt under the wrath of God, and the curſe of the law; come to him for his whole ſalvation. Employ him, put your caſe in his hand, as your Saviour by the Father's appointment; and ſlight him no more.

Motive 1. Conſider you need a Saviour. Your diſeaſe of ſin will ruin you, if ye be not ſaved from it. The guilt of it will ſtake you down under wrath, and the wrath of God will ſink you into hell. And while ſin keeps its dominion over you, be ſure the guilt is not removed: Matth. ix. 12. *They that be whole need not a phyſician, but they that are ſick.* Gen. ii. 17. *But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou ſhalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.*

Mot. 2. There is no Saviour beſides Chriſt, Acts iv. 12. *Neither is there ſalvation in any other: For there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we muſt be ſaved.* All others are phyſicians of no value. All your own endeavours will not ſave you, nor any thing any creature can do for you.

Mot. 3. He is able to ſave you, Heb. vii. 25. 'He 'is able to ſave them to the uttermoſt, that come unto 'God by him.' Whatever be your caſe, there is infinite merit in his blood to take away the deepeſt guilt, 1 John i. 7. 'The blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son cleanſeth 'us from all ſin.' There is an infinite efficacy in his Spirit to ſanctify the moſt unholy, 1 Cor. vi. 11. 'And 'ſuch were ſome of you; but ye are waſhed, but ye are 'ſanctified, but ye are juſtified in the name of the Lord 'Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God.' If ye doubt it, ye diſhonour Chriſt, and his Father who ſent him, Pſal. lxxxix. 19. 'Then thou ſpakeſt in viſion to thy holy 'One, and ſaidſt, I have laid help upon one that is 'mighty; I have exalted one choſen out of the people.'

Mot. 4. He is willing to ſave you, Rev. xxii. 17. 'And the Spirit and the bride ſay, Come. And let 'him that heareth, ſay, Come. And let him that is athirſt, come: And whoſoever will, let him take the 'water of life freely.' The only thing wanting is your willingneſs to be ſaved, Jer. xiii. 27.——'Wo unto thee, 'O Jeruſalem, wilt thou not be made clean? when ſhall 'it once be?' There is no fear of being rejected if ye come, John vi. 37.——'Him that cometh to me, I will 'in no wiſe caſt out.' He has taken on him the office of Saviour of the world, and he cannot refuſe the buſineſs of it.

Mot. 5. *laſtly*, Ye muſt either receive him as your Saviour from ſin and wrath, according to his commiſſion from heaven; or ye will be, and be held refuſers of him for your Saviour, after his father has nominated and commiſſionated him for that effect. Conſider how ye will anſwer that before the judgment-ſeat.

Queſt. How ſhall I receive him, and employ him?

Anſw. By faith, by believing on him. Being convinced of your ſin and curſed ſtate, and deſiring to be ſaved from both, believe Chriſt is your Saviour by his Father's appointment; and ſo wholly truſt on him as a crucified Saviour, for his whole ſalvation, on the ground of God's faithfulneſs in his word.

The Neceſſity of SELF-DENIAL.

A SERMON preached on a Sacramental Occaſion, at Galaſhiels.

LUKE ix. 23.

And he ſaid to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs daily, and follow me.

THey that are raſh and indeliberate in their ſetting away after Chriſt among his followers, will readily be found to break away from him again, and deſert him, ere they come to the end of the courſe. Therefore our Lord Jeſus fairly intimates here, how he is to be followed of all that would come to the end of the courſe with him; that men may count the coſt ere they begin to build; and lay their account with what they are to expect in his company, in the way to the kingdom. And in the words there is,

1. The caſe which this intimation refers to, *If any man will come after me.* It is not the caſe of coming to Chriſt, as if none might come to him, or believe on him, till once they have denied themſelves, and taken up their croſs daily: for as none can come after Chriſt in the ſenſe of the text, till once they have come to him: ſo none ſhall ever be able to reach theſe things, till once they have believed on him. But it is the caſe of coming after Chriſt; which is more than following him: and conſiſts of two parts, (1.) Following him in the way to the kingdom, upon which one is ſet by believing. This part of it our Lord points at, Luke xiv. 26. 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and ſiſters, yea, and his own life alſo, he cannot be my diſciple;' as it is plainly imported in the expreſſion. (2.) Coming in at his back into the kingdom; as the term to which Chriſt with his followers was moving; where he being ſet down, they alſo come in after him, and in his right. And this part of it is expreſſed, verſ. 24. 'For whoſoever will ſave his life, ſhall loſe it: but whoſoever will loſe his life for my ſake, the ſame ſhall ſave it.'

2. What is neceſſary to that caſe, to one's following Chriſt in the way to, and coming in at his back, into the kingdom of heaven. Two things are neceſſary thereto. (1.) Self denial: Let him deny himſelf, otherwiſe he will not follow me in the way to the kingdom; for I deny myſelf, Rom. xv. 3. 'For even Chriſt pleaſed not himſelf; but as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.' John v. 30. 'I can of mine own ſelf do nothing.——I ſeek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath ſent me.' The original word is very forcible, Let him deny away himſelf, like thoſe that deſert a party, to have no more to do with them, and content that all the world know it. They muſt deny themſelves as the Jews denied Chriſt, Acts iii. 14. *But ye denied the holy One, and the juſt, and deſired a murderer to be granted unto you.* And how that was, ye ſee John xix. 15. 'But they [the Jews] cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him.——We have no king but Cæſar.' Away with ſelf, crucify it; we have no king but Chriſt. They muſt deny themſelves, as they muſt deny ungodlineſs, Tit. ii. 12. denying its cravings, ſtarving it, till it dwindle away into nothing. (2.) Taking up the croſs daily, and following him with it on our back, *Let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs daily;* otherwiſe he will not come in at my back to the crown; for ſo I go to it with the croſs on my back, and that daily. The croſs is any trouble or adverſity which the Lord lays upon his followers.

Now, theſe things are neceſſary in this caſe, abſolutely neceſſary; otherwiſe we do not follow Chriſt in the way to the kingdom, but ſelf in the way to deſtruction: and ſo we cannot come in at his back to the kingdom, and there is no other way to get into it. They are univerſally neceſſary: *If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf and take up his croſs daily, and follow me.* Be who they will, never ſo delicate, dainty; they muſt lay their fair necks under this yoke, or periſh.

3. The parties to whom this intimation is made: He ſaid to them all. Peter gave the occaſion for this, by his raſhneſs in adviſing or wiſhing Chriſt might ſpare himſelf as to the croſs; for which he got a particular rebuke. But Mark tells us, that thereupon he called together the people, and his diſciples alſo, chap. viii. 34. And here he ſaid to them all, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs daily, and follow me.* The matter nearly concerned them all, as well as Peter, the intimation was made to all accordingly.

DOCT. *Whoſoever will follow Chriſt in the way to the crown, and come in at his back to the kingdom of heaven, muſt of neceſſity deny himſelf, and take up his croſs daily, and follow Chriſt with it on his back.*

Three things fall here to be conſidered. I. One's coming after Chriſt, which is the caſe put; II. One's denying himſelf; and, III. One's taking up his croſs and following Chriſt; which are the two things neceſſary in that caſe.

I. *Firſt,* We are to conſider the coming after Chriſt, which is the thing ſome do aim at, and all ſhould. For clearing of that, conſider,

1. Chriſt in the world was in the way to his kingdom, the kingdom of heaven. Luke xix. 12. *A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himſelf a kingdom.* As he was God every where preſent, he was there even while on earth, John iii. 13.——*the Son of man which is in heaven,* but, as he was man, he was but in his way to it. That was the joy ſet before him, which he had in view all along while he travelled through our wilderneſs-world.

2. Accordingly he was in the world, not as a native thereof, but as a ſtranger travelling through it, with his face always away-ward from it, home to his father's houſe. Therefore, though he was ſometime courted to ſet up for himſelf in it, he would not hearken to the ſolicitations to ſtay, and take his kingdom there. The Jews would have forced their kingdom on him, John vi. 15. but he fled from it, departing into a mountain, where he was nearer heaven, out of the din of the world. Satan offered him all the kingdoms of the world, Matth. iv. 8, 9. but he rejected his propoſal with indignation.

3. Our Lord Jeſus made his way to his kingdom through many bitter ſtorms blowing on his face in the world, and is now entered into it: Heb. xii. 2.——*who, for the joy that was ſet before him, endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and is ſet down at the right hand of the throne of God.* His life here was a life of ſorrows; but now he has reached the fulneſs of joy. Death wrought on him all along to the grave; now it has no more dominion over him.

4. There is no coming into that kingdom, for a ſinner, but at his back, in fellowſhip with him: John xiv. 6. 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.' If we pretend to come into it otherwiſe, juſtice will caſt the door on our face, and tumble us down into the pit. He is the Captain of our ſalvation, that is on the head of the whole company of the ſaved: he is the door of the ſheep, and there is no entering but through him. So, *If any man will come after me,* is in effect, If any man will enter into the kingdom of heaven.

5. *laſtly,* There is no coming in at his back into the kingdom, without following him in the way: Pſal. cxxv. v. *As for ſuch as turn aſide unto their crooked ways, the Lord ſhall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity.* John xv. 6. *If a man abide not in me, he is caſt forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and caſt them into the fire, and they are burned.* He is the author, as well as the finiſher of our faith; and chief guide in the way, as well as the giver of the prize at the end of the race. Certainly the merit of Chriſt is effectual on none unto ſalvation, but thoſe whom it conforms to his example. If we have any ſaving part in his death, we will be conformed to him in his life. Wherefore, ſince Chriſt went to his kingdom, denying himſelf, and taking up his croſs, we muſt lay our account to go and do likewiſe, if we mind to be there.

II. *Secondly,* Let us then conſider briefly, one's denying himſelf to come after Chriſt. And,

1. It implies two things. It implies,

1ſt, That Chriſt and ſelf are contraries, leading contrary ways: *If any man come after me, let him deny himſelf.* Self is Chriſt's great rival in the world; and no man can ſerve the two maſters: he muſt either deny himſelf, and go after Chriſt; or he will deny Chriſt, and go after ſelf. There is no compromiſing the matter betwixt the two: for Chriſt is the leader of God's upſetting; ſelf of the devil's, when man fell off from God. Hence it implies,

2dly, That the ſelf to be denied, is our corrupt ſelf, the old man, the unrenewed part; for that only is contrary to Chriſt. And indeed it is not poſſible there can be any true ſelf denial but in ſound believers, regenerate perſons; in whom there is a renewed part, which is that which denies, and an unrenewed, which is that which is denied.

2. Wherein it conſiſts. It conſiſts in a holy refuſal to pleaſe ourſelves, that we may pleaſe God in Chriſt: for it is a denying of ourſelves in competition: and God is the competitor, whom the ſelf-denying Chriſtian prefers to himſelf, after Chriſt's example, Rom. xv. 3. *For even Chriſt pleaſed not himſelf*, &c. And it is God in Chriſt for whom a ſinner denies himſelf, as ſaith the text: for an abſolute God out of Chriſt being a conſuming fire, with which we can have no comfortable communion, the ſight of him frights away the ſinner, and cauſeth ſelf gather together all its ſtrength in its own defence againſt him; whereas the view of God in Chriſt, draws the ſinner to lie down at his feet and hope. Hence, in ſelf-denial there is,

1ſt, Faith and hope, as the neceſſary ſprings thereof: Phil. i. 29. *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Chriſt,——to believe on him.* Rom. xii. 12. *Rejoicing in hope.* Cut off theſe, and you cut off ſelf-denial; for the heart of man will never quit hugging of one's dear ſelf, till it get a God to reſt in; nor let go its grips of what it has, till it have hope of better.

2dly, A practical ſetting up of God as our chief end; and a bringing down ourſelves to lie at his feet: Pſal. lxxxiii. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon the earth that I deſire beſides thee.* This is true converſion, whereby a man is brought back to his primitive ſituation, out of which he was turned by ſin, ſetting ſelf on the throne as his chief end, and laying the honour of God at its feet. The which unnatural ſituation all natural men are in; their whole life being one uninterrupted courſe of practical blaſphemy, making themſelves the chief end, and God the means.

3dly, An unlimited reſignation of ourſelves unto God in Chriſt: 2 Cor. viii. 5.——*firſt gave their own ſelves to the Lord.* Faith taking hold of God as our God, according to the meaſure of faith, the whole man is ſwallowed up in him; God is all, and we become nothing in our own eyes: the whole ſoul, the whole man, the whole lot, is reſigned to him.

4thly, A refuſing to pleaſe ourſelves in any thing in competition with God; but denying the cravings of ſelf, as they are contrary to what God craves of us: Tit. ii. 12.——'denying ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts.' And herein lies the exerciſe of ſelf denial, which there will always be occaſion for while we are here. We may take it up in two generals.

1. Denying our ſelf-wit, which is ready to crave of us a quite other belief and judgment, than God demands of us by his word and works: Prov. iii. 5. *Truſt in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own underſtanding.* If we will come after Chriſt, we muſt in this caſe ſhut our own eyes, or refuſe to believe our own eyes. So did Abraham, Rom. iv. 17, 18.——'who againſt hope believed in hope,' &c. There are two caſes particularly wherein this ſelf-wit is to be denied.

(1.) In the caſe of truths revealed in the word, be they never ſo myſterious: 2 Cor. x. 5. *Caſting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itſelf againſt the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Chriſt.* The want of this is cauſing many unhumbled men make ſhipwreck of the faith at this day, to ſap the foundations of Chriſtianity in gratification of their ſelf-wit. But the grace of God will make the greateſt wits and profoundeſt ſcholars receive revealed truths like a bairn, if ever it touch their hearts: Luke xviii. 17. 'Verily I ſay unto you, Whoſoever ſhall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, ſhall in no wiſe enter therein.'

(2.) In the caſe of wants, crooks, and hardſhips that we find in our lot. God in his providence ſays, That trial, croſs, &c. is beſt for you; ſelf-wit ſays, It is very bad; and thinks it ſees well, how that work of God might be mended, and made far better. And thus many walk in a courſe of contradiction to the judgment of God declared in his works of providence. Holding faſt by ſelf-wit, they will not quit their opinion of the matter to him. That is walking after ſelf-wit.

Denying our ſelf-will, which is ready to thwart with the will of God. Therefore we are taught to pray, (Mat. vi. 10.) 'Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.' If we come after Chriſt, we muſt take God's will for our will, ſaying with him, (Matth. xxvi. 39.) 'Not as I wilt, but as thou wilt.' There are two caſes wherein we are particularly to deny our ſelf-will.

(1.) In the caſe of duty, that we may comply with the will of God's command, however croſs it may lie to our inclination; Rom. vii. 22. 23. *For I delight in the law of God, after the inward man. But I ſee a law in my members, warring againſt the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of ſin, which is in my members.* God's will muſt be a ſufficient reaſon for our practice, and we muſt put the knife to the throat of all our contrary inclinations, Tit. ii. 12. 'denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts.

(2.) In the caſe of our lot, that we may comply with the will of God's providence, Acts xxi. 14.——'ſaying, The will of the Lord be done.' He that made us muſt be allowed to manage our lot and condition; we calmly and contentedly ſubmitting our will to his, readily embracing what he carves for us. There is reaſon for it, Job xxxiv. 33. 'Should it be according to thy mind? he will recompenſe it, whether thou refuſe, or whether thou chuſe.'

And this denying our ſelf-wit and ſelf-will, muſt extend to three kinds of things.

1. To our civil comforts; ſuch as, our outward peace, worldly ſubſtance, liberty, and credit, and the like: all which muſt be laid at the Lord's feet, to do with them as he will, take them from us, or continue them with us, if ſo be we will come after Chriſt: Luke xiv. 26. 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and ſiſters, yea, and his own life alſo, he cannot be my diſciple.'

2. To our natural enjoyments, as health, eaſe, relations, even life; all which alſo muſt be laid at the Lord's feet, to be diſpoſed of as he will, not as we will, Luke xiv. 26. forecited.

3. To things of religion; not truſting in our own management for them, but depending wholly on the Lord, Pſal. cxxvii. 1. 'Except the Lord build the houſe, they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain;' nor making ourſelves the chief end of them, but the honour of God, even as in all things elſe, 1 Cor. x. 31. *Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatſoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

And here two things are of ſpecial conſideration. One is, That when we refuſe to gratify our will, on ſome carnal motive that may feed ſome ſpiritual luſt, as is the caſe in Popiſh auſterities, that is not the Chriſtian ſelf-denial; but a gratifying of ſelf in one thing, by denying it another: and that is a bias the heart is ready to ſlip aſide to. Another is, That there is a denying of ourſelves even in ſpiritual things; for there is nothing wherein ſelf may not mix while we are here. This was called for at Mary's hand, John xx. 17. *Jeſus ſaith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet aſcended to my Father,* &c. It was exerciſed by Paul, Phil. i. 23, 24. *I am in a ſtrait betwixt two, having a deſire to depart,* *and to be with Chriſt; which is far better: nevertheleſs to abide in the fleſh is more needful for you.* Spiritual benefits are ever to be deſired; but even in theſe things there muſt be an awful regard to the will of God. Say, 'Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.'

Uſe 1. Is it ſo that there is no coming after Chriſt but in the way of mens denying themſelves? then religion is no eaſy buſineſs, and there are few like to ſee heaven. It is not a way wherein men can be allowed that latitude and ſelf-indulgence, which moſt men cannot want. And they do but deceive themſelves, who pretend to faith, or to have come to Chriſt, that are not exerciſed to deny themſelves.

2. See and conſider, communicants, what ye are to lay your account with in coming after Chriſt, which, in communicating at his table, ye ſay ye are reſolved on: Lay your account with the ſtruggle againſt ſelf; giving up with ſelf-wit, and ſelf-will: and lay your account with your croſs.

3. See a weighty errand ye have at the Lord's table, with reſpect to denying yourſelves, and taking up your croſs. Ay, ſay ye, we are to bind ourſelves ſolemnly to theſe duties. I will not deny but ye are. But I doubt ye know your errand well anent theſe things, if that be the main part of it: that ſhould be, how to get ſtrength for theſe duties, and to get a ſealed poſſeſſion of Chriſt and the promiſes for that effect. And believing is the way to attain that.

(1.) The more firmly ye believe on Chriſt, and apprehend God as your God in him, the more will ye be in caſe to deny yourſelves, and take up your croſs.

(2.) It is by believing we at firſt become new creatures, 2 Cor. v. 17. *If any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature: old things are paſſed away; behold, all things are become new.* Eph. ii. 10. *For we are his workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works.* And it is by believing that the new man grows. And ſo it is by it that there is a principle of ſelf-denial, and by it one is ſtrengthened to the exerciſe thereof.

(3.) *laſtly*, In this duty deny yourſelves, and depend on the Lord.

III. *Thirdly*, We come now to conſider one's taking up his croſs, and that daily, and following Chriſt. Without this none can come after Chriſt to the kingdom of heaven, and in the way thereto. They who mind to come after him to mount Zion, muſt go as Simon the Cyrenian went after him to Calvary, Luke xxiii. 26. bearing his croſs.

We offer the import of this clauſe in theſe following things.

1. God will lay down the croſs to every one that minds for heaven, that they ſhall have nothing ado but to take it up, John xvi. 33.——'In the world ye ſhall 'have tribulation.' They ſhall not need to make croſſes to themſelves, nor to go out of their way to ſeek a croſs: God will lay it down at every one's door. He had one Son without ſin, but no ſon without the croſs, Heb. xii. 8. *But if ye be without chaſtiſement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye baſtards, and not ſons.* And God lays down the croſs to be taken up by us; when it is brought to that, we muſt either ſuffer or ſin, Heb. x. 35. 'Caſt not away therefore your confidence, 'which hath great recompence of reward.'

2. He will lay it down daily to the followers of Chriſt, that they may have a daily exerciſe in taking it up, and bearing the croſs of the day, Matth. vi. 34.——'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' A change of croſſes may be got, but there will be no end of them as long as we are here. Our wilderneſs-ſtation may be changed indeed; but it will be but for another wilderneſs-ſtation, till once we are over Jordan: Pſal. lxxiii. 14. *For all the day long have I been plagued, and chaſtened every morning.*

3. We muſt not be chuſers of croſſes. Every one muſt take up his own, allotted to him by ſovereign wiſdom, that is the beſt judge what croſs fits us beſt. We are ready to think, we could bear another croſs better than that which is laid before us: but that is but a deceit of the heart, that longs for ſhifting the preſent croſs; and ſpeaks a want of ſelf-denial. But to ſtrike the bottom out of this humour of picking and chuſing croſſes, know, that if God mind to take a particular trial of you for heaven and eternal life, and there be any one thing wherein, of all things, ye are leaſt able to be touched, God will chuſe your croſs for you in that very thing: ye will be ſure to be touched in the ſore heel, and get rubs where ye are leaſt able to abide them. And it is highly reaſonable the trial ſhould be there, when the competition is betwixt God and ſelf. Mark x. 21.——'One 'thing thou lackeſt; go thy way, ſell whatſoever thou 'haſt, and give to the poor; and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven; and come, take up the croſs, and follow me.'

4. We muſt not trample on the croſs, and ſtep over it, but take it up: Heb. xii. 5.—'My ſon, deſpiſe not 'thou the chaſtening of the Lord.' The ſullen manlineſs and Roman courage wherewith ſome bear their croſſes, is the produce of ſelf-will, not of ſelf-denial; and ſpeaks contempt of God, not ſubmiſſion to him. When Heaven is our party, it becomes us to ſtoop, and not to make our faces like flint, leſt God be provoked to daſh us in pieces.

5. Yet neither muſt we faint at the ſight of the croſs; for at that rate we will not be able to take it up: Heb. xii. 5.——'Nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.' It is unbelief cauſes that fainting, whiſpering in to the ſoul at the appearance of the croſs, Now, ye will never be able to bear that: and when that is received, the hands hang down, and the knees become feeble: and then the ſoul is next door to going out of God's way for relief, Heb. xii. 12, 13. 'Wherefore lift up the hands 'which hang down, and the feeble knees: and make 'ſtraight paths for your feet, leſt that which is lame be 'turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed.' But know ye it for a truth, There is no croſs whatſoever ſo heavy, but we may get it borne acceptably: there is an allowance of proportionable ſtrength made for it, to be fetched in by faith, 2 Cor. xii. 9. *And he ſaid unto me, My grace is ſufficient for thee; for my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs. Moſt gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Chriſt may reſt upon me.* Phil. iv. 13. *I can do all things through Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth me.*

6. As we muſt not go off the road of duty to ſhift the croſs, ſo we muſt not ſtand ſtill till it be rolled out of our way, but take it up and go forward. It is eaſy going off the way, but not eaſy coming on again. There are quagmires of ſin and ſorrow on every ſide of the croſs, where the ſhifters of it may come to ſtick, 1. Tim. vi. 9. 'But they that will be rich, fall into temptation, and 'a ſnare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful luſts, which 'drown men in deſtruction and perdition.' And to follow Chriſt in the ſummer of proſperity, and deſert him in the winter of adverſity, ſpeaks ſelf-love, not the love of Chriſt to be predominant in us; and will ſhew us to be time-ſervers, not ſervants of Chriſt: Job xvii. 9. 'The righteous alſo ſhall hold on his way, and he that 'hath clean hands ſhall be ſtronger and ſtronger.'

7. We muſt take up no more for our croſs, than what God lays down; not what Satan and our own corruptions lay to it: it will be our wiſdom, to ſhovel that off in the firſt place, and we will take up the croſs the eaſier. God lays down barrenneſs to Rachel for her croſs, Satan and her own corrupt heart lay a killing weight upon it. Gen. xxx. 1. 'And when Rachel ſaw 'that ſhe bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her 'ſiſter: and ſaid unto Jacob, Give me children, or elſe 'I die.' And then ſhe is like to die in taking it up. O how often do men lay over-weights on their croſs, and then complain they are not able to heave it! indeed we are for the moſt part in the miſt about our croſſes,

and then mole-hills appear mountains; but when the croſs is cleared of what is laid to it, the naked croſs will be found light; and he, has it half up, that has it to carry, 2 Cor. iv. 17. 'For our light affliction, which 'is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more ex'ceeding and eternal weight of glory.'

8. But however heavy the croſs be, we are not to refuſe it. Our very life, which of all worldly things is deareſt to us, muſt be laid at the Lord's feet, and we ready to part with it for Chriſt. The croſs was an inſtrument of death, and that a moſt ſhameful and painful one; and the neceſſity of taking it up, ſays, that every true follower of Chriſt muſt be content to be a martyr; and will be ſo, either in action or affection. Luke xiv. 26. *If any man come to me, and hate not——his own life, he cannot be my diſciple.*

9. We muſt yoke with the croſs willingly and ſubmiſſively: God can lay it on us, whether we will or not; but he will have us to ſtoop, and take it up on us: James i. 2. 'My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall 'into divers temptations.' When, by the providence of God, we fall into them, we muſt not be like the untamed bullock, to whoſe neck the yoke muſt be forced; but like the camel that bows down on his knees, till the burden is laid on him, Lam. iii. 29, 30. 'He putteth 'his mouth in the duſt, if ſo be there may be hope. He 'giveth his cheek to him that ſmiteth him, he is filled 'full with reproach.' So did Eli, 1 Sam. iii. 18. ——'He ſaid, It is the Lord; let him do what ſeem'eth him good.' This is done by a Chriſtian ſubmiſſion of our will to the will of God in the matter.

10. We muſt bear it, going evenly under it, till the Lord take it down. It is what belongs to the Lord, to take it off; it is our part to take it up. There muſt be an exerciſe of patience, in our coming after Chriſt, Luke xxi. 19. 'In your patience poſſeſs ye your ſouls.' And patience muſt have her perfect work, enduring to the end, James i. 4.

11. *laſtly,* We muſt follow Chriſt with the croſs on our back. The example of Chriſt's holy life, is the compaſs by which we muſt ſteer our courſe, if ever we get to the ſhore of Immanuel's land, 1 John ii. 6. *He that ſaith he abideth in him, ought himſelf alſo ſo to walk, even as he walked.* And the hardſhips of the way through the croſs, will not excuſe our going out of the way. However we be put to ſuffering, we muſt ay be doing in imitation of Chriſt.

Uſe. O Chriſtians, communicants, and whoſoever of you mind for the kingdom of heaven, lay your account with the croſs; take it up meekly, and bear it after Chriſt. Think it not ſtrange concerning the fiery trial. The croſs is a kindly name to a chriſtian: be reconciled to it. For that end conſider,

1. The neceſſity of it, in virtue of the divine appointment: *If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs daily, and follow me.* They that caſt out with the croſs, do in effect caſt out with heaven. Though the way of the croſs is a rough way, yet it is the high way, the only way to it. The fiery trial by the croſs, is that whereby God tries what metal is fit to be made a veſſel of glory, and what not: and it is a dreadful thing to be caſten here as baſe metal, Jer. vi. 29, 30. *The bellows are burnt, the lead is conſumed of the fire, the founder melteth in vain: for the wicked are not plucked away. Reprobate ſilver ſhall men call them, becauſe the Lord hath rejected them.*

2. Chriſt bore the croſs before you, for your ſake; and ſhall it be ſuch a frightful thing for you to bear it after him for his ſake? If ye would partake of his crown, will ye refuſe your part of his croſs; Rom. viii. 17.—— 'If ſo be that we ſuffer with him, that we may alſo be 'glorified together.' It is highly reaſonable Chriſt's followers be like him in the way to the kingdom, as well glorified with him in it. If the head bore a croſs, it were unbecoming the members to go without one. When he was a man of ſorrows, can his followers expect to be men of joys here? Will the world that was a ſtepdame to him, be a natural mother to you?

3. Conſider the relation your croſſes and troubles have to the croſs of Chriſt, O believers.

(1.) They are the croſs ſet up again to Chriſt, upon which his members are now ſuffering, Col. i. 24. 'Who 'now rejoice in my ſufferings for you, and fill up that 'which is behind of the afflictions of Chriſt in my fleſh, 'for his body's ſake, which is the church.' And the croſs piercing his members, cannot miſs to touch the head, Iſa. lxiii. 9. *In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his preſence ſaved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.* Zech. ii. 8. *For thus ſaith the Lord of hoſts; After the glory hath he ſent me unto the nations which ſpoiled you: for he that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye.* This view of the croſs, in which Chriſt himſelf appears on it with us, may render it more lovely.

(2.) They are Chriſt's croſs to you, as he left it. Chriſt in perſon took up the croſs, and there was a curſe in it when he took it up: he takes off the curſe, and leaves it; and bids you take it up next. O believer, the tree is left thee, but the curſe is away; the nails are left, but the venom they were dipt in is away. Though bulls ſhould puſh you, the horns wherewith they puſhed him are cut off. Though croſſes of all ſorts ſhould meet together in your caſe; the ſoul and life which the fiery law breathed into them, is gone.

(3.) They grow out of the croſs of Chriſt. Ye will, may be, not expect the Chriſtian's bitter troubles among the fruits of Chriſt's croſs; but miſtake it not: they muſt either be bleſſings or curſes. Curſes they are not, Gal. iii. 13. 'Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the 'law, being made a curſe for us;' therefore they are bleſſings; and if bleſſings, from whence elſe can they drop? Eph. i. 3. 'Bleſſed be the God and Father of 'our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed us with all ſpi'ritual bleſſings in heavenly places in Chriſt.' It was by the blood of his croſs he procured the covenant-bleſſings to his people, and the croſs among the reſt, Pſal. lxxxix. 30.——33. *If his children forſake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my ſtatutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I viſit their tranſgreſſions with the rod, and their iniquities with ſtripes. Nevertheleſs my loving-kindneſs will I not utterly take from him, nor ſuffer my faithfulneſs to fail.* We might welcome the croſs in this view.

4. The croſs is for the deſtruction of the old man, not of the new man. It is a croſs to our corruptions, that is much needed: but no real grace ever yet died by the croſs. As the candle ſhines brighteſt in the night, and the fire burns keeneſt in a keen froſt; ſo grace has ordinarily thriven beſt under the croſs. It is indeed a croſs to our corrupt will, that never goes right while it gets head: it is a croſs to particular luſts, that ſhould be mortified, Gal. v. 24. 'And they that are Chriſt's, have 'crucified the fleſh, with the affections and luſts:' and both theſe need to be croſſed.

5. It has been the lot of the ſaints in all ages. And there is no ſhifting of the croſs, if we will go out by the footſteps of the flock. Yea, and ordinarily they that have been moſt dear to God, have drunk deepeſt of the bitter cup; the moſt eminent for piety and uſefulneſs, as Job; for piety and parts, as Heman and Paul; for divine manifeſtations made to them, as Jacob and David.

6. *laſtly,* Public perſecution for the cauſe of Chriſt, is what moſt now alive never ſaw, far leſs felt; though our fathers had a long and dark night of it. But the way to heaven is ſtill the ſame; and therefore no wonder God is making up that want another way in the caſe of his people; and what trial formerly he took of them, by perſecutors, priſons, and gibbets, he is taking the ſame upon the matter of them now, by other means.

I will conclude by giving you ſome helps to bear the croſs.

Fifthly, 1. Look on yourselves as strangers on earth; and keep your eye on Christ, as he went through the world; and upon heaven, as your home, where only ye expect your rest.

2. Quit not faith's gripe of the promise of through-bearing: Isa. xliii. 2. *When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee: when thou walkeſt through the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt; neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee.* Believe firmly, that Chriſt lays on no croſs, without allowance of ability for acceptable bearing it; plead and look for it.

3. *Laſtly*, Set the croſs in the light of the word, and look in through it, till ye ſee the pleaſure in it that Paul affirms us from his experience to be within it, 2 Cor. xii. 10. 'Therefore I take pleaſure in infirmities, in 'reproaches, in neceſſities, in perſecutions, in diſtreſſes 'for Chriſt's ſake: for when I am weak, then am I 'ſtrong.' Why, (1.) There is a pleaſure in a man's ſeeing himſelf ſtanding a candidate for glory, on his trials for heaven. (2.) In ſeeing a gracious God croſs our corrupt inclinations; in ſeeing the thieves on the croſs, and the hand of God darting one arrow after another into their heart. (3.) In ſeeing ourſelves paſs the mountains, where we ſee the marks of Chriſt's own footſteps before us. Such a paradiſe there is, within the thorn-hedge of the croſs.

The Old and the New Man in Believers.

A

SERMON preached on a Sacramental Occaſion, at Maxton, in the Year 1729.

Rom. vi. 6.

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of ſin might be deſtroyed, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve ſin.

THE ſanctification of ſinners is no leſs a myſtery than their juſtification; the former ſpringing out of the croſs of Chriſt unto them, through the intervention of faith knitting the ſinner to a crucified Chriſt, as well as the latter. Hence the apoſtle having aſſerted the inſurance of the ſanctification of believers, that they ſhall certainly walk in *newneſs of life*, ver. 4. in *the likeneſs of Chriſt's reſurrection*, ver. 5. i. e. as Chriſt, during the forty days after his reſurrection, lived in the world after a new manner, very different from his manner of life in it before his death, brings the ground of it from the croſs of Chriſt, in the words of the text. In which we have,

1. The ground inſuring holineſs of life in believers united to Chriſt, *Our old man is crucified with him.* This ſecures their holineſs of life, in ſuch manner as the drying up of the fountain doth the drying up of the ſtreams.

(1.) The ſtate the fountain of ſin is in believers, *Our old man is crucified with him.* This ſuppoſeth that Chriſt was crucified; that in believers there is a twofold man, a new man, and an old; for while he ſaith, *our old man*, he intimates that the old man is not the whole man, as in the irregenerate. The new man is the new creature of grace in the believer, or he as renewed. This old man is the fountain of ſin in his heart and life.

Now, the ſtate it is in is a ſtate of crucifixion; it is nailed to the croſs, which is a ſtate of death. And its crucifixion is a concrucifixion with Chriſt, Gal. ii. 20. 'I am 'crucified with Chriſt.' In ſo far as the believer is by faith united to Chriſt, his old man is nailed to the croſs of Chriſt, to fare here as Chriſt fared: and that was heavy fare.

(2.) The iſſue of this ſtate of the fountain of ſin in believers. It is twofold.

1*ſt*, The final iſſue, *That the body of ſin might be deſtroyed.* The old man is the body of ſin, being a complication of the ſeveral ſinful luſts oppoſite to the holy law; as the body is of members competent to the human frame. Now, the final iſſue of this ſtate of the old man, the body of ſin, is its deſtruction and utter ruin. Crucifixion is not preſent death indeed, but it is ſure and certain death. Pilate would have *chaſtiſed Chriſt, and releaſed him*, Luke xxiii. 16. but the Jews would have him crucified, for that would carry him quite away from among them: even ſo the old man is not to be corrected and amended, but deſtroyed quite and clear.

2*dly*, The intermediate iſſue, *That henceforth we ſhould not ſerve ſin*: that from the moment of our union with Chriſt we ſhould not ſerve ſin any more, voluntarily living in it, and giving up ourſelves to it as its ſervants, to live and act for ſatisfying of it, as we did before. The old man may live long on the croſs, before he be deſtroyed; but then his hands and feet cannot ſerve him as they did before, there are nails driven through them; he may move them indeed, but then it is with pain and difficulty. So was it with Chriſt; he behoved to recommend his mother to the care of his beloved diſciple John, for that his own hands and feet were not at liberty to act and go for her as formerly.

2. The certainty concerning this ground, *Knowing this.* It is not a matter of uncertain hope, but known for truth. It could not be known by ſenſe; no bodily eye could diſcern our old man on the croſs with Chriſt; not yet by rational deduction from natural principles; for the whole myſtery of Chriſt is ſuper-natural. Therefore it is known by faith upon divine teſtimony; it is a concluſion of faith to be laid down for invigorating us in all our endeavours after holineſs of life, and to be firmly held and ſtuck by, in all our ſtruggles with the old man, as ever we would deſire to make head againſt him.

That I may touch the ſeveral purpoſes of this text, I ſhall offer them in ſeveral doctrines to be briefly handled.

Doct. I. *There is in believers united to Chriſt a new man, a holy principle; and an old man, a fountain of ſin.*

I. Why the holy principle and the corrupt nature in believers are called the new and old man?

1. They are called men becauſe each of them poſſeſſeth the whole man, though not wholly. There are by this means two I's in every believer, Rom. vii. 15. *For that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.* There is not one part of the man that is in Chriſt, but grace has a part of it: as in the twilight there is light over all, and darkneſs over all too, the darkneſs being mixed in every part with the light. So my renewed part is I, a man having an underſtanding enlightened, a will renewed, affections ſpiritualized, uſing my body conform; but my unrenewed part is I too, having an underſtanding darkened, a will rebellious, affections corrupted, and uſing my body accordingly.

2. They are called the *new* and *old man*, for two reaſons.

(1.) Becauſe the new nature is brought in upon the corrupt principle, which was the firſt poſſeſſor. The corrupt nature is of the ſame ſtanding with ourſelves from the conception and birth, and had all its alone till our union with Chriſt by faith. And then only came in the new nature, and that made the former old.

(2.) Becauſe of their different originals: the one being in us from the corrupt firſt Adam, the other from the holy ſecond Adam. So the believer looking on the corruption of his nature, may call fallen Adam father; and on the new creature in him, he may call Chriſt father. The ſecond Adam coming after the firſt, made the firſt old; ſo the produce of them in us, is the old and new man accordingly.

II. How the believer comes to be thus ſplit in two, two men. This is done by virtue of his union with Chriſt, from whence ariſeth a communication of grace to him from Chriſt, 1 Cor. i. 30. *But of him are ye in Chriſt Jeſus, who of God is made unto us wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and redemption.* Concerning which two things are to be noted.

1. That in the moment of one's union with Chriſt by faith, there is communicated to him out of the fulneſs of grace in the man Chriſt, a meaſure of every grace in him, as the wax impreſſed receives every point in the ſeal, John i. 16. 'And of his fulneſs have all we received, and grace for grace.' Eph. iv. 13. *Till we all come*——*unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt.* And thus is the new creature formed, being a new man perfect in parts, entire or having all its members, no grace totally wanting.

Hence it is that the new man is formed immediately after Chriſt's image, ſo that it is the very picture of the man Chriſt, as Eve was of Adam. Therefore the forming of it is ſaid to be the forming of Chriſt in the believer, Gal. iv. 19.

2. That yet there is not then, nor during this life communicated to the believer a full meaſure of any grace, 1 Cor. xiii. 9. 'For we know in part.' So all the graces being imperfect, though they remove ſin as far as they go, they cannot fill up the room in any part mind, will, or affections. And thus is there an old man left in the believer ſtill, Rom. vii. 14. which is the image of the firſt Adam, from whom the corruption compoſing it is derived.

USE 1. Hence ſee, that the believers life while here cannot miſs to be a ſtruggling life, Gal. v. 17. *For the fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the fleſh: and theſe are contrary the one to the other; ſo that ye cannot do the things that ye would.* The believer is like Rebekah in another caſe, the two men ſtruggle in him; and like the two armies in the Shulamite.

2. See here the riſe of the peace and eaſy life of it moſt men have. The fleſh in them has no competitor. In the ſtate of glory, grace has all, ſo there is a perfect peace: in the ſtate of nature, corruption has all; ſo there is peace too; except what is marred by the ſtruggle between the fleſh in one part luſting, and the fleſh in another part fearing, as in Balaam, 2 Pet. ii. 15. 'who loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs,' compared with Numb. xxii. 18. *If Balak would give me his houſe full of ſilver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do leſs or more.* Whereas the ſtruggle in the believer is betwixt the fleſh and Spirit in the ſame part, nilling and willing the ſame thing of their proper motions, Rom. vii. 15, 16. forecited.

DOCT. II. *The old man in believers is a body of ſin, an entire body lacking none of its members.* Rom. vii. 24. 'O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?' This appears from the account of it already given. As we derive every grace from the ſecond Adam in our regeneration, ſo every corruption from the firſt Adam in our natural generation.

USE 1. This may ſerve to humble believers, when they are at their beſt. There is an entire body of ſin in them while they are here. Do they excel in any grace; yet there is in them a member of the old man oppoſite to it, as paſſion in meek Moſes. Have they every grace in them? They have every corruption too, though every one does not appear, more than every grace. Therefore they have need to watch againſt all ſin whatſoever; for there is never a ſnare in the ill world, but there is a member of the old man ready to fall in with it, Col. iii. 5. *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanneſs,* &c.

2. No wonder the believer grone being burdened, having a whole body of ſin carrying about with him. And they that grone not under it, are certainly all fleſh; no new man in them. If ye belong to Chriſt, ye cannot want an errand to him for ſanctification. Ye have a body of ſin to lay before him, for killing virtue from him againſt it.

DOCT. III. *The old man in believers is crucified with Chriſt.* This bears two things.

I. Chriſt was crucified. He not only died for us, but died for us the curſed, painful, ſhameful, lingering death on the tree of the croſs; which we are met to commemorate. Chriſt was put to this death for us, rather than another kind of death.

1ſt, That the firſt ſin that let in all ſin into the world, might be the more clearly read in the puniſhment. When ye conſider the awful and tremendous diſpenſation of the Son of God, the ſecond Adam, hanging naked on a tree, and dying there at great leiſure in exquiſite pain; can ye miſs to ſee the fiery wrath of God againſt the ſin of that naked pair in paradiſe, pleaſuring themſelves in the fruit of the forbidden tree, and in an inſtant defacing the image of God in them?

2dly, That the whole world might ſee, what a low and hard ſtate Chriſt took on him, putting himſelf in our room. We were bond-men under the curſe, and Chriſt took on him our ſtate of ſervitude, and that under the curſe, becoming a bond-man for us under the curſe, Philip. ii. 7. 'He took upon him the form of a ſervant.' Hereof the death on the croſs was the ſign and badge, being the puniſhment of ſlaves, and accurſed in the law. And to make way for this circumſtance, the Jews were ſubjected to the Romans.

USE 1. Remember a crucified Chriſt, enter this night deep into the thoughts of the Son of God hanging, groaning, dying on a croſs for us. Admire the matchleſs love in it. Behold the ſeverity of divine juſtice againſt ſin in it. Prize the ſalvation ſo dearly bought, and receive it with thankfulneſs.

2. Think not ſtrange, if ye have a crucified life in the world. If ye are Chriſtians, followers of Jeſus, why ſhould ye think ſtrange of it, to be thus conformed to your head?

II. The old man in believers is crucified together with him. Here we are to enquire how it is crucified with him; which take in the following particulars.

1. Chriſt hung on the croſs as a public perſon, a re-

preſentative of his ſpiritual ſeed. For he was the ſecond Adam ſuffering, as the other the firſt Adam ſinning. So that as they ſinned in Adam, they ſuffered in Chriſt; the law having them all on the croſs in Chriſt their repreſentative, Gal. ii. 20. 'I am crucified with Chriſt.'

2. Chriſt hanging on the croſs had the body of all their ſins upon him, your old man and my old man. They were on him by the imputation of the guilt of them, though not inherent in him, 2 Cor. v. 21. *For he hath made him to be ſin for us, who knew no ſin; that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.* Therefore our old man is ſaid to be crucified, not *in* him, but *with* him.

3. While he was hanging on the croſs, he was meritoriouſly doing away the guilt of them, and conſequently the power, pollution, and very being thereof; inaſmuch as the guilt being removed, theſe muſt ceaſe of courſe. For the ſtrength of ſin is the law, whereby it ſtakes down the ſinner under the curſe, 1 Cor. xv. 56.

4. The ſinner being united to Chriſt by faith, the merit and virtue of Chriſt's ſuffering on the croſs is actually applied to him. So that, his guilt being removed, there is a reigning principle of grace planted in him, going through the whole man, whereby the dominion of ſin is broken, Rom. vi. 14. and the pollution removed ſo far as that new man goes, Tit. iii. 5. So that the believer is an image of Chriſt on the croſs, full of grace in him, and of ſin on him; but the former working off the latter.

USE 1. See then, O communicants, that the crucifying of the old man, the body of ſins in you, depends entirely on your uniting with Chriſt by faith. The ſacrament is appointed to ſeal and ſtrengthen that union. Therefore your great buſineſs at the table ſhould be, cloſely to knit with a crucified Chriſt. The more of that, the more will the death of ſin be haſtened on. And they that aim not at the deſtruction of ſin in their communicating, while they pretend to remember a crucified Saviour, forget the end of his crucifixion, viz. that the body of ſin being crucified with him might be deſtroyed.

2. The old man in believers, is in a ſtate of death, though not dead outright. It is crucified with Chriſt. It may move and ſtir in them, and vehement ſtruggles it may make, as a dying man ſtruggling with the mortal diſeaſe: but whatever efforts it make, it is on the croſs, whence it ſhall not come down till it breathe out its laſt.

2. The practice of religion is painful work; and Chriſtians muſt not think it ſtrange, that oft-times they are pained to the heart in it. The ſaints in glory have no pain in their work; for the old man is deſtroyed in them; but the ſaints here have an unrenewed part; and that is on the croſs, and cannot but pain them. There are right eyes in them to be plucked out; the man has a painful ſtruggle in denying himſelf, croſſing his own inclinations, wreſtling againſt his own fleſh and blood. Providence thruſts a ſpear into the old man's ſide, by piercing trials and troubles; it breaks his legs by cutting diſappointments from many airths, to forward his death. This cannot be but painful.

4. The old man is long a dying out; for crucifying is a lingering death. There muſt be an exerciſe of patience in the Chriſtian courſe; for there may be many a battle ere the complete victory be got. Many a wound the old man will take ere he fall; and after he is worſted again and again, he will get up and renew the battle, till he get the final ſtroke from the Lord's immediate hand.

It is a grave queſtion, Why doth the Lord ſuffer the old man of ſin to dwell in his people, after their converſion? Why is not ſin quite expelled at the firſt entry of grace? Our text affords one weighty reaſon for it, viz. That the members may be conformed to the head. Chriſt did not put off him the body of our ſins that by imputation lay on him, at his very firſt encounter with it; nay, he had a grievous ſtruggle with it for the ſpace of three hours on the croſs, till he himſelf got the firſt fall, dying by its hand on the croſs. Nay, if we reckon rightly, it lay heavy on him the ſpace of thirty-three years; only upon the croſs was the heat of the battle, which ended in his death and burial, whereby he put it off quite and clean. So ſince imputed ſin was on Chriſt the head all his life, inherent ſin is left in believers the members all their life. The old man is crucified with him.

DOCT. IV. *By virtue of the croſs of Chriſt, the old man in believers ſhall certainly be deſtroyed quite and clean at length.* Here we may enquire,

I. What deſtruction is that, that is certainly abiding the old man in believers? It is an utter deſtruction of it, with all effects of it, all marks and veſtiges of it, all belonging with it to the old Adam.

1. The old man himſelf ſhall be deſtroyed, utterly deſtroyed, out of all that are Chriſt's; ſo that though he has many a time trode them like a field of battle, there ſhall not be in them the leaſt print of his feet to be diſcerned, Heb. xii. 23.—'The ſpirits of juſt men 'made perfect.' The day will come, when there ſhall not be the leaſt guilt of it on them, to draw a frown from their Father's face againſt them, Iſ. xxxiii. ult. *The people that dwell therein, ſhall be forgiven their iniquity;* when it ſhall have no power to prevail over them in the leaſt; nay, when it ſhall no more have an indwelling in them, Heb. xii. 23. forecited; but ſhall be utterly caſt forth as an abominable branch. So the new man ſhall poſſeſs all alone, without a competitor for ever.

2. The ſinful vile body derived from old Adam, which brought him down from Adam to us, Pſal. li. 5. and continues to the end the beſt friend he has in believers, ſhall be deſtroyed for his ſake. The ſoul ſhall leave the ſinful fleſh to be carried into the grave, where it ſhall rot and conſume, till it return to the duſt again, ſo as not the leaſt lineament of old Adam's image or likeneſs ſhall be diſcerned on it. And Chriſt will take the ſame duſt thus purified, and form it anew after his own likeneſs as ſecond Adam, Philip. iii. 21.

3. The viſible heavens that covered him, and this earth that bore him, and furniſhed fewel to his luſts, ſhall for his ſake be ſet on flames, and reduced to aſhes, 2 Pet. iii. 10. *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat, the earth alſo and the works that are therein ſhall be burnt up.* Compare Gen. iii. 17. *Curſed is the ground for thy ſake.* So that it ſhall no more for ever be to be ſaid, There is the earth where the old man ſome time lived, and there the heaven that gave him light and air. But Chriſt will make new heavens and a new earth for the new man, 2 Pet. iii. 13. *Nevertheleſs we, according to his promiſe, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs.*

4. *laſtly*, All that ſhall remain of him, ſhall be buried in hell, Rev. xx. 14. 'And death and hell were caſt in'to the lake of fire.' Old Adam brought in the old man into the world, and he ſpread his poiſonous efficacy over all; ſo that look where ye will, ye ſhall not ſee in all this world that in which there is not ſin, or ſome effect of ſin. But then all ſhall be gathered from off believers, and from off the now groning creatures, and caſt into the lake of fire; ſo that there ſhall not be the leaſt ſin, nor effect of ſin, without the boundaries of hell.

II. When will the old man be thus deſtroyed? You will eaſily conceive, from what is ſaid, that deſtruction will have two periods.

1. At the death of the believer, and not till then. Till then the child of God muſt wreſtle on with it; for ſo did Chriſt with it as imputed to him, till death ſet him free. It is a grave queſtion, How come believers to die being freed from the curſe of the covenant of works? *Anſwer*, They die in conformity to Chriſt their head; that as death came in by ſin, ſin may go off by death.

It is not dying that does it indeed; for ſin goes through death in [illegible] that are out of Chriſt, not moved from off them for all that death can do. But at death, Chriſt gives the redding ſtroke betwixt the new and old man, kills the old man outright, as 2 Sam. i. 10. And he does it, by letting in a full meaſure of every grace from himſelf into the believer, which takes up the whole man wholly; and ſo the old man is gone in a moment, as the darkneſs upon the ſun's diſplaying his beams over all.

2. At the end of the world. Then comes the utter abolition of all veſtiges of it out of hell.

III. The certainty of it. It is even as ſure as the death of Chriſt could merit its deſtruction, and as the end of his death cannot be fruſtrated, as he roſe again from the dead free from the imputed guilt of it, and ſits in heaven to-day without ſin ſo much as imputed to him.

USE. Let the ſaints then take courage, and renew the battle vigorouſly with the old man; for the victory will undoubtedly fall to their ſide. And as for you that are ſtill for keeping the old man's head and heart hale; as ye do interpretatively deſire none of Chriſt's croſs, it is an argument ye have as little ſaving intereſt in it.

DOCT. V. *In the mean time, till the old man be deſtroyed quite and clean by virtue of the croſs of Chriſt, by virtue of the ſame croſs, the believer ſhall not be a ſervant to the old man more.* That is the preſent piece of freedom from it the believer has.

1. The believer has heartily given up with him for a maſter. Some time he ſaid, as Exod. xxi. 5.——'I 'love my maſter,——I will not go out free.' But now he hates him mortally, and would fain be altogether free at any rate, Rom. vii. 24. 'O wretched man that 'I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this 'death!' The very being in the houſe with the old man is a burden.

2. He will get no work, but forced work, off his hand more, Rom. vii. 15. 'For that which I do, I allow 'not,' &c. He will not yield his members to the old man voluntarily, as before, chap. vi. 13. *Neither yield ye your members as inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin.* He that will never get work with whole good-will at his hand more, but half-will at moſt.

USE. This writes death to ſuch as have given their hand to Chriſt at his table, and are ready to go back into the ſervice of their luſts. If from henceforth ye enter not into a ſtruggling life againſt ſin, ye have not felt the virtue of Chriſt's croſs.

DOCT. VI. *ult. Believers ſhould go out againſt the old man in acts of holineſs, in the faith that he is a crucified man; i. e.* Believe your old man is crucified with Chriſt, and in this belief beſtir yourſelf againſt him in the uſe of appointed means. If you believe it not, how can your hands be ſtrong, having all to do your alone? But believe it firmly, and it will make you as a giant refreſhed with wine.

WORM JACOB threſhing the MOUNTAINS.

A

SERMON preached on a Sacramental Occaſion.

ISAIAH xli. 14, 15.

Worm Jacob——thou ſhalt threſh the mountains, and beat them ſmall, and ſhalt make the hills as chaff.

RELIGION is a myſtery, and the truly religious are a myſtery too. They are a myſtery to the world, 1 John iii. 1.——'The world knoweth us not;' yea to themſelves, ver. 2.——'It doth not yet appear what we 'ſhall be.' That is a matter not of ſight and feeling, but of faith. There are many odd connections, which folk would think contradictions and impoſſibilities, in their character. See a cluſter of them, 2 Cor. vi. 9. 10. *As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chaſtened, and not killed; as ſorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet poſſeſſing all things.* That is a ſtrange connection, an old man and a new man in one man; but none more ſtrange and ſurpriſing, than this in the text: *A worm threſhing the mountains;* and that not ridiculouſly, without effect; but moſt efficaciouſly, beating them ſmall. In theſe words we have two things.

1. What the church and people of God are. They are named by him who miſnames none, *Worm Jacob.* Their name from their nature is a *worm;* they are poor, weak, deſpiſed creatures, ready to be cruſhed by the foot of every paſſer-by: yet *worm Jacob;* believing, praying, wreſtling *worms,* as he was.

2. What they ſhall certainly and infallibly do, *Threſh the mountains, and beat them ſmall,* &c. I find interpreters generally underſtand by *mountains,* the great and lofty potentates of the earth, ſetting themſelves againſt the church. And no doubt theſe were in the prophet's view; but the view was not confined to them only. God's bringing down the Babylonian monarchy at their prayers, and the victories afterward of the Maccabees over their enemies, cannot reaſonably be ſuppoſed to complete the intent of this prophecy. We muſt needs look to the kingdom of Chriſt for it; of which there is plainly an account, ver. 17. 18, 19. Compare Dan. ii. 34. 35. And we muſt carry on our view, all along to the end of time, Rev. ii. 26. 27.; the rather that it is the manner of the prophet, to wrap up in one expreſſion, temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal deliverance; the deliverance from Babylon, which was temporal, being the firſt and neareſt in view, Iſa. xxvi. 19. 'Thy dead 'men ſhall live,' &c.; but not terminating it. Here then we may conſider,

(1.) What *worm Jacob* has to encounter or yoke with, *mountains* and *hills,* whoſe weight is ſufficient to cruſh millions of him; difficulties quite diſproportionable to his ſtrength, as a mountain to that of a worm.

(2.) The ſucceſs of this ſo very unequal match. The mountains ſhall not cruſh the worm; but the worm ſhall threſh the mountains, as one does a ſheaf of corn with repeated ſtrokes. They did not in thoſe days threſh their corn with flails, as we do; but tread it out with the feet of men or beaſts, or elſe by drawing a kind of cart, drag, or ſledge over and over it, called in the text *a threſhing inſtrument.* I do not find the word here denoting the action of the worm, and rendered *threſhing*, applied at all to the drag: but as it formally ſignifies *to tread out*, as rendered Hoſ. x. 11. ‘ Ephraim is as an heifer that is taught, and loveth to tread out the corn;’ as appears from Iſa. xxv. 10. *For in this mountain ſhall the hand of the Lord reſt, and Moab ſhall be trodden down under him, even as ſtraw is trodden down for the dunghill.* So it is applied to a ſelf-moving creature, man, Micah iv. 13. ‘ Ariſe and threſh, O daughter of Zion;’ or beaſt, Jer. l. 11. Here lies the myſtery then, uniting the two notions of the ſelf-mover and the inſtrument, that the worm ſhall tread out the mountains, as one would do a mole-hill. And if ye ſay, Alas! ſuch a treader! what weight has it? I will make (ſays the Lord) the feet or belly of the worm like a new-ſhod threſhing drag for them, that ſhall tread out the higheſt and rockieſt of them all, to purpoſe.

(3.) The degree and pitch of the worm's ſucceſs againſt thoſe mountains; it ſhall beat them ſmall, till they be like duſt, as the word is uſed, Deut. ix. 21.; or like chaff: ſo that they ſhall be blown away with the wind, and no veſtige of them remain.

(4.) The inſurance of this ſucceſs of the worm. Who could inſure it, but the mighty God? He has done it. Jeſus Chriſt, Jehovah, the moſt high God, and worm Jacob's Kinſman-redeemer, hath, by his word of promiſe, engaged his almighty power on the ſide of the worm againſt the mountains. Let not the worm fear or doubt the ſucceſs. A worm ſeconded by Jeſus Chriſt, will be an overmatch for all the mountains and hills ſetting up their heads from earth or hell.

DOCT. *The myſtery of grace carried on by Jeſus Chriſt in his church and people, is like a worm's threſhing the mountains, infallibly to iſſue in its threſhing them away quite and clean.* Briefly, *Worm Jacob ſhall threſh the mountains, and threſh them away quite and clean.*

Here we ſhall conſider,

I. The character of the ſubject wherein this myſtery of grace is carried on by Jeſus Chriſt.

II. The myſtery of grace carried on in them by Jeſus.

III. I ſhall account for this myſtery, *worm Jacob* threſhing the mountains of difficulties in his way, and threſhing them away quite and clean.

IV. Apply.

I. *Firſt*, I ſhall conſider the character of the ſubject wherein this myſtery of grace is carried on by Jeſus Chriſt. It is in *worm Jacob*, denoting the church in general, and every believer or true member thereof in particular: for of theſe the church conſiſts, as in the text, verſ. 14. without the ſupplement, *Fear not, thou worm Jacob, ye men of Iſrael.* One would think, that one deſigned to be a threſher of the mountains, ſhould be a party of a ſignally great and ſwelling character, a hero, a giant, or if there were any thing could carry the character higher: but on the contrary, it is very low, ſurprizingly low, worm, worm Jacob. This character points at theſe five things eſpecially, in the caſe of the people of God. It points them out as,

1. Weak creatures, really weak for the encounters they muſt make, as a worm for a mountain. God himſelf gives them this name of extreme weakneſs; therefore they muſt be ſo in very deed. They have weak heads, hearts, hands, for the work they are called to. Not only does the firſt grace find them really weak, but the after ſupplies of grace alſo, Heb. xi. 34.—— ‘ Out of weakneſs were made ſtrong.’

2. Humbled ſouls, truly ſenſible of their own weakneſs. By nature they were ſwelling vipers, but by grace they are humbled worms. And,

1ſt, Habitually humbled, in reſpect of their ſtate: as the creeping worm, whoſe nature it is to go on its belly. So the humble and the gracious are equivalent terms, Pſal. xxxiv. 2, 3. *My ſoul ſhall make her boaſt in the Lord: the humble ſhall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.* There is a law-work followed with goſpel-grace, wrought on them; iſſuing in a thorough humiliation, breaking down their natural ſelf conceit, tumbling down their towering imaginations about themſelves which they had in their ſtate of blindneſs, bringing them, in their own eyes, from the conſiſtence of mountains to that of worms; and convincing them, they are, have, and can do, nothing, Luke xv. 17. 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

2dly, Actually humbled, in reſpect of their frame. As the worm ſtill retains its creeping gate, at the mountain, as in the valley: ſo God's people, at difficulties to be happily ſurmounted, ſtill keep up the ſenſe of their utter emptineſs, and weakneſs for them, 2 Cor. iii. 5. *Not that we are ſufficient of ourſelves to think any thing as of ourſelves: but our ſufficiency is of God.* If the *worm Jacob* begin to ſwell again, he will be ſo unwieldy that he will threſh no mountains, till he fall anew, 1 Cor. xv. 10. 2 Cor. xii. 11.

3. Deſpiſed creatures. As the lofty mountains overtop the crawling worm, ſo doth the carnal world contemn *worm Jacob*, Pſal. xxii. 6. ‘ But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and deſpiſed of the people; and cxxiii. 4. Our ſoul is exceedingly filled with the ſcorning of thoſe that are at eaſe, and with the contempt of the proud.’ Though they may value *worm Jacob*, for his gifts which he has in common with themſelves; they will never value him for his grace, that leaves them ſtill as a worm in their ſight. What of religion lies beyond the reach of the natural man, they deſpiſe; the Chriſtian entertainment on words and promiſes, they deſpiſe, as we do the duſt the worms lick up; the Chriſtian way of doing in faith, they deſpiſe, as we do the crawling of the worm: Like Sanballet, when he mocked the Jews, ſaying, *What do theſe feeble Jews? will they fortify themſelves? will they ſacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the ſtones out of the heaps of the rubbiſh, which are burnt?* Neh. iv. 2, 3.

4. Yet united to Jeſus Chriſt. Though a worm, yet *worm Jacob.* Our Lord Jeſus himſelf is of the worm-family, Pſal. xxii. 6. viz. *worm Jacob*, Pſal. xxiv. 6. ‘ This is the generation of them that ſeek him, that ſeek thy face, O Jacob.’ Compare Iſ. xlix. 3. ‘ Thou art my ſervant, O Iſrael, in whom I will be glorified.’ This intimates an union between him and them as his *worm brethren*, Heb. ii. 11. Being lowered and humbled to the condition of the worm, they are knit to and built on him by faith, Luke vi. 48.

5. *laſtly*, Daring adventurers, daring wreſtlers, *Worm Jacob* ventured on him that formed the mountains, and wreſtled with him, and *prevailed* too, Gen. xxxii. 24. Hoſ. xii. 4. What wonder to find him then venturing on the mountains themſelves? He muſt have the bleſſing, and muſt be forward whatever mountains be in the way. I proceed to,

II. The *ſecond* thing to be conſidered, namely, The myſtery of grace carried on in them by Jeſus Chriſt. We may take it up in theſe two.

1. An apparently hopeleſs encounter they are led to by him: *worm Jacob* threſhing the mountains. What a hopeleſs-like encounter is a worm threſhing a mountain! ſo hopeleſs-like are the encounters the people of God have to make in their way to the eternal reſt. Theſe threſhers are certainly *threſhers in hope*, 1 Cor. ix. 10. But the naked eye cannot diſcover the ground of hope in it: it is faith only which ſhews it hopeful, while ſight repreſents it as a hopeleſs caſe; and therefore they muſt

cloſe their eyes, and threſh in faith, as Abraham did, Rom. iv. 19, 20.

We take up this hopeleſs-like encounter in five things.

1*ſt*, The Lord lays in his people's way, mountains of difficulties quite above their ſtrength; difficulties which they look to, as a worm to a mountain before it, 2 Cor. i. 8. *For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Aſia, that we were preſſed out of meaſure, above ſtrength, inſomuch that we deſpaired even of life.* However plain the way to hell be, the way to heaven will be a mountainous way, in the experience of all that travel it: they will never want mountains in their way, till they come to the hill of God.

2*dly*, They muſt not go about the mountains in their way, ſhifting the difficulties which the Lord calls them to, but they muſt make their way over them, threſhing them down, Micah iv. 13. *Ariſe and threſh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thy horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs braſs, and thou ſhalt beat in pieces many people*, &c. If they offer to go about one mountain, they will be ſure to meet with a higher in their aboutgate. Peter tried it, denying his Maſter, and found it ſo; encountering another as high above the former, as the anger of God is above that of the creature; and which was like to cruſh him, as we may ſee from Matth. xxvi. 75. 'He went out, and wept bitterly.'

3*dly*, Therefore *Worm Jacob* falls a threſhing the mountains, combating the difficulties which the Lord lays in his way. He puts on a brow for a bargain, and reſolutely beſtirs his weak hands and feet, thruſting forward maugre all oppoſition, Gen. xxxii. 26. Matth. xi. 12. For there is a ſpirit in *Worm Jacob*, more daring and venturous than ever was in any unbelieving hero; a ſpirit for threſhing mountains, while they did but ſcatter molehills, Numb. xiv. 24. Prov. xvi. 32.

4*thly*, They continue the combating of difficulties reſolutely and patiently. Threſhing is a continued action, conſiſting of repeated ſtrokes. It takes ſome time to threſh a ſheaf; how much more to threſh a mountain? It is the ruin of many, that they are not able to endure: if a ſtroke or two would do the buſineſs, they would bring their matters to a good account; but they have no heart to be threſhers. 'But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing,' James i. 4. 'He that ſhall endure unto the end, the ſame ſhall be ſaved, Matth. xxiv. 13.

Laſtly, *Worm Jacob* has many mountains to threſh. One would be enough, we would think, for the worm; but there is a plurality of them. The truth is, this world is full of mountains to the people of God; and when they have threſhed one, they will have another to fall to, till they be out of this mountanious country. Having paſſed one difficulty, they will get another to grapple with, till they be within the gates of the city. So they muſt have a threſhing life time of it, till they come there.

2. A ſurpriſing ſucceſs: even as ſurpriſing as a worm's threſhing and beating the mountains ſmall to duſt, and threſhing them away. Such will be the iſſue of the encounter which the people of God now have with their difficulties in their way through the world; for which the text is plain. We take it up in theſe two. They will have,

1*ſt*, Partial ſucceſſes in their way, very ſurpriſing; ſurpriſing to others and to themſelves: Pſal. cxxvi. 1, 2. *When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with ſinging: then ſaid they among the Heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them.* What mountains of difficulties were in David's way to the kingdom! He threſhed long at them, and they never appeared to give way; nay he was like to be cruſhed with them, ſaying, 'One day I ſhall periſh by the hand of Saul.' But ſee the ſurpriſing ſucceſs, Pſal. xviii. intituled, 'A Pſalm of David, in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul:' wherein, after recapitulating the various difficulties he had to encounter with, he particularly mentions the happy deliverances he met with, and the ſurpriſing manner of the ſame. Some mountains God's people are kept threſhing at all their days, particularly the mountain of corruption; and they never fall quite down till death. But, as a pledge for the time to come, God makes ſome mountains now and then fall down before the *worm Jacob*; wherewith he is ſurpriſed, and tranſported with wonder, how it has come to paſs: Mark xvi. 4. 5. *And when they looked, they ſaw that the ſtone was rolled away;—and they were affrighted.*

2*dly*, A total ſucceſs at the end of their way, which will ſwallow them up in ſurpriſe and eternal wonder: 1 John iii. 2. *Beloved, now are we the ſons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be: but we know, that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him; for we ſhall ſee him as he is.* When the myſtery is finiſhed, the web cut out, it will appear an admirable piece. There will not be left then the leaſt veſtige of all the mountains that ſtood between heaven and them; the threſhed mountains will then be blown away with the wind; and they will lay by the flail as an inſtrument they have no more uſe for.

Object. But have not others as well as *worm Jacob*, mountains of difficulties in their way, which they become maſters of too at length? *Anſw.* This world is ſo mountainious, that none can get through it without meeting mountains in their way: carnal men make a ſhift to creep through ſome of them; but they can threſh none of them, as *Worm Jacob* doth; they want his head-ſtaff, John xv. 5. 'Without me ye can do nothing.' They creep into others of them, and neſtle in them; the mountains of their corruptions which in a ſpecial manner ſtand between heaven and them; and at length they will be eternally buried under them.

Uſe 1. Here is a touchſtone for trial of true Chriſtians, and worthy communicants, worm Jacob threſhing the mountains.

1*ſt*, They have a heart and ſpirit for threſhing of mountains in their way to heaven. They are peremptory and reſolute to break through them, without exception, as men that muſt be there, muſt not periſh: Matth. xi. 12. *The kingdom of heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent taketh it by force.*' Though they have long threſhed in vain to their own ſenſe, they are reſolute to hold on; like Paul 'preſſing toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus,' Phil. iii. 14. This caſts the delicate and ſoft-hearted in this caſe, that are not for threſhing of mountains: they are for the eaſier taſks, but have no heart nor hand for that. Theſe I think are the *fearful*, Rev. xxi. 8. like the unbelieving ſpies and people in the wilderneſs. Take heed here, how ye ſtand diſpoſed.

(1.) To a vain world; whether there is in you a heart to row againſt that ſtream or no; Rom. xii. 2. 'Be ye not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind,' &c. If ye have no heart for it, but muſt go along with it; be ye young or old, ye are no good Chriſtians, Gal. vi. 14.——'The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.' And young communicants leaving that gap open, make naughty and worthleſs old ones after.

(2.) To the ſin that moſt eaſily beſets you. Have you no heart to threſh that mountain? ye have not the ſpirit of *Worm Jacob*, who is one *that keeps himſelf from his iniquity*, Pſal. xviii. 23.; and ye will be buried under it at length: like the young man, who was grieved at Chriſt's diſcourſe about ſelf-denial and the croſs, and went away from him, and never returned, Mark x. 21, 22.

(3.) To the crook in your lot. Have you no heart to ſet yourſelves to a Chriſtian bearing it, but muſt needs have it evened to your mind? ye have not the ſpirit of

Worm Jacob; for the Lord has ſaid, ‘If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs, and follow me.’ Matth. xvi. 24.

2*dly*, Yet they are but worms in their own eyes, an unequal match for the leaſt of the mountains; 2 Cor. iii. 5. *We are not ſufficient of ourſelves to think any thing as of ourſelves, but our ſufficiency is of God.* This caſts the proud legaliſt that minds nothing but binding himſelf to duty, reckoning himſelf man enough for the duties of Chriſtianity.

The ſum of this mark is, The Chriſtian communicant is reſolute and peremptory for doing all, yet convinced that he is ſufficient for nothing.

Uſe 2. Here is likewiſe a ground of full comfort to ſuch. Let not the height, rockineſs, nor bulk of mountains diſcourage thee; nor yet the felt unſucceſsfulneſs of thy attempts hitherto. God has ſaid it, ‘Worm Jacob, thou ſhalt threſh the mountains, and beat them ſmall.’ Be not afraid; only believe.

Uſe 3. *laſtly*, Here is, moreover a ſtrong inducement to all to come to Chriſt: he will make you ‘threſh the mountains, and beat them ſmall.’ Come ye that are wandering on the mountains of vanity, like to be worried, on the mountains of prey, neſtling in the mountain of corruption, unable to get over the mountains of difficulty before you; come to Chriſt, and ye ſhall *threſh the mountains and beat them ſmall, and ſhall make the hills as chaff.*

III. *Thirdly*, I ſhall account for this myſtery, *worm Jacob*, threſhing the mountains of difficulties in his way, and threſhing them away quite and clean, How can this be?

1. God has ſaid it, and therefore it cannot fail; ‘Thou ſhalt threſh the mountains, and beat them ſmall, and make the hills as chaff.’ Compared with Numb. xxiii. 19. *God is not a man, that he ſhould lye; neither the ſon of man he ſhould repent, hath he ſaid, and ſhall he not do it; or hath he ſpoken, and ſhall he not make it good?* He ſpeaks things into being, and they muſt ſtart out of the womb of nothing or not-being at his word which calls them forth, Rom. iv. 17. There is as much for worm Jacob's threſhing and beating away the mountains, as there was for making the world, and all the mountains in it, Pſal. xxxiii. 9. ‘He ſaid and it was,’ Heb. Shall not his word that ſaid them into being, be as effectual to ſay them away again? *Thus ſaith the Lord*, is enough to enſure the accompliſhment of the hardeſt things propheſied.

2. The glory of his grace, which is the great deſign of the whole myſtery of God, neceſſarily requires it. What does he intend by the myſtery of Chriſt, but *the glory of his grace?* Eph. i. 6. to ſhew the *exceeding riches* of it, chap. ii. 7. Therefore he has choſen the way that leads ſtraight to that point, Rom. iv. 16. *Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace.* The worm is deſpicable in itſelf; but being the ſubject of glorious grace, if it ſhould miſcarry in its attempts, the glory of grace is ſunk, as the precious loading with the ſhip caſt away. Wherefore, that his grace may be glorified, if it be in a worm threſhing mountains, thoſe mountains muſt needs be threſhed away by that worm. Though that ſacred fire be but like a ſpark, in the midſt of a ſea of corruption, it muſt not only be preſerved in, but dry up that ſea quite and clean.

3. By an unalterable decree, there muſt be a conformity betwixt the little worm and the great worm Jacob, the little one's Kinſman-redeemer; Rom. viii. 29. ‘For whom he did foreknow, he alſo did predeſtinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firſt-born among many brethren.’ Now, the *great worm*, the man Chriſt, *a worm and no man*, Pſal. xxii. 6. has encountered mountains, and threſhed them away. Where are the four monarchies, the moſt towering mountains that ever ſet up their heads on the earth? The chief worm Jacob has threſhed them away to chaff, which is away with the wind, Dan ii. 35. The mountains ſtood before him through the world, with all the faſtneſs that human learning and the power of the ſword could give; but by his few fiſhermen he threſhed them away; and the prophecy is fulfilled, Pſal. lxxii. 16. *There ſhall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the firſt fruits thereof ſhall ſhake like Lebanon, and they of the city ſhall flouriſh like graſs of the earth.* Now many mountains ſtand before the little worm: but where will that conformity to heaven's beloved pattern be, if they alſo do not threſh them away.

4. The little worm Jacob is in reality but a member of the great one, Jeſus Chriſt. Take away that, and worm Jacob is as inſignificant for threſhing of mountains, as any worm that crawls on the earth, John xv. 5. ‘Without me ye can do nothing.’ Fix that, and worm Jacob has a kind of derived omnipotence, verſ. 7. ‘If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye ſhall aſk what ye will, and it ſhall be done unto you.’ Phil. iv. 13. ‘I can do all things through Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth me.’ And it is fixed: ſo their threſhing is Chriſt's threſhing, Col. i. 24. And ye may well allow Chriſt's threſhing away mountains, with a little finger of his body. If with the finger of God he caſt out devils, with the leaſt of his fingers he may caſt down mountains.

5. *laſtly*, All the mountains that ſtand before worm Jacob, are burnt mountains; ſo they are far eaſier to threſh than one would think. The mountain of the Babyloniſh monarchy ſtood before worm Jacob, and barred his way ſeventy years: at length God ſets fire in the bowels of it, and makes it a burnt mountain; and then bids worm Jacob threſh, and it flies away with the wind: Jer. li. 25. *Behold, I am againſt thee, O deſtroying mountain, ſaith the Lord, which deſtroyeſt all the earth, and I will ſtretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain.* By the death and reſurrection of Chriſt, all the mountains that ſtand between worm Jacob and heaven are burnt mountains. Chriſt has gone through the bowels of them with his fire, undone their conſiſtence, burnt the rocks to lime; they are nothing now but the ſhape of mountains, with a thin ſcorched ſurface: they will give way at the threſhing of worm Jacob, like the apples of Sodom, that being touched go to duſt between one's fingers: Micah ii. 13. ‘The breaker is come up before them: they have broken up, and have paſſed through the gate, and are gone out by it; and their King ſhall paſs before them, and the Lord on the head of them.’ Nahum iii. 12. ‘All thy ſtrong holds ſhall be like fig-trees with the firſt-ripe figs: if they be ſhaken, they ſhall even fall into the mouth of the eater.’ Compare Iſa. xxvi. 19. ‘Thy dead men ſhall live, together with my dead body ſhall they ariſe: awake and ſing, ye that dwell in the duſt: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth ſhall caſt out the dead.’ Hoſ. xiii. 14. ‘I will ranſom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy deſtruction; repentance ſhall be hid from mine eyes.’

Inf. 1. The ſtruggles of the church with all her adverſaries, will have a ſurpriſingly comfortable iſſue at length. As weak as ſhe is, and as ſtrong and numerous as they are, ſhe will infallibly have ſucceſs, ſurpriſing ſucceſs, againſt them, attending the encounter with them: Micah. iv. 11, 12, 13. ‘Now alſo many nations are gathered againſt thee, that ſay, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon *Zion*. But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither underſtand they his counſel: for he ſhall gather them as the ſheaves into the floor. Ariſe and threſh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs braſs, and thou ſhall beat in pieces many people: and I will conſecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their ſubſtance unto the Lord of the whole earth.’ And as to the preſent ſtate of the church, learn, 1*ſt*, It is not at all ſtrange, nor will it make the caſe of this church hopeleſs, that prodigiouſly high mountains, higher than our fathers ſaw, are raiſed up againſt her, overtopping worm Jacob, and threatening to cruſh him: mountains of national guilt of forty years gathering, laid upon the top of the mountains of guilt raiſed by our fathers: profanity overflowing, and become faſhionable; a conſpiracy carried on in the houſe of her friends, againſt the grace of Chriſt, and ſerious godlineſs, to palm upon us refined Heatheniſm for Chriſtianity; the foundations ſtruck at, mountains of damnable hereſies and blaſphemies againſt the perſon of Chriſt, and divine authority of the ſcriptures; and the advanced learning of the age improved to theſe monſtrous ends. But,

2*dly*, Aſſuredly theſe mountains will be brought down, though we have all ground to expect, that multitudes ſhall be cruſhed to death with threſhing judgments for bringing them down; yet neither the one nor the other ſhall cruſh worm Jacob, but he ſhall ſee them all blown away with the wind.

3*dly*, It is worm Jacob ſhall threſh and beat them ſmall: a believing, praying, wreſtling, though deſpiſed remnant, will bring them down; though they ſtand immoveable againſt all the merely rational and politic methods uſed againſt them.

Inf. 2. They are not for heaven, that are not for threſhing away the mountains in their way to it. As,

1*ſt*, Such as are not exerciſed unto godlineſs; that pretend to believe, but trouble not themſelves with the work of mortification, letting theſe mountains ſtand unmoleſted: Gal. v. 24. ‘They that are Chriſt's, have crucified the fleſh, with the affections and luſts.’ Whatever kindred ye pretend to worm Jacob, if you had any thing of his nature, ye would threſh, in mortification.

2*dly*, Such as are partial in their obedience, that are not for threſhing the mountains in their way without exception, Mark x. 21, 22. Such a luſt they are content to ſacrifice, but there is a darling one to be ſpared: any trouble they would bear, but only ſuch a one as God lays before them, they can never think to lay their fair neck under that yoke: that is to ſay, they will ſcatter the molehills, but have no heart to venture on the mountains.

3*dly*, Backſliders, that fall a-threſhing, but give over before the mountains begin to give way, or be beaten ſmall; (Heb. x. 38.;) they draw back their hand, Luke ix. 62. Theſe are like thoſe that came out of Egypt, but fell in the wilderneſs through their unbelief, thinking there was no making it againſt the Anakims.

Inf. 3. *laſt*, Serious ſouls ſenſible of their weakneſs, but reſolute to combat whatever difficulties are between them and heaven, be the iſſue what it will, ſhall certainly be bleſſed with ſurpriſing ſucceſs, to their own eternal wonder. The worm ſhall threſh away the mountains.

I would ſay to ſuch, Go on and proſper: threſh on, worm Jacob, thou ſhalt beat them ſmall.

1. Threſh on the mountains of oppoſition that ſtand in your way, from earth or hell; thou ſhalt get through them all at length; and thou ſhall *ſtand on the ſea of glaſs having the harp of God*; and ſhalt *ſing the ſong of Moſes and of the Lamb, ſaying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; juſt and true are thy ways, thou King of ſaints*, Rev. xv. 2, 3.

2. Threſh on the mountain of troubles, trials, and afflictions. Let none of them, be they never ſo high and formidable, prevail to ſeparate betwixt your God and you; they will be beat to duſt at length, and blown away from before you; Rev. vii. 9. 10. 14. ‘After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, ſtood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, ſaying, Salvation to our God which ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.——Theſe are they which came out of great tribulation, and have waſhed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.’

3. Threſh on the mountain of corruption, indwelling ſin; threſh on every height therein, particularly that top of it that is the ſin that eaſily beſets you; infallibly ye will get it down at length. Paul ſaw this while he was threſhing it, Rom. vii. 24, 25. *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death! I thank God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*

Say not, Alas! I am weak, my threſhing will be in vain. No, though you have no more ſtrength for them, than a worm for a mountain, it will not be in vain. God will have theſe mountains threſhed by worms.

But thou wilt ſay, Alas! I have threſhed long without ſucceſs. *Anſw.* Threſh on; there muſt be patient enduring ere the mountain fall, Heb. vi. 15. ‘After Abraham had patiently endured, he obtained the promiſe:’ but there is an oath mediating betwixt the promiſe and its accompliſhment that it cannot fail, ver. 17, Gr. Mind the walls of Jericho. Have ye not had a partial ſucceſs ſometimes? be ſure then of the total. So it is with Jeſus himſelf, Heb. ii. 8. ‘Thou haſt put all things in ſubjection under his feet. For in that he put all in ſubjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we ſee not yet all things put under him.’

The laſt mountain to be threſhed away is death, and ye ſhall beat that ſmall too, 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55. ‘When this corruptible ſhall have put on incorruption, and this mortal ſhall have put on immortality, then ſhall be brought to paſs the ſaying that is written, Death is ſwallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory?’

After all, it is a mighty wonder, worm Jacob threſhing the mountains. But the threſhing worm is ſhod from heaven, and ſo is fitted to threſh. Three things this threſhing inſtrument is ſhod with. (1.) A word of command, calling to the work. (2.) A word of promiſe, ſecuring the ſucceſs. (3.) The uſe of means of Heaven's appointment for reaching the end. If any of theſe be wanting, there will be no threſhing the mountains away: a plain inſtance we have in the rationaliſts of the age laying aſide the doctrine of a crucified Chriſt, and ſubſtituting in the room thereof the dry and ſapleſs doctrines of Heatheniſm; which God will never countenance to renew the hearts or reform the lives of any, as being contrary to the appointment of Heaven for that purpoſe. But worm Jacob, influenced by the command of God, excited by the promiſe of ſucceſs, and uſing the proper means, *ſhall threſh the mountains, and beat them ſmall, and ſhall make the hills as chaff.*

The Caſe of PETITIONERS at the COURT of HEAVEN conſidered;

O R,

The Neceſſity of praying always, and not fainting.

Two SERMONS, preached on a Sacramental Occaſion at Maxton, July 15. and 16. 1727.

LUKE xviii. 1.

And he ſpake a parable unto them, to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.

THE time of this life is the time of trial; only in the life to come is full eaſe to be expected. Now is the warfare, and partial victories; the complete victory comes not till death. If we muſt have our portion of goods in hand preſently, and cannot wait, we will ſoon be through it, and have nothing when we need moſt. If we mind for heaven then, we muſt be reſolute, ſet a ſtiff heart to a ſtay brae, and hold forward whatever ſtorms blow in our face, as we ſee in the words of the the text. Wherein we have,

1. The Lord's inſiſting to teach his diſciples, *And he ſpake a parable unto them,* &c. That the relative *them* refers to his diſciples, appears by the continued connection of theſe words with the diſcourſe from chap. xvii. 22. And he changes in it his manner of teaching, making a practical improvement in a parable, of what he had before taught them in plain ſtyle. *Gr. Now he ſpake alſo a parable unto them,* to impreſs the leſſon the more lively, both on their minds, memories, and affections.

2. The new leſſon he taught them, *That men ought always to pray, and not to faint;* that there would be a neceſſity of their praying always, and not fainting. The diſcourſe whence it is inferred, among other things bears, (1.) That their comforts ſhould be leſs than they were then, verſ. 22. 'And he ſaid unto the diſciples, 'The days will come when ye ſhall deſire to ſee one of 'the days of the Son of man, and ye ſhall not ſee it.' (2.) Their temptations more, verſ. 23. 'And they ſhall 'ſay to you, See here, or ſee there; go not after them.' (3.) That the world would be long in deep ſecurity, and they long in deep diſtreſs, ſo that they might be in hazard of giving it over; ſee verſ. 26.—33. (4.) That the Lord would come to them at length, and make all right; but when or where they are not to know.

Now, to direct them how to carry in ſuch a difficult ſituation, he ſpeaks the following parable; the ſcope and ſum of which comes to this, *That men ought always to pray, and not to faint.* So he tells them, (1.) The courſe they muſt hold, blow the wind as it will: they muſt *always pray;* not that they muſt be always on their knees, but they muſt keep a habitual courſe of praying. (2.) What they muſt beware of; they muſt *not faint.* The word ſignifies a ſuccumbing or yielding under the preſſure of evils or hardſhips, as one ſinking under a burden, or giving over by reaſon of the badneſs of the way, Eph. iii. 13. and is well rendered *fainting,* for the apoſtle explains it by being *looſened,* Gal. vi. 9. becauſe in fainting or ſwooning the nerves are looſed, relaxed, or unbended, and ſo activity is gone. So whatever hardſhips are met with, we muſt not be ſo cut-wearied with them, as to give over. (3.) The neceſſity of this; men ought or muſt needs *always pray* and *not faint.* If we give over, we are gone; if we faint, and break off our courſe, all is loſt.

DOCT. *Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt has kindly intimated to all that have buſineſs at the court of heaven, the neceſſity of ſo managing themſelves, that they ſtill hang on there, and not faint, whatever entertainment they meet with during the dependance of their proceſs.*

In this doctrine there are three heads to be conſidered.

I. Our Lord's kind intimation of this way of his Father's court.

II. The way of the court of heaven, in tryſting petitioners with ſome hardſhips, during the dependence of their proceſs.

III. The duty of the petitioners, to hang on, and not faint, whatever they meet with.

IV. Apply.

I. The *firſt* thing to be conſidered, is, Our Lord's kind intimation of this way of his Father's court. And here we would ſhew, 1. The import of Chriſt's making this intimation to petitioners there; and, 2. The weight and moment of this intimation.

Firſt, I ſhall ſhew the import of Chriſt's making this intimation to petitioners at his Father's court.

1. The darkneſs that is naturally on the minds of poor ſinners, with reſpect to heaven's management about them. We may ſay as Jer. v. 4. 'Surely theſe are poor, 'they are fooliſh; for they know not the way of the 'Lord, nor the judgment of their God.' The obſcureſt ſhepherd from the remoteſt corner, would know more of the king's court, if he had buſineſs there, than the wiſeſt mortals naturally know of the way of the court of heaven. Dark clouds are about the ſovereign manager to us: 'his way is in the ſea, and his path in the great 'waters, and his footſteps are not known.' Even Job, that had been a long hanger on about the court of heaven, knew little of the way of it, and behoved to have a new leſſon of it, Job xxxviii. 1, 2. *Then the Lord anſwered Job out of the whirl-wind, and ſaid, Who is this that darkeneth counſel by words without knowledge?*

2. Chriſt's good-will to the ſinner's buſineſs going right there: Exod. xxviii. 29. 'And Aaron ſhall bear 'the names of the children of Iſrael in the breaſt-plate 'of judgment, upon his heart, when he goeth in unto 'the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually.' He ſhews it by his concern for their right managing it: he knows they are unacquainted with the manner of the court of heaven, and ſo are in hazard of marring their own buſineſs: and therefore he is concerned to let them on the road to get a good anſwer. The poor ſoul that is ſometimes at the brink of groning and

giving it over, is moved to ſtart back from that precipice, and grone and look up again. Whence is that, but from Chriſt's ſecret making of this intimation to them by his Spirit? Rom. vii. 26. *Likewiſe the Spirit alſo helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itſelf maketh interceſſion for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

3. That our Lord ſees ſinners are in hazard of fainting from the entertainment they may meet with during the dependence of their proceſs, Heb. xii. 3. He knows their frame, the haſtineſs of their ſpirits, John vii. 6. how apt they are to take delays for denials, and be diſcouraged with what is deſigned only for their trial. Therefore he opens and forwarns them of the manner of the court, Iſa. xxviii. 16. 'He that believeth ſhall not 'make haſte.'

4. They that ſhall hang on, and not faint, ſhall come ſpeed at length. Luke xviii. 6, 7, 8. 'And the Lord 'ſaid, Hear what the unjuſt judge ſaith. And ſhall not 'God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night 'unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you 'that he will avenge them ſpeedily.' It is not poſſible that the ſoul continuing reſolute to go to no other door, but hanging on at Chriſt's door to make its grave there, if it be not let in, can be ſhut out always, John vi. 37. ——'Him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out.' Wilful faith, that will be forward in face of *killing* and *ſlaying*, Job xiii. 15. will get all its will at length, Mat. xv. 28. 'Then Jeſus anſwered, and ſaid unto her, O 'woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as 'thou wilt.'

Secondly, The weight and moment of this intimation. This will appear, if it is conſidered in a four-fold light.

1. Jeſus Chriſt who makes it, has experienced it in his own caſe. The man Chriſt, the head of the church had the moſt important buſineſs at the court of heaven that ever came before it; viz. for through-bearing in a work on which his Father's glory, and the ſalvation of an elect world, depended. And he was often in prayer; he ſpent a whole night in it, Luke vi. 12. But ſee his experience of this manner of the court, Pſal. xxii. 1, 2. 'My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? 'why art thou ſo far from helping me, and from the 'words of my roring? O my God I cry in the day-time, 'but thou heareſt not: and in the night ſeaſon, and 'am not ſilent. And lxix. 1, 2, 3. 'Save me, O God, 'for the waters are come in unto my ſoul. I ſink in 'deep mire, where there is no ſtanding: I am come 'into deep waters where the floods overflow me. I am 'weary of my crying, my throat is dried: mine eyes 'fail while I wait for my God.' Now, if this was the manner with the great Petitioner, how can we expect it ſhould fare otherwiſe with us? nay, God in his dealing with Chriſt the Head, ſet down a pattern to be followed thereafter in his dealing with the members, Rom. viii. 29. *For whom he did foreknow, he alſo did predeſtinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firſt born among many brethren.* Compare verſ. 28. *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpoſe.*

2. He is the great Prophet of heaven, whoſe office it is to reveal the manner of the court to poor ſinners. He is fitted for it, as being on all the ſecrets of it, which the moſt favourite angel cannot dive into, John i. 18. Therefore we may be very ſure, this is the manner of the court; and that thoſe who will manage their buſineſs at it otherwiſe, will be ſure to mar it.

3. He is the only interceſſor there, the Father's Secretary, the Solicitor for poor ſinners there. There is never a petition received at the throne of grace, but what is preſented by him; nor graciouſly granted there, but through his interceſſion, Rev. viii. 3, 4. nor an anſwer graciouſly returned, or an order iſſued out for the ſinner's relief, but it comes through his hand, John v. 22. 'For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed 'all judgment unto the Son.' Who then can doubt of the neceſſity by him intimated? and who muſt not ſee the kind aſpect that the Interceſſor's hinting this to the petitioners has on their buſineſs?

4. He is himſelf the hearer of prayer. The angels are called to worſhip him, Heb. i. 6. Stephen in his moſt ſerious moments, when he was neareſt heaven, prays to him, Acts vii. 59. a plain evidence, that he is true God, the Father's equal, the Supreme, the moſt high God; for it is written, Deut. x. 20. *Thou ſhalt fear the Lord thy God: him ſhalt thou ſerve, and to him ſhalt thou cleave, and ſwear by his name.* Compare Matth. iv. 10. *Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve.* Pſal. lxxxiii. 18. *That men may know, that thou whoſe name alone is Jehovah, art the Moſt High over all the earth.* And the ſcripture condemns ſerving thoſe that are not by nature gods, Gal. iv. 8. Therefore Chriſt is God by nature, true God, neceſſarily exiſtent, independent, God of himſelf, though not a Son of himſelf: but the divine eſſence being eternally and neceſſarily communicated from the Father to the Son, the Fathers communicating it, and the Son's receiving it, are equally glorious. Since then he is the hearer of prayer, that makes this intimation, it is equivalent to a promiſe, that prayers ſo managed ſhall certainly come ſpeed at length; as appears from Iſa. xlv. 19. *I ſaid not unto the ſeed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain.*

II. The *ſecond* thing to be conſidered, is, The way of the court of heaven, in tryſting petitioners with ſome hardſhips during the dependance of their proceſs. Here I ſhall give you, 1. A ſwatch of that way; and 2. Some reaſons of that way, whereby to account for it in a ſuitableneſs to the divine perfections.

Firſt, A ſwatch of that way in a few particulars. Though the Lord ſometimes gives his people very quick diſpatch, Iſa. lxv. 24. 'And it ſhall come to paſs, that 'before they call, I will anſwer, and whiles they are 'yet ſpeaking, I will hear,' yet it is very uſual to try them another way.

1. Oft-times there is a deep ſilence from the throne, Matth. xv. 23. and that even when the petitioner is crying with the greateſt earneſtneſs, and crying inceſſantly, Pſal. xxii. 1, 2. and is at the point of being overwhelmed for want of help, Pſal. cxliii. 7. yet no voice to be perceived, no motion appearing towards the petitioner's relief.

2. Oft-times they get a very angry-like anſwer. The woman of Canaan got a couple of them, one on the back of another, Matth. xv. 24. 26. 'But he anſwered and 'ſaid, I am not ſent, but unto the loſt ſheep of the 'houſe of Iſrael.——It is not meet to take the children's 'bread and to caſt it to dogs.' It is very ordinary for Heaven's petitioners to hear ſome Sinai thunders, when they are on mount Zion; to come in a low and heavy caſe to the throne, and to go away laid lower than they came. So going with their petitions to the throne of grace, they are teazed there to purpoſe, and many a foul ply of their heart and life is opened out to them, and they come back with a breaſt full of convictions, Judges x. 10.——14.

3. Many a time at the ſight of the King on the throne they falter and their ſpeech fails, that they cannot get words to tell what they would be at, Pſal. lxxvii. 3, 4. Hence many broken ſentences in their petitions, which yet are underſtood well enough in heaven, the blanks being filled up with groans, Pſal. vi. 3. Rom. viii. 26, 27.

4. Diſappointed expectations are a piece of very ordinary entertainment there, Jer. viii. 15. *We looked for peace but no good came: and for a time of health, and behold trouble.* Hope may be raiſed, and yet be deferred, till it make a ſick heart. Theſe diſappointments may meet the petitioner over and over again, Cant. iii.

1, 2. *By night on my bed I ſought him whom my ſoul loveth: I ſought him, but I found him not. I will riſe now, and go about the city in the ſtreets, and in the broad ways I will ſeek him whom my ſoul loveth: I ſought him but I found him not.* If ye aſk, How long the courſe of them may laſte? I know of no term fixed for them but one, and that one is enough for faith, Pſal. ix. 18. 'For 'the needy ſhall not always be forgotten: the expecta'tion of the poor ſhall not periſh for ever.' And if ye go to another door than the Lord's, the courſe of your diſappointments will have no end.

5. Many a time looking for an anſwer, providence drives a courſe apparently juſt contrary to the granting of their petitiin; ſo is fulfilled that, Pſal. lxv. 5. 'By 'terrible things in righteouſneſs, wilt thou anſwer us, 'O God of our ſalvation.' And it may be ſo ſtunning, as to require much faith, not to take that for the final anſwer, as if God had ſaid, 'Speak no more to me 'of that matter;' and yet the wheel of providence may be but fetching a compaſs to come to the point deſired. Thus the ſunk ſpirits of the Iſraelites were raiſed in hope, Exod. iv. 31. 'And the people believed; and when 'they heard that the Lord had viſited the children of 'Iſrael, and that he had looked upon their affliction, 'then they bowed their heads and worſhipped.' But the very firſt thing that comes after that, chap. v. is, that they are in worſe condition than ever, their bondage is more intolerable; which made Moſes's faith all ſtagger, verſ. 22, 23. *And Moſes returned unto the Lord, and ſaid, Lord, wherefore haſt thou ſo evil entreated this people? why is it that thou haſt ſent me? for ſince I came to Pharaoh to ſpeak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither haſt thou delivered the people at all.*

6. *laſtly*, Oft-times the Lord, inſtead of eaſing the petitioner, lays new burdens on him, Jer. viii. 15. 'We 'looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time 'of health, and behold trouble.' Inſtead of curing the old wound, there are new ones given. So that ſometimes the waters come in on every ſide, and compaſs the poor ſoul: and yet the Lord, though he ſee it meet to give the ſinner ſuch a gliff, may have no mind he ſhould drown for all that, Pſal. cxvi. 3. 'The ſorrows of death 'compaſſed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon 'me: I found trouble and ſorrow.' Verſ. 6. 'The 'Lord preſerveth the ſimple: I was brought low, and 'he helped me:' and lxxxviii. 17. 'They came round 'about me daily like water, they compaſſed me about 'together.' So it was in Job's caſe.

Uſe 1. Whoſoever of you would manage your buſineſs ſucceſsfully at the court of heaven, on this occaſion, put on reſoluteneſs to hang on about the Lord's hand, and not to faint, till ye get it to a happy iſſue. And,

1ſt, Lay the great buſineſs of ſalvation cloſe to heart, let it be your main buſineſs; the ſecuring of your ſaving intereſt in Chriſt, now when you have this ſolemn occaſion of both the word of the covenant, and the ſeal of the covenant together; not knowing if ever ye may have ſuch a favourable occaſion again. Time goes away, death is haſtening on, it is dangerous to delay. If ye be indifferent in the buſineſs, ye will never hang on.

2d'y, Lay it down for a concluſion, Ye muſt have Chriſt, or ye periſh. Pinching need makes men importunate: If ye feel not that, ye will ſoon weary and never bring the matter to a good iſſue, John vi. 67, 68. 'Then ſaid Jeſus unto the twelve, Will ye al[illegible]o away? 'Then Simon Peter anſwered him, Lor[illegible]o whom 'ſhall we go? thou haſt the words of eternal life.' All doors elſe ſeen cloſed, will make the ſinner hang on at Chriſt's door.

3dly, Embrace Chriſt in the great promiſe of the goſpel, believing the promiſe: taking a dead gripe of it, never to part. It is held out to you and every one of you, Heb. iv. 1. 'Let us therefore fear, leſt a promiſe 'being left us of entering into his reſt, any of you ſhould 'ſeem to come ſhort of it.' It is the report from heaven to be believed, Iſ. liii. 1. Without faith there is no eviting of fainting, Pſal. xxvii. 13. *I had fainted, unleſs I had believed to ſee the goodneſs of the Lord in the land of the living.*

4thly, Take an eternal farewell of the vain world, and deceitful luſts; reſolving, that, come what will, ye will hang by Chriſt in the promiſe, if ye ſhould die there; ſaying with Job, chap. xiii. 15. *Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him.* None come aright to Chriſt but they that come reſolutely.

Laſtly, Be not haſty, but reſolve to wait in expectation, ſetting no time to the Lord's comforting you, Iſa. xxviii. 16. 'He that believeth ſhall not make haſte.' Micah vii. 9. 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, 'becauſe I have ſinned againſt him, untill he plead my 'cauſe, and execute judgment for me: he will bring 'me forth to the light, and I ſhall behold his righteouſ'neſs.' If all thy life long ſhould paſs uncomforted, peace and comfort in the end is well worth waiting on.

Uſe 2. Be not ſurpriſed, nor offended at the way of God, though in your addreſſes to the throne ye meet with apparent harſh entertainment. They have ſeemed to themſelves to be boaſted away, who taking the buffet, have got the bit too by waiting on, like the woman of Canaan, Matth. xv. 21.——28. The importunity of faith, that is, a continued truſt in the promiſe, and an inceſſant uſe of the means, will prevail.

Secondly, I ſhall give you ſome reaſons of that way, whereby to account for it in a ſuitableneſs to the divine perfections.

1. This way is taken with petitioners in the court of heaven; for thereby God is glorified, and his attributes more illuſtrated than otherwiſe they would be. In this view of it, Paul welcomes it in his own caſe, though it was hard to ſenſe, 2 Cor. xii. 9. *And he ſaid unto me, My grace is ſufficient for thee: for my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs. Moſt gladly therefore will I rather glory in mine infirmities, that the power of Chriſt may reſt upon me.* God treating his people thus, diſplays his wiſdom, in guiding the broken veſſel ſafely through many rocks and ſhelves to land without ſplitting; that afterwards they are made to ſay, None elſe but he could have done it, Iſ. ix. 6. 'His name ſhall be called Won'derful, Counſellor;' his power, in ſupporting them under a preſſure, that otherwiſe they would ſink under, 2 Cor. i. 8, 9. 'For we would not, brethren, have you 'ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Aſia, 'that we were preſſed out of meaſure, above ſtrength, 'inſomuch that we deſpaired even of life; but we had 'the ſentence of death in ourſelves, that we ſhould truſt 'not in ourſelves, but in God which raiſeth the dead;' his grace, mercy, and goodneſs, in ſeaſonable interpoſings thereof, when their foot is ready to ſlip, Pſal. xciv. 18. *When I ſaid, my foot ſlippeth: thy mercy, O Lord, held me up.* 2 Cor. xii. 9. forecited.

2. Hereby the ſtate of petitioners is tried, and a plain difference conſtituted between hypocrites and the ſincere, Matth. xxiv. 13. 'He that ſhall endure unto the 'end, the ſame ſhall be ſaved.' God's petitioners in the groſs are like Gideon's army, Judges vii. far more than are to be truſted. So God brings them down to theſe waters of trial; and there is a heap of them that muſt have a fill preſently, or they faint, cannot go forward; ſo they are ſet off, like the men that bowed down on their knees to drink, Job. xxvii. 10. *Will he delight himſelf in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?* Others are diſpoſed to endure hardneſs, without fainting, like the men that lapped; and they are kept as meet to have their petitions granted at length, Luke xviii. 7. *And ſhall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?*

3. Hereby the graces of believing petitioners are tried, both as to the reality and ſtrength of them; particularly their faith and patience, 1 Pet. i. 6, 7. *Wherein*

ye greatly rejoice, though now for a ſeaſon (if need be) ye are in heavineſs through manifold temptations. That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that periſheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praiſe, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt. James i. 12. *Bleſſed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he ſhall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promiſed to them that love him.* Our Lord takes great pleaſure in the faith and patience of his people, and therefore he puts them ſore to it in theſe points, like the woman of Canaan, Matth. xv. that they may have occaſion to exert them vigorouſly. Sometimes they meet with ſuch a ſhock that they are foundered in them: anon there is a ſecret breathing, and they get to their feet again, and act more vigorouſly than before, like a giant refreſhed with wine, Jonah ii. 4. ‘Then I ſaid, I am caſt out of thy ſight; yet I will look again to thy holy temple.’ Hereby they have a double benefit; they ſee the reality of their faith and patience better than in a calm, and the ſtrength of them more than they could have expected, and withal that they are other things than efforts of natural abilities, no more to be their product, than roſes of the deſart: Rom. v. 3, 4, 5. ‘And not only ſo, but we glory in tribulations alſo, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not aſhamed, becauſe the love of God is ſhed abroad in our hearts, by the holy Ghoſt which is given unto us.’

4. Hereby believers are humbled, and taught that they hold of free grace. The exalting of grace is the great deſign of the whole contrivance of the goſpel. Therefore faith is made the turning point in it, the hinge of it as to us; Rom. iv. 16. ‘Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promiſe might be ſure to all the ſeed.’ Therefore this method is uſed in the diſpenſation of Heaven's favours according to it, Deut. viii. 2. ‘And thou ſhalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee theſe forty years in the wilderneſs, to humble thee, and prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldſt keep [illegible] commandments, or no.’ They that buy with their money muſt be ſerved preſently; but beggars muſt be content to wait on. There are powerful remains of a legal ſpirit in the beſt, kything in requiring ſupply for their needs, with little ſenſe of their unworthineſs; and in a diſpoſition to fret, if they be not quickly anſwered. It takes much hewing to bring down theſe; to empty the man of himſelf, and to let him ſee that God is no debtor to him for any thing, great or ſmall.

5. This way is taken from the honour of the word, Pſal. cxxxviii. 2.——*Thou haſt magnified thy word above all thy name.* There are many letters of God's name, but this Bible is the capital letter of it: and there is not one diſpenſation of providence, that magnifies the Bible more than this. It is even the thing that bears the head above, and keeps the heart from fainting, in this caſe, Rom. xv. 4. ‘For whatſoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the ſcriptures, might have hope.’ This treatment at the court of Heaven ſends the petitioner to the records, which gladden his heart, finding that it has been the ancient way of the court; and in a deſart way it is no ſmall comfort to the traveller, to find a track, and the print of ſome's feet before him. It makes him mark narrowly, and greedily catch at a word; and to diſcover a treaſure, where many a time, when he went over it before, he ſaw nothing.

6. *laſtly*, It is taken to make them long to be home. God's children are in this world, young heirs that are abroad out of their Father's country: they ſend their letters, and draw their bills on their Father, and while they are ſpeedily anſwered, at every turn, they live at eaſe in the ſtrange country, and are not ſolicitous to be home: but their father cures them of that, letting them at length write over and over again, without an anſwer; and ceaſing to anſwer their bills: and then they long to be home.

III. The third thing to be conſidered, is, the duty of the petitioners to hang on, and not to faint, whatever they meet with. We may view it in theſe things following.

1. They muſt never lift their proceſs from the court of heaven, John vi. 67, 68.——‘Lord, to whom ſhall we go? thou haſt the words of eternal life.’ It was Saul's ruin, that when God anſwered him not, he went to a witch; and the unbelieving Iſraelites, when they heard of the giants of Canaan, that they would be back to Egypt again, Numb. xiv. 4; and it is the ruin of many, when they find not the ſweet in religion that they expected, to go back to the world and their luſts, that will anſwer them, they think, ſooner. But whatever be your ſore, ye ſhould proteſt that it ſhall run for you, till the Lord put forth his own healing hand, and that ye will not go to another for cure, Lam. iii. 49, 50. *Mine eye trickleth down, and ceaſeth not, without any intermiſſion: till the Lord look down, and behold from heaven.*

2. They muſt never give over praying, but *pray always.* They that will pray about the time of a communion, and afterwards leave it off by degrees, will loſe all their pains, and prove themſelves to be hypocrites, Job xxvii. 10. ‘Will he delight himſelf in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?’ And Satan ſometimes plies diſtreſſed ſouls to give up with it, as what they may ſee they will do no good with, for that God will not hear them. But that is a deceit of hell which ye muſt never yield to; no not though God ſhould continue to anſwer you not a word; nay, not though your attempting to pray, ſhould ſeem to ſerve for nothing but to ſet Satan a raging againſt you; for it is God's command, That *men pray always.* There is leſs ill in miſmanaging of prayer than giving it over altogether; for that is tamely to yield ourſelves to Satan's will. And though ye may be in ſuch confuſion, as to take the devil's whiſpers within you for your own voice, God will carefully diſtinguiſh the two, and not lay that to your charge wherein ye are pure ſufferers. And continuing to pray, ye are in the way of duty, wherein ye may expect God will hear and pity at length.

3. They muſt inſiſt on their tabled petitions, while their need remains, whatever entertainment they ſeem to meet with, as the woman of Canaan did, Matth. xv. If ye inſiſt not, ye will be conſtructed to have fallen from it; but importunity will ſpeed at long-run, Luke xi. 8. *I ſay unto you, Though he will not riſe and give him, becauſe he is his friend: yet becauſe of his importunity, he will riſe, and give him as many as he needeth.* And indeed, need continuing to pinch, and the petitioner giving over his crying for ſupply, is fainting with a witneſs.

Caſe. But may it not be that the Lord may ſay, *Speak no more to me of this matter? Anſw.* It is true it may be ſo, as the Lord did to Moſes, Deut. iii. 26. ‘But the Lord was wroth with me for your ſakes, and would not hear me: and the Lord ſaid unto me, Let it ſuffice thee, ſpeak no more unto me of this matter.’ But in that caſe I conceive, (1.) The Lord ſhews his people they do not need that thing; *let it ſuffice thee,* or *thou haſt much,* or *enough.* And to quiet Moſes in this caſe, he gave him a ſight of the land from Piſgah, ver. 27. (2.) The help of the Spirit as to praying in that particular is withdrawn. There is an embargo laid on them in that point. *Speak no more unto me of this matter.*

4. They muſt carry all their incident needs in new petitions, to the ſame throne of grace, where the former petition may have been long lying, and ſtill unanſwered; and ſo purſue all together. The latter muſt not drive out the former, nor the former keep back the latter. It is one of the ways how the Lord keeps his people hanging about his hand without fainting, by ſending them ſeveral loads above their burden: which loads he takes off ſoon at their requeſt; and ſo makes them go

under their burden the more eaſily. Theſe ſhort incident proceſſes, that get a ſpeedy anſwer, confirm their faith and hope in waiting on for the anſwer of the main. I believe it will be found, that the Lord's children who have had the moſt tedious proceſs before the throne, have not wanted experience of very quick diſpatches in the time, Iſa. lxv. 24. 'And it ſhall come to paſs, that before they call, I will anſwer, and whiles they are yet ſpeaking, I will hear.'

5. They muſt continue in the faith of the promiſe, never quit the gripe of it; but truſt and believe, that it ſhall certainly be accompliſhed, though the wheels of providence ſhould ſeem to drive out over it and in over it, Rom. iv. 19, 20, 'And Abraham being not weak in faith, he conſidered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadneſs of Sarah's womb. He ſtaggered not at the promiſe of God through unbelief; but was ſtrong in faith, giving glory to God.' Providence is not our Bible; the works of God may be very various, but the word of promiſe is always the ſame, it is never moved. Ye have a very poetical paſſage, Pſal. xviii. 7. and downwards. I think it proceeds upon this view, That though all the confuſions of the univerſe cannot move the promiſe; yet if hills, earth, fire, waters, heavens, were all ſtanding before it to hinder its accompliſhment, it would move them all out of their places, and make its way through them.

6. They muſt keep up hope of the thing promiſed over the belly of all improbabilities, 1 Pet. i. 13. *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be ſober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt.* Faith opening the door of the promiſe, hope ſees the bleſſed anſwer, to the petition lying at the King's hand, however long it may be ere it be tranſmitted. That is very pleaſing to God, Pſal. cxlvii. 11. 'The Lord taketh pleaſure in thoſe that hope in his mercy.'

7. *laſtly*, If at any time they begin to faint, they muſt wreſtle againſt it, that they go not quite away, Heb. x. 35. 'Caſt not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.' If faith and hope fail, ſo will patience: but ye muſt ſet yourſelves to believe over the belly of ſenſe, and hope againſt hope.

Uſe, Chriſtians, communicants, and whoſoever of you would have your buſineſs go right in heaven, go from this place reſolute to hang on about the Lord's hand, and not to faint, whatever you have met with, or ſhall meet with from that airth. Have a horror of fainting, giving over, or going back to another door. Conſider,

1. If ye faint and give it over, your ſuit is loſt, ye have given up with it. And,

1*ſt*, If your ſuit be the main thing, the eternal well-being of your ſoul, which is what we all pretend to, then your ſoul is loſt, Heb. x. 38. 'If any man draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him.' Be reſolute in religion, as ever you would not be eternally loſt; for none will get to heaven but thoſe that have a brow for a bargain, to yoke with difficulties in the way, and go through them. It is a concerning word, Rev. xxi. 8. *But the fearful, and unbelieving,—ſhall have part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimſtone: which is the ſecond death.* I think it has a view to the fearful and unbelieving diſpoſition that kept the Iſraelites out of Canaan, Numb. xiii. 33. and xiv.

2*dly*, If it be a temporal mercy, ye may get it, but the foyſon will be out of it, at leaſt till ye repent of your fainting, Pſal. cvi. 15. 'He gave them their requeſt, but ſent leanneſs into their ſoul.'

2. If ye hold on, and faint not, be your on-waiting never ſo long, it ſhall not be in vain, Matth. xxiv. 13. 'He that ſhall endure unto the end, the ſame ſhall be ſaved.' Gal. vi. 9. Let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint not.' God will never put thoſe away empty from him, that hang on, and will not go without the bleſſing.

3. He is well worth the waiting on. (1.) Though he is infinitely above us, he has waited long on us. (2.) The longer you are called to wait for a mercy, ye will readily find it the more valuable when it comes. The promiſe uſes to go longeſt with the biggeſt mercy: witneſs the promiſe of Chriſt, while many leſſer promiſes brought forth. (3.) His time will be found *the due time*, Gal. vi. 9. the beſt choſen time for the mercy's coming; witneſs the time of Iſaac's birth. (4.) Ye ſhall be ſure of ſome bleſſed of-fallings, while ye wait on, Pſal. xxvii. 14. 'Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he ſhall ſtrengthen thine heart: wait, I ſay, on the Lord.' and cxxxviii. 3. 'In the day when I cried, thou anſweredſt me; and ſtrengthenedſt me with ſtrength in my ſoul.' Ye ſhall be ſure of ſome pledge of a good anſwer, Jer. lii. 31, 32.

4. *laſtly*, They have waited long, that have loſt all, by not having patience to wait a little longer, Exod. xxxii. 1 Sam. xiii. 1. 10. Therefore *let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing*, James i. 4. *for in due ſeaſon ye ſhall reap, if ye faint not*, Gal. vi. 2.

PETITIONERS at the COURT of HEAVEN encouraged.

O R,

The happy iſſue of praying always, and not fainting.

TWO SERMONS, preached on a Sacramental Occaſion at Galaſhiels, Auguſt 12. and 13. 1727.

LUKE xviii. 8.

I tell you that he will avenge them ſpeedily.

AT a late occaſion I ſpoke to the ſcope of this parable from verſ. 1. The parable itſelf we have verſ. 2.——5. the doctrine of it, verſ. 6, 7. In the text we have the doctrine of it repeated, amplified, and confirmed.

1. The doctrine of the parable is here repeated, *He will avenge them.* Our Lord had already laid it before his diſciples, verſ. 7. in very ſtrong terms: for it is a point upon the belief of which very much depends: particularly his people's *praying always, and not fainting*, q. d. God will certainly hear them at length; therefore theſe muſt hang on about his hand crying, and not faint.

1*ſt*, Conſider the parties for whom this benefit is ſecured to them. It refers to verſ. 7. and ſo the parties are, they that *cry unto God night and day*; and what that is, appears from the ſcope; it is even to *pray always, and not to faint*; which I have already explained. So they who having laid petitions for ſupply of their needs before the Lord, do hang on and inſiſt without fainting and giving over, are aſſured of a happy iſſue of their proceſs, however tedious it may be. This is good news to petitioners at the court of heaven, though their anſwer may have been ſo long delayed, that it ſeems as if they would never be heard: this may make them renew their ſuit and purſue as a giant refreſhed with wine.

Object. But it is expreſsly reſtricted to the elect; therefore, though I hang on never ſo long, I am, may be, none of God's elect, and therefore can have no encouragement from it. *Anſw.* The ſcope of the parable looks to men indefinitely, verſ. 1. 'That men ought always to pray, and not to faint;' and the term elect is no reſtriction of the cries that are to be heard, as if there were ſome that cry day and night unto God, that are elect ones: and others that cry day and night unto him, that are not elect ones. No: but the crying of the elect day and night in the ſenſe of the text, is propoſed as an evidence of eternal election: it is inferred from their ſo crying that they are elect ones, and therefore ſhall ſurely be heard. *Q. d.* The unjuſt judge heard a woman he had no regard for, becauſe ſhe came continually to him: how much more will a juſt God hear thoſe that are coming continually to him, ſince they are ſurely his choſen ones, elſe they would certainly give it over, and go to another door?

2dly, The benefit ſecured for them, *He will avenge them*; that is; agreeable to the general ſcope, he will hear them at length to their full ſatisfaction; their proceſs ſhall have a happy iſſue. But it is expreſſed by *avenging of them*, to intimate, (1.) That all the grievances that God's children labour under, and which ſend them crying to God for relief, ariſe from their adverſaries, temporal or ſpiritual, without them or within them. (2.) That they are not able to rid themſelves of their adverſaries, but muſt grapple with their burden till another hand take it off. (3.) That God will not only deliver them, but ſhew them juſt vengeance on the ſprings of their grievance.

2. The doctrine of the parable amplified, I tell you that he will avenge them ſpeedily. Though they think they are put to wait long, yet matters being weighed in an even balance, they ſhall have a quick return of their prayers.

3. The confirmation of the whole, *I tell you.* Our Lord Chriſt gives his word for it.

The doctrine from the firſt verſe was, *That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt has kindly intimated to all that have buſineſs at the court of heaven, the neceſſity of ſo managing themſelves, that they ſtill hang on there, and not faint, whatever entertainment they meet with during the dependance of their proceſs.* And, in purſuance of the ſame ſcope from the 8th verſe compared with the firſt, I obſerve the following.

DOCT. *To move them that have buſineſs at the court of heaven, ſtill to hang on there, and not to faint, whatever hardſhips they meet with during the dependance of their proceſs, our Lord Jeſus hath expreſsly intimated, that ſuch petitioners ſhall certainly be heard to their hearts content, and that ſpeedily, in reality, however tedious their proceſs may ſeem to them for the time.* Briefly, *Jeſus Chriſt has given his word for it, that ſuch petitioners at the court of heaven as will hang on, and not faint, ſhall certainly be heard to their hearts content, and that ſpeedily.*

In handling of this doctrine, I ſhall ſhew,

I. What is that treatment petitioners may meet with at the court of heaven, under which they will be in hazard of fainting.

II. Why petitioners are in hazard of fainting from ſuch treatment at the court of heaven.

III. Wherefore the Lord gives ſuch treatment to any of his petitioners.

IV. What is the import of this intimation made for this end.

V. The certainty of ſuch petitioners being heard at length.

VI. How they ſhall be heard to their hearts content.

VII. How it ſhall be ſpeedily, notwithſtanding of the long delay.

VIII. Apply.

I. *Firſt*, I ſhall ſhew what is that treatment petitioners may meet with at the court of heaven, under which they will be in hazard of fainting. I mentioned ſeveral particulars at another occaſion; I offer now only three things in general.

1. The weight and preſſure of their heavy caſe itſelf, whatever it is, may be long continued, notwithſtanding of all their addreſſes for help, Jer. viii. 20. *The harveſt is paſt, the ſummer is ended, and we are not ſaved.* They may come again and again to the throne of grace, with their burden on their back, and as often carry it away with them. And that is faintſome work. A ſhort trial, though it be ſharp, is but *running with the footmen*; but a long continued one is *contending with horſes*, apt to run one out of breath, Pſal. vi. 3. 'My ſoul is alſo 'ſore vexed: but thou, O Lord, how long?'

2. There may be no appearance of relief, Pſal. lxxiv. 9. *We ſee not our ſigns, there is no more any prophet, neither is there any that knoweth how long.* A glimpſe of an appearance of relief, though yet afar off, would be like a cordial to the weary attendants, howbeit their night may have been long and dark, and yet no ſign of day-break to be diſcerned. The petitioners are apt to faint, who, though they often liſten, can hear no voice; though they look oft to the throne, can diſcern no moving toward their relief, Pſal. cxix. 123. 'Mine eyes 'fail for thy ſalvation, and for the word of thy righte'ouſneſs.'

3. They may get incident weights laid on them, as a load above their burden, Pſal. lxix. 26. 'They perſe'cute him whom thou haſt ſmitten, and they talk to 'the grief of thoſe whom thou haſt wounded.' Theſe are like drops poured into a full cup, ready to cauſe it run over: like ſmart touches on a broken leg, inclining one readily to faint.

II. The *ſecond* thing to be ſpoke to, is, Why petitioners are in hazard of fainting from ſuch treatment at the court of heaven. Four things concur to it.

1. Natural weakneſs, Iſa. xl. 6. 'All fleſh is graſs, 'and all the goodlineſs thereof is as the flower of the 'field.' On this very view the Lord *pities his children*, Pſal. ciii. 13, 14. We have weak backs, eaſily bowed down under a heavy burden, Pſal. xxxviii. 6.; weak hearts, ſoon damped, where God ſhews himſelf our party; weak heads, and are ſoon brought to our wits end; weak hands, that can do little for ourſelves at a pinch; and weak knees, ready to bow, and let us go to the ground, after long hanging on.

2. Conſcience of guilt, Pſal. xxxvii. 5, 6. 'My wounds 'ſtink, and are corrupt: becauſe of my fooliſhneſs. I 'am troubled, I am bowed down greatly; I go mourn'ing all the day long. Guilt is a mother of fears, and fears cauſe fainting. The ſinner goes to God with his pinching caſe, he is not anſwered: preſently there is a quarrel apprehended, the man knows he is a criminal, and the guilty conſcience whiſpers in his ear, 'There 'is no hope.'

3. Unacquaintedneſs with the methods of ſovereignty, Pſal. lxxvii. 19. 'Thy way is in the ſea, and thy path 'in the great waters, and thy footſteps are not known.' The myſteries of the management of providence have perplexed ſaints of the firſt magnitude, as Aſaph, Jeremiah, &c. We are apt to meaſure God's way by our

own, which occaſions much fainting in trials: whereas they differ as far as heaven and earth, Iſa. lv. 8, 9.

4. A ſtrong bias to unbelief, and walking by ſenſe, goes contrary to our duty and intereſt, 2 Cor. v. 7. We are apt to be impreſſed more with what we ſee and feel in providence, than what we hear from the word. And whereas we ſhould expound providence by the promiſe, the word being our rule, and ſo get the cordial virtue of it; we expound the promiſe by providence, and ſo put ourſelves in hazard of fainting: Luke xxiv. 20, 21. 25, 26. *The chief prieſts and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we truſted that it had been he which ſhould have redeemed Iſrael: and beſide all this, to-day is the third day ſince theſe things were done. Then he ſaid unto them, O fools, and ſlow of heart to believe all that the prophets have ſpoken! Ought not Chriſt to have ſuffered theſe things, and to enter into his glory?*

III. The *third* thing to be conſidered, is, Wherefore the Lord gives ſuch treatment to any of his petitioners.

Firſt, *Negatively*.

1. It is not for mere will and pleaſure. Satan will be ready to ſuggeſt this, and poſe the party with ſuch queſtions as theſe, For what uſe is all this delay? what glory comes to God by it? what profit comes to you by it? Good folk may liſten over much to it. But it is a lie, that it is for mere will and pleaſure, Lam. iii. 33. 'For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.'

2. It is not becauſe he has no pity on you, nor concern for you under your burden; though Zion, by the ſuggeſtion of Satan, may entertain that jealouſy of her God, which he flatly refuſes, Iſa. xlix. 14, 15. 'But Zion ſaid, The Lord hath forſaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her ſucking child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the ſon of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.' Whatever the Lord's way be with thee, it is an eternal ſcripture-truth, *God is love*, 1 John iv. 16. *gracious and full of compaſſion*, Pſal. cxi. 4. And it is apparent even in this caſe, in that it is not worſe with thee, Lam. iii. 22. and that thou art always getting new ſupports under thy burden, ver. 23.

3. It is not to ſignify to you, that you ſhould give it over, and trouble him no more with your petition; as the haſty unbelieving heart is ready to take it, and to give over duty becauſe there is no ſenſible appearance of ſucceſs, Jer. xx. 9. *I ſaid, I will not make mention of him, nor ſpeak any more in his name.* He has ſignified his will to be the quite contrary, 1 Theſſ. v. 17. 'Pray without ceaſing;' and our Lord ſpoke this parable to prevent that miſconſtruction.

4. *laſtly*, It is not becauſe he is reſolved not to hear you at any rate, cry as long as ye will. Satan will interpret it that way to you, and there is too much liſtening to it, Hab. i. 2. 'O Lord, how long ſhall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not ſave!' He has promiſed the contrary, Pſal. l. 15. 'Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver, and thou ſhalt glorify me.' Our Lord aſſures you of the contrary in the text.

Secondly, But *poſitively*, in general,

It is for holy, wiſe, becoming ends; it is neceſſary for his glory and your caſe. Believe that on the credit of the word, Deut. xxxii. 4. *He is the rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity, juſt and right is he.* There is not one random ſtep in his whole way, Lam. iii. 33. There is a neceſſity for what he does.

Object. I cannot ſee how my caſe requires it, or what glory God can have by it. *Anſw.* You are no competent judge of what your caſe requires, and therefore you ſhould leave that to the Lord, Pſal. xlvii. 4. 'He ſhall chuſe our inheritance for us.' Jer. x. 23. 'O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in man himſelf: it is not in man that walketh, to direct his ſteps.' If you are ſick, you leave it to your phyſician how to order your caſe; if your affairs are perplexed, and you have a plea at law, you leave it to your lawyer: and when you have a proceſs at the court of heaven, will ye not leave it to your God?

Ye are as little competent judges of what glory God can have by ſuch and ſuch a management. God can raiſe glory to himſelf, where ye can ſee nothing but diſhonour to him; and he will have it, Rom. xi. 36. *For —— to him are all things.* Believe that, and leave the way of raiſing it to himſelf. The ſeed of glory to God in Job's trial, neither he nor his friends generally ſaw for a long time: yet it ſprung up fair at length, and flouriſhed to this day.

But *particularly*,

1. It is for the honour of the man Chriſt. It contributes to it,

1ſt, In that thereby the petitioners are conformed to his image, in the ſuffering part thereof. He met with that treatment at the throne, Pſal. xxii. 1, 2. *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? why art thou ſo far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou heareſt not; and in the night-ſeaſon, and am not ſilent.* And for a reward of his bearing it, it is appointed it ſhould be the way of the court ever after. And therefore none of God's children ſhall miſs to ſhare of it, in greater or leſſer meaſure, ſoon or late, Rom. viii. 29. 'For whom he did foreknow, he alſo did predeſtinate, to be conformed to the image of his Son.'

2dly, Thereby he gets the more employment as the great Interceſſor, and is more earneſtly applied to than otherwiſe he would be. Longſome pleas give the advocates much ado; and longſome proceſſes at the court of heaven bring much buſineſs to the Mediator, and ſo much honour.

3dly, It affords him the moſt ſignal occaſion of diſplaying his power in combating with and baffling the old ſerpent, next to that he had on the croſs, 2 Cor. xii. 9. 'And he ſaid unto me, My grace is ſufficient for thee: for my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs. Moſt gladly therefore will I rather glory in mine infirmities, that the power of Chriſt may reſt upon me.' Here Satan and a weak creature is yoked, Heaven ſtanding by and looking on. The poor creature has a burden on his back, he cries, Lord, take it off, and cries again, but no anſwer: Satan takes the advantage, works againſt him to make him faint: but the combat is maintained, and Satan is baffled, through ſecret ſupport conveyed to the ſinner from Jeſus.

2. To ſhew who are meet to be heard, and who not; who have a due value for the mercy petitioned for, and the God in whoſe hand it is. Iſrael wandered in the wilderneſs till all the deſpiſers of the pleaſant land, and unbelievers of the word, dropt off, and Caleb and Joſhua, who followed the Lord fully, were brought in. The fainting petitioners either deſpiſe the mercy, by dropping it; or God himſelf, by carrying their proceſs to another.

3. To magnify the promiſe. Satan, in man's ſtate of innocence, bent his main force againſt the threatening, to ſhake man's faith of it. Now he bends his main force againſt the promiſe, to make poor ſinners quit their gripes of it. In ſuch a caſe there is a ſolemn ſtruggle about it; faith holds, and the devil draws. The believer ſees he is gone if he quit it; it is his all; and therefore, though the floods overflow, he ſtrives to keep the gripe.

4. *laſtly*, To keep up the mercy, till that time come, that, all things conſidered, will be the abſolutely beſt time for beſtowing it, John xi. 14, 15. *Then ſaid Jeſus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your ſakes, that I was not there (to the intent ye may believe,) nevertheleſs, let us go unto him.*

Uſe 1. Know then, that trifling and careleſs management will not daunt the court of heaven. Deep earneſt yourſelves in, reſolved not to take a nay-ſay. Be ſincere, prepare and vigorouſly preſs your ſuits. This may encourage ſinners to come to Chriſt, and to put their caſe in his hand, and hang on. Particularly backſliders, and whoſoever are foreboding no good to themſelves from him, may be encouraged by this doctrine.

IV. The *fourth* thing to be ſpoke to, is, What is the import of this intimation made for this end? It is imported, That ſinners are ready to take delays at the court of heaven for denials. Satan and their own unbelieving hearts tell them they are ſo. And therefore in oppoſition to this, and to prevent the miſtake, our Lord expreſsly gives his word that it is not ſo.

2. That importunity and reſolute hanging on, and repeated addreſſes for the ſupply of the ſame need, are very welcome and acceptable to Chriſt and his Father. There is no fear of exceſs here; the oftener ye come, the more reſolute ye are in your hanging on, the more welcome. The interceſſor will not weary of your putting your petitions in his hands, nor his Father of taking them out of his.

3. That the faith of being heard at length, is neceſſary to keep one hanging on without fainting, Pſal. xxvii. 13. 'I had fainted, unleſs I had believed to ſee the good 'of the Lord in the land of the living.' Petitioners indifferent whether they be heard or no, may continue their cuſtomary prayers without the faith of being heard; but if men be in deep earneſt with their petitions, they will never eſcape fainting without faith, Rom. iv. 18, 19, 20.

4. That the hearing to be got at length at the court of heaven, is well worth the waiting on, be it never ſo long. It will more than counterbalance all the fatigues of the proceſs, that is kept longeſt in dependance. And the faith of this ſhould be kept up, to keep the petitioner from fainting.

V. The *fifth* thing in the method is, The certainty of ſuch petitioners being heard at length. Here it is neceſſary to repeat what was ſaid of the duty of hanging on, and not fainting, that we may ſee who they are that are ſuch petitioners. Now, that ſuch petitioners will be heard, is beyond peradventure, however long they get to wait on, if ye conſider,

1. They are doubtleſs God's own children, elect believers, whatever they think of themſelves, Luke xviii. 7. 'And ſhall not God avenge his own elect, which 'cry day and night unto him, though he bear long 'with them?' If they were not ſo, they could never take ſuch treatment at God's hand, and yet ſtill hang on about it, John viii. 35. *The ſervant abideth not in the houſe for ever: but the Son abideth ever.* And will not God hear the cries of his own children at length? Certainly, he will. The begun reſemblance to their elder brother muſt be complete, 2 Tim. ii. 11. 12. 'It is a 'faithful ſaying, For if we be dead with him, we ſhall 'alſo live with him: if we ſuffer, we ſhall alſo reign 'with him,' &c.

2. The nature, name, and promiſe of God, join to inſure it. He is good and gracious in his nature, Exod. xxxiv. 6.—9. He has bowels of mercy more tender than a mother to her ſucking child, Iſ. xlix. 15. He is the hearer of prayer, Pſal. lxv. 2. and will he not anſwer that part of his name? will he not hear his own children; and hear them after they have cried long, and ſtill continue crying? He has bound himſelf by promiſe, Pſal. l. 15. 'Call upon me in the day of trouble; 'I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorify me:' and cii. 17. 'He will regard the prayer of the deſtitute, and not 'deſpiſe their prayer.' And will he not perform this his promiſe?

3. Such prayers are the product of his own Spirit in them, and therefore cannot miſs to be heard, James v. 16. *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* Ye ſay, ye have cried ſo long, and no anſwer; and therefore your petitions appear to be the product of nature, not of the Spirit of God. But I ſay, according to the word, ye have cried ſo long and no anſwer, and yet continue crying, and have not fainted, and given over, but ſtick by it reſolutely: therefore your petitioning is not the product of nature, but of the Spirit. For nature's praying is a pool that will dry up in a long drought; but the Spirit of prayer is the laſting ſpring, John iv. 14. If thou art ſtrengthened to hang on, and not faint, it is a token Heaven's hand is at thy upholding; as was the caſe with David, Pſal. cxxxviii. 3. 'In the day when I cried, thou anſweredſt me, 'and ſtrengthenedſt me with ſtrength in my ſoul.'

4. Our Lord Jeſus has given his word on it, and ſo has impawned his honour they ſhall be heard, *I tell you that he will avenge them ſpeedily.* Now, he is the interceſſor at the court of heaven, and his interceſſion is never baulked there: ſo the honour of the Mediator, and his people's being heard, are in one bottom to ſink or ſwim together; and he is able to ſecure his own honour: and does not that make ſure work of your being heard? I proceed to ſhew,

VI. *Sixthly*, How they ſhall be heard to their heart's content.

1. They ſhall at length ſee that their prayers have been accepted. I do not ſay they ſhall be at length accepted, but they ſhall ſee they have been ſo. Many cannot think thoſe prayers are accepted, that do not come ſoon back with anſwers. But that is a miſtake; for the petitions of thoſe that hang on, and faint not, proceeding from that diſpoſition, are accepted inſtantly, though many years ſhould run ere the anſwer come back, 1 John v. 14. 'And this is the confidence that we have 'in him, that if we aſk any thing according to his will, 'he heareth us.' God does with his wreſtling childrens petitions, as a father with letters ſometimes ſent from his ſon in a far country; he reads them with pleaſure and affection always as they come to his hand, and lays them by in a ſhuttle to be all anſwered at the moſt convenient time: Matth. xv. 28. 'Then Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be 'it unto thee even as thou wilt.'

2. They ſhall get an anſwer of their petitions to their heart's ſatisfaction, Matth. xv. 28. forecited. Pſal. ix. 18. 'The needy ſhall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor ſhall not periſh for ever.' God will tell out to them according to the promiſe, in anſwer to their prayers; ſo that they ſhall change their wreſtling note, and ſay, *I love the Lord, becauſe he hath heard my voice, and my ſupplications*, Pſal. cxvi. 1. and look on what they have met with as bearing the ſignature of the hand of a prayer-hearing God. Their burden ſhall be taken off, and they ſhall have their petition in kind, or equivalent, to their heart's content, 2 Cor. xii. 9. 'And 'he ſaid unto me, My grace is ſufficient for thee: for 'my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs.'

3. They ſhall be fully ſatisfied as to the long delay and the whole ſteps of the procedure, however perplexing they were before, Rev. xv. 3. *And they ſing the ſong of Moſes the ſervant of God, and the ſong of the Lamb, ſaying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty: juſt and true are thy ways, thou king of ſaints.* Standing on the ſhore, and looking back to what they have paſſed through, they will be made to ſay, 'He hath done all things well;' and they will ſee that none of it could have been wanting.

4. They ſhall get it with increaſe according to the time they waited on, and the hardſhips they ſuſtained during the dependance of the proceſs. The fruit of the promiſe, the longer it is a-ripening, the more bulky it is. Abraham and Sarah waited for the promiſed child till they were coming into extreme old age, the very

next ſtep to death, Gen. xviii. 11. but they got with it an addition of the renewing of their age, Gen. xxi. 7. and xxv. 1.

5. *Laſtly*, Their ſpiritual enemies that flew thick and ſtrong about them in the time of the darkneſs, ſhall be ſcattered at the appearance of this light, 1 Sam. ii. 5. 'They that were full, have hired out themſelves for 'bread; and they that were hungry, ceaſed: ſo that the 'barren hath born ſeven, and ſhe that hath many chil'dren, is waxed feeble.' Formidable was Pharaoh's hoſt, while the Iſraelites had the Red-Sea before them; but when they were through the ſea, they ſaw the Egyptians dead upon the ſhore, Exod. xiv. 30. Such a heart-ſight ſhall they that hang on, and faint not, get of Satan and all his black bands. I proceed to ſhew,

VII. *Seventhly*, How it ſhall be ſpeedily, notwithſtanding of the long delay.

1. It ſhall be ſpeedily in reſpect of the weight and value of it when it comes: ſo that the believer looking on the return of his petition, with an eye of faith perceiving the worth of it, may wonder it is come upon ſo ſhort on-waiting. This view of it the apoſtle takes, 2 Cor. iv. 17. *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* And ſo ſays Zophar, Job xi. 16. 'Thou ſhalt 'forget thy miſery, and remember it as waters that paſs 'away.'

2. It ſhall come in the moſt ſeaſonable nick of time it can come in, Gal. vi. 9. when it may come to the beſt advantage for the honour of God and their good: and that which comes in the beſt ſeaſon, comes ſpeedily. 'To every thing there is a ſeaſon;' ſo fools haſte is no ſpeed. Times and ſeaſons are in the Lord's hand, and all his works are beſt-timed, Deut. xxxii. 4. and will abide the ſtricteſt examination, Eccleſ. iii. 14.

3. It ſhall come as ſoon as they are prepared for it, Pſal. x. 17. 'Thou wilt prepare their heart;' and if it ſhould come ſooner, it will be over ſoon. And it may take long time to prepare for it; there may be many a leſſon to learn, much working on their will may be neceſſary, ere they be prepared for it.

4. It ſhall not tarry one moment beyond the due and appointed time, Hab. ii. 3. *Though it tarry, wait for it, becauſe it will ſurely come, it will not tarry*: it will not linger, poſtpone, or put off beyond that due time. Whatever way the wheel of providence be driving, it is a wheel within a wheel, and ſo needs ſpend no time in turning about.

5. *Laſtly*, It will be ſurpriſing, as a glaring light to one brought out of a dungeon, though he was expecting it. No doubt the church was expecting the end of their captivity in Babylon, toward the end of the ſeventy years; yet ſuch was the change, it was ſurpriſing, they *were like men that dreamed*, Pſal. cxxvi. 1.

Uſe 1. Let all know that it is not in vain to ſeek the Lord. God's truſt is better than the world's hand-payment. Though waiting on at the court of heaven may be longſome, yet it is a ſure way to get our wants ſupplied.

2. All ye that have now ſet your faces heavenward, profeſſing your reſolution to forſake ſin and the world, and to hang on about the Lord's hand for all; do not look back, turn not away from him, Heb. x. 38. *If any man ſhall draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him.* Remember it is *he that endures to the end ſhall be ſaved.*

3. Think it not ſtrange if ye meet with treatment at the hand of the Lord, whereby ye may be in hazard of fainting. He loves to try his followers. But be reſolute to hang on about his hand, come what will, and ye will be ſure to ſpeed at length.

4. Ye that are going away mourning from this communion becauſe of a hiding God, and a hungry meal ye have got; do not deſpond; but enquire into the cauſes, mourn over them, and renew your addreſſes to the throne vigorouſly; and what ye miſſed in public, ye may get in ſecret.

5. *Laſtly*, Ye that are under any preſſure, who have been long toſſed with tempeſts and not comforted, nor have any appearance of comfort ſhewing itſelf; comfort yourſelves with the words of the text, believing it, while ye can have no comfort from the appearance of providence; and be reſolute in hanging on, and faint not. And ye have Chriſt's word for it, your caſe ſhall have a happy iſſue, though never ſo deſperate-like.

And whoever would be kept from fainting, and animated to hang on about the Lord's hand, believe that hanging on ye ſhall certainly be heard at length to your heart's content. For ſo hath our Lord ſaid, *I tell you that he will avenge them ſpeedily.*

The STRENGTH of Chriſt illuſtrated in the WEAKNESS of his People.

Two Sermons, preached on a Sacramental Occaſion at Galaſhiels, July 31, and Auguſt 1, 1731.

2 COR. xii. 9.

For my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs.

IN the Lord's leading his people through the wilderneſs of this world, there are many myſteries of providence which are too high for them fully to comprehend; ſo that, after the narroweſt ſcrutiny into them, they muſt conclude as Pſal. lxxvii. 19. 'Thy way is in 'the ſea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footſteps are not known.' But the light of glory hereafter will ſatisfy their ſenſe as to all the particular ſteps therein; and till that time come, there is a light of the word that may ſatisfy faith as to the general deſign of them; and the text has a beam of ſuch light in it.

In the words,

Firſt, Obſerve the connection pointing to the myſtery this beam of light was ſent to clear; *For*, &c. That we may ſee what this aims at, we muſt look back to the preceeding account; where we find, (1.) Paul wrapt up into the third heavens, while yet alive, ver. 2. (2.) The ſame Paul quickly after in a kind of hell upon the earth; where, inſtead of the pleaſurable glance and taſte of the happineſs of the heavenly ſociety he had got, he finds himſelf yoked in cloſe combat with the devil, ver. 7.; whom if he did not ſee with his eyes, he certainly felt the weight of his hands upon his body and ſpirit: for I think there is no reaſon to recede from the literal ſenſe of the text. (3.) Paul praying again and again in this humble ſituation, to be brought out of it, ver. 8. *For this thing I beſought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.* (4.) The anſwer given to his prayer, whereof the text is a part. And here is, 1*ſt*, The preciſe anſwer to his petition, *My grace is ſufficient for thee.* Wherein there is, (1.) Something implied, viz. That the Lord was not minded to give the ridding ſtroke as yet, but the combat behoved to continue longer, and how long he was not to know. (2.) Something expreſſed, viz. That he had ſuch a ſecond, that there ſhould be no fear of the iſſue, 'My grace is ſufficient for thee.' Now, 2*dly*, Our text is the juſtifying reaſon of this anſwer; not of the expreſſed part of it, the ſufficiency of the Lord's grace; but the implied part, the divine conduct in letting the battle go on, though by this *time* it was with 'confuſed noiſe, and garments 'rolled in blood.' *q. d.* Paul, be not ſtumbled at this, I have a becoming deſign in ſuffering it to go on, and not giving the deciſive ſtroke as yet.

Secondly, The beam of light clearing this myſtery in the general he ſaith, *My ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs.* Wherein is ſet forth,

1*ſt*, An amicable yoking of divine ſtrength and creature-weakneſs. There was indeed here a moſt powerful evil ſpirit, yoked in a hoſtile manner with weak fleſh and blood; ſo that had they two, without any interpoſition from heaven, been left to diſpute it, the former had torn the latter in a thouſand pieces. But there was an inviſible divine hand with the weak party, that ſupported it againſt the ſtrong.

2*dly*, The illuſtration of the glory of the divine ſtrength by this conjunction with creature-weakneſs; *My ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs.* Where,

1. Conſider *whoſe* is this ſtrength. It is the Lord's, to whom Paul prayed, ver. 8, 9. and that was the Lord Chriſt, ver. 9. To whom Paul prayed, in this combat with Satan, it being he who by his office was to bruiſe the ſerpent. Whereby it appears, that he is true God, God by nature, as being the object of divine worſhip, and the ſubject of ſovereign divine power, Col. ii. 9. 'For in him dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily.'

2. What his *ſtrength* is. It certainly comprehends the ſtrength of his grace lodged in him as Mediator, but is not confined to his moral perfections, but takes in the whole divine power, whereby he is able to do all things for the weak creature, whatever its weakneſs be: for the words are general.

3. One of thoſe fields wherein it exerts itſelf, viz. weakneſs. It exerts itſelf in the ſtrong, both in heaven and earth; and without it the ſtrongeſt would be weak as water. But on this earth there is occaſion for its exerting itſelf in the weak, in their weakneſs; working in, by, and with the real weakneſs and felt weakneſs of the creature.

4. With what advantage it exerts itſelf in the creature's weakneſs; it is made perfect there. There is a twofold perfecting of a thing; one real, by adding to it ſomething that it wanted to complete it; and the power of Chriſt being infinite, is not capable of that: another manifeſtative, whereby that which was vailed before comes to be diſcovered, like the ſun getting from under a cloud. Thus Chriſt's ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs: it ſhines forth the more illuſtriouſly there, that it doth as it were appear alone, unmixed with creature-ſtrength.

DOCT. *The ſtrength and power of our Lord Chriſt, being perfected or illuſtrated in the weakneſs of the creature, ſufficiently clears the diſpenſation of his keeping his people, ſo long as he really doth, ſtruggling in circumſtances of weakneſs in this world.*

In handling this doctrine, I ſhall

I. Conſider this diſpenſation.

II. The matter clearing it.

III. Apply.

I. *Firſt*, We ſhall conſider this diſpenſation. The Father has committed all judgement into the hand of the Son; Chriſt the Mediator has the charge of conducting all his redeemed ones through the world, to the promiſed land, John v. 22. Iſa. lv. 4. And here is his conduct in that matter, this is the ſtated courſe of his diſpenſations, keeping them long ſtruggling in circumſtances of weakneſs. And here conſider,

Firſt, The place of it. That is only this world. It begins with them as ſoon as, believing on him, they reſign themſelves to his conduct: it continues with them all along after while they are on the way: but when he has them at home in heaven, that diſpenſation is for ever laid aſide as to them. It has no place but in this lower world. Paul, from the time he became a Chriſtian, had a continued ſtruggle, till he was wrapt up to the third heaven, Rom. vii. 24. While he was there in that caſe, it intermitted. But when he came back again, he even fell into it anew; and the firſt bruſh of it was a moſt fearful one.

Secondly, The nature of it; which we may take up in theſe two.

1*ſt*, He obliges them to a ſtruggle, Matth. xi. 12. 'The kingdom of heaven ſuffereth violence, and the 'violent taketh it by force.' They are not to expect an eaſy paſſage through the world to the promiſed land; but muſt truſt him their deſired eaſe till they come to their journey's end. They are obliged to it.

1. In that he lays great pieces of work to their hand, doing work, ſuffering work. He will not have them to be idle: every day will call up its own piece of work, that unleſs they fall aſleep, they will find their hands filled every day. And if at any time they do fall aſleep, when they awaken again, they will find their work increaſed on their hand.

2. In that he ſuffers them to meet with great oppoſition. The wind of providence from heaven, often blows ſtrong in their face for their trial, Gen. xxii. 1. The wind of temptation from hell, and oppoſition from that airth, never fails, and at times riſes very boiſterous, and becomes tempeſtuous, as in the apoſtle's caſe here, verſ. 7. Mean while they muſt not run in from their work, and take a houſe till it turn calm, but muſt hold on their way. This conſtitutes the ſtruggle, Eph. vi. 12. *For we wreſtle not againſt fleſh and blood, but againſt principalities, againſt powers, againſt the rulers of the darkneſs of this world, againſt ſpiritual wickedneſs in high places.*

2*dly*, Yet, though he obliges them to this ſtruggling life, he, in the depth of his wiſdom, keeps them in circumſtances of weakneſs: and theſe circumſtances of,

1. Real weakneſs: whereby it comes to paſs, that they really want within themſelves a ſufficient ſtock of ability, to manage their work, and grapple with and force their way through the oppoſition made them in it. He himſelf owns this to be the way of his managing his people, that he keeps them from hand to mouth, John xv. 5. 'Without me ye can do nothing.'

2. Felt weakneſs. They are not man enough for their work, and he makes them ſenſible it is ſo, 2 Cor. iii. 5. 'Not that we are ſufficient of ourſelves to think 'any thing as of ourſelves; but our ſufficiency is of 'God.' So that both builders and bearers about the temple of the Lord, are obliged with one voice to ſay, *Except the Lord build the houſe, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchmen waketh in vain,* Pſal. cxxvii. 1. And if at any time they loſe this ſenſe of their weakneſs, it is his way to leave them to their own weight, till catching a fall, the ſmart bring them to themſelves to a ſenſe of their weakneſs; as in Peter's caſe.

More particularly, our Lord keeps his people while here,

1ſt, Always in circumſtances of natural weakneſs; and theſe,

1. Of pure natural weakneſs, a weakneſs that is inwrought with human fleſh, though at its prime, Iſ. xl. 6. 'All fleſh is graſs, and all the goodlineſs thereof is as the flower of the field.' The witneſſes hereof are, the need of meat, drink, ſleep, &c. wherewith the tabernacles of clay muſt daily be underpropped. Even this makes God's children objects of their *Father's pity*, Pſal. ciii. 13, 14.

2. Of ſinful natural weakneſs; not that he brought them under ſuch weakneſs, but he ſuffers them to lie under it. There are remains of the corruption of nature in them all, which makes them a company of poor groning weaklings, Rom. vii. 24. Grace has got in indeed, but corruption is not quite got out. The Canaanites are left in the land, and they are not able to clear the land of them. And this corruption of nature hath a bias in each of them, to ſome particular evil, according to their various tempers and circumſtances, 'the ſin that *eaſily* beſets them,' Heb. xii. 1.

2dly, Often in circumſtances of accidental weakneſs, through a variety of afflictions, trials, and temptations, weakening their bodies, or weakening their ſpirits, or weakening both together, as in Paul's caſe here. The particulars of this kind are too numerous to enter into the detail of: phyſicians and divines have filled books with them reſpectively.

Thirdly, The difficulty caſting up about this diſpenſation. There is a twofold knot here.

1. The firſt lies in that he can put them out of thoſe circumſtances of weakneſs, yet he keeps them in them. The former cannot be queſtioned, ſince his divine power could have perfected them in the moment of converſion, both naturally and morally: what he will do to their ſouls at death, to their perſons at the reſurrection, he could have done in the moment of their union with him. The latter is manifeſt from the experience of his people in all ages and places of this world.

2. The ſecond lies in the conſequences of this diſpenſation. The weak things act weakly, leaving the marks of their weakneſs on all they do, and grone under the whole. Here the creature's hardſhips and preſſures are the eaſieſt part; but the ſin, and diſhonour to God that eventually attends them under this diſpenſation, ties the knot ſtraiteſt, and makes many a weary look for the deliverance.

II. *Secondly*, We are to conſider the matter clearing this diſpenſation; which is, That the ſtrength and power of Chriſt is illuſtrated in the weakneſs of the creature. And here we would ſhew, 1. Wherein the ſtrength of Chriſt is illuſtrated in the way of this diſpenſation; and, 2. The becomingneſs thereof.

Firſt, Wherein the ſtrength of Chriſt is illuſtrated in the way of this diſpenſation.

1. In ſupporting them under their weakneſs, 2 Cor. i. 8, 9, 10. The more ready the houſe is to fall, the more does appear the efficacy of the prop that holds it up. The diſpenſation of providence towards ſome of the ſaints, in ſupporting them under their preſſures, is a train of wonders: the diſpenſation of grace ſupporting them all, is a continued miracle, in that the ſpark of grace is not extinguiſhed, in the ocean of corruption wherewith it is encompaſſed in themſelves and others, and put in agitation by the powers of darkneſs.

2. In doing great things by them, weak and contemptible as they are. How illuſtriouſly ſhines the power of Chriſt in making *worm Jacob threſh the mountains*, Iſa. xli. 14. 15. weak creatures victorious over all the power of the enemy? It is in ſuch Chriſt chuſes to ſet forth his God-like ſtrength, his divine power, 2 Cor. iv. 7. When he ſet forth with his goſpel in the world, Satan had the power of the ſword, and the learning in the world, on his ſide; but Chriſt, by a few illiterate fiſhermen, Paul excepted, carried his point againſt Satan with his ſwords-men and book-men too.

3. In ſtrengthening them out of weakneſs, Heb. xi. 34. How often is their caſe, when at the weakeſt, neareſt to a ſtrengthening; and the fainting ſaint becomes like a giant refreſhed with wine, by a touch of Chriſt's hand, a word from his mouth! Iſ. xl. 29. 'He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might, he increaſeth ſtrength.' Amos v. 9. 'The Lord ſtrengtheneth the ſpoiled againſt the ſtrong, ſo that the ſpoiled ſhall come againſt the fortreſs.' Paul ſpeaks his uſual experience of this, 2 Cor. xii. 10. *Therefore I take pleaſure in infirmities, in reproaches, in neceſſities, in perſecutions, in diſtreſſes for Chriſt's ſake: for when I am weak, then am I ſtrong.* He gives ſtrength for a particular effect: when the work comes to the ſetting to, it comes, according to Matth. x. 19. *When they deliver you up, take no thought how, or what ye ſhall ſpeak: for it ſhall be given you in that ſame hour what ye ſhall ſpeak:* when the work is done, it goes. So the timing and continuance of it, ſpeaks whence it comes, that it is not home-bred, but heaven-bred.

4. *laſtly*, In bringing the weak things, through all their difficulties, ſafe home at long run, Pſal. lxxiii. 24. O wonderful counſellor, that will guide ſuch a weak company, through all their ſnares, to glory! how muſt the power and ſkill of the Pilot ſhine, in bringing ſuch broken and ſhattered veſſels, amidſt ſo many rocks and ſhelves, in a tempeſtuous ſea, ſafe to land! Sure, whatever doubts remain now with them about this diſpenſation, when they ſet their foot on the ſhore, they will ſing the ſong of Moſes and of the Lamb, and ſay of his whole diſpenſations, *He has done all things well.*

Thus do ſhine forth in this diſpenſation,

1. The ſtrength of the wiſdom of Chriſt, and it writes his name in legible characters, *The wonderful counſellor.* What wiſdom but divine could conduct ſuch a company of weaklings, under ſuch circumſtances of weakneſs, through all the powers of the enemy, ſo as to loſe none of them? Mark that connection, Iſa. xl. 28.—31. 'Haſt thou not known? haſt thou not heard that the everlaſting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no ſearching of his underſtanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might, he increaſeth ſtrength. Even the youths ſhall faint and be weary, and the young men ſhall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord ſhall renew their ſtrength, they ſhall mount up with wings as eagles, they ſhall run and not be weary, and they ſhall walk and not faint.'

2. The power of his hand, which eminently exerts itſelf here. To do great things by mighty inſtruments is the way of the creatures: but to do great things by weak and contemptible means, is the way of Chriſt, becauſe he is GOD. To overthrow mountains by earthquakes, is the work of God in nature: but to make a worm threſh mountains ſmall as duſt, is his work in grace.

3. The power of his grace, 2 Cor. xii. 9. Here it appears an immortal ſeed; and to be, in its meaneſt lodging; the heart of a weak creature, impregnable: whence? Not from its own nature, as ſuch a created quality, evident from Adam's caſe: but that it is the grace of Chriſt, communicated out of his fulneſs, and thereby fed as from a continual ſpring, John iv. 14. *The water that I ſhall give him, ſhall be in him a well of water ſpringing up into everlaſting life.*

4. *Laſtly*, The ſtrength of Chriſt's intereſt in heaven, which procures the weak ones ſo many pardons, keeps them in the ſtate of favour with God, and in end gets them, notwithſtanding of all their weakneſs and worthleſſneſs, ſet up veſſels of glory in the upper houſe.

Uſe 1. Hence we proclaim Jeſus Chriſt a fit ſupport for all weak ones to draw to: come to him then, ye weak creatures that his power may be diſplayed in you, to his honour, and your good.

There are other weak ones than the ſaints, though none ſo ſenſible of their weakneſs as they. Strangers to Chriſt, ye are weak, dead-weak, however ſtrong in your conceit. To convince you that feel it not,

1. Are ye brought out of the ſtate wherein Adam left you? No, ye are not. Then ye are weak, Rom. v. 6. *For when we were yet without ſtrength, in due time Chriſt died for the ungodly*: not only weak bodies, but weak ſouls, notwithſtanding of all your natural and acquired abilities. And it is owing to the lowneſs of your caſe, that ye are not ſenſible of it.

2. What head can ye make againſt diſeaſe or death? 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56, 57. what ſtrength for that encounter? Iſ. xl. 6. All muſt die, ſay ye; but the ſaints through Chriſt are proof againſt the ſting of it; but what ſafeguard againſt it have ye?

3. Are your own legs able to bear you before the tribunal of God? No, ſure, Pſal. cxliii. 2.——'In thy 'ſight ſhall no man living be juſtified.' Why ſeek ye not then for ſhelter under the covert of blood? I ſay then,

1ſt, Inſenſible ſinners, come to a ſenſe of your weakneſs, and under the ſenſe of it come to Chriſt. Without it ye will not.

2dly, Senſible ſinners, let not your weakneſs ſcare you from Chriſt, but rather prompt you not to delay coming, Matth. ix. 12. 'They that be whole need not 'a phyſician, but they that are ſick.' They will periſh in their weakneſs that come not.

Let all conſider, that whoever they be in whom the ſtrength of Chriſt's grace ſhall not be diſplayed, in a ſtate of union with him, the ſtrength of his hand will be diſplayed againſt them for ever, in a ſtate of ſeparation from him, 2 Theſſ. i. 8.

Uſe 2. Communicants may hence be directed in their approach, to come under a ſenſe of their weakneſs, to receive the ſeal of God's covenant inſuring the ſtrength of Chriſt to be forthcoming for them under all their weakneſs. And all that are minded for heaven, may learn to ſet themſelves to ſubmit to this diſpenſation, and to lay their account to live by faith, not by ſenſe, till they get home.

Secondly, The becomingneſs of this conſtitution. It will appear worthy of God, and therefore in reaſon ſhould be ſatisfying to the creature, if ye conſider,

1. That the man Chriſt is now in heaven, and will be to the end of the world, Acts iii. 21. But by this means his divine power is, for his glory, ſtill illuſtrated in the world. While he was on the earth, he did now and then let out a beam of his divine glory: but he was nevertheleſs put to an ignominious death in it; and his enemies gave out, that he was ſwallowed up in death as other men. But by this means there is a continual proof of his reſurrection, aſcenſion, and divine power, kept up and to be kept up in the world to the end, in that continued diſplay of his ſtrength in the weakneſs of his people, 2 Cor. iv. 11. 'For we which live, are alway de-'livered unto death for Jeſus ſake, that the life alſo of 'Jeſus might be made manifeſt in our mortal fleſh.' Conſider,

1ſt, His divine power had a vail caſt over it, when he was on earth, Phil. ii. 7. and in his ſufferings, crucifixion, death, and burial, he appeared in human weakneſs, 2 Cor. xiii. 4. Is it not worthy of God then, that now, when he is in heaven, his divine power ſhould ſhine forth in its turn in the world; and that there ſhould be a ſcene of human weakneſs, wherein it may to the greateſt advantage diſplay itſelf?

2dly, This diſplay of the ſtrength of Chriſt in the weakneſs of his people, appears full to their conviction: and the more weak they are, they ſee it the more clearly while it is exerted in them; as contraries appear beſt by another's ſide. And thus the glory of the power of Chriſt continually ſhines in the world, in the eyes of them who feel it.

3dly, While there is a people in the world compaſſed about with much weakneſs, yet profeſſing their dependence on the ſtrength of Chriſt, and they are accordingly ſtrengthened, in many inſtances at leaſt, to the conviction of beholders: this is a ſufficient objective evidence of the power of Chriſt to the world, ſufficient to extort a confeſſion of it from them, as Pſal. cxxvi. 2. *Then ſaid they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them,* Iſa. lxi. 9. *Their ſeed ſhall be known among the Gentiles, and their offſpring among the people: all that ſee them ſhall acknowledge them, that they are the ſeed which the Lord hath bleſſed*; or to leave them inexcuſable. Hence, in all times of perſecution, the ſupport from heaven that confeſſors and martyrs had, hath brought numbers over to their ſide, ſo that the blood of the martyrs uſually proved the ſeed of the church.

Hence I conclude, That this conſtitution and method of providence and grace on the church on earth, is a glorious device worthy of God, for diſplaying the glory of Chriſt. There, where he was ſome time covered over with ignominy, reproach, and diſgrace, as weak and contemptible, *a worm and not a man; a reproach of men, and deſpiſed of the people*, is his glory diſplayed, Pſal. xxii. 6.

2. It is agreeable to the method of divine procedure in other things, and ſo makes the divine conduct to be of a piece. Wherein we may obſerve, that it is God's ordinary way, 1. To carry on great works by degrees, and not immediately to bring them to their perfection. So the world was made, firſt, a confuſed dark maſs of earth and water, and then ſtep by ſtep formed, and finiſhed. Was the old creation a work of time, for the more full manifeſting of the power of God? It is congruous, that the new creation ſhould be ſo too, for illuſtrating the ſtrength of Chriſt, in and by whom it is done. (2.) From ſmall and contemptible beginnings to raiſe the moſt eminent works, and by moſt unlikely and unpromiſing means to do great things; becauſe the power of God appears the more clearly in ſuch a ſituation. From Abraham's body in a ſort dead, and Sarah a barren woman, whoſe womb by age was deadened too, he raiſed a nation like the ſtars for multitude, continuing to this day: and looking to their beginning, we ſee Iſaac an only ſon, him on an altar, his throat ready to be cut; and the firſt-fruits of them long in ſlavery in Egypt, and when delivered, wandering forty years in a wilderneſs. How congruous is it, then, that the innumerable multitude that ſhall at length ſtand on the mount Zion above, round about the throne, in white robes, and palms in their hands, ſhould be brought thither from lying among the pots, and ſtraggling long in the wilderneſs?

3. Particularly, it is agreeable to the divine procedure in the caſe of Chriſt himſelf. And that, (1.) In the conſtitution of his perſon as God-man; wherein infinite power and creature-weakneſs met together as attributes of one and the ſame perſon; he who, being true man, was capable of being crucified through weakneſs, being alſo the mighty God, 2 Cor. xiii. 4. Now, if the divine power was lodged with creature-weakneſs in Chriſt perſonal, how congruous is it that the ſame divine power ſhould be illuſtrated in the weakneſs of his myſtical members? (2.) In the conduct of providence about his perſon. The moſt ſignal diſplay that ever God made of his power, was by the man Chriſt and in him, 1 Cor. i. 24. being Chriſt the power of God, and the wiſdom of God. By him as God he made the world at firſt, but by him as God-man he redeemed the world; the laſt a greater work than the firſt, as the giving his own Son was more than the ſpeaking of a word. But how was this work brought about, but by ſubjecting of him to a number of weakneſſes for his lifetime in this world, concluded at length with his death? And in theſe the divine power ſent forth its moſt radiant

beams, and by them reared up the new creation. Shall it then be thought ſtrange, that as Chriſt was in the world, Chriſtians ſhould be even ſo too? or that, ſince the power of God was illuſtrated in the weakneſs of the man Chriſt, the ſame divine power in the perſon of Chriſt ſhould be illuſtrated in the weakneſs of his people, while they are here in this world?

4. *laſtly*, This diſpenſation tends to the heightening of the glory of the victory of the Son of God againſt the devil. That proud apoſtate ſpirit roſe in rebellion againſt God; and, having ſeduced man, ſet up a kingdom in the world in oppoſition to God's. Againſt him the Son of God, for his Father's glory, and the recovery of fallen man, proclaimed war in paradiſe, Gen. iii. 15. 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and 'between her ſeed and thy ſeed; it ſhall bruiſe thy head, 'and thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel;' and, for his more ſhameful defeat, encounters him in human nature, a weak one in compariſon of the more powerful angelic nature, whereof Satan was; and illuſtrates his ſtrength againſt him, in the weakneſs of that nature, as in his natural body, ſo in his myſtical body. The heat of the battle was on the croſs, where he was crucified through weakneſs, yet triumphed over him. The battle is carried on in his myſtical members laden with weakneſſes, yet even in them alſo he defeats him; and ſets them off the field conquerors, one generation after another, without the loſs of a man. It will laſt till the end of the world: and then Chriſt's victory with his weak men will be complete, Satan with his party being chained down under everlaſting darkneſs. So there will be no more occaſion for Chriſt's illuſtrating his power in weakneſs; conſequently, there ſhall no more for ever be a weak one among Chriſt's party; all their weakneſſes come then to an end.

USE 1. This may be of manifold uſe in the Chriſtian life.

1. As an oracle to ſatisfy ſerious inquirers anent the whole of the divine conduct about believers, and particularly to two difficult queſtions.

1ſt, Why the Lord leaves ſin in the regenerate? Why, though they pant long, and breathe after perfection, yet they cannot reach it; though they would buy their freedom from ſin with ten thouſand worlds if they had them, and the bondage of a body of ſin cleaving to them makes them long for cold death, to ſet them free, yet they muſt wreſtle on with it. See what may ſatisfy. It is that the power of Chriſt may be illuſtrated in your weakneſs; therefore it is that the *wheels of his chariot tarry*.

2dly, Why the Lord keeps his people under long and ſore afflictions? The reaſon is the ſame. Satan might be too hard for the Chriſtian, in a perfect calm of providence about him: yet our Lord will give the Chriſtian a diſadvantageous poſt in a thicket of afflictions and trials, therefore called temptations, James i. 2. and Satan having that advantage of the ground, ſhall be ſuffered to attack him, and yet be baffled; to the greater glory of the ſtrength of Chriſt, and ſhame of the enemy.

2. As a way mark, to direct us, if we mind for heaven, unto the King's highway to it; that is, the *way of faith*, and not of *ſenſe*, 2 Cor. v. 7. Whatever ſweet cluſters of ſenſe the Lord may allow any of his people for their refreſhment by the way: the life of ſenſe is certainly reſerved for heaven, where all weakneſs is put off. The life of Chriſtians here is a life of believing, hoping, patient waiting, in a courſe of doing, ſuffering, ſtruggling, and wreſtling, where Chriſt's power is illuſtrated in their weakneſs.

3. As an interpreter of Chriſt's mind anent the actings of grace in his people. The carnal world deſpiſes theſe actings as things of no value. A look of a weak creature to Chriſt, a groan to him for help, believing of a promiſe, hoping in his word, ſome confidence in him that he will at length appear for them, are but trifling things in their eyes. And in the eyes of believers themſelves, except when they are bound up for them, they are but of ſmall value, hardly worth their own notice, far leſs Chriſt's; eſpecially conſidering that they are ſo weak, and ſo long a time intervenes between them. But certainly Chriſt notices them all, and looks on them as very precious, elſe his diſpenſation, whoſe end is to draw them out, had never been choſen by him, 1 Pet. i. 7. *That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that periſheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praiſe, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt.* Cant. iv. 9. *Thou haſt raviſhed my heart, my ſiſter, my ſpouſe; thou haſt raviſhed my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.*

4. As a cordial to ſupport, with the proſpect of a happy event, all the followers of Chriſt,

1ſt, Under their own perſonal weakneſs and preſſures. He that has brought them under them to illuſtrate his own ſtrength in them, will ſurely make a ſhining morning follow their darkeſt night.

2dly, Under the low caſe of the church, whether in point of corruption or perſecution. Though ſhe be either of theſe ways brought to death's door, ſhe cannot die out: for Chriſt will not let her fall ſo low, but for the clearer manifeſting of his divine ſtrength in her recovery. The utmoſt point of hopeleſſneſs is the uſual ſignal for Chriſt's exerting his power for his people: Deut. xxxii. 36. *For the Lord ſhall judge his people, and repent himſelf for his ſervants; when he ſeeth that their power is gone, and there is none ſhut up, or left.*

5. *laſtly*, As a perſuaſive to Chriſtians, with a holy ſubmiſſion of ſpirit to this diſpenſation, reſolutely to wreſtle on, till the Lord have fully ſerved the ends of his glory by all their weakneſſes. This bids us,

1ſt, Stoop to the diſpenſation, and not quarrel; and after he has thus far diſcovered to us the deſign of it, to crucify all our *how's* and *why's* on the matter; and that both with reſpect to our ſpiritual and bodily weakneſſes.

2dly, Reſolutely to keep up the ſtruggle, to get forward in the way the Lord calls us. What though we be weak? the works of the Chriſtian life are not to be laid aſide, but we are to ſtretch out the withered hand, that his ſtrength may be perfected in our weakneſs.

Whoſo thus ſtruggle reſolutely, and yet ſtoop humbly to the diſpenſation, ſhew their concern for his honour, inſomuch that they are pleaſed his ſtrength ſhould be diſplayed in their weakneſs. Thus honouring him here, he will honour them in the other world.

The beſt Security againſt the DAY of WRATH.

A Sermon, preached before the celebration of the Lord's Supper, at Ettrick, June 7. 1713.

HEB. xi. 28.

Through faith he kept the paſſover, and the ſprinkling of blood, leſt he that deſtroyed the firſt-born, ſhould touch them.

SOlomon tells us, Prov. xxii. 3. 'A prudent man 'foreſeeth the evil, and hideth himſelf: but the 'ſimple paſs on and are puniſhed.' We may be ſure there is a ſad and trying time abiding the world. God will have his day when the world has got theirs. Of this there is no great ground to doubt, that there is a ſad and trying time abiding th[illegible] the laſt occaſion of this nature we h[illegible] to be giving the word to cut up the cumber-ground fig-tree of the church of Scotland; yet beyond hope, he has let it alone another year. But let us take heed; there may be more depending on the iſſues of the digging and dunging this year than we are aware of. It has got deep very deep ſnegs already, and the axe is ſtill lying at the root. And therefore I think we have the duty of this day, this communion-day, in the text; and that is, that we make it a hiding day under the covert of blood, for time and for eternity; as Moſes did in the like caſe.

God had long ſat ſtill, and his enemies had been provoking him; now he was riſen up, and was begun to reckon with them: and, after ſeveral leſſer ſtrokes, the warning is given, that the ſoor ſtroke was at hand. What does Moſes, with other believing Iſraelites, in this trying time?

1. He goes to his duty, in a ſealing ordinance, and makes a covenant with God by ſacrifice; he kept the paſſover, &c. He ſaw that he and his Iſraelites deſerved the ſtroke, as well as the Egyptians; that God would have a ſacrifice off both their hands; that the deſtroying angel ſhould either find blood on their houſes, or ſhed blood on them. Then ſays Moſes, Let the Egyptians do as they will, the lamb ſhall be our ſacrifice this night; we will ſprinkle the blood on our houſes. So they kept the paſſover, Gr, made; not that he gave a being to it, inſtituting it at the command of God, though that was true; but it is an Old Teſtament expreſſion, 2 Chron. xxxv. 1. well rendered he kept, i. e. celebrated this holy ordinance, whereof we have an account, Exod. xii. The paſſover was a lamb ſlain and eaten by the Iſraelites, a ſacrament of the old covenant of grace. The apoſtle ſpeaks of the ſprinkling of blood, as a diſtinct thing; for though it was the blood of the paſcal lamb, yet it was not uſed in the after paſſovers, after they left Egypt. The lamb repreſented Chriſt; and the ſprinkling of the blood, the believing application of his.

2. He managed this duty rightly. He had need; for there was much depending on it. He did it believingly, through faith. I may not ſtand on the detail of the actings of Moſes's faith in this matter. Only I will give an inſtance of it both theſe ways, ver. 1. 'Now faith is 'the ſubſtance of things hoped for, the evidence of things 'not ſeen.' The object of faith is twofold. (1.) Things that have a being, but fall not under our ſenſe. So Moſes's faith was to him the evidence of things not ſeen; i. e. the ſpiritual inſtrument whereby he diſcerned and applied that in the ordinance which his eye could not ſee. He ſaw Chriſt in it, and the grand contrivance of ſalvation: and by the ſame mean he applied him. What elſe could give eaſe to a guilty ſinner whoſe eyes were opened? And therefore, notwithſtanding of Pharaoh's rage againſt him, and that they were all to march the next day, and that there was to be ſuch a dreadful ſtir in Egypt that night, he keeps his temper, and goes about his duty. (2.) Things that have no being but in the promiſe. So his faith was to him the ſubſtance of things hoped for; i. e. the ſpiritual inſtrument whereby he aſſured himſelf, that the deliverance which was not yet done, ſhould certainly be performed; and ſo the future deliverance was to him thereby as preſent. And our faith muſt act both theſe ways, if we manage this ſacrament aright.

3. He had a particular view in his managing of it; leſt he that deſtroyed the firſt-born, ſhould touch them. He ſaw there was a bloody time at hand, that God was to make the moſt dreadful time in that land that ever they ſaw with their eyes. The deſtroying angel was to paſs through the land of Egypt that night, to ſmite all the firſt-born both man and beaſt. He was afraid of the leaſt touch of that angel armed with vengeance, knowing it would cruſh him as a moth. Therefore he takes the bleſſed opportunity which the Lord had put into his hand, to ſecure himſelf and his people; flying in under the covert of blood, to be hid in the day of the Lord. He does not gather his people together to ſtand to their own defence; that would not do, they muſt go into their houſes, and lie at the feet of mercy. To cloſe the windows, bar the doors, &c. will not do it; but the blood of the lamb on the door-poſts will. Therefore he ſprinkles that blood for that very end.

DOCT. *The believing management of the ſacrament of Chriſt's body and blood, is the beſt ſecurity for a ſinner againſt the day of wrath.*

In handling of this doctrine, I ſhall ſhew,

I. What is that believing management of the ſacrament of Chriſt's body and blood, which is the beſt ſecurity for a ſinner againſt the day of wrath.

II. What ſecurity this will be againſt the day of wrath.

III. Confirm the doctrine.

IV. *laſtly*, Make application.

I. *Firſt*, I ſhall ſhew, what is that believing management of the ſacrament of Chriſt's body and blood, which is the beſt ſecurity againſt the day of wrath. We will be helped to a view of this, by conſidering the ordinance pointed at in the text.

1ſt, The Chriſtian and communicant that would manage this ordinance ſo as he may be ſecured againſt the day of wrath, muſt have his bunch of *hyſſop* ready; that is, he muſt have *faith*, by which alone that blood can be ſprinkled on the ſoul. An unbeliever can never believingly manage this or any other ordinance; for there can be no acting without a principle. Faith is the hand that muſt receive the atonement, that transfers the guilt on the head of our great ſacrifice, the feet whereby we flee into the city of refuge, and the hand that draws the cover from wrath over our heads, and ſigns the covenant of peace betwixt us and an angry God.

2*dly*, He muſt believe his own deſert of wrath, that he himſelf deſerves to fall amongſt them that fall. Blood on the door poſts proclaimed them guilty, as well as blood in the houſes of the Egyptians did them. He muſt ſit down at this table under a ſenſe of ſin, and deſert of wrath; acknowledging, that he deſerves rather to be led to the altar for a ſacrifice for vengeance to feed upon, than to ſit down at the table to feed on this coſtly ſacrifice. If ye be this day to be marked with the ſign of ſalvation, ye will be ſenſible ye have hung the ſign of deſtruction before your own doors; and while others in the view of wrath on the land, are dealing all the cauſes of wrath about them, ye will ſmite on your breaſts, ſaying, with the publican, Luke xviii. 13. 'God ' be merciful to me a ſinner;' a ſelf, a land, a church deſtroyer.

3*dly*, He muſt, with an eye of faith, diſcern the ſacrifice, and the virtue of it, ſeeing that in the ordinance which a carnal eye cannot diſcern; as Exod. xii. 26, 27. 'And it ſhall come to paſs, when your children ' ſhall ſay unto you, What mean you by this ſervice? ' that ye ſhall ſay, It is the ſacrifice the Lord's paſſover, ' who paſſed over the houſes of the children of Iſrael in ' Egypt, when he ſmote the Egyptians, and delivered ' our houſes.' The apoſtle tells us, how the ſpiritually blind bring wrath on themſelves, inſtead of ſecuring themſelves againſt wrath, 1 Cor. xi. 29. *For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himſelf, not diſcerning the Lord's body.* And here faith will ſay two things.

1. Faith will look in through the ordinance, and ſeeing Chriſt in it, will ſay, *There is a hiding place from wrath,* John i. 29. *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the ſin of the world,* Eph. ii. 14. *For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.* The believer will ſee the grand device of ſalvation in a crucified Redeemer: He will ſay, There is the Lamb that was ſlain to turn away the deſtroying angel; the *Lamb of God,* that is, the Lamb which God himſelf hath provided, as he did the ram in the thicket; *Jehovah-jireh, (i. e. God will provide,)* ſaid Abraham's faith long ago, Gen. xxii. 14.

2. Faith will look more narrowly yet, even through the hiding-place itſelf; and where the fearful unbeliever ſees many faults, the believer will ſee none, but ſay, ' He is able to ſave them to the uttermoſt, that come ' unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them,' Heb. vii. 25. There is a bottom on which I may venture for time and eternity; there is a ſufficient ſhelter, blow the ſtorm from what airth it will. There will be ſafety there when the Lord in anger will rain ſnares on a generation of his wrath: it will be ſafe there when the waters of Jordan ſwell to the brim. In a word, he will believe, (1.) that Chriſt is the appointed refuge againſt wrath; and, (2.) that he is a ſafe refuge, and that there is no other.

4*thly*, He muſt dip his bunch of hyſſop in the baſon where the blood of the Lamb is. Chriſt is our paſchal Lamb, 1 Cor. v. 7. the covenant is the baſon wherein the blood of the Lamb is poured, Heb. xiii. 20. and the cup the New Teſtament. The believing communicant will lay hold on the covenant made by ſacrifice, that he may be ſafe in the day of wrath, Pſal. l. 3, 4, 5. God offers himſelf to the ſinner in the covenant; now muſt the man ſay, *I am the Lord's. The marriage of the Lamb is come,* the Bridegroom has given his conſent already, and he exhibits himſelf in the ſacrament; and the ſoul by faith preſents itſelf, and they join hands and hearts at once. The Judge of the earth appears in the quality of a Bridegroom; and ſo they take him and are ſafe.

5*thly*, He muſt ſprinkle this blood, make an effuſion of it; apply it by faith, and receive the atonement. He muſt not ſtand afar, and ſay, I dare not meddle with that blood, though others may: I dare not lay my foul fingers on it. He muſt not ſit down at the table, and only bathe himſelf in tears; not daring to bathe himſelf in the blood of a Redeemer. Call that what ye will, God will call it unbelief with a witneſs; and ye will riſe even as clean as ye would come out of mire, notwithſtanding ye would pretend to throw yourſelves into it for waſhing. Therefore ye muſt touch, take and apply that holy thing: ſay, this blood is for me, my peace, my pardon, my ſanctification, &c. and on it I venture my all for time and eternity. Heaven and earth are witneſſes, that it is offered even to vile me; and let them be witneſſes alſo, that I embrace the offer, and that it is mine, and that I muſt be found under the covert of it in the day of wrath, Gal. ii. 20. 'Who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.'

6*thly*, He muſt ſprinkle it on the lintel and ſide-poſts, only, not on the threſhold. Look with an eye of faith on it as precious blood; and ſprinkle it over your whole man, above you, on every ſide; only not under your feet, Deſpiſe it not; conſider that awful word, Heb. x. 29. *Of how much ſorer puniſhment ſhall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was ſanctified, an un*[illegible] *thing, and hath done deſpite unto the Spirit of grace* [illegible] the blood of God the price and ranſom of precious ſouls, the foundation of all the precious promiſes. But wrath from heaven hangs over your head, and over the land: ſprinkle it above you, over your heads; take that blood for your ſconce, ſhelter, and defence. Satan will attack you on every ſide, and may be his hounds will be let looſe on you: therefore ſprinkle it on every ſide; and by all means on your weak ſide. Ye have weak heads, and weak ſides; this blood is for all.

7*thly*, He muſt not ſprinkle it only on the back of the door, but on the outſide, the lintel and ſide poſts, that the angel may ſee it. The Lord is coming to call the land to a ſad account, and examine every one who ought them. On with your mark this day, on your foreheads. Antichriſt's followers may take his on their forehead or right hands, to ſerve a turn: but not ſo Chriſt's, Rev. xiv. 1. 'And I looked, and lo, a Lamb ' ſtood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred ' forty and four thouſand, having his Father's name ' written in their foreheads.' Your precious faith within muſt ſhine forth in an open profeſſion, 2 Cor. iv. 13. 'We alſo believe, and therefore ſpeak.' Ye muſt not think to quite your profeſſion, come what will come; but liſt yourſelves this day among Chriſt's witneſſes in the world, in Scotland, willing to ſeal your teſtimony with blood: Rev. xii. 11. 'And they overcame him by ' the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their teſtimony: and they loved not their lives unto the death.'

1. The ſubſtance of Chriſt's teſtimony; and that is holineſs. The world with one voice is telling a lye of God, That he is a God that delights in wickedneſs; that folk may be happy with him in heaven, and come there, ſome ſay, in the way of profanity, or formality. Ye muſt give your teſtimony againſt this; and for holineſs; that God is holy, and that there is no coming nor likeneſs to him, but in holineſs; and this by a ſtrict and holy walk, over the belly of the example of the world and your own luſts. This was the ſubſtance of the ſaints teſtimony from the time of the righteous Abel, Gen. iv. 7. to this day, Rev. iii. iv. and xiv. 4. This is the ſubſtance of our covenants, national and ſolemn league; and will be the ſubſtance of the teſtimony of the Lord's people to the end of time.

2. The neceſſary appendages of the teſtimony; and theſe are twofold.

(1.) The revealed truths of God made known to you.

Ye muſt bear witneſs to theſe, whoever run them down; the truths of doctrine, Prov. xxiii. 23. *Buy the truth and ſell it not.* Mark viii. 38. *Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and ſinful generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.* This land is under the bond of a covenant to the maintenance of the truth of doctrine: and till the Lord raiſe up the ſpirits of his people to renew that covenant together, ye muſt ſeal the covenant for that effect at the Lord's table. If ye quit the truth of doctrine known to you, ye quit the ſubſtance of the teſtimony; for it is 'the doctrine which is according to godlineſs,' 1 Tim. vi. 3. It is the channel in which the ſanctification of ſinners, the great end of divine revelation does run, Gal. iii. 2. *This only would I learn of you, Received ye the ſpirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith.*

(2.) The inſtituted ordinances of God which ye have received. Ye muſt bear witneſs to theſe, though our beautiful houſe ſhould be laid in rubbiſh, and mens ordinances and inſtitutions ſet up in their room. We are under a covenant for the pure ordinances, and againſt mens ordinances. And ye muſt bear teſtimony to theſe divine ordinances: for ſo far as ye quit them, ye quit the ſubſtance of the teſtimony; for they are the means appointed of God for the ſanctification of an unholy world. When we come to heaven, we will ſtrive with no body for Preſbytery againſt Prelacy, for the ſimplicity of goſpel worſhip againſt idolatry and ſuperſtition; for then the end, holineſs is obtained, and we have no more need of the means. But we are not there yet: and therefore we muſt contend for theſe ordinances of God; we muſt not lay by our ſtaff, ere we arrive at our journey's end. Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damaſcus, may be pleaſanter rivers than Jordan; but dipping in them will not cure us of our leproſy; for they want one thing Jordan has, a word of divine appointment. Prelacy and ceremonies make a greater figure in the eye than purity and ſimplicity; but they are not means of holineſs; God never made them, and men cannot make them ſo. Accordingly we have found them curſed trees of mens planting, under whoſe ſhade piety went always to wreck, and profanity grew.

8thly, He muſt feed on the body and blood of Chriſt. Faith muſt taſte, and feed, and reliſh the ſweetneſs of Chriſt, and of every part of Chriſt; unite the ſoul with him, and ſo draw virtue, ſap, and ſtrength from him, to ſtand before the Lord; the tempter and an evil world without, and luſts within. And I am ſure, if faith be in exerciſe, it will take up a crucified Chriſt, as fit for this, as the eating of a lamb was to ſtrengthen for work or travel. And,

1. Ye muſt take and feed on a whole Chriſt; Chriſt in all his offices. As your prophet. A day of wrath is a day, wherein many miſtake their way, ſtumble into by paths, and fall into error. But, ſays the believing communicant, I renounce my own wiſdom and wit; and take this Chriſt to be my guide; and he has promiſed to guide me even unto death. A day of wrath is a day of ſad challenges, of revenging ſtrokes of juſtice; but here is my prieſt, I ſhelter under his righteouſneſs. Such a day is a day of fearful attacks from the devil, the world and the fleſh; but I take him to be my king, and rely on his promiſes.

2. Ye muſt eat with the bitter herbs of repentance and ſorrow for ſin. If faith be ſtirring in thy heart, it will make a hole in your heart, though like a rock otherwiſe, Zech. xii. 10. *And I will pour upon the houſe of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, the Spirit of grace and of ſupplication, and they ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced; and they ſhall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only ſon; and ſhall be in bitterneſs for him, as one that is in bitterneſs for his firſt born.* Thou wilt ſorrow for thy own ſins, and the ſins of the land that bring on wrath; for the diſhonour done to Chriſt by yourſelf and all ranks, Ezek. ix. 4. 'And the Lord ſaid unto him, Go through the midſt 'of the city, through the midſt of Jeruſalem, and ſet a 'mark upon the foreheads of the men that ſigh and 'that cry for all the abominations that be done in the 'midſt thereof.' Hab. iii. 16. 'When I heard, my 'belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenneſs entered into my bones, and I trembled in 'myſelf, that I might reſt in the day of trouble.'

3. Ye muſt eat in a departing poſture; turning your backs on the world and your luſts, and ſetting your face ſtedfaſtly to Immanuel's land. Ye muſt this day go to that table, joining yourſelves to the Lord, reſolute to *ſave yourſelves from this untoward generation*, Acts ii. 43. that if Chriſt mind to leave the land, ye will not ſtay behind, but go with him, and follow him whitherſoever he goes. If ye can but have him preſent with you in the furnace of affliction, in exile, priſon, or blood, ye are content. For this end ye muſt take hold of him never to part.

II. The *ſecond* thing propoſed, was, to ſhew what ſecurity this will be againſt the day of wrath.

1ſt, Thus ye will be ſecured from eternal wrath. When the great day of wrath comes, and all the enemies of God are before him in one body on the left hand, ye will be on the right. Ye will ſtand with Chriſt on the field, till ye ſee with him the backs of all his enemies, while they are driven with horrible roarings into the bottomleſs pit. And when they are cloſed up there under the load of everlaſting wrath, ye ſhall get your *crowns on your heads, and palms in your hands*, and help to make heaven ring eternally with your *Hallelujahs.*

2dly, In a day of wrath upon the land; though the ſtorm blow never ſo hard, ye ſhall have a manifold ſecurity. Though ye muſt not promiſe yourſelves ſecurity from trouble, yet,

1. Ye ſhall be kept from mixing with the generation of God's wrath. Ye are to ſet up the partition-wall this day betwixt you and them; do it firmly, and aſſuredly in the heat of the wrath it ſhall ſtand. Build ye the partition wall, and God will build the protection-wall, Pſal. xii. 7. *Thou ſhalt keep them, O Lord, thou ſhalt preſerve them from this generation for ever.* There are two generations in the world, the righteous and the wicked; thoſe who fear God, and thoſe who fear him not: but they are ſeparate parties, oppoſite to one another; and they ſhall never mix. I confeſs, the two parties at this day are too near one another in the church of Scotland. They are like the toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image, part of clay, and part of iron; yet *iron is not mixed with clay*, Dan. ii. 41. 43. But fire *congregat homogenea*, &c. And when God kindles his fire, it will make men of like natures run together, and make the ſeparation greater; and the one generation may be leſs bulky, but nothing leſs worth; and the other generation more bulky, but leſs worth.

2. 'It may be, ye ſhall be hid in the day of the Lord's 'anger,' Zeph. ii. 3. May be God may hide you in heaven ere then, as he has been doing with many eminent miniſters and Chriſtians of late, *taking them away from the evil to come.* Or he can hide you under heaven, for *the earth is the Lord's:* and though men allow you not a hole to hide your head in, he can give you a broad place, whether they will or no. Though it be a very open place, he can draw a curtain over you, where the ſharpeſt ſighted enemy ſhall not ſee through. He has an inviſible lock and key on every place, where the moſt reſolute and quick-ſighted ſearchers ſhall not be able to open the door, and ſee who is therein.

3. Ye ſhall not be ſtraitened for proviſion, though it be a ſcarce time, Pſal. cxlii. 5. *I cried unto thee, O Lord, I ſaid, Thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living.* Though it may be hard to get a ſermon without, ye ſhall have two preachers within. (1.) The boſom-preacher will be with you, that has his pulpit in the breaſt; that is a good conſcience, one of the

ſweeteſt preachers that ever opened a mouth, that fills all his hearers with joy, 2 Cor. i. 12. ‘ Our rejoicing is this, the teſtimony of our conſcience,’ &c. (2.) The heart-preacher, that has his pulpit in the heavens; that is, Chriſt himſelf by his Holy Spirit, who is always a ſucceſsful preacher, whoſe hearers are ever taught to profit; Pſal. xxxii. 8. ‘ I will inſtruct thee, and teach thee, in the way which thou ſhalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.’ He will ſbe to you as a little ſanctuary. And theſe will carry you through till ye come to your journey's end.

4. Though the weight of common calamity ſhould bruiſe you, yea, and cruſh you, *there ſhall no evil touch you*, Job v. 19. (1.) No evil that is an only evil; mercy ſhall always be predominant in thy cup. (2.) The evil ſhall be taken out of the evils that come on thee. So that (ver. 22.) ‘ at deſtruction and famine thou ſhalt laugh: neither ſhalt thou be afraid of the beaſts of the earth.’ Thou ſhalt ſay as Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 55. ‘ O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory? *There ſhall be no more curſe.*’ God ſhoots poiſoned arrows at his enemies, but none of theſe at his friends. The ſerpent ſhall be unſtinged. May be thou wilt think, ere all be done, thou feeleſt a ſting; but aſſure yourſelf it will be but a bee-ſting, that goes only ſkin-deep, Matth. x. 28. *And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the ſoul*, &c. (3.) The evils that may come on thee, ſhall be turned to good, Rom. viii. 28. ‘ And we know, that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpoſe.’ Every ſtone thrown at thee, ſhall turn a precious ſtone; and the moſt croſs wind ſhall drive thee to thy harbour.

III. The *third* thing propoſed, was, to confirm the doctrine. And here only two things may be noticed.

1*ſt*, He that thus manageth this ordinance, unites with Chriſt the great peace maker; Chriſt is his: his ſecurity is in him, for Chriſt is in him, Gal. iv. 19. he cannot die. His blood is ſprinkled on his people, and that marks them for the Lord. The father has given all into his hand; and now though he be a lion to others, he is a lamb to them; and ſo he will not hurt them himſelf: a lamb, a male of the firſt year, in his prime; not a bone broken, in his full ſtrength, though ſacrificed for them; therefore he is able to defend them, and will not let his enemies hurt them: ſlain and roaſted with fire, therefore juſtice has no more to crave of them; without blemiſh, and therefore can cover all theirs.

2*dly*, He gets all this ſealed under the broad ſeal of heaven in this ordinance. Herein the covenant of peace between God and ſinners, is ſealed in both hands; and all theſe, and much more, are promiſes and articles of the covenant. And what greater ſecurity can ye imagine in this world?

IV. *Fourthly*, I proceed to the application.

USE I. For information.

1*ſt*, The ſlighters of this ordinance, eſpecially at ſuch a time, are great fools, and deſpiſers of their own mercy. Some remain in their groſs ignorance, and have no ſuch eſteem of it, as to ſet them on to get knowledge. Some live in their profanity; and having no mind to be abridged of their ſinful liberty, have ſlighted all theſe, and, it ſeems, will ſlight them to the laſt. Some, if the leaſt demur be made about their admiſſion, if but ſpoke to about amending what is a reproach to the goſpel in their converſation, preſently caſt it off, and enqnire no more about it. And ſome that formerly have ſat down at that table, caſt at that and other ordinances altogether. Well, Sirs, I muſt tell you, ye are ſlighters of your own mercy; and the ſlight redounds to Chriſt himſelf, whoſe ordinance it is, and will lie heavy on your ſouls if ever your eyes be opened. The day of wrath will either rouſe and bow, or break your careleſs, proud, and preſumptuous ſpirits. Thoſe things may ſerve to blind your conſciences now, that will fall off like fig-leaf covers, when God comes to call you to an account for your opportunities of grace.

2*dly*, The miſmanagers of this ordinance are great fools, who ſit down at the Lord's table, but communicate not believingly. They do the outward work, but it is not in faith; they bring no faith, no ſenſe, no diſcerning, &c. and ſo inſtead of ſecuring themſelves againſt the day of wrath, do mark themſelves out for wrath. Ah miſerable work, for men to turn the food of their ſouls into poiſon; ſo to manage the treaty of peace with God, that they part greater enemies than before! The ſin of mock-covenanting, and unworthy communicating, will be a dreadful item in the day of wrath, here and hereafter.

USE II. Of Exhortation.

1*ſt*, Ye that are not communicants, ye are in hazard of the day of wrath as well as others, though ye ſit not at that table. Will ye by faith embrace the ſacrifice exhibited there; receive and ſprinkle the blood, the covenant ſealed there.

2*dly*, Communicants, manage this work ſo as ye may be ſecured againſt the day of wrath. All of you, flee into Jeſus Chriſt as the city of refuge; and make ſure work, and lay down your meaſures for time and for eternity.

Motive 1. Conſider that there will certainly be a great day of wrath upon the world. Our God will come. The day is coming wherein the dead ſhall be raiſed, and all ſhall be ſiſted before the tribunal. Eternal wrath will then ſweep away all that ſhall be found out of Chriſt at that day. Where will ye then appear, O ſlighters and deſpiſers of Chriſt?

Mot. 2. We have all imaginable grounds to look for a day of wrath againſt this church and theſe lands. The plague is begun already as to this poor church; her beauty is defaced; we have all left God, and he has left us in great meaſure: we have broken off from God, and are broken among ourſelves. There is much of the carved work of Zion broke down already; and we have all ground to expect a root ſtroke to the whole of the covenanted work of reformation. Matters are brought to that paſs, that our lands can hardly miſs to be a field of blood. The ſins of the late times are like the iniquity of Baal-peor, which kindled the anger of the Lord againſt the congregation of Iſrael, and brought on a plague amongſt them; and the iniquity of thoſe times has not been ſuitably mourned over to this day. A ſpirit of apoſtaſy and declining is on the growing hand amongſt all ranks; the cry of our ſins is gone up to heaven; and, notwithſtanding of all the alarming diſpenſations of the day, there is a viſible hardneſs and ſtupidity on the generation, and the ſpirit of prayer is reſtrained, that we cannot ſee how we can eſcape. Prepare then to meet your God; and how will ye do it but in Chriſt?

I would only ſay two things.

(1.) Seeing the glorious goſpel-light has ſo ſhined among us, and that contempt of it and of religion does ſo appear in the ſight of the ſun, and a profane ſpirit does ſo much rage, it is very like God will have a particular eye for evil on the profane contemners of religion amongſt us.

(2.) Seeing there is ſome ground to think that we ſhall yet have glorious days, it is like God will ſhovel out of the way many, that their eyes ſhall never ſee it; and that it will make a ſad ſcattering among formal profeſſors, ſtrangers to the life of godlineſs.

Mot. 3. Conſider Chriſt is now offering himſelf and the covenant of peace to us. It is time to be going when the Lord is riſen up, and is drawing out his armies againſt us; to tremble when the lion roars. Come then, leſt ye *mourn at the laſt, and ſay, How have I hated inſtruction, and my heart deſpiſed reproof? and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that inſtructed me?*

I cloſe with two or three words of advice to thoſe that reſolve ſo to manage this ſacrament, as that they may be ſecured againſt the day of wrath.

(1.) Let not the thoughts of wrath prevail to darken your view of the love of Chriſt in the goſpel and in this ordinance. Particularly, aſſure yourſelves if ye be willing to be the Lord's, and take him for your God, the white ſide of the cloud is to you; and that though God were to deſtroy the whole land from off the face of the earth, if there were but one ſoul who ſhould take ſhelter in the covenant of peace, he ſhould be welcome.

(2.) As ye give yourſelves to the Lord, ſo give your families too. Take all yours that way, and lay them over on him, and leave them with him for the evil day.

(3.) Let it be your main concern to get ſtrength to be carried cleanly through; that ye be not led away with the ſins and ſnares of the evil time, and ſo fall from your ſtedfaſtneſs.

(3.) *laſtly*, Be not peremptory and particular as to what otherwiſe may be your portion of common calamity; but leave that on the Lord. Only in this be particular, that the ſting of the curſe muſt be taken away, and therefore that ye muſt put yourſelves in the bottom of the everlaſting covenant, and give yourſelves to Chriſt as the great ſteerſman through the ſea of this world, leaving that to him what weather ye ſhall meet with in your voyage to Immanuel's land.

Thus I have delivered my meſſage to you from the Lord, as that which I judged was God's mind and call to you at this day. I deſire to venture myſelf for time and eternity on this bottom; and it is my requeſt to you that ye will take this method this day for your ſecurity againſt the day of wrath. And if I ſhould never have another occaſion of this nature to ſpeak unto you, I would leave it with you, That this and this only, is the way to be ſecured againſt the day of wrath.

The Sin of People's FORSAKING GOD, and BETATING themſelves to the CREATURE in his Stead;

A N D

The Wretchedneſs of this Exchange.

Several Sermons, preached at Ettrick, in the year 1725.

JER. ii, 13.

For my people have committed two evils: they have forſaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out ciſterns, broken ciſterns, that can hold no water.

THIS text is uſhered in with a ſtrange preface, wherein the heavens are called to ſtand in amaze, to be filled with horror, and to dry up. Why, what is the matter? the ſin and folly of Iſrael. *My people have committed two evils*, &c. In which words there is,

Firſt, A general charge againſt them: they have done *two evils*, two ill things. Why, two is not many: Yea; but they are two leading ill things, two mother-evils. They are two fountain-ſins, each of them caſting out their thouſands, as a fountain doth her waters. They are enough to overwhelm them with ſins and ſorrows. And the evils are the greater that they are *my people*, in covenant with me, that have done them. It is not the iſles of Chittim, nor Kedar; but *Iſrael*.

Secondly, A particular condeſcenſion on theſe evils, theſe fountain-evils.

1ſt, Deſerting God: *They have forſaken me*, left me, and gone away from me. I am their King and Lord, and they have ſhaken off their ſubjection to me; their Head and Huſband, and they have run away from me. I am their confederate, who took them into covenant with me; and they have broken the bands, and burſt the yoke. I am their God in covenant, whom they have forſaken.

2dly, Taking up with the creature. They have betaken themſelves to the creature in my room and ſtead. They have *hewed them out ciſterns, broken ciſterns, that can hold no water*. Heb. *for to cut out*, &c. Thus they have made an exchange. They have left me to go to them; like traiterous ſubjects, caſting off their rightful lord, for an uſurper; an unfaithful wiſe, deſerting her huſband, for her adulterer; a wretched creature, deſerting his God, for an idol. So here,

1. There is ſomething ſuppoſed. It is ſuppoſed.

(1.) That Iſrael was no more ſelf-ſufficient than any other people under heaven. They were not able to ſatisfy themſelves from themſelves; they were as much in need of ſupply for the ſatisfaction and reſt of their hearts as ever a thirſty man was of drink to refreſh him. And as proud as they were, they behoved to hang on about ſome door or other for their ſupply; either God's or the creature's.

(2.) That, in this their neceſſitous caſe, God took them home to his houſe, as one would take in a beggar in rags, and ſet him down with the children; and told them, they ſhould not want, if they would ſtay with him, Deut. xxxii. 10. 'He found him in a deſart land, and 'in the waſte howling wilderneſs; he led him about, 'he inſtructed him, he kept him as the apple of his 'eye.' He called them his people, took them into the covenant, and ſet them down at the fountain-head, the well-ſpring of mercy and goodneſs.

2. There is ſomething expreſsly declared. It is ſo declared,

(1.) That Iſrael had made a wilful exchange of his condition, caſt himſelf out of God's houſe, into the devil's common again; changed his glory, for that which will not profit; forſaken the God that took him in, and gone back to the empty creature, where he was before.

(2.) That Iſrael had ſinned and played the fool egregiouſly in making this exchange. And accordingly his ſin and folly is here proclaimed. And,

1. Iſrael was a holy people; but the text proclaims them a ſinful people with a witneſs. Their forſaking him the fountain of living water, and betaking themſelves to broken ciſterns, are ſignal evils. There is a heap of evil in each of them. They could not have made a worſe choice, to the diſhonour of God, and to make his name to be blaſphemed among the Heathen. So they affronted their God.

2. Iſrael was a wiſe people; but the text proclaims them fools with a witneſs; that were as blind to their own intereſt, as they were unfaithful to God's honour. Mens wiſdom or folly appears in their bargains: let us ſee what a blind exchange they had made. They had exchanged,

1*ſt*, A ſpring-well for ciſterns. A ciſtern is a hollow place cut out in the earth, in wood, or ſtone, for receiving of and keeping rain water, or water otherwiſe put into it; whereas the fountain or ſpring hath the water from itſelf. God in Chriſt is the fountain, all-ſufficient in himſelf. All the creatures are but ciſterns: if there is no water brought into them from heaven, or from the ſpring, they are dry. Who then would exchange a fountain for a ciſtern? Living are ſpringing.

2*dly*, A fountain made ready to their hand, for ciſterns that were to be hewed out. Happineſs is ready in God for us, and we need only to draw out by faith the waters of conſolations. But O what hard work is it to hew out the ciſterns of created enjoyments! It is deſirable to have comfort ready. Who then will be ſo fooliſh, as to exchange a fountain made ready to their hand, for ciſterns that require much labour to hew them out?

3*dly*, One ſpring-well, ſufficient for all their needs, for many ciſterns. There is no one ciſtern that will do one's buſineſs: when the man has hewed out one ciſtern, the water is lacking and unpleaſant there, and he muſt hew out another, and ſo on. And thus the ſoul once forſaking God, becomes reſtleſs; there is no end of ciſterns. It is a great conveniency, to have what we need in one place, and not to be obliged to go here and there for it. Who then would forſake God, the fountain of all bleſſings, and betake themſelves to the creatures, which though tried one after another, cannot ſupply their wants?

4*thly*, Freſh and ſweet waters of the ſpring, for the dead unſavoury waters of the ciſterns, i. e. ſpringing waters bubbling up through the earth, cool, and freſh, for the ſtanding, ſtinking waters of the ciſterns. Who then will be ſo fooliſh, as to forſake the living waters and betake themſelves to the ſtinking waters of the ciſterns?

Laſtly, A ſpring-well, for broken and cracked ciſterns, that let the water through them, and cannot hold it in. So that when the man comes to drink at his ciſtern for his thirſt; behold there was a crack in the ciſtern, and the water is all gone; and there is nothing left but ſediment, mud, and mire.

The ſcope and ſubſtance of theſe words may be taken up in theſe two doctrines.

DOCT. I. *Forſaking of God in Chriſt, and betaking one's ſelf to the creature in his ſtead, are two ill, ſignally ill things.*

DOCT. II. *To forſake God in Chriſt, and take the creature in his ſtead, is a wretched exchange.*

I return to the firſt of theſe, viz.

DOCT. I. *Forſaking of God in Chriſt, and betaking one's ſelf to the creature in his ſtead, are two ill, ſignally ill things.*

In diſcourſing this doctrine, we ſhall conſider the two branches of it ſeparately, viz. 1. The forſaking of God in Chriſt; and, 2. The betaking one's ſelf to the creature in God's ſtead.

Firſt, As to the firſt of theſe ill things, the forſaking of God in Chriſt, we ſhall conſider,

1*ſt*, The object forſaken.

2*dly*, How ſinners forſake God in Chriſt.

3*dly*, Why they forſake him.

4*thly*, The ill of this practice.

Laſtly, Make application.

I. *Firſt*, We ſhall conſider *the object forſaken.* It is not ſimply God, but God in Chriſt; for the object in the text, is *the fountain of living waters* to ſinners, to refreſh them, and ſatisfy their ſouls: but God out of Chriſt, an abſolute God, is a conſuming fire to them. We can no way, according to the ſcripture, conceive of God, as a *fountain of living waters* to us, but in Chriſt Jeſus, Zech. xiii. 1. 'In that day there ſhall be a fountain opened to the houſe of David, and to the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, for ſin, and for uncleanneſs.' John iv. 10. 'Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto her, if thou kneweſt the gift of God, and who it is that ſaith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldſt have aſked of him, and he would have given thee living water.' It is true, there is an infinite fulneſs of goodneſs, mercy, and grace, in the nature of God; but to ſinners it would have been a ſealed fountain for ever, had not the Mediator interpoſed. So there is,

1*ſt*, A forſaking of God ſimply as God. Thus Adam, falling from his integrity, forſook God, ſhaking off the yoke of obedience to his Creator. This was a horrid evil, and it lies on all men in their natural ſtate. They are in a ſtate of deſertion, having left God, Eph. ii. 12. *At that time ye were without Chriſt, being aliens from the commonwealth of Iſrael, and ſtrangers from the covenants of promiſe, having no hope, and without God in the world.* The firſt covenant-tye is no longer able to hold them with him. In this ſenſe, the Pagans have forſaken God, who never heard of Chriſt.

2*dly*, A forſaking of God in Chriſt. And thus only his viſible church and people called by his name, are capable of forſaking him; as the texts hints. He becomes their God in a viſible church-ſtate, bidding them welcome to all his fulneſs, for the ſupply of their needs, and making over the ſame to them in the goſpel-offer; they profeſſing their acceptance, by receiving the ſeal or ſeals of his covenant.

So the God forſaken by the hearers of the goſpel, muſt be conſidered,

1. As God in our nature, for communion with guilty us, Matth. i. 23. *Behold, a virgin ſhall be with child, and ſhall bring forth a ſon, and they ſhall call his name* EMMANUEL, *which, being interpreted, is,* GOD WITH US. We could have no communion with an abſolute God: the rays of his majeſty would have burnt us up; as fire does the dry ſtubble. But he clothed himſelf with our nature, that he might be a refreſhing ſpring to us, 2 Cor. v. 19. 'God was in Chriſt, reconciling the world unto himſelf,' &c. The rock of ages was found in our wilderneſs, and there he was ſmitten with Moſes's rod, and the waters guſhed out, the living waters, for us. He tabernacled among us.

2. As God in our nature, ready to communicate his fulneſs to us, for making us happy in time and eternity, John iv. 10. forecited. The ſpring is not to dig now; it is digged already, and running, that 'whoſoever will, may take of the water of life freely,' Rev. xxii. 17. The invitation is given out, to come and drink, John vii. 37. All the ſaints have drunk, but the ſpring is running as much as ever for us.

3. *laſtly*, As a God we have profeſſed to betake ourſelves to for our happineſs, Jer. xvi. 19. *O Lord, my ſtrength and my fortreſs, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles ſhall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and ſhall ſay, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit.*

We have found the ſcorching thirſt that hath ſeized us, through the diſorder brought into our ſouls by Adam's fall; and have profeſſed to look for our relief in God only; and ſo have ſit down by the well.

II. The *ſecond* thing on this head is, *How ſinners forſake God in Chriſt?* Sinners forſake him,

Step 1. Lowering their eſteem of him, the value and honour they had for him ſinking low, Pſal. l. 21. *Thou thoughteſt that I was altogether ſuch a one as thyſelf.* It is the high eſteem of Chriſt that brings ſinners to him; and as that ſinks, they will go away, John vi. 68. ‘Simon Peter anſwered him, Lord, to whom ſhall we ‘go? thou haſt the words of eternal life.’ The myſtery of Chriſt is ready to be deſpiſed by proud nature, becauſe there is no ſeeing of the glory of it without a peculiar light. Hence God in Chriſt is a ſtumbling-ſtone to the blind world, Math. xi. 6. *Bleſſed is he whoſoever ſhall not be offended in me.* And a ſtroke in the eye, whereby one ſees no beauty in him, leads here.

Step 2. The heart's falling off its reſt in him, and turning reſtleſs, ſo that the fulneſs of a God cannot quiet it, Iſa. xxx. 15. *In returning and reſt ſhall ye be ſaved, in quietneſs and in confidence ſhall be your ſtrength?* If the wife begin to harbour a diſcontent as to her huſband, ſhe is in a fair way to forſake him: and the heart that cannot be content with the fountain, will forſake it, to hew out ciſterns for itſelf; when the view of the broad covenant, with all its benefits, is not ſufficient to lay bands on the heart, and make it to ſay, ‘This is all my ‘deſire,’ 2 Sam. xxxii. 5. it is as good as gone from the Lord.

Step 3. Ceaſing to cleave to him by faith, and letting go believing grips of the promiſe, Heb. iii. 3. *Take heed, brethren, leſt there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.* It is by faith one depends on and hangs about him for happineſs and ſatisfaction. It is the hand by which his children hold him, Cant. iii. 4. It is the eye which they are to keep on him for the ſupply of all their wants, Iſa. xlv. 22. While they do ſo, they are ſafe; and the fountain will ſpring forth to them; as in the caſe of Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 26. when he ſaid, ‘I will not let thee go, except thou ‘bleſs me;’ and in the caſe of the Syrophenician woman, Mark vii. 24.——30. But as ſoon as they let down their hands, and keep their eyes no more upon him for their ſupply, they are forſaking him. In the next place, they will be found,

Step 4. Looking out ſome other way, for ſomething to reſt their hearts in. And then they are on their way away from him, Heb. iii. 12. Unbelief ſays, One may long wait at this fountain, ere he get wherewith to quench his thirſt: then he begins to think of hewing out ciſterns. It ſays the promiſes of a reſt are but fair words, not to be truſted to; then they are for returning back to Egypt again; and think they muſt ſeek a ſeen good, Pſal. iv. 6. *There be many that ſay, Who will ſhew us any good?* Thus the reſtleſs heart, giving over to ſeek its reſt and ſatisfaction in God, goes to the creature to find in it what it cannot find in God.

Step 5. Growing remiſs in duties, and ſlighting opportunities of communion with God; a form of duties may be kept up, but the heart is away, what avail they? Cant. iii. 1. *By night on my bed I ſought him whom my ſoul loveth; I ſought him, but I found him not.* Prayer is poſted over; for it is for faſhion's cauſe, rather than from faith or hope of gaining thereby, that they ſeek him at all: and by their coldriſeneſs in their addreſſes, they court a denial. At ſermons, they are not all there, their heart is away after ſome one idol of jealouſy or other, like thoſe ſpoke of, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. ‘And they come ‘unto thee as the people cometh, and they ſit before ‘thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they ‘will not do them; for with their mouth they ſhew ‘much love, but their heart goeth after their covetouſ‘neſs.’ Satan ſtrikes in, picks up the word as it is ſown, and fills their hearts otherwiſe, Prov. v. 14. ‘I ‘was almoſt in all evil, in the midſt of the congregation ‘and aſſembly.’ And Sabbaths become a burden, like thoſe who ſaid, ‘When will the new moon be gone, ‘that we may ſell corn? and the Sabbath, that we may ‘ſet forth wheat?’ Amos viii. 5.

Step 6. Having no regard to pleaſe him in their ordinary walk, Ezek. xxiii. 35. *Therefore thus ſaith the Lord God, Becauſe thou haſt forgotten me, and caſt me behind thy back, therefore bear thou thy lewdneſs and thy whoredoms.* Hence they are in no concern to acknowledge God in their ways, to ſeek counſel of God in particular caſes, and to carry along with them a regard to his glory in all things; but are like the princes of Iſrael, Joſh. ix. 14. that ‘took of the Gibeonites ‘victuals, and aſked not counſel at the mouth of the ‘Lord.’ So, if they do a good thing, it is not becauſe it pleaſes God, but becauſe it pleaſeth themſelves: and if they do evil, and are touched for it, it is not becauſe it is diſpleaſing to him.

Step 7. Laying aſide the word for a rule, and regulating themſelves by another ſtandard, Pſal. cxix. 53. *Horror hath taken hold upon me becauſe of the wicked that forſake thy law.* Satan ſhuffles in the courſe of the world, the voice of the multitude, inſtead of the Bible in their hand: and it is enough for them that they ſee a throng in the way before them, though they hear not the voice behind them, ſaying, ‘This is the way, walk ‘ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye ‘turn to the left,’ Iſ. xxx. 21. But God ſpeaks to us by his word, and binds us to it, Iſ. viii. 20. ‘To the law, ‘and to the teſtimony,’ &c. and it is the appointed means of communion betwixt God and us; the rule of our obedience, and muſt be the reaſon of it; and it is the appointed channel of influences, Iſa. lix. 21. ‘As ‘for me, this is my covenant with them, ſaith the Lord: ‘My ſpirit that is upon thee, and my words which I ‘have put in thy mouth, ſhall not depart out of thy ‘mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy ſeed, nor out of ‘the mouth of thy ſeed's ſeed, ſaith the Lord, from ‘henceforth and for ever.’ So whoſo forſake the word, forſake God.

Step 8. Forſaking his people for their companions, Prov. xiii. 20. *He that walketh with wiſe men, ſhall be wiſe: but a companion of fools ſhall be deſtroyed.* Like as it is with the ſinner returning unto God, he turns his back on the world lying in wickedneſs, and forſakes his former companions in ſin, Pſal. xlv. 10. for there is no going in the way of life otherwiſe, Prov. ix. 6. ſo men forſaking the Lord, are ready to forſake his people. Indeed men may keep by God's people, and yet forſake God; but none can forſake the people of God, and not forſake God himſelf; more than they can throw off a living body, and yet hold by the head.

Step 9. Forſaking ordinances, and the communion of ſaints therein. Ordinances are the tryſting places for the meeting betwixt God and ſinners; he walks in the midſt of the golden candleſticks: he will account himſelf forſaken by people's turning their back on the tryſting place where he is to be met with. Mark Heb. x. 25, 26. *Not forſaking the aſſembling of ourſelves together as the manner of ſome is; but exhorting one another. For if we ſin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſins.* He hath ſent out his meſſengers with awful certification, Luke x. 16. ‘He that heareth you, heareth ‘me; and he that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me; and he ‘that deſpiſeth me, deſpiſeth him that ſent me.’ Therefore ſays Jeremiah, chap. xvii. 13. ‘O Lord, the hope ‘of Iſrael, all that forſake thee, ſhall be aſhamed, and ‘they that depart from me, ſhall be written in the earth, ‘becauſe they have forſaken the Lord, the fountain of ‘living waters.’ It is an ill ſign in a wife, when ſhe is not to be found in the houſe of her huſband; and of one forſaking God, when his feet are giving up treading his courts.

Step 10. *laſtly*, Throwing away the form of religion, caſting off the maſk, and giving the ſwing to their luſts. Thus the forſaking of God is compleated, 2 Pet. ii. 22. *But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and, the ſow that was waſhed, to her wallowing in the mire.* Then the devil re-enters with ſeven worſe than himſelf, into where he had gone out. Thus men come to the end of this wretched road. Yet even in this caſe all are not alike. Some give up themſelves to ſome one abomination or other; others give up themſelves to all manner of abomination that come in their way, ſwimming in a ſea of wickedneſs, as the former in a pool. Some again continue indifferent as to others yet in the way of God; others are poſſeſſed with a rancour and ſpite againſt the way of God, and thoſe that follow it; ſo in times of peace, they are cruel mockers, and will do any ill turn they can; and in time of the church's trouble, will turn downright perſecutors.

III. The *third* thing is, *Why they forſake him?* how it comes they do ſo?

1. There is a natural bent to apoſtacy in all men; ſaints and ſinners, Hoſ. xi. 7. *And my people are bent to backſliding from me: though they called them to the Moſt High, none at all would exalt him.* In ſaints it ſtirs, and often carries them very fearful lengths, as it did in Peter: in ſinners it reigns, and ſo may carry them the full length. This woful ſet of heart is natural to us, Gen. viii. 21.——'The imagination of man's heart is evil 'from his youth.' Our hearts, by Adam's fall, have got a bias to departing from God: there is need to take heed to it.

2. Many were never truly joined to the Lord, though they ſeemed to be ſo: ſo having never knit with him, no wonder they fall away from him, 1 John ii. 19. 'They 'went out from us, but they were not of us; for if 'they had been of us, they would no doubt have con-'tinued with us; but they went out, that they might 'be made manifeſt, that they were not all of us.' Profeſſors ſtrangers to ſaving faith, in whom dwells not the Spirit of God, but of the world, lie fair to make apoſtates, Heb. x. 39. 'But we are not of them that draw 'back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the 'ſaving of the ſoul.' An error in the taking up of religion, often makes it come to a ſorry and ſhameful account at the long-run; men building without a foundation, Luke xiv. 28, 29, 30.

3. They often have ſome idol of jealouſy ſecretly reſerved, when they are at their beſt; and that upon a proper occaſion does the buſineſs; like the young man in the goſpel, that went away from Chriſt grieved, becauſe *he had great poſſeſſions*, Mark x. 22. It was not without reaſon that Pharaoh would have Iſrael leave their cattle; for then he knew this would bring them back again. One ſon of a ſtranger was the death of Gideon's ſeventy ſons. One luſt unmortified, and ſecretly ſpared, will be the death of a thouſand good motions and inclinations. That proves the man's ſnare. So Judas's covetouſneſs was ſometimes peeping out, while he was following Chriſt; at laſt it broke out like a flood, and carried him quite away to betray his Maſter.

4. Their not preſſing in to the ſweet of religion, in an experimental feeling of the power of it. It is not for nought that exhortation is given with ſo much earneſtneſs, Pſal. xxxiv. 8. 'O taſte, and ſee that the 'Lord is good!' Experience is the beſt way to keep a ſinner with God; he feels how good it is *to draw near to God*, Pſal. lxxiii. 28. Diſappointment cauſes forſaking, as in the caſe of Iſrael in the wilderneſs. And they who preſs not in to the inner court of religion by faith, hope, and diligence, but ſatisfy themſelves with the form of it, cannot miſs theſe fatal diſappointments.

5. The want of a living principle of grace in the heart, that may bear out in all changes of one's condition, Pſal. lxxviii. 37. *For their heart was not right with him.* It fares with ſinners as with ſprings and pools; when there is a ſhower from the clouds, the pools are full; but then when drought comes, the pool dries up, there being no ſpring in it. But the ſpring-well bears out then as at other times. The newneſs of religion ſerves people a while, to keep the affections aſtir: but when that is over, and there is no living principle of grace, the affections are loſt, and religion turns unſavoury. They cool like a ſtone taken from the fire, and wither like a branch that takes not with the ſtock.

6. Unwatchfulneſs. Thereby men are ſtolen off their feet, Prov. iv. 23. *Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the iſſues of life.* Conſidering that we have a deceitful heart within, an inſnaring world without, and a buſy devil going about us, no man can keep his feet without watching. By unwatchfulneſs there is a breach made in one's caſe, the conſcience is defiled, and the heart is deadened, Eccleſ. x. 18. 'By much 'ſlothfulneſs the building decayeth, and through idle-'neſs of the hands the houſe droppeth through;' and no care being taken to make up the gap, it grows ſtill wider and wider: a ſtrangeneſs gets in betwixt God and the ſoul; and that not being removed, they even wear out of acquaintance.

7. A conceit of being able to live without him, Jer. ii. 31. *O generation, ſee ye the word of the Lord: have I been a wilderneſs unto Iſrael? a land of darkneſs? wherefore ſay my people, we are lords, we will come no more unto thee?*

8. *laſtly*, Ill company carries many away from God, 1 Cor. xv. 33. 'Be not deceived: Evil communications 'corrupt good manners.' Joaſh kept the way of God as long as his good tutor Jehojada lived; but when he was gone, and he fell into the ill company of the princes, he went quite wrong, 2 Chron. xxiv. 17, 18. Many an apoſtate has inſnaring company made; and therefore we find God's people reſolute to cleave to the Lord, will beware of it, as of a peſt houſe, Pſal. cxix. 115. 'Depart from me ye evil doers; for I will keep the 'commandments of my God.'

IV. The *fourth* thing here is, *The ill, the ill of ſin that is in forſaking God in Chriſt.*

1. It is a downright perverſion and deſerting of the end of our creation. As God is the firſt cauſe of all things, ſo he is the chief and laſt end, whereunto all ought to have a tendency, Rom. xi. 36. 'For of him, 'and through him, and to him are all things.' When God made man, he gave him a diſpoſition to bend towards him in all things, as his chief end; when he remade the world in Chriſt, he ſet ſinners on the ſame way again, Pſal. cv. 4. 'Seek the Lord, and his ſtrength; 'ſeek his face evermore.' To forſake him then, is quite contrary to our chief and laſt end. And for a man to forſake God, is as much oppoſite to the order eſtabliſhed in things at the creation, as if the ſun ſhould leave his giving light, and the earth its yielding its fruit to men: as if the fire ſhould go downward, and the waters run upward; and the whole courſe of nature ſhould be turned upſide down.

2. There is in it a ſetting up another in the room of God; therefore it is the firſt command, 'Thou ſhalt 'have no other God.' For what is the forſaking of God, but going away from him to another? there is no mids: for ſeeking ourſelves inſtead of God, is a deifying of ſelf. So the ſcripture points it out as ſpiritual adultery, Ezek. xvi. 32. and idolatry, Phil. iii. 19. See it then as a pulling down of our Sovereign Lord God from his throne over us, and ſetting up a creature in his room, to pay it that homage which we owe to him alone.

3. Fearful ingratitude, for the greateſt mercy and kindneſs, Jer. ii. 2. 12. *Thus ſaith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindneſs of thy youth, the love of thine eſpouſals, when thou wenteſt after me in the wilderneſs, in a land that was not ſown. Be aſtoniſhed, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very deſolate, ſaith the Lord.*

God has condeſcended to vail himſelf with our fleſh, that he might keep communion with us, with the ſafety of his honour; God was in Chriſt, that he might be a refreſhing fountain to a ſtarving world; he has brought us to him by the goſpel, to drink of the waters of his conſolations, while many of the world have the fountain ſealed to them. What monſtrous ingratitude muſt it be for us to forſake him! Jer. ii. 31. forecited.

4. Notorious unfaithfulneſs to our kindeſt Head and Huſband, Jer. ii. 20. 'For of old time I have broken 'thy yoke, and burſt thy bands, and thou ſaidſt, I will 'not tranſgreſs: when upon every high hill, and under every green tree, thou wandereſt, playing the harlot.' We cannot forſake him, but we muſt be falſe to our profeſſion, our ſolemn vows and engagements. Our forſaking of him is treachery with a witneſs, caſting off the ſtrongeſt bands taken on us with our conſent, to abide with him and cleave to him. It is an aggravation that is not in the devil's deſerting him, nor the Pagans.

5. Notorious unfaithfulneſs to our own intereſt, and folly with a witneſs. It was a pertinent anſwer which Peter gave, John vi. 68. 'Lord, to whom ſhall we go? 'thou haſt the words of eternal life.' It were good for ſinners under temptation to forſake God, to propoſe it to themſelves, and ſtay till they get a ſatisfying anſwer. Will men forſake one they are with, if they cannot do better, or as well, with another? But we can never do well with any other, 1 Sam. xii. 21. *Turn ye not aſide from following the Lord; for then ſhould ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver, for they are vain.* Nay, whatſoever we go to, from God, will do us hurt, and not good, Ezek. xxix. 7. It is taking poiſon, leaving wholſome food. So that forſakers of God ſin againſt themſelves, cutting the throat of their own intereſt, Prov. viii. 36. 'But he that ſinneth againſt me, 'wrongeth his own ſoul: all they that hate me, love 'death.'

6. An affronting of God before the world, caſting diſhonour on him, bearing falſe witneſs againſt him, Jer. ii. 31. 'Have I been a wilderneſs unto Iſrael? a 'land of darkneſs? wherefore ſay my people, We are 'lords, we will come no more unto thee?' That bears the language of their deſerting to have been, that God had been to them as a wilderneſs. Forſakers of God are as the ſpies that brought up an ill report on the good land, Rom. ii. 34. 'For the name of God is blaſphemed among the Gentiles through you.' What muſt the world ſay, ſeeing God's people forſake him, but that it is in vain to ſerve him, and that there is not that ſatisfaction and comfort to be found in him, that the word ſays there is?

7. A practical commendation of the way of the world, contemning God, and ſeeking their happineſs in things that are ſeen, Prov. xxviii. 4. *They that forſake the law praiſe the wicked: but ſuch as keep the law, contend with them.* Deſerters of God do not only ceaſe to give a teſtimony againſt the world lying in wickedneſs, but give teſtimony for them, as if 'they only were the people, and wiſdom would die with them.' And thus they fly in the face of the teſtimony of God in his word.

8. It is a ſinning againſt the remedy of ſin, and makes one's caſe very hopeleſs, Heb. x. 26. 'For if we ſin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the 'truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſins.' When man forſook God as God and his God in the firſt covenant, there was a way found for bringing him back to God, 2 Cor. v. 19. 'God was in Chriſt, reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing their 'treſpaſſes unto them:' but if men ſhall forſake God in Chriſt, there is not another way to be expected for ſalvation. If the ſinner fall at the Mediator's door, he muſt lie there, there is none to take him up. This is the laſt method of ſalvation; thoſe who ſpurn it, cannot eſcape periſhing.

9. *Laſtly*, It is an opened ſluice for all other ſins. So the ſin being as it were a mother ſin. The man that forſakes God, he expoſes himſelf a prey to all temptations, to be picked up by the firſt finder, Prov. xxvii. 8. *As a bird that wandereth from her neſt: ſo is a man that wandereth from his place.* He breaks off from communion with God in ſanctifying, guiding, and ſtrengthening influences; his ſoul being withdrawn as a pipe laid ſhort of the fountain. He caſts off his guide and protector in the wilderneſs; and no wonder to find him in all evil, who forſakes the fountain and only ſpring of goodneſs.

USE 1. Then let us be deeply humbled in the ſenſe of our departures from the Lord, which we have had at any time in our life, Jer. ii. 19. *Thine own wickedneſs ſhall correct thee, and thy backſlidings ſhall reprove thee: know therefore and ſee, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou haſt forſaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, ſaith the Lord God of hoſts.* How often have our hearts been found in this way, gadding after other lovers? Behold the wickedneſs, ingratitude, and unfaithfulneſs in it. What great lengths have we often gone, in affronting our God before the world, and cauſing his name to be blaſphemed; Matth. xviii. 7. *Wo unto the world becauſe of offences: for it muſt needs be that offences come: but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh.* It may be humbling to us,

1ſt, That we live in a land infamous for apoſtaſies; a covenanted land ſolemnly married to God, but which in a national capacity did forſake her covenanted God, purſuing even to death ſuch as durſt not go in to the national apoſtaſy. It is like, when God ſhall raiſe the proceſs againſt the land for theſe things, it will be terrible, eſpecially to thoſe that are ſtill forſaking him.

2dly, We live in a generation that is faſt apoſtatizing, not going but running away from God. The ſluice of untenderneſs is opened among all ranks, wickedneſs abounds; the current is ſo forcible, that it is taking away many, one after another, with it, ſtripping them of their form of godlineſs; driving them into ſinful courſes that once a day would have ſaid, 'Am I a dog, that I ſhould 'do ſuch things?' And it is hard for any to keep their feet.

Let us be humbled under our own and the generation's forſaking of God, conſidering the diſhonour to God thereby, and the danger to ourſelves.

2. Beware of and watch againſt the beginnings of forſaking of God. We may apply that, Prov. xvii. 14. 'The beginning of ſtrife is as when one letteth out 'water; therefore leave off contention, before it be 'meddled with.' When the ſoul begins to decline from God, it is hard to ſay where it may ſtop: but one ſtep ſtill makes way for another. I doubt not there are many, who when they firſt left God, going out of his way, they did not think to have been ſo long away from him as they have been; nor to have gone ſo far as they have gone. And it would have been a terror to them then, to have thought that they ſhould run the length they are now at. But it is eaſier holding off the firſt ſtep, than off the ſecond, and ſo forward; for men are like thoſe going down a precipice, that cannot ſtop till they be at the bottom. Therefore watch againſt the beginnings; and 'let him that ſtandeth take heed leſt he fall.'

3. Ye that are far on, ſtop, and go no further; 1 Pet. iv. 4. *For the time paſt of our life may ſuffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles*, &c. Hold in time, leſt ye run to the utmoſt, and lie at the end of it a ſacrifice to your own wilfulneſs. God is calling you to return, and promiſing to take you home again, Jer. iii. 22. 'Return, ye backſliding children, and I will heal your 'backſlidings.' Are not your conſciences convinced, that it was better with you before ye went away, than it is now? ſay then as Hoſ. ii. 7. 'I will go and return to 'my firſt huſband, for then it was better with me than 'now.' Proceed not then in your courſe, for to make ill worſe. Why will ye ruſh on, 'as the horſe ruſheth 'into the battle?' Jer. viii. 6.

4. *laſtly,* Forſakers of God, return, return; whatever lengths ye are gone, whatever ſtep ye are in, return to God in Chriſt.

1*ſt*, Return by faith, and let the marriage-covenant betwixt Chriſt and you be renewed. There is acceſs for it yet, Jer. iii. 1. 'Thou haſt played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, ſaith the Lord.' Many a time matters are gone ſuch a length betwixt Chriſt and ſinners ſolemnly eſpouſed to him, that there muſt be as great a ſolemnity to the agreement and coming home again, as there was to the firſt taking them in: Rev. xix. 7. *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herſelf ready.*

2*dly*, Return by repentance, Jer. xxxi. 19. *Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was inſtructed, I ſmote upon my thigh: I was aſhamed, yea, even confounded, becauſe I did bear the reproach of my youth.* Return with the bluſh in your face, the tear in your eye, grief and ſorrow in your heart, your hand ſmiting on your breaſt, and the rope of humiliation about your neck, for your going away. Rake through your departures, ſearch your ways, and be converted from them. Many times matters go ſuch a length in people's forſaking the Lord, that there muſt be a going over the road of converſion again, in the ſeveral ſteps of it, as at firſt, Matth. xviii. 3. 'Except ye be converted, 'and become as little children, ye ſhall not enter into 'the kingdom of heaven.' There muſt be new conviction, compunction, humiliation, &c.

Motive 1. If ye will continue to forſake God, he will forſake you utterly, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. We may ſay, God does not quite forſake us, though we have forſaken him: he is ſtill doing us good, filling our hearts with food and gladneſs. But that will not laſte always ſo; the God that now follows us with mercy, will forſake us too, and give up with us, 2 Chron. xv. 2. 'The Lord is 'with you, while ye be with him; and if ye ſeek him, 'he will be found of you; but if ye forſake him, he will 'forſake you.'

Mot. 2. Heavy will be your caſe, if God ſhall forſake you, Hoſ. ix. 12. 'Yea, wo to them when I depart from 'them.' It is compriſed there in a word of two letters; but men and angels cannot ſufficiently unfold the import of it. Saul got a taſte of it in this world, and what a dreadful weight was it on him? 1 Sam. xxviii. 15. 'And Saul anſwered, I am ſore diſtreſſed: for the Phi'liſtines make war againſt me, and God is departed from 'me, and anſwereth me no more, neither by prophets, 'nor by dreams.' How much more dreadful will it be in another world?

Mot. 3. It is a hell by choice; and when it comes to be felt in its vigour, it will be nothing the eaſier, but the hotter, that it was your own choice. The ſentence of damnation runs in theſe terms, 'Depart from me, ye 'curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and 'his angels,' Matth. xxv. 41.

Now men will not ſtay with him, they will be away. The ſending of them to hell, will be a giving of them their will; a forcing them to that in a penal way, which is now their ſinful choice.

Mot. 4. *laſtly,* The Lord calls you to return, and is courting you to come back. He needs us not; but he ſees that we are ruined if we do not come back.

SECONDLY, As to the *ſecond* evil, *The betaking one's ſelf to the creature in God's ſtead.*

In ſpeaking to this, let us conſider,

1*ſt*, The object taken up with in God's ſtead.

2*dly*, How ſinners take up with the creature in God's ſtead.

3*dly*, Why ſinners take up with the creature in God's ſtead.

4*thly*, The ill of this practice.

Laſtly, Improve the doctrine.

I. *Firſt*, Let us conſider *the object taken up with in God's ſtead.* It is the creature: A ſorry exchange, Rom. i. 25. 'They changed the truth of God into a lie, and 'worſhipped and ſerved the creature more than the Cre'ator.' It has two names in ſcripture, a negative and a poſitive one.

1*ſt*, It is not God, Deut. xxxii. 21. 'They have 'moved me to jealouſy with that which is not God.' This is the name of all the ciſterns of the whole creation, choſen in God's room. Whatever it is, whatever excellency be conceived in it, it is a not-god. They take it for a god, and ſo they take it for what it neither is nor can be; and ſo they cheat themſelves. We may take up this name in theſe two ſyllables.

1. It cannot ſatisfy, Iſa. lv. 2. 'Wherefore do ye 'ſpend money for that which is not bread? and your 'labour for that which ſatisfieth not?' There are a great many empty ſpaces in the hungry heart, and it cannot fill them up. God's name is *All-ſufficient*, Gen. xvii. 1. *Heb. q. d.* that which is commenſurable. Hereby he is diſtinguiſhed from all not-god; none of them all will meaſure out, nor all of them together, with the neceſſities of any of us.

2. It cannot profit, 1 Sam. xii. 21. *And turn ye not aſide: for then ſhall ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver, for they are vain.* Whatever not-god one betakes himſelf to, it can not only do him good enough, but it can do him no good, Jer. ii. 11. 'Hath 'a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? 'but my people hath changed their glory, for that which 'doth not profit.' Yea, it can do him no good, even though it were a whole world gained, Matth. xvi. 26. 'For what is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole 'world, and loſe his own ſoul? or what ſhall a man give 'in exchange for his ſoul?' Paul was not out in his reckoning, when he ſaid, (Phil. iii. 8.) *Yea doubtleſs, and I count all things but loſs for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord;—and do count them but dung, that I may win Chriſt.* A ciſtern of one's own hewing out for the fountain, is not only ſcant of water, but the little that is of it is naught.

2*dly*, It is the world, 1 John ii. 15.; the great bulky vanity, Eccleſ. i. 2.; the paſſing world, 1 John ii. 17.; the preſent evil world, Gal. i. 4. that there is a curſe upon, whereby it is doomed to be burnt to aſhes, and ſo can neither laſte, nor ſatisfy in the time it does continue. It is a name conſiſting of three ſyllables.

1. *The luſt of the fleſh*, 1 John ii. 16. i. e. things grateful to the vile body. There is nothing in it for a pure holy ſoul, but what is noiſome to it; as appears from the entertainment it gave to Chriſt. But the vile world affords for the vile body; the pleaſures of eating and drinking, of fleſhly luſts, luxurious eaſe. It has wherewith to gratify the ſenſes, of touching, taſting, and ſmelling. And though *the Lord is for the body*, 1 Cor. vi. 13. and can and will gratify its ſenſes more than ten thouſand worlds; yet men forſake God, and take up with the world, and its luſts of the fleſh.

2. *The luſt of the eyes*, 1 John ii. 16. i. e. things grateful to the covetous eye, Pſal. iv. 6. 'Who will 'ſhew us any good?' There is nothing in it for the ſingle eye but grievouſneſs, which makes them cry, Hab. i. 3. and makes it a weary land. But it has fewel for feeding the vitiated luſting eye; it affords ſilver and gold, houſes and lands, farms and merchandize, cloaths and ornaments, pompous and gaudy ſights and ſhows, huſbands and wives, children and ſervants, &c. And though there is a perfection of beauty in God in Chriſt, while he is repreſented as *fairer than the ſons of men*, and *altogether lovely*, Cant. v. 16.; yet he is forſaken for the luſt of the eyes the world affords; while in the mean time it never ſatisfies the eye, Eccl. i. 8.

3. *The pride of life*, 1 John ii. 16. i. e. things grateful to the vain mind. There is nothing in it for the pure mind, but what is vain, or elſe vile, 2 Cor. v. 4. 'For we that are in this tabernacle do grone, being bur-

‘ dened.’ Phil i. 23. ‘ For I am in a ſtrait betwixt ‘ two, having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt; ‘ which is far better.’ But it affords abundant entertainment for the vain mind; airy honours, credit, reputation, and eſteem for this and the other fancied or real excellency in a perſon; a variety for entertaining the muſical, light, or malicious ear; airy caſtles enough, for the fancy to rove up and down in at large, in vain projects, and vile deſires, and dreaming enjoyments; and enough to buſy the curious, while they live, if they were to live as long as Methuſelah, that with all their learning and reſearches they ſhall never come to the end of. In God in Chriſt are *hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge*, Col. ii 3 full ſatisfaction for the mind, 1 John iii. 2. But he is forſaken for the world's *pride of life*, that will fall in a moment *like the foam on the water*, Hoſ. x. 7.

II. *Secondly*, Let us conſider, *How ſinners take up with the creature in God's ſtead.* This is done by ſetting the heart on the creature, giving it the chief or ſupreme room in the heart, which is due to God only. And ſo men take up with the creature in God's ſtead. The ſteps of it are theſe.

Step 1. Raiſing their eſteem of and value for the creature, till it come to overtop their eſteem of God in Chriſt, like Eve with reſpect to the forbidden fruit, Gen. iii. 6. Men looking on the creature, are often as one ſtanding looking over a precipice, till the head growing giddy, they fall over. Thus Achan came to forſake God for the wedge of gold, Joſh. vii. 21. The creature grows more and more bulky and glorious; and the beauty of a God in Chriſt is more and more vailed; till in end the ſoul gives the preference to the creature, and determines it is beſt for it. Now the unhappy match is begun, and the ſoul is in a fair way to go off to the creature.

Step 2. Bending their chief deſire towards the creature, Pſal. iv. 6. to obtain it, and the ſatisfaction they apprehend is to be found in it. The heart goes after it on the wings of deſire, the ſoul flying after it as a ravenous bird on its prey, Prov. xxiii. 5. So the heart is boiling hot upon it, and grows cold towards God, as Eſau, Gen. xxv. 30, 32. Then the man is making away to it as faſt as he can.

Step 3. Embracing and knitting with it in chief love, 2 Tim iv 10. So Demas looſed his gripes of Paul and the goſpel, and faſtened his gripes on the world. It gets more of his love than God in Chriſt, and all the riches of Chriſt. He looks for his happineſs from it, thinks he would be happy if he could be maſter of what is in it; and ſo he cleaves to it in love, till the love of God is extinguiſhed in his heart, 1 John ii 15. And thus the man has betaken himſelf to it inſtead of God, and the fatal new match is made up.

Step 4. Seeking a reſt for their heart in it, Matth. xi. 28. *Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt.* The man has a reſtleſs heart in his breaſt, that is gaping for ſomething to ſatisfy it; and he carries it away to the creature, to reſt there; to the ciſterns, to drink there. And there he ſucks at the breaſts of the world's conſolations, the conſolations of God being now taſteleſs with him.

Step 5 Truſting in it, and having their chief dependence on it, notwithſtanding of the curſe pronounced againſt ſuch truſt, Jer. xvi 5, 6. It is their prop that ſupports them, the pillar they lean on. Happy had they been, if they had had ſuch truſt to God as they give to the creature. Though it frowns on them, they truſt it will yet ſmile, and they will wait on: it has diſappointed them often, and yet with the greateſt confidence they will promiſe on its head. God's promiſes, that might be deferred but never failed, they can truſt nothing to; but the deceitful promiſes of the world they truſt in.

Step 6. Uſing their chief and moſt earneſt endeavours for it. Their truſt in it is backed with endeavours conform: they ſpare no coſt, to get out of the creature what they are ſeeking, Iſ. lv. 2. *Wherefore do ye ſpend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which ſatisfieth not?* They will ware their money on their luſts, and what is better than either gold or money, they will ſpare no pains; they will labour for it: they will labour in the very fire, and that to wearineſs, Hab. ii. 13. It is not the ſinner's fault, that he gets not ſatisfaction in the creature: if it were in it, he would ſurely have it out of it. Mean while, as is his truſt and dependence on God, ſo are his endeavours that way; his truſt nothing, and his endeavours languid.

Step 7. Rejoycing moſt in their enjoyment of it, and delighting moſt in it. It is no more God, but the creature that is the man's chief joy, 1 Tim. iii. 4. *Lovers of pleaſures more than lovers of God.* The joy of the corn and wine, the crop and cattle, is more to them than the light of the Lord's countenance. They can reliſh no other joys but what are carnal: let the world ſmile, the heavens may lower for them, they can be eaſy; and reign as kings without God, if the kind world will but ſet a fading crown on their head.

Step 8 Sorrowing moſt of all for the want of it, under the frowns of it, 2 Cor. vii. 10.——*The ſorrow of the world worketh death.* They can bear the frowns of the God that made them better than the frowns of the creature: for the latter has more of their heart than the former. Though God's diſpleaſure is burning againſt them for forſaking him, that is not their grief; it will not mar their joy in the world, but their joy in the world will be an antidote againſt it: Hoſ. xii 7, 8. ‘ He ‘ is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand: ‘ he loveth to oppreſs. And Ephraim ſaid, Yet I am ‘ become rich, I have found me out ſubſtance; in all ‘ my labours they ſhall find none iniquity in me, that ‘ were ſin.’ But all the joys of the goſpel will not weigh down their ſorrows from the creature, Exod. vi, 7, 8, 9.

Step 9. Still cleaving to it, under never ſo many diſappointments from it; not forſaking it, but trying another mean, when one miſgives: Iſa. lvii. 10. *Thou art wearied in the greatneſs of thy way; yet ſaidſt thou not, There is no hope: thou haſt found the life of thine hand; therefore thou waſt not grieved.* When their expectations in God were deferred, they ſaid, ‘ Why ſhould ‘ we wait on the Lord any longer?’ and ſo they forſook him. But do they treat the creature ſo? No indeed; but when it razes their hope in one thing to the very foundation, they ſhift about from one creature to another, but never come back to God; when one ciſtern runs dry, they go to another, but return not to the fountain.

Step 10, *laſtly*, Following the creature whitherſoever it goes, even quite over the hedge of the law of God: Eccleſ. x. 8. *He that diggeth a pit, ſhall fall into it; and whoſo breaketh an hedge, a ſerpent ſhall bite him.* The man that has betaken himſelf to the creature, he may hold within the compaſs of lawful enjoyments, and periſh by them, Matth. xxiv 38, 39. ‘ For as, in the days ‘ that were before the flood, they were eating and ‘ drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, untill the ‘ day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not till ‘ the flood came, and took them all away; ſo ſhall alſo ‘ the coming of the Son of man be’. But the ſinner diſappointed of the ſatisfaction expected in lawful things, takes at length the liberty of unlawful; like a beaſt, that, having ate up all to the red earth within his paſture, breaks over the hedge; and eats up that which is not allowed. Thus the ſinner is come to the laſt ſtep, giving himſelf the ſwing in his luſts.

III. The *third* thing is, *Why ſinners take up with the creature in God's ſtead.*

1. Becauſe the heart of man is naturally wedded to the creature; and that bond not being truly broken, it is apt to return upon occaſion to its natural bias. Adam ſinning left God, and joined the creature: ſo there

is the natural bond, theſe is the object that gets our firſt love. Hence, though the ſinner ſeem to join himſelf to the Lord, he is apt to return to the creature; and will do it, if the power of grace prevent it not, Hoſ. xi. 7. *And my people are bent to backſliding from me; though they called them to the Moſt High, none at all would exalt him.*

2. Becauſe man's corrupt nature finds a ſuitableneſs and agreeableneſs in the creature to itſelf, Iſa. lvii. 10. foreceited. Corrupt luſts, which otherwiſe muſt ſtarve, find an agreeable entertainment in the creature, an entertainment they can reliſh or ſavour, while they cannot ſavour the things of God, Rom. viii. 5. Even as a ſwine brought into a palace, will get back into an unclean place, where it will get mire and dirt which it cannot get there.

3. Becauſe the creature takes by the eye and other ſenſes: God and his favour are the object of faith, which is rare in the world. Men are naturally much addicted to ſenſe, and apt to be led thereby, and are moſt feelingly touched by objects of ſenſe; while it requires the exerting of a ſupernatural power on them, to raiſe in them the faith of things inviſible. Hence the natural cry, Pſal. iv. 6. 'Who will ſhew us any 'good?' And therefore God gives his people a ſpiritual ſenſation to balance it, verſ. 7. 'Thou haſt put 'gladneſs in my heart, more than in the time that their 'corn and their wine increaſed.'

4. Becauſe the creature promiſeth a preſent good, whereas the greateſt things of God are reſerved to another world. Though God does offer great things in hand to the ſinner, Pſal. xix. 11. yet the greateſt is in hope: but the world's good is offered as a preſent good; as that which is ſoon rotten is ordinarily ſoon ripe too, and contrariwiſe. Hence the ſinner, making the compariſon, looks on the ſpiritual good as the bird in the buſh, on the temporal as the bird in hand, and ſo gripes to it, letting the other go.

5. Becauſe, by the power of a ſtrong deluſion, conveyed into the nature of man by the ſerpent in paradiſe, they expect a ſatisfaction and happineſs in the creature Gen. iii 5, 6. It is repreſented to them in a magnifying glaſs, as the forbidden fruit was to our firſt parents, and ſo ſtrongly is this hope rivetted in them, that though they meet with thouſands of diſappointments, yet ſtill in new hopes they renew their endeavours to extract it out of them, Iſa. lvii. 10. 'Thou art wearied in the 'greatneſs of thy way; yet ſaidſt thou not, There is 'no hope.'

6. *laſtly*, Becauſe they muſt needs betake themſelves to ſomething without themſelves, not being ſelf-ſufficient: ſo having loſt God, they fall of courſe to the creature in his ſtead, Eph. ii. 12. *At that time ye were without Chriſt, being aliens from the commonwealth of Iſrael, and ſtrangers from the covenants of promiſe, having no hope, and without God in the world:* compared with ver. 3. *Among whom alſo we all had our converſation in times paſt, in the luſts of the fleſh, and of the mind.* The ſun being gone down on them, they ſet up their candles to enlighten their darkneſs, and compaſs themſelves about with their own ſparks. When the prodigal wanted bread, he fed on huſks: when bread was not in Samaria, aſſes heads and doves dung were uſed.

IV. The *fourth* thing is, *The ill of this practice, taking up with the creature in God's ſtead; the ill of ſin in it.*

1. It is an egregious wrong done to God, and his infinite excellency, Jer. ii. 11. 'Hath a nation changed 'their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people 'have changed their glory, for that which doth not 'profit.' To take up with the creature in God's ſtead, is to affront him, caſt diſhonour on him, and, as far as lies in us, to ungod him. To pull down the king from his throne, and to put a beggar from the dung-hill upon it; to pull down the ſun from the firmament, and ſet up in its room a twopenny candle; the angels from their ſeats, and ſet glow-worms in their ſtead; would be no ſuch injury, as here: for the diſtance betwixt theſe is but finite; but that betwixt God and the creature is infinite.

It is a heap of practical blaſphemies againſt God, and vilely miſrepreſents him as if he were not,

(1.) The chief good. He is originally good, and the fountain of all goodneſs that is to be found in any creature, Matth. xix. 17. 'There is none good but one, 'that is God.' Therefore he is the chief good. But this practice ſays, the creature is better than he; elſe why do men take up with it in his ſtead? What is our choice, in a plurality of things, one of which we may have, will always be reckoned the beſt in our judgment.

(2.) All-ſufficient. He declares himſelf all-ſufficient in himſelf, and to his creatures, Gen. xvii. 1. There is enough in him to make all the world of men, yea, a thouſand worlds of men happy; for his perfections are infinite. But the taking up with the creature in his ſtead, ſays, There is not enough in him for us. If it is not ſo, why do not we hold by him? if there is enough for us in a God, why are we found at the creature's door? if the fountain is not dry, why at ciſterns?

(3.) The moſt lovely. God is the perfection of beauty and excellency; for whatever is lovely in the creature, is a ray of beauty darted from him, James i. 17. 'Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, 'and cometh down from the Father of lights.' Every thing has its ſpots; only *he is altogether lovely*, Cant. v. 16. ſo he is *fairer than the ſons of men.* Pſal. xlv. 2. and nothing is ſo deſirable. But the taking up with the creature, gives the lye to this teſtimony. If the water is ſweeter in the fountain than in the ciſtern, why is the ciſtern choſen inſtead of the fountain?

(4.) Communicative, willing to impart of his goodneſs to his creatures, Matth. xxv. 21. He has parted with his own Son for us, and is willing with him to give us all things, Rom. viii. 32. And this is the teſtimony of the goſpel of God. Yet ſinners by this practice give it out, that all this is falſe; that they muſt needs take up with the creature, ſince the Creator locks up himſelf from them.

2. It is a wrong done to the creature, as being a putting it out of its proper place. It is a rape committed upon it, a violence done thereto, which makes it grone, Rom. viii. 21, 22. When Rachel put her huſband in God's ſtead, he complained bitterly of it, ſaying, Gen. xxx. 2. *Am I in God's ſtead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?* So did the King of Iſrael, when the King of Syria, he thought treated him ſo, 2 Kings v. 7. 'Am I God, (ſaid he,) to kill and to make alive, 'that this man doth ſend unto me to recover a man of 'his leproſy?' So would the whole creation complain of men, if they had a mouth to ſpeak. It expoſes the creature to the fire of God's jealouſy, Ezek. xxiv. 25. As there is not a readier way to break a bow, than to overbend it; ſo there is not a readier way to ruin the creature, than to make an idol of it. Nothing ſits ſafe that ſits in the ſeat of God.

3. It is a wrong done to the whole generation of the ſaints. Aſaph takes notice of this in his caſe, Pſal. lxxiii. 12, 13, 14, 15. *Behold, theſe are the ungodly, who proſper in the world, they increaſe in riches. Verily I have cleanſed my heart in vain, and waſhed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chaſtened every morning. If I ſay, I will ſpeak thus; behold, I ſhall offend againſt the generation of thy children.* As it affronts their God, it grieves them to the heart; as it declares them to have made a fooliſh choice, it diſhonours them, and proclaims them fools. Thus they ſadden the hearts of thoſe whom God has not made ſad; and hold them for fools, whom he accounts wiſe.

4. *laſtly*, It is an egregious wrong to the ſinner's own ſoul, putting the arranteſt cheat upon it that one is capable to do, Prov. viii. 36. 'But he that ſinneth againſt

me, wrongeth his own ſoul; all they that hate me, love death.’ It is the putting one in the hand of the ſoul, for an end it will never be able to anſwer. God ſays, He will be for a God to the ſinner; but, behold, the ſinner ſays to his own ſoul, Let the creature be for a God to thee. This is, inſtead of bread, to give a ſtone; inſtead of a fiſh, to give a ſerpent.

USE. Then have a horror of taking up with the creature in God’s room and ſtead: look on it as a ſignal evil, and tremble at the very thoughts of it. And,

1. Look back on your guilt of that kind, and repent. O what of this idolatry has there been, and is there among us? See it, and be convinced and humbled under the ſenſe of it.

(1.) Has not ſome creature or other had your chief affection ſet upon it? 1 John ii. 15. ‘Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. How warmly have your hearts been carried towards it, while nothing for God but cold riſe love, languiſhing deſires? &c. The heart has been like a common inn, ſo thronged with ſtrangers, that there was no room for the Maſter.

(2.) Have you not ſerved the creature more than God? Rom. i. 25. Ye have all been at pains for the world, and to ſerve that intereſt: but ſo long as ye have lived, what have ye done for God and his intereſt? Alas! are there not many who ſet themſelves in oppoſition to it? and at beſt they think they do very well if they do not act againſt it; but how few ſet themſelves to advance it? Do ye ſerve the creature ſo? No. Then do ye not *ſerve the creature more than the Creator?*

(3.) Has not your greateſt care been to pleaſe another rather than God? yourſelves, your luſts, this and the other perſon whoſe favour ye have valued, rather than a God in Chriſt? Gal. i. 10. ‘For do I now perſuade men, or God? or do I ſeek to pleaſe men? for if I yet pleaſed men, I ſhould not be the ſervant of Chriſt.’ How often have ſinners pleaſed themſelves and others, at the expence of God’s high diſpleaſure; and made their way to their own pleaſure, over the belly of all the intimations of the pleaſure of God to the contrary?

Look back on theſe things, ſee how ye have ſet up another in God’s ſtead: be aſhamed, lothe yourſelves, mourn, and repent for theſe things.

2. Reform; pull down your idols of jealouſy; whatever it is that has had God’s room with you, caſt it down from the throne, and ſet it in a low place at his footſtool, Hoſ xiv 3. *Aſhur ſhall not ſave us, we will not ride upon horſes, neither will we ſay any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods: for in thee the fatherleſs findeth mercy.* Reſtore the throne to our Sovereign Lord, reduce the uſurper; let a God in Chriſt command, and let all things elſe be at his diſpoſal, and modelled according to his will and pleaſure, 2 Cor. x. 5.

3. *laſtly*, Watch, and beware of any creature’s ſtepping in at any time in the room of God, Prov. iv. 23. ‘Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the iſſues of life.’ Keep a jealouſy of this ſort over your hearts at all times; for there is a propenſity in it to fall into this courſe; and it will be off to the creature, if ye do not guard againſt it: and in ſpecial at ſome times, particularly,

(1.) When the Lord delays to anſwer. This is a time when the unbelieving heart being in a haſte, is ready to make its addreſs to the creature inſtead of God, that it may do for the man what God defers to do. This was the ruining thing to thoſe in the wilderneſs. God was not like to bring them into Canaan, and therefore they were for going back to Egypt. Reſolve ye with the church, Lam. iii. 49, 50. ‘Mine eye trickleth down, and ceaſeth not, without any intermiſſion; till the Lord look down, and behold from heaven.’

(2.) When the creature courts, and the world ſmiles, Prov. i. 32. *For the turning away of the ſimple ſhall ſlay them, and the proſperity of fools ſhall deſtroy them.* We are ready to hang by a frowning world; how much more dangerous is it when it ſmiles on us? Many have been hugged to death thereby. When therefore things go according to your wiſh, take heed ye be not ruined, as the ſcum the higher it riſes, the ſooner it runs over and is loſt.

DOCT. II. *To forſake God in Chriſt, and take the creature in his ſtead, is a wretched exchange.*

For clearing of this doctrine I ſhall take it up in theſe four points.

POINT I. *Forſaking of God for the creature, is an exchanging of a fountain for a ciſtern.*

POINT II. *Forſaking of God for the creature, is an exchanging of a fountain made ready to our hand, for a ciſtern that remains to be hewed out by ourſelves.*

POINT III. *Forſaking of God for the creature, is an exchanging of a fountain for many ciſterns.*

POINT IV *ult. Forſaking of God for the creature, is an exchanging of a fountain, for cracked and broken ciſterns that can hold no water.*

I return to the firſt of theſe, viz.

POINT I. *Forſaking of God for the creature, is an exchanging of a fountain for a ciſtern.* This is a wretched exchange, if ye conſider,

1. The water in the ciſtern is all borrowed water, that in the fountain is from itſelf. Mark x. 18. ‘There is none good but—God:’ none good eſſentially, underivedly, but God himſelf. All the ciſterns of created enjoyments muſt be filled from God as the fountain, or elſe remain empty. The fountain has a ſpring in itſelf, the ciſtern none. If God communicate not to the creature, it is ſapleſs and foyſonleſs. The whole creation ſhines with borrowed light. Whatever ſweetneſs is in any perſon or thing created, it is a drop from the fountain, from God. Would one exchange the ſun for the ſtars?

2. The water muſt needs be ſweeter and freſher in the fountain, than in the ciſtern. Who would not drink rather from the ſpring, than from a veſſel of water within the houſe? the enjoyment of God in Chriſt is far ſweeter than the whole creation can afford: Pſal. iv. 6, 7. ‘There be many that ſay, Who will ſhew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou haſt put gladneſs in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increaſed.’ Every thing is beſt in God as in the fountain. Heaven’s riches, the riches of Chriſt, are better than worldly riches, which are but a ſtream from the other, Pſal. civ. 24. ‘O Lord, how manifold are thy works; in wiſdom haſt thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.’ The beauty of Chriſt ſurpaſſes all created beauties, Pſal. xlv. 2. ‘Thou art fairer than the ſons of men. The knowledge of Chriſt is more excellent than all other knowledge, Phil. iii. 8. *Yea doubtleſs, and I count all things but loſs, for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord;——and do count them but dung, that I may win Chriſt.* The comfort of the creature is often unſavoury, in God it is ever ſweet.

3. The water in the ciſtern is no more but a certain meaſure; in the fountain it is unmeaſurable. Whatever perfection or goodneſs is in any creature, there is an end of it which one may reach unto, Pſal. cxix. 96. ‘I have ſeen an end of all perfection; but thy commandment is exceeding broad.’ But God’s perfections are infinite, there is no end of them. So in all created things there is a want, and therefore the heart cannot find true reſt in them: but in God there is no want, the heart may reſt in him, Heb. iv. 3. ‘For we which have believed, do enter into reſt.’ No creature is commenſurable to the boundleſs deſires of man’s

heart; but God is: ſo ſinners may be happy for ever.

4. The water in the ciſtern is moſtly very ſcanty: the fountain is ever full. There is a want in the creature at its beſt; it cannot ſatisfy the deſires of the heart of man, If. lv. 2. ‘ Wherefore do ye ſpend money for that ‘ which is not bread? and your labour for that which ‘ ſatisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ‘ ye that which is good, and let your ſoul delight itſelf ‘ in fatneſs.’ But even what may reaſonably be expeced from it, oft-times cannot be had from it: it ſinks far below the meaſure of what it promiſes; ſo that often it is as Hag. ii. 16.——‘ When one came to a heap ‘ of twenty meaſures, there were but ten: when one ‘ came to the preſs fat, for to draw out fifty veſſels out ‘ of the preſs, there were but twenty.’ But there is a perpetual fulneſs in a God in Chriſt, that one can never come amiſs to him, if he ſhould come never ſo oft. How wretched an exchange muſt it then be, to exchange the fulneſs of a Godhead for the empty creature?

5. The water of the ciſtern is always dreggy; the fountain clear and pure. Hence the end of the one is ſorrow, but the end of the other not ſo, Prov. x. 22. *The bleſſing of the Lord it maketh rich; and he addeth no ſorrow with it.* There is a thorn of uneaſineſs in the ſofteſt bed one can make to himſelf in the whole creation; and the faireſt roſe wants not its prickles. Lawful enjoyments leave behind them a ſting in the heart; and the more comfort one has in them, the more bitter is the parting with them, which cannot be evited. Unlawful ones leave a ſting in the conſcience, which will ſting through eternity, if bitter repentance prevent it not, Prov. v. 8. ‘ Remove thy way far from her, and ‘ come not nigh the door of her houſe.’ See If. l. 11. ‘ Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compaſs your‘ ſelves about with ſparks; walk in the light of your ‘ fire, and in the ſparks that ye have kindled. This ‘ ſhall ye have of mine hand, ye ſhall lie down in ſorrow.’ A devil of covetouſneſs, uncleanneſs, &c. rages in ſome; but bitter will be the dregs of it. But whoſo hold by a God in Chriſt, ſhall ſwim in joy unſpeakable for ever.

6. *laſtly*, The water of the ciſtern is ſoon dried up; the fountain, never. A few days or years will put an end to all our lawful and unlawful comforts in the creature. A touch of the hand of God, by ſome heavy diſeaſe on the body, may ſoon make the now healthieſt incapable of comfort either of theſe ways. And if ſuch ſhould ſpend their days in health and wealth, the moment they go to the grave, the candle will be put out, and they will pay for their folly by everlaſting bitterneſs. But a God in Chriſt will be an eternal ſpring of comfort to thoſe that are his.

USE. See the wretchedneſs of this exchange, and repent that ye have made it. The reſult of it in end will be,

1. Cutting diſappointment, Luke xii. 19, 20. *And I will ſay to my ſoul, Soul, thou haſt much goods laid up for many years; take thine eaſe, eat, drink, and be merry. But God ſaid unto him, Thou fool, this night thy ſoul ſhall be required of thee: then whoſe ſhall thoſe things be which thou haſt provided?* No body forſakes God for the creature, but they think to better their condition thereby; but that is impoſſible; therefore they muſt be diſappointed, and their expectations fruſtrated, Iſa. xx. 5, 6. ‘ And they ſhall be afraid and aſhamed of Ethio‘ pia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory. And ‘ the inhabitant of this iſle ſhall ſay in that day, Behold, ‘ ſuch is our expectation, whither we flee for help to ‘ be delivered from the king of Aſſyria; and how ſhall ‘ we eſcape?’ They may get an offputting for a while with the creature to which they betake themſelves in God's ſtead; but the day will come when they ſhall complain of it, as Job vi. 15. *My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the ſtream of brooks they paſs away.*

2. Bitter remorſe, Prov. xxiii. 32. ‘ At the laſt it ‘ biteth like a ſerpent, and ſtingeth like an adder.’ What comfort had Judas of his thirty pieces of ſilver, when he ſaw the end? the rich man of his faring deliciouſly every day, when in hell he lift up his eyes? Since there is a God and a judgment to come, he will certainly make thoſe who ſwill down the cup of ſin with ſo much pleaſure now, wring out and drink the dregs thereof too at long-run, Pſal. lxxv. 8. ‘ For in the hand ‘ of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red: it is ‘ full of mixture, and he poureth out of the ſame; but ‘ the dregs thereof all the wicked of the earth ſhall wring ‘ them out and drink them.’

POINT II. *Forſaking of God for the creature, is an exchanging of a fountain made ready to our hand, for a ciſtern that remains to be hewed out by ourſelves.* The wretchedneſs of this exchange does appear, in that,

1. The fountain is always ready for us, the ciſterns often are unready. There is acceſs at any time to be had unto God through Chriſt, by faith, Pſal. xlvi. 1. ‘ God is our refuge and ſtrength, a very preſent help ‘ in trouble.’ The man that came to his friend at midnight, had acceſs and was ſerved of all he wanted, Luke xi. 5.——8. God in Chriſt is that friend, and he will help early, Pſal. xlvi. 5. But the creature is an unready help; ſo that the man's caſe is often paſt cure, ere help can be had from that airth.

2. The fountain is made ready for us by another hand, the ciſterns muſt be prepared by our own, Zech. xiii. 1. *In that day there ſhall be a fountain opened to the houſe of David, and to the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, for ſin and for uncleanneſs.* Jeſus Chriſt has opened the fountain of the divine fulneſs, that we may come to it and drink. It is ſet wide open in the goſpel, John vii. 37.—‘ Jeſus ſtood, and cried, ſaying, If any man thirſt, ‘ let him come unto me, and drink.’ Adam's ſin ſtopt all the wells of creature comforts to us: ſo that we find much ado to get them ſo far opened, as thence to get a little to quench our thirſt: and O what pains it coſts men to open them again!

3. At the fountain one has nothing ado but to drink, John vii. 37. but it is no little pains that is neceſſary to fit out the ciſtern for us. It is a labour, If. lv. 2. ‘ Wherefore do ye ſpend——your labour for that ‘ which ſatisfieth not?’ Matth. xi. 28. ‘ Come unto ‘ me all ye that labour:’ and oft times a weary labour, Hab. ii. 13. ‘ Behold, is it not of the Lord of hoſts, ‘ that the people ſhall labour in the very fire, and the ‘ people ſhall weary themſelves for very vanity?’ For the ciſterns muſt be hewed out, as out of a rock: and this hewing work is the work that fills moſt mens hands all the days of their lives, till death make their tools drop out of their hands. Hewing work is,

1. Hard and ſore work. But no hewing is harder than hewing out ciſterns of creature-comforts in God's ſtead. Others may rack the whole body; but this racks the ſoul and conſcience always, and ſometimes the body too, Hab. ii. 13. forecited. How is the heart racked with anxious deſires and impetuous luſtings! the mind racked to contrive how to gratify them: the executive faculty, how to bring it to paſs; and the conſcience, to make way over its belly for them; and the body itſelf treated in the purſuit, as they would be loth to treat their beaſt? Pſal. vii. 14. ‘ Behold, he travel‘ leth with iniquity, and hath conceived miſchief, and ‘ brought forth falſehood.’

2. Longſome work, that one comes but little ſpeed in. The truth is, it is ſo longſome, that it is never at an end with men, till either God's grace reaching the heart cauſe one give it over as vain work, or elſe death drag him away from it, Job xv. 20. ‘ The wicked man ‘ travelleth with pain all his days, and the number of ‘ years is hidden to the oppreſſor.’ It is a curſed work that one can never by their labour get to the end of. The wordly man muſt ſtill be hewing, Eccleſ. iv. 8. *There is one alone, and there is not a ſecond; yea, he hath neither child nor brother; yet there is no end of all his labour, neither is his eye ſatisfied with riches, neither ſaith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my ſoul of*

good? this is alſo vanity, yea, it is a ſore travel. The ſenſual man muſt be hewing, to pleaſe his fleſhly luſts, Prov. xxiii. 35. “They have ſtricken me, and I was not ſick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not; when ſhall I awake? I will ſeek it again. The proud man muſt be hewing, till he get his neſt ſet among the ſtars, Obad. verſ. 4. though ere he gets there juſtice will throw him down.

3. Weary work on theſe accounts; ſore and long toil, and that many times for nought, makes weary work, Hab. ii. 13. forecited. O it is an ungrateful world men ſet their hearts on, that cauſeth them to go many a foot to no purpoſe. It is a hard rock, the creature, to work upon, where many a ſtroke is given for no effect. The man is thirſty, and he hews, but he can get no water, Iſa. lvii. 10. ‘Thou art wearied in the greatneſs of thy way.’ Many a man has much toil, and weary on-waiting, to get his own ſoul ruined, Jer. ix. 5. The miſchievous man wakes while others ſleep, Pſal. xxxvi. 4. The murderer, the adulterer, and the thief, wake alſo, Job xxiv. 14, 15, 16.

Three things make this work about the ciſterns ſuch a hewing work.

1. The emptineſs of the creature, brought into it by man's ſin. There is an original emptineſs in it, which took place in the ſtate of innocence, that it could never afford a reſt to the heart of man. There is an accidental emptineſs in it by ſin; the ſcripture calls it vanity, Rom. viii. 20. that it cannot now afford the ſatisfaction it ſometimes could have given, being like an empty huſk, a dry and parched ground, in compariſon of what it once was, Pſal. cii. 26. Now here lies the caſe: There is leſs in the creature now, than ſome time there was; yet mens hearts eagerly ſeek out of it, and expect from it, more than ever was in it. When then men in theſe circumſtances fall a-hewing at it, how can it miſs to be hard, longſome, and weary work?

2. The curſe lying upon it for man's ſin, Gen. iii. 17. This has ſo locked up the little comfort that is in it, that it is made hard work to get at it. Hence ſo many diſappointments, ſo often falling ſhort of the comfort that otherwiſe it might really give. Thus, whereas God in Chriſt is an opened fountain, the creature is a ſealed ciſtern many times, Mal. ii. 2. *If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory to my name, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, I will even ſend a curſe upon you, and I will curſe your bleſſings: yea, I have curſed them already, becauſe ye do not lay it to heart.* And no wonder one find hard work in breaking through Heaven's ſeal on the creature.

3. *laſtly*, The oppoſition from heaven the ſinner muſt lay his account with in this work of his. It is a work which is againſt God, and God will be againſt it, and it is hard to kick againſt the pricks, Acts ix. 5. Providence may let the man thrive in it a while, as the builders of Babel did: but they ſhall be ſenſible at length of God's working againſt them, Hoſ. ii. 6. ‘Therefore behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that ſhe ſhall not find her paths.’ They ſhall plant, and God ſhall pluck up; build, and he ſhall deſtroy; they ſhall beautify, and he ſhall blaſt; fill their ciſterns, and he empty them. They may find God working againſt them, and the effect of it on their wicked hearts may be, to cauſe them to hew the more forcibly and eagerly, as if they would carry on their work in ſpite of oppoſition from heaven: but aſſuredly God ſhall daſh them to pieces that contend with him, 1 Sam. ii. 9, 10. *He will keep the feet of his ſaints, and the wicked ſhall be ſilent in darkneſs; for by ſtrength ſhall no man prevail. The adverſaries of the Lord ſhall be broken in pieces, out of heaven ſhall he thunder upon them.*

USE. Sinners, then lay by your work of hewing out ciſterns to yourſelves in God's room and ſtead. Ye are at a great deal of work in ſeeking to get the ſap and foyſon of the creature, in lawful and unlawful enjoyments, for a meal to feed your hungry hearts; and neglect God in Chriſt. Repent, and come drink of the fountain ready to your hands, and ceaſe your hewing.

Motive 1. Conſider, it is unbleſſed work, Pſal. cxxix. 6, 7, 8. ‘Let them be as the graſs upon the houſe-tops, which withereth afore it groweth up: wherewith the mower filleth not his hand; nor he that bindeth ſheaves, his boſom. Neither do they which go by, ſay, The bleſſing of the Lord be upon you: we bleſs you in the name of the Lord.’ God never ſet man to it; but Satan and the corrupt heart, and they are cruel maſters, that fill the hand with ſelf-ruining work. You cannot look to God for a bleſſing on it.

Mot. 2. It is vain and fruitleſs work, where ye will never get worth the pains and coſt wared on it, Iſa. lv. 2. *Wherefore do ye ſpend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which ſatisfieth not?* Ye are ſeeking out of the creature what is not in it; ye are waring your all upon it, and the coſt will quite overgo the profit, Matth. xvi. 26. ‘For what is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?’ Hard work may be the better borne that has a proportionable advantage following it: but ſee the emblem of this, Hab. ii. 13. ‘Behold, is it not of the Lord of hoſts, that the people ſhall labour in the very fire, and the people ſhall weary themſelves for very vanity?’

Mot. 3. Ye have found it heavy work already; why will ye inſiſt when God calls you to leave it?

(1.) Have ye not in your hewing given many a fruitleſs ſtroke? ſought, and found nothing? Yea we may ſay as Iſa. xxvi. 18. ‘We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind, we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth, neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen:’ having been like thoſe hewing at a rock, where no impreſſion could be made.

(2.) Have not the chips in your hewing flown out upon you, to your wounding? Inſtead of the good and comfort ye have ſought from the creature, ye have got hurt by it, Ezek. xxix. 7. *When they took hold of thee by the hand, thou didſt break, and rent all their ſhoulder: and when they leaned upon thee, thou brakeſt, and madeſt all their loins to be at a ſtand.* Where ye have expected your greateſt comfort, thence has ariſen your greateſt croſs; where the ſoundeſt reſt, there greateſt vexation.

(3.) Have ye not often found, that all your ciſtern could hold when ye got it, was not worth the pains ye had been at in hewing it out? How often has your comfort in the enjoyment of the creature, ſunk vaſtly below the expectation ye had of it?

(4.) Has not one touch often broke your ciſtern all in pieces, after ye had been at all pains in hewing it out; and ſo ye have in a moment loſt all your expectation together, with all your pains? How many fine projects for this world do miſgive, juſt when one is looking for the fruit of them? Sometimes a little providential incident, or a piece of one's own miſmanagement, breaks all to pieces.

Mot. 4. *laſtly*, How will ye anſwer it, that ye are at ſo great pains for the ciſterns, and will not be at pains to go to the fountain? Men refuſe not to labour, to hew for the creature; but they will be at no tolerable pains for the enjoyment of God. O how well might it be with men, if they would be at as much concern to ſeek their happineſs in God, as they are at in ſeeking it in the creature! But the opened fountain is ſlighted, while the ciſtern is hewn out of the hard rock.

POINT III. *Forſaking of God for the creature, is an exchanging of a fountain for many ciſterns.* When one forſakes God, and betakes himſelf to the creature, as a man with one God; no, he cannot: he muſt have a plurality, a variety, a multitude of them, in his room: becauſe,

1. None of them are ſufficient, but all of them defective. All-ſufficient, is a name peculiar unto God alone, Gen. xvii. 1. not communicable to the whole

creation, in which, Eccleſ. i. 15. *That which is crooked cannot be made ſtraight ; and that which is wanting, cannot be numbered.* So the man muſt needs have a ſecond to make up the want of the firſt, and a third to make up the want of the ſecond, and ſo on without end. This labours under one defect, that under another ; ſo there is no reſt in any of them.

2. There is ſomething diſagreeable and vexing in them all, Eccleſ. i. 14. 'I have ſeen all the works that 'are under the ſun : and behold, all is vanity and vex'ation of ſpirit.' There are ſome prickles in the faireſt roſe, except the Roſe of Sharon ; ſome thorn of uneaſineſs in the ſofteſt bed, except the bed of the covenant, the true Solomon's. Did ever any thing bear ſo much delight, but it had withal ſomething to fret you, in it or attending it? the agreeableneſs of it is ſeen afar, but when one comes near, he is made to feel the vexation too. So recourſe muſt be had to one ciſtern, to put away the bitter taſte or unſavourineſs of another.

3. They enlarge their appetite, but do not ſatisfy it, Hab. ii. 5. *Yea alſo, becauſe he tranſgreſſeth by wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his deſire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be ſatisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people.* The more men drink of the ciſterns for ſatisfaction, the more they would drink. As one draught of ſalt water makes a neceſſity of another, ſo the gratifying of a luſt doth but open its mouth wider : as is evident from the caſe of thoſe, who having once given themſelves looſe reins, nothing can prevail to bind them up, till the grace of God change them. They go from ill to worſe.

Now, this is a wretched exchange ; for,

1. The acceſs to one fountain is far more ready than to many ciſterns. He that has but one door to go to for ſufficient ſupply, is certainly in better caſe than he that muſt go to many ; ſo he that has the fulneſs of a God to ſatisfy himſelf in, is in circumſtances a thouſand times better than he who muſt go from creature to creature for that end. In God you would find happineſs, as corn in a heap ; whereas in the creature, you have it to pick up here and there, as corn that is ſown abroad.

2. The water is better that is altogether in one fountain, than that which is parted into many ciſterns. United force is ſtrongeſt ; and that which is ſcattered, the farther it is ſcattered abroad, it is the weaker. So the conſolations of God are mighty, as liquor kept together in one veſſel : while the comfort of the creature is comparatively weak, as water ſpilt on the ground.

3. It is with greater eaſe of mind that one may apply to the one fountain, than to the many ciſterns. The multitude of the ciſterns to go to for what we need, fills the heart with much perplexity, and diſtracting cares ; while the oneneſs of the fountain creates eaſe, Jer. xvii. 5.—8. O what eaſe has the man that goes to God's door for all, in compariſon of him who begs at the doors of the creatures, ranging up and down among them !

USE. Repent then of this folly, and take the one fountain inſtead of your many ciſterns ; go to one God inſtead of the multitude of created things.

Motive 1. This will contract your cares now ſo diffuſive, leſſen your labour, and ſpare you many a weary foot.

Mot. 2. Ye ſhall find enough in God, that ye ſhall ſee no neceſſity of ſeeking any happineſs without him, John iv. 14. ; more than ſhall ſupply the want of the corn and wine, Pſal. iv. 7. ; that ſhall be commenſurable to your whole deſire, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

Mot. 3. *laſtly*, Heap up as many ciſterns as ye can, they ſhall never do for you what the one fountain can, they ſhall never make you eaſy or ſatisfied.

POINT IV. *ult. Forſaking of God for the creature, is an exchanging of a fountain, for cracked and broken ciſterns that can hold no water.* A ciſtern as a ciſtern holds but little ; the broken ciſterns ſpills the little put into it. Every created comfort is a ciſtern containing little at beſt ; but withal it is cracked and broken, that it cannot keep the little it has at any time.

1. At its beſt it is cracked ; has ſuch rifts in it, as that it begins to loſe of the little that is in it. There is a powerful mixture of corruption in the beſt of perſons in this world, whereby no body wants ſome remarkable defect : and in the beſt of things there, there is a defect with reſpect to the heart of man.

2. At length it is broken in pieces. Being always cracked, it is eaſy broken. All perſons here are liable to death, all things to corruption or deſtruction, whereby they become uſeleſs as to our comfort, Matth. vi. 19. *Lay not up for yourſelves treaſures upon earth, where moth and ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and ſteal.* Theſe ciſterns can hold no water for us.

So this exchange is a wretched one ; for,

1. The fountain is always certain to go to, the ciſterns always uncertain ; and worldly men here quit certainty for uncertain hope. It is certain, we can never come amiſs to God ; but as for the creature, it is ſo uncertain, that there may be nothing in it all but mud and mire, when we come to drink.

2. The fountain is laſting ; the ciſterns being broken, guide as we will, will laſte but ſhort while. God is an everlaſting fountain of comfort ; the creature is but for a time, and draws to an end. The whole univerſe is a cracked veſſel, and in a little time it will be all in pieces by the general conflagration.

USE. Come away then from the broken ciſterns of the creature, to the fountain of happineſs in God. Seek no more your happineſs in any thing below the ſun ; but ſeek it in a God in Chriſt.

The Birth, Gift, Government, and glorious Names of Jeſus Chriſt, as Saviour of Sinners.

Several Sermons preached at Ettrick in the years 1725 and 1726.

ISAIAH ix. 6.

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government ſhall be upon his ſhoulder: and his name ſhall be called, Wonderful, Counſellor, The Mighty God, The Everlaſting Father, The Prince of Peace.

THESE words bear a joyful intimation or declaration of a great privilege afforded to the children of men; in which the prophet himſelf ſhares as one of them, and ſo is the more feelingly touched with it; and therefore God has employed men to preach Chriſt to men, that the glad tidings may be brought by ſuch as have equal need of and intereſt in them with themſelves. *For unto us a child is born*, &c.

The words are thus plainly connected with the preceeding; for the diſcovery of which we muſt look back to ver. 2. where the prophet ſpeaks of the light of the goſpel breaking up in a dark world by Jeſus Chriſt, as is clear from Matth. iv. 12.——16. See the caſe of ſinners before Chriſt appears to them: they are all in darkneſs, in a blind, uncomfortable, and dangerous condition. (1.) Some are walking in that darkneſs; they are beſtirring themſelves for happineſs, and to mend their condition, but they ſee not their way. Such were the Jews, and all formaliſts. (2.) Some ſitting in that darkneſs, thickeſt darkneſs, pining away in their ſin, and not aiming to mend their condition, but like condemned malefactors in a dungeon. Such were the Gentiles, and all profane, carnal perſons, having no view but to this world's happineſs.

Chriſt coming unto them, their darkneſs is diſpelled. They that walk, ſee light which they ſo much wanted; it breaks up to them in their way. Thoſe that ſit, it ſhines in on them, makes its way into their dungeon. Both ſee where they are, and how to get their condition mended, how hopeleſs ſoever it was.

The effect of this light or ſaving illumination by means of the goſpel, ver. 3. *Thou haſt multiplied the nation, and not increaſed the joy: they joy before thee, according to the joy in harveſt, and as men rejoice when they divide the ſpoil.* (1.) The increaſe of the church, by the enlightened ſinners coming to Chriſt: As where a light is ſtruck up in darkneſs, all gather about it. (2.) Great joy. Some indeed, viz. the unbelieving party among the Jews, had no more joy in it, than owls have in the ſun's ſhining; they grudged it, and fretted at it. And ſo do the enemies of Chriſt's kingdom at the ſucceſs of his goſpel. But to the ſpiritual nation of believers, the joy is great on that occaſion. Chriſt's new friends on their coming in, and his old friends whom they join, rejoice together; the former on the happy change of their condition, the latter on the increaſe of the family.

This joy for the greatneſs of it is compared, (1.) To the joy of the harveſt, when people get the corn happily cut down and gathered in. (2.) To the joy of a victorious army when the battle is over, and they are dividing the ſpoil of their enemies. A goſpel-harveſt wherein ſinners are repeated and gathered in to Chriſt, a goſpel-victory over the devil, and dividing the ſpoils, are moſt joyful times; as much more joyful than theſe, as ſouls are more precious than ſheaves of corn, or the precious things of the world.

The cauſe of this joy, is a great deliverance or ſalvation brought about to the nation, verſ. 4. 'For thou 'haſt broken the yoke of his burden, and the ſtaff of his 'ſhoulder, the rod of his oppreſſor, as in the day of Midian.' They were under a burdenſome yoke: that is, the yoke of the law as a covenant of works, binding them to obedience under pain of the curſe: now that is broken, and they rejoice on that account. They were obliged to carry heavy burdens on their ſhoulders, by a ſtaff over their ſhoulder, as the Levites carried the ark; that is, they were under the power and dominion of ſin, as real drudges to it in the ſeveral luſts thereof, as thoſe who, to the worſt of maſters, never want the burden-bearing ſtaff off their ſhoulder: now that is broken and they joy. They were under a rigid exactor, a tyrant ſwaying a ſcepter over them; that is, they were under the power of the devil: now his ſcepter is broken, he has loſt his power over them; and they joy.

How quickly was it done? *Heb. Thou haſt made to knap aſunder.* The yoke, ſtaff, ſceptre, were broken with a touch, ſuddenly and freely; and that by means very unlikely in the eye of ſenſe, *as in the day of Midian*, when Gideon with his three hundred men, holding lamps in their hands, and breaking the pitchers, and blowing with trumpets, but fighting none, routed Midian quite, Judg. vii. So Chriſt overcame the devil, by his dying on the croſs, and the preaching of the goſpel by a few fiſhermen moſtly.

The perfection of it ſhall be ſuch, that the yoke, ſtaff, and ſceptre ſhall become a burning and fewel of fire, verſ. 5. it ſhall be abſolute; or rather the knapping aſunder ſhall become a burning.

Now in the text, the prophet leads us to the author of all theſe great events; and anſwers the queſtion, How can theſe things be done, and done in favour of us poor ſinners? *For unto us a child is born*, &c. ſays he. The events are indeed great beyond expreſſion, but ſo is the author of them. There is a great deliverer working this great deliverance, viz. the Meſſias, Jeſus Chriſt; of whom only it can be underſtood, and the ancient Jews did underſtand it. And herein we have,

1ſt, His relation to us. Wherein he is held forth, (1.) As *a child born to us*, viz. as Samſon was to Iſrael, born to be our deliverer, Judg. xiii. 5. brought into the world on that very occaſion. (2.) As a ſon given to us, given of the Father as a gift ſuitable to our neceſſity. (3.) As one upon whom the management of the ruined affairs of loſt ſinners is devolved, in order to retrieve them.

2dly, The incomparable excellency of this our relative. He is a Child, a Son, a Governor, quite extraordinary. Hear his name ſhewing his nature and perfections. We cannot comprehend his glorious excellencies; he is *Wonderful*; we may ſee and wonder at them, but can never fully reach them. For wiſdom, he is the *Counſellor*, with whom the Father took counſel, and whom he has appointed the Counſellor of poor ſinners in their moſt perplexed caſes. For power, he is *The Mighty God*, to whom nothing is too hard to do. For continuance, he is *The everlaſting Father*, abiding for ever and ever: ſo that, through the whole of time, and through eternity, his wiſdom and power ſhall be forthcoming. And then for meekneſs, and acceſſibleneſs to poor rebel-ſinners, though he be a *Prince*, he is *the Prince of peace*, ſpeaking, working, granting peace, yea he died for peace. A wonderful one!

Thus much for a general view of the words; to be in our progreſs more particularly explained.

The expreſſion may be obſerved to be full of holy exultation. The prophet expreſſeth himſelf in a triumphant manner on this ſubject. In his days Chriſt was not come; but he ſaw him in the promiſe, by faith: and he ſpeaks of him with as great certainty as if he had been come. He ſaw the need the world had of him, he felt the need he himſelf had of him; he believed him to be given to loſt ſinners for a Saviour, a Saviour in whoſe hand no one's caſe could miſcarry; and that he was given to himſelf among others: Therefore he cries out as in a rapture, *To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given*, &c. Q. d. "O my loſt brethren, ſons of "Adam, to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given," &c. Hence obſerve this

DOCT. *Felt concern in the glad tidings of the goſpel, fills one with warm affection towards them.* It is that ſame way in other things; where one's own dear intereſt is concerned, he will be much concerned about that thing; as in the caſe of partners in trade, where there is a good market.

In diſcourſing this doctrine, I ſhall ſhew,

I. Wherein this felt concern lies.

II. What is the warm affection which that felt concern fills with.

III. *laſtly*, Apply,

I. *Firſt, Wherein does this felt concern lie?* It lies in theſe two.

1. Felt need of the benefit of the goſpel, Prov. xxvii. 7. 'To the hungry ſoul every bitter thing is ſweet.' When an indemnity is proclaimed, the man that is not liable to the laſh of the law, has no great moving of heart about it; but it makes the condemned man's heart leap within him for joy, Matth. ix. 12. 'They 'that be whole need not a phyſician; but they that are 'ſick.' While men are not ſenſible of their ſin and danger, the goſpel will be taſteleſs and unſavoury to them; but no ſooner are the ſinner's eyes opened, but it will be ſweeter than the indemnity proclaimed to rebels can be.

2. Felt liberty of acceſs to the benefit of it, with others, *To us*, ſays the prophet. While a man ſenſible of his need of an indemnity, yet finds himſelf excepted in it; that it is for others, but not for him; this ſtrikes a damp in him, he cannot rejoice in it. And unbelief prevailing ſo far as to ſay, 'There is no hope,' will ſuck the ſap out of the goſpel tidings to you.

II. *What is the warm affection that felt concern fills with?* It is,

1. A warm affection of joy in it. They rejoice in it that it is ſo, That *to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given*, even though that they have not as yet a ſpecial ſaving intereſt in him, Matth. xiii. 44. *The kingdom of heaven is like unto treaſure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and ſelleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.* The ſick will joy in the tidings of a phyſician able and willing to cure them, even before they are actually cured; and ſenſible ſinners believing they may have acceſs to Chriſt, will joy in that.

2. A warm affection of deſire, actually to partake of the benefit. The ſinner's felt need tells him, he muſt go to Chriſt, as felt liberty of acceſs tells him that he may go. And both inflame his deſire.

USE 1. The reaſon why the goſpel is ſo very taſteleſs to moſt of the hearers of it, is, they do not feel their own concern in it. They believe not the doctrine of the law, nor the doctrine of the goſpel neither, with application to themſelves. They are either under the plague of ſtupidity and inſenſibleneſs of their need, or elſe under the plague of unbelief and hopeleſs. The news of a good or ill market affects them, for they ſee their concern in either: but they are not affected by either the threatenings of the law, or the joyful tidings of ſalvation in the goſpel.

2. Labour to ſee your intereſt in the goſpel, if ever ye would be brought to reliſh it, and entertain it. You need this Saviour, without him ye are undone: ye may have this Saviour; if ye miſs him, it is your own fault. Your great intereſt for eternity lies in this goſpel, however ye entertain it.

CHRIST preſented to Mankind-ſinners.

ISAIAH ix. 6.

Unto us a Child is born.——

THIS is the firſt part of the glad tidings ſo much affecting the prophet. The world waited long for Chriſt's coming into it; and here the prophet gives the news, that long looked for is come at laſt. *The Child is born.* The word rendered *child* is a name of the ſex, *a man child*, and is juſt *a lad, a lad child*; ſuch was our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. It is a name common to the young of the male ſex, competent to them whenever they are born, and continuing with them during their younger years, till they be grown men. The word rendered born, doth ſignify more, even to be *ſhewed* or *preſented born*. It is a cuſtom ſo natural, that it has ever been in the world, that when a child is born and dreſſed, it is preſented or ſhewed to its relations, for their comfort. So Machir's children were preſented to Joſeph their great-grand father, and on that occaſion given him on his knees, Gen. l. 23. and Ruth's ſon to Naomi, Ruth iv. 17. So ſays the Prophet, This wonderful Child is *preſented*, viz. to his relations. And who are theſe? He has relations in heaven; the Father is his Father, the Holy Ghoſt his Spirit, the angels his ſervants: but it is not theſe who are here meant. It is to us, the ſons and daughters of Adam; we are his poor relations; and to us as his poor relations on earth, ſons of Adam's family, whereof he is the top branch, this child is preſented born, for our comfort in our low ſtate.

DOCT. *Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is upon his birth preſented unto us mankind ſinners as his relations.*

In ſpeaking to this preſenting of Chriſt as a born Child, I will ſhew,

I. What is preſuppoſed in it.
II. To whom he is preſented.
III. How he is preſented.
IV. The import of his being preſented to us.
V. Wherefore he is preſented to us on his birth.
VI. *laſtly*, Apply the doctrine.

I. I ſhall ſhew *what is preſuppoſed in it.* It preſuppoſeth,

1. The birth of Chriſt was expected and looked for. The church his mother, Cant. iii. 11. had an early promiſe of it, Gen. iii. 15. And it was in virtue of that promiſe he was conceived and born; all mankind beſides, by another word, viz. Gen. i. 28. 'Be fruitful, 'and multiply, and repleniſh the earth.' Though Mary his mother, in a proper ſenſe, was no longer than ordinary big with him; yet the church, his mother in a figure, was big with him from that time, Gen. iii. 15. for about four thouſand years. Many a time the delivery was looked for; and ſhe was in hazard of thinking it a falſe conception, it was ſo long a coming forward. Kings and prophets looked and longed for the day, Luke x. 24. *I tell you, that many prophets and kings have deſired to ſee thoſe things which ye ſee, and have not ſeen them: and to hear thoſe things that ye hear, and have not heard them.* The whole church of the Old Teſtament alſo longed for Chriſt's day, Cant. viii. 14. 'Make haſte, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or 'to a young hart, upon the mountains of ſpices.'

2. Chriſt is now born. The happy hour of the long-looked for birth is come, and the Child is come into the world. Angels proclaimed it, Luke ii. 10, 11. 'And 'the angel ſaid unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring 'you good tidings of great joy, which ſhall be to all 'people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of 'David, a Saviour, which is Chriſt the Lord. The fathers, kings, and prophets were in their graves, who died in the faith he would be born: and now it is come to paſs. He was really born; a little Child, though the Mighty God; an Infant, not one day old, though the Everlaſting Father. Wonderful birth! ſuch as the world never ſaw before, nor ever ſhall ſee again.

3. Some have been employed to preſent this Child to the friends and relations; and they are ſtill about the work. O honourable employment! more honourable than the office of preſenting a new-born prince of the earth, to a king his father. Joſeph and Mary had the office of preſenting him to the Lord, Luke ii. 22. But who has the honour of preſenting him to us? Why,

(1.) The Holy Spirit has the office of preſenting him *internally* to us, 1 Cor. ii. 2. 4. 'For I determined '(ſays Paul) not to know any thing among you, ſave 'Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified. And my ſpeech, and 'my preaching, was not with enticing words of man's 'wiſdom, but in demonſtration of the Spirit, and of 'power.' And by him his Father preſents him to us, Matth. xvi. 17. *And Peter anſwered and ſaid, Thou art Chriſt, the ſon of the living God. And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Bleſſed art thou Simon Barjona: for fleſh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.* Thus ſinners have him preſented to them in his heavenly glory, ſo as they get a broad ſight of him, ſuch as is to be had on earth by faith, John i. 14. 'The Word was made fleſh, and dwelt amongſt 'us; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only 'begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.'

(2.) Miniſters of the goſpel have the office of preſenting him to us *externally*, in the ſwaddling-cloaths of word and ſacraments. They are employed to preſent believing ſinners to Chriſt, 2 Cor. xi. 2. *For I have eſpouſed you to one huſband, that I may preſent you as a chaſte virgin to Chriſt;* and to preſent Chriſt to ſinners, to be believed on. They come with old Simeon, with the holy Child Jeſus in their arms in goſpel-ordinances, Rom. x. 6, 7, 8. and ſay with John the Baptiſt, John i. 29. *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the ſin of the world.*

4. *laſtly*, This Child is actually preſented to us on his birth. Few, if any, were witneſſes to his birth, it was ſo very mean and low in its circumſtances: but that there might be no doubt of his being born, he has been and ſtill is preſented to multitudes, Gal. iii. 1.

II. *To whom is Chriſt preſented?*

1. *Negatively*, He is not preſented to the *fallen angels*: he was not born for them, they are none of his relations, Heb. ii. 16. 'For verily he took not on him 'the nature of angels; but he took on him the ſeed of 'Abraham.' Their houſe was originally more honourable than the houſe of Adam: but Chriſt has put an honour on the houſe of Adam above the houſe of angels. The holy angels are his ſervants, the evil angels his executioners; but holy men are his brethren.

2. *Poſitively*, He is preſented to *mankind-ſinners*, thoſe of the houſe of his father Adam. To them is the voice directed, John i. 29. 'Behold the Lamb of God,' &c. *To us a child is born*, Luke ii. 10, 11. He was firſt preſented to the Jews, ſhewed to Iſrael, John i. 31. but then to all the world indifferently, of whatſoever nation, Mark xvi. 15. Hence, from the uttermoſt parts of the earth, ſongs are heard, upon occaſion of ſhewing him born to them, his glory appearing unparallelled, Iſ. xxiv. 16. Particularly,

(1.) He is preſented to the viſible church, even to all and every one of them. There are indeed many in the world to whom he is not preſented; they have neither heard his voice or fame, nor ſeen his ſhape repreſented in the word: but wherefoever the goſpel comes, there Chriſt is preſented to every perſon as born to them, Acts xiii. 26. *Men and brethren, children of the ſtock of Abraham, and whoſoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this ſalvation ſent.* He is now bodily in heaven indeed; yet really, though ſpiritually, in the word and ſacraments, preſented to ſinners, and ſeen by faith; though the moſt part will not behold him.

(2.) He is preſented effectually to all the elect. Chriſt is *revealed in them*, Gal. i. 15, 16. Hence they believe on him; and ſo it is with all them, however others entertain him, Acts xiii. 48.——'As many as were ordain'ed to eternal life, believed.' They are all as Paul was, in a ſenſe, choſen to ſee the juſt one: and their ſeeing him with a ſpiritual eye, makes them willing to part with all, and purchaſe the field and treaſure, and the one pearl.

Uſe. Since Chriſt is preſented to us as a child born, then ſee well how you entertain the honour done you, in the Prince of peace being upon his birth preſented to you. Some at this ſeaſon pretend to honour his birth, by obſerving a day they count for it. But where is the divine appointment of that day? is it not like Jeroboam's feaſt? 1 Kings xii. 33. *So he offered upon the altar which he made in Bethel, the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had deviſed of his own heart; and ordained a feaſt unto the children of Iſrael, and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incenſe.* And can men ſoberly think, that their feaſting, eating, and drinking, as uſual on that day, does indeed honour Chriſt? But,

1. Embrace him, with old Simeon, in the arms of faith. Knit with him, open your heart to him.

2. Kiſs the Son, receiving him as your Lord, and King, and God.

III. *How is Chriſt preſented?* He is preſented,

1. In the preaching of the goſpel, Gal. iii. 1. 'O 'fooliſh Galatians, who hath bewitched you that you 'ſhould not obey the truth, before whoſe eyes Jeſus 'Chriſt hath been evidently ſet forth, crucified among 'you?' To whomſoever the goſpel comes, Chriſt is preſented to them, as being in the word of the goſpel to be diſcerned by faith, Rom. x. 6, 7, 8. 'But the righte'ouſneſs which is of faith, ſpeaketh on this wiſe, Say

not in thine heart, Who ſhall aſcend into heaven? (that is, to bring Chriſt down from above;) or, Who ſhall deſcend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Chriſt again from the dead;) but what ſaith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is the word of faith which we preach.' In the word the Bridegroom's picture is drawn, in his birth, life, and death, &c. in his willingneſs and ability to ſave, &c. It is the looking-glaſs held before their eyes, in which they may ſee him, 2 Cor. iii. 18. *But we all, with open face, beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

2. In the adminiſtration of the ſacraments. As in the word he is preſented to the ears, in the ſacraments he is preſented to the eyes. In them there is a lively repreſentation of Chriſt bleeding and dying on the croſs for ſinners: *This is my body*, &c. Though he is not corporally preſent in the ſacraments, yet he is really and ſpiritually ſo, to the faith of believers, which realizeth inviſible things, Heb. xi. 1. 'Faith is—the evidence of things not ſeen.' And glorious views are to be had of him there, Luke xxiv. 35. 'And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.'

3. In the internal work of ſaving illumination. The Spirit of the Lord not only gives light, but ſight, to the elect; not only opens the ſcriptures to them, but opens their eyes, and *reveals Chriſt in them*, Gal. i. 15, 16. This is that demonſtration of the Spirit Paul ſpeaks of, which is the immediate antecedent of faith, 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5. forecited: without which no man will believe. This is the finding of *the treaſure, the one pearl*, Mat. xiii. 44. 46.

IV. *What is the import of his being preſented to us?* It bears,

1. Our ſpecial concern in his birth. The birth of Chriſt concerns us nearly; why elſe is he preſented to us? The holy angels had a concern in it, as ſervants of the family, to carry the tidings of it; the fallen angels found themſelves concerned in it, as a birth that would be the ruin of their intereſt in the world: but we have a peculiar intereſt in it, as the birth of *a Saviour to us*, Luke ii. 11. *the bringing in of a better hope.*

2. Our relation to him. He is preſented to us as his relatives. Sinners of mankind have a common relation to Chriſt; a relation to him, in reſpect of his nature he aſſumed, the human nature, Eph. v. 30. 'For we are members of his body, of his fleſh, and of his bones:' a relation to him in reſpect of his office: he is born *the Saviour of the world*, and therefore our Saviour, John iv. 42.——'This is indeed the Chriſt, the Saviour of the world.' 1 John iv. 14.——'The Father ſent the Son the Saviour of the world.' He was born to ſave ſinners, to 'ſeek that which was loſt,' &c. therefore our Saviour, our ſeeker.

3. An owning of our relation to him. The preſenting of him to us upon his birth, is an open teſtimony given of our being related to him. Though we are poor and naughty relatives, he is not aſhamed to own us, nor does our unworthineſs make him diſown us, Heb. ii. 11.——'He is not aſhamed to call them brethren.' He is born for our help, to raiſe up again Adam's broken family; and ſince he comes to help and ſet us up again, the more, and needy, and worthleſs we are, the more honour redounds to his name at length.

4. *laſtly*, The comfortableneſs of his birth to us. Children are preſented on their birth to their relations, for their comfort; and ſo is Chriſt to ſinners of mankind. Never was there ſuch a comfortable birth in the world as this. The whole world of mankind-ſinners was *born in ſin*, never ſo much as one of them all miſſed the contagion; and ſo are born *children of wrath*. By this means the whole world was ſitting in a moſt miſerable and deplorable caſe, when Chriſt, as a public perſon was born with a ſinleſs, holy human nature.

V. *Wherefore is Chriſt preſented to us on his birth?*

1. That we may ſee the faithfulneſs of God in the fulfilling of his promiſe. The promiſe of Chriſt was an ancient promiſe, the accompliſhment whereof was long delayed: but now we ſee it is performed in its time; and thence may conclude, that all the reſt of the promiſes depending thereon, ſhall be fulfilled in their ſeaſon.

2. That we may rejoice in him. The very birth of his forerunner was to be *a joy to many*, Luke i. 14. how much more his own? The angels ſang for joy at the birth of Chriſt, Luke ii. 13, 14. And he is preſented to us, that we may join them in their ſong; for it is matter of *great joy*, Luke ii. 10, 11. And whoſoever ſee their danger by ſin, will rejoice on Chriſt's being preſented to them, as a condemned man on the ſight of the Prince, by whom he is to obtain a pardon.

3. That we may look on him, ſee his glory, and be taken with him, John i. 14. For this cauſe ſinners are often invited to look unto him, Iſa. xlv. 22. 'Look unto me, and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth.' Cant. iii. 11. *Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his eſpouſals, and in the day of the gladneſs of his heart.* The looking on the forbidden fruit has ſo vitiated the eyes of mankind, that the things of the world appear as in a magnifying glaſs; and there is no getting a right view of them, till we behold Jeſus in his glory.

4. *laſtly*, That we may acknowledge him in the character in which he appears, as the Saviour of the world and our Saviour. For he is preſented as a young prince, to be acknowledged heir to the crown. The Father has made choice of him to be the Saviour of the world by office, and given him to us for our Saviour, and preſents him accordingly for our acknowledgment.

USE. I exhort you then to believe, that Chriſt is on his birth preſented to you as his relations. And if ye enquire what is your duty on that occaſion? I anſwer,

1. Embrace him cordially, Pſal. xxiv. 7. 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlaſting doors, and the King of glory ſhall come in.' Old Simeon, when he was preſented in the temple, took him in his arms with full ſatisfaction of ſoul, Luke ii. 28, 29. He is now in heaven as to his bodily preſence; but he is preſented to you in the goſpel, embrace him by faith, with the heart believing on him for all his ſalvation, renouncing all other ſaviours for him, betaking yourſelves to him for all, for a reſt to your conſciences and your hearts.

2. Kiſs him, Pſal. ii. 12.; with a kiſs of love; giving him your hearts, 'My ſon, give me thine heart;' with a kiſs of honour, honouring him in your hearts, lips, and lives; and with a kiſs of ſubjection, receiving him as your Lord, King, Head, and Huſband.

3. Bleſs him: *his name*, Pſal. xcvi. 2. *Bleſs his name.* He is *God bleſſed for ever*. But we are to bleſs him, as we bleſs God, declaratively, proclaiming him *bleſſed*, Pſal. lxxii. 17.; praying from the heart, that his kingdom may come, Pſal. lxxii. 15.

4. Worſhip him. So did the wiſe men of the eaſt, Matth. ii. 11. He is the everlaſting God, therefore to be adored, Pſal. xlv. 11. 'He is thy Lord, and worſhip thou him;' thy Huſband, thy King, thy God. Worſhip him with internal worſhip, conſecrating your whole ſouls to him; and worſhip him with external worſhip.

5. *laſtly*, Preſent unto him gifts. So did the wiſe men, Matth. ii. 11. Make a gift of your hearts to him, Prov. xxiii. 26.; of yourſelves wholly, 2 Cor. viii. 5.; to glorify him in your ſouls, and bodies, your ſubſtance, your all.

CHRIST, the Son of GOD, gifted to ſinners.

ISAIAH ix. 6.

——*Unto us a Son is given.*——

THIS is a ſecond part of the glad tidings which did ſo much affect the prophet. And therein Chriſt is propoſed, (1.) As a *Son.* This is not to denote the ſex; that was done already in the former part. But it denotes a Son by way of eminency, *fairer than the ſons of men.* Our Lord Jeſus was the Son of God from eternity, he became the Son of Mary in time, Luke ii. 7. According to his human nature, he was the Son of Mary; but he is not in reſpect of that nature called the Son of God, though even in that reſpect he was a Son quite extraordinary. For as he was man, he was *without Father*, Heb. vii. 3. and as he is the Son of God, he was *begotten of the Father*, John i. 18. But as he was man, he was not begotten at all; and he has *brethren*, Heb. ii. 11. Therefore he is not called *the Son of God* in reſpect of his human nature. Now, in the preceeding clauſe, he is propoſed as a Son in reſpect of his human nature, being called a lad-child born: therefore here he is called a Son, as the Son of God in reſpect of his divine nature. And thus he is held forth to us here as God-man, with two diſtinct natures. (2.) As a *Son given to us*. The Father has made a free gift to us poor ſinners, of his own Son, for remedy of our miſery. As our miſery was great, ſo the gift is fully proportioned to it, being the greateſt that heaven had to afford, or the world could receive.

DOCT. *The Son of God in man's nature, is given to us poor ſinners for remedy of our miſery.*

Here let us conſider,

I. The gift itſelf.

II. The Giver.

III. The party to whom he is given.

IV. *laſtly*, Apply the doctrine.

I. *Firſt*, Let us conſider *the gift itſelf*. Many precious gifts have come from heaven to earth, yea all we have is Heaven's gift, James i. 17. 'Every good gift, 'and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down 'from the Father of lights.' But this is the great gift. On this head, let us conſider,

1ſt, What this gift is.

2dly, Wherein it appears and comes to us.

3dly, What a gift it is.

FIRST, Let us conſider *what this gift is*. It is,

1. A perſon. Perſons are more excellent than things, in their ſeveral kinds. All a man hath he will give for his life; a ſoul is more precious than a world. So this gift is more precious than the whole world. Whatever thou wanteſt, if thou have Chriſt, thou art better than to be emperor of the world; if thou haſt him not, thou haſt nothing that can compenſate that want.

2. A divine perſon. This gift of God is God, John i. 1. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* O what a gift muſt God himſelf be! it is therefore an *unſpeakable gift*, 2 Cor. ix. 15. The poſſeſſor of this gift muſt needs be bleſſed, Pſal. cxliv. 15. *Happy is that people whoſe God is the Lord.* Here is a myſtery, a divine perſon gifted to poor ſinful perſons. God has given angels to be miniſtering ſpirits to his people, Heb. i. 14.; but we will ceaſe to wonder at that, when this comes in view.

3. The ſecond perſon, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, John iv. 10 'Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto her, If thou knew-'eſt the gift of God, and who it is that ſaith to thee, 'Give me to drink; thou wouldſt have aſked of him, 'and he would have given thee living water.' The third perſon, the Holy Spirit, is alſo given to poor ſinners, Luke xi. 13.—'How much more ſhall your heaven-'ly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that aſk him?' But here it is the Son that it is given, and the gift of the Spirit follows thereupon. Man, by creation the ſon of God, fell out of God's family; and the beloved Son of the Father is given to bring him in again. He was pitched upon; for he only could be both ſent, and ſend the Spirit, according to the manner of working of the adorable Trinity.

SECONDLY, Let us conſider, *wherein this gift appears and comes to us.* Thoſe who ſend gifts, precious gifts, to others, wrap them up in ſomething that is leſs precious. And a treaſure ſent in earthen veſſels, is the method of conveyance of the beſt gifts from heaven to earth. And the Son of God being the gift, was ſent vailed and wrapped up in our nature, (1 Tim. iii. 16.) to us. The Son becomes a lad-child, born of a woman. This vail laid over the gift ſent to poor ſinners, was,

1. Leſs precious than the gift itſelf. The human nature of Chriſt was a created thing, his divine nature uncreated. What diſproportion is between the clay and potter, the creature and the Creator; that was between the vail and the gift wrapped up in it. Hence it was like a moſt precious pearl, ſent in an earthen pitcher; which uſes not to contain ſuch a precious thing. Therefore the world received him not, becauſe they perceived him not, ſeeing only the vail, a few only excepted, Mark iv. 11. *Unto you it is given to know the myſtery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all theſe things are done in parables.* Nay, the gift was never clearly ſeen, till the pitcher it was in was broken in pieces, by his death; and the ſhells gathered up, by his reſurrection, and new caſt; and ſet up in the upper houſe, by his aſcenſion.

2. Howbeit, it was a cleanly thing. Though men ſend their precious gifts in ſome coarſe thing, yet it will always be cleanly; they will not ſend their gifts in a foul thing. The human nature of Chriſt, though infinitely below the dignity of his divine nature, yet was a holy thing, Luke i. 35.—'That holy thing which 'ſhall be born of thee, ſhall be called the Son of 'God.' His ſoul was holy, and his body too, perfectly holy; without the leaſt ſtain or ſpot, Heb. vii. 26. *Such an High Prieſt became us, who is holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparated from ſinners.* This gift could not have remained in a vail, having the leaſt ſpot of ſin, more than flaming fire in a tainted cloth, which it would preſently burn up. Now, this gift appeared and was ſent to us in the vail of human nature.

(1.) That it might be capable of the treatment it behoved to undergo for our relief. It behoved the Son of God to ſuffer, Luke xxiv. 26. 'For without ſhedding 'of blood there could be no remiſſion:' therefore he behoved to be incarnate, and to appear in our fleſh. He put on our nature, as his ſuffering attire, as priſon garments; and ſo the gift was, as it were ſent us in a winding ſheet; and the Son, the Lord of life, came down, as it were, in a ſuit of dead-cloaths of our fleſh; becauſe he was to die in it. Howbeit, this ſuit of our fleſh is not now laid aſide, but turned into a ſuit for the court, being no more mortal, but immortal, bright, and ſhining more glorioully than the ſun: ſo that the gift now appears through it, and will for ever, moſt illuſtriouſly. A pledge hereof was given in his transfiguration, Mat. xvii. 2.

(2.) That it might be ſuited to the weakneſs of the capacity of the receivers. As he who gifts a ſword, ſends it in a ſcabbard, and not naked, leſt it ſhould harm the receiver; ſo God giving his Son to ſinners, gave him wrapped up in the vail of human fleſh. The Son of God in his unvailed glory would have no more been an object for our eyes to have looked on, than the ſhining ſun to the eyes of an owl. A few rays of his glory, breaking out from under the vail, made his enemies fall to the ground: What would have come of us then, if there had been no vail at all?

THIRDLY, Let us conſider, *what a gift this is.* The gift of the Son of God to poor ſinners is a matchleſs gift, ſingular for,

1. The worth of it, Prov. viii. 11. ‘Wiſdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be deſired, are not to be compared to it.’ Many worthy gifts God has given; but this is *the gift of God* by way of eminency, as if he had never given another, John iv. 10. ‘If thou kneweſt the gift of God, &c. Never did Heaven's bounty appear ſo much as in this gift, John iii. 16. *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,* &c. If it were laid in the balance with ten thouſand worlds, they would be lighter than vanity in compariſon of it; nay, balanced with the gift of created graces, and the created heavens, it would downweigh them; as the bridegroom's perſon is more worth than his jewels and palace.

2. The ſuitableneſs of it. Ranſack the earth and ſeas, the whole vault of heaven; go through the upper houſe amongſt all the ſhining angels; no perſon, no thing, ſhall be found ſo ſuitable for our caſe as this gift that is given us, Acts iv. 12. ‘Neither is there ſalvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we muſt be ſaved.’ Heb. vii. 25. ‘Wherefore he is able alſo to ſave them to the uttermoſt, that come unto him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them.’ The earth, ſeas, and air, afford for the back, belly, and purſe; but there is nothing there to give life to a dead body, far leſs to a dead ſoul. But (1 John v. 12.) *He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.* The angels in heaven might have condoled our loſs, but could not repair it, like him, Ruth iv. 6. ‘And the kinſman ſaid, I cannot redeem it for myſelf, leſt I mar mine own inheritance; redeem thou my right to thyſelf, for I cannot redeem it.’ Nay, they could not have ſhown how to do it, Rev. v. 3. 5. But there is in Chriſt what is ſuitable to all the caſes of all ſinners,

3. The ſeaſonableneſs of it. Many a gift has been marred, by its coming out of ſeaſon: but this gift was given moſt ſeaſonably. No ſooner was mankind broken and ruined, but as ſoon the upmaking gift was proclaimed, Gen. iii. 15. in a promiſe that the ſeed of the woman ſhould bruiſe the head of the ſerpent. Seaſonably was the ram afforded for Iſaac, when he lay bound on the altar: A type of the Son given to and for poor ſinners, when juſtice had the knife at their throat.

4. The comprehenſiveneſs of it. It is all in one, Rom. vii. 32. *He that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things?* Whoever have Chriſt, have all in him, and are complete in him, Col. ii. 9, 10. ‘For in him dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.’ All grace is in him relative and real. God giving Chriſt to ſinners, gives them remiſſion of ſin, and ſanctification. All glory and happineſs is in him, 1 John v. 11. *And this is the record, That God hath given to us eternal life: and this life is in his Son.* All that is neceſſary for our bodies in this life, is in him, for he is heir of all things, and is Lord of the whole creation, Pſal. viii. 6. &c. Whatever we want is in him, formally or virtually. He is meat, drink, and cloathing, lodging for the ſoul directly. He is all this for the body indirectly, as money anſwereth all things.

5. *laſtly,* The unreſtricted freeneſs of it. As it is abſolutely free to ſome, ſo it is abſolutely free to all, John iii. 16. ‘God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.’ What is freer than a gift? The joint ſtock of the whole world could not have purchaſed this gift. It is quite below the honour of the Giver and gift, for any to pretend to come with money in their hand to grace's market, Iſa. lv. 1. *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.* And all are alike free and welcome to it, Rev. xxii. 17. ‘And the Spirit and the bride ſay, Come. And let him that heareth, ſay, Come. And let him that is athirſt, come: And whoſoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.’

Uſe 1. Beware of ſlighting this gift. It is a *perſon,* to take notice of the ſlight put upon it; a *divine perſon,* to make the ſlight highly criminal, and to avenge it; the *ſecond perſon,* the Saviour, the Mediator, whoſe office it is to make peace, and there is not another Mediator, Pſal. ii. 12. ‘Kiſs the Son, leſt he be angry, and ye periſh from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.’ The ſlighting of this gift is the ſin of this day.

2. Take heed ye miſs not to perceive this gift. The Jews were ruined in their unbelief; for they could not ſee through the vail that the gift was wrapt up in. And ſo it is to this day. Moſt men ſee no farther into the myſtery of Chriſt than the outward appearance it makes in the world, as adminiſtred in the word, ſacraments, *&c.* and they deſpiſe it. Look ye inward.

3. Admire the wiſdom of God, and his infinite condeſcenſion, in the manner of the conveyance of this gift of the Son. Behold him in our nature, that he might ſuffer, and guilty ones may approach him.

4. *laſtly,* See here how you may be made up and enriched for time and eternity. And prize and receive this gift ſingular for its worth, ſuitableneſs, ſeaſonableneſs, comprehenſiveneſs, and freeneſs, as ye have heard at large. Why ſhould we continue in ſuch a poor condition, when ſuch a gift is made to us, and nothing remains but to receive it?

II. *Secondly,* Let us conſider *the Giver.* And,

1*ſt, Who is the Giver?* The Giver is God, John iv. 10.—‘If thou kneweſt the gift of God,’ &c.; and could be no other, ſince the gift is a divine perſon. And it is particularly God the Father, John iii. 16. *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,* &c. and could be no other perſon of the Godhead, ſince the gift is the Son. Here is the ſpring and original ſource of our ſalvation. The Father ſaw mankind was ruined, no help for them in the creation; and rather than they ſhould periſh without remedy, he makes a gift of his Son to them, for remedy of their miſery. And to exalt the Giver's free love and grace herein, obſerve from the word three things there marked about it.

1. It was *his own Son* that he gave, Rom. viii. 32. ‘He ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all,’ &c. All the ſons in the world were at his diſpoſal: but as none of them could redeem his brother, ſo none of them were made the gift. The angels were his ſons improperly; to have parted with one of them, would have been much; but they could not anſwer the end; ſo he gave his proper Son, the expreſs image of his perſon.

2. It was his beloved Son that he gave, Luke xx. 13. —*I will ſend my beloved Son,* &c. He loved upright Adam as his ſon: he loved the holy angels as his ſons, but he had one, the expreſs image of his perſon, and brightneſs of his glory; who was *the beloved Son,* whom he loved more than them all; and him he gave. Jacob had a beloved ſon, Benjamin; and he could not think of parting with him, to venture him to Egypt: but

God gave his beloved Son into the world, though to die there without peradventure.

3. It was *his only begotten Son* he gave, John iii. 16. Jacob thought it a good reaſon for refuſing to let Benjamin go down to Egypt with his brethren, Gen. xlii. 38. And every body knows it is hard to part with an only ſon, Zech. xii. 10. So that was Abraham's trial, Gen. xxii. 2. *And he ſaid, Take now thy ſon, thine only ſon Iſaac, whom thou loveſt, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of*: A type of the Father's giving his only Son for ſinners.

2*dly*, *What has he given ſinners, gifting his Son to them?* The tongues of men and angels cannot fully expreſs this. I ſhall give a general view of it in three things. Giving his Son,

1. He has given them himſelf. For the *Father is in him*, John xiv. 11. and *they are one*, John x. 30. He is *the true God*, John v. 20. *The fulneſs of the Godhead dwells in him*, Col. ii. 9. So, if ye will receive his Son, ye are poſſeſſed of the Father for your Father, &c. All the perſons of the Godhead are yours, all the perfections of God, all his works, &c. O wonderful gift of the Father!

2. He has given them eternal life. The Son of God is the life, John xiv. 6. eternal life, 1 John v. 23. Sinners are naturally in a ſtate of death, yea, they are liable to dying eternally; but behold, in the gift of the Son, the Father has given them eternal life, 1 John v. 11. O enriching gift! Life to the dead is the greateſt gift that can be beſtowed on them. Here is life, legal life, moral life, a life of comfort; and all eternal.

3. He has given them all things, Rom. viii. 32. 'He 'ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us 'all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all 'things?' Therefore ſays the apoſtle of thoſe who have received Chriſt, 1 Cor. iii. 21. 'All things are yours.' The Son of God is *heir of all things*, Heb. i. 2. Receiving him, we become joint heirs with him, Rom. viii. 17. and ſo inherit all things, Rev. xxi. 7.

Uſe 1. Let us admire the love of the Father to poor ſinners of Adam's race. The love of the Father is propoſed as an object of admiration, in making ſinners his ſons, 1 John iii. 1. 'Behold, what manner of love the 'Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be cal'led the ſons of God!' But here is a ſtep higher, his giving to them his ſon, John iii. 16. 'God ſo loved the 'world, that he gave his only begotten Son,' &c. But ah, how is it loſt on a blind ungrateful world, that take no notice of it! They will be apt to conclude God's ſpecial love to them, from his laying to their hands plenty of common favours: but the love of the Father in giving them his Son, comes not in mind.

Dreadful muſt the hazard of ſlighting this gift be, as the crime in it is atrocious. As ye would not run into the deepeſt of guilt, and expoſe yourſelves to God's fierceſt wrath, ſlight not the gift of his Son made you. God has given us his own Son, his beloved Son, his only begotten Son, and in him himſelf, &c. The greater the gift, the greater the love in making it, the greater is the ſin, and the greater will be the wrath, for the ſlighting of it, John iii. 19. 'And this is the con'demnation, that light is come into the world, and men 'loved the darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds 'were evil.'

III. The *third* thing is, *The party to whom he is given.* Here let us conſider,

1*ſt*, To whom he is given.

2*dly*, In what reſpects he is given.

3*dly*, In what character he is given.

Firſt, To whom he is given? He that believes the Son of God to be given to ſinners, and lays the matter to heart will be ready to ſay, O but whom is he given to? I fear he is not given to me; and what am I the better then? But

Chriſt is given to mankind-ſinners indefinitely. It is not to the elect only, but to ſinners indefinitely, elect or not elect; ſinners of the race of Adam without exception, whatever qualifications they have, whatever they want. The Father, in making of this gift to us, had no eye to any qualification in us, but our miſery and extreme need; and, in the view of that, he made this gift for their remedy.

1. This gift and grant is conceived in the moſt ample terms, without any reſtriction to any particular ſet of men, John iii. 16. 'God ſo loved the *world*, that he 'gave his only begotten Son, that *whoſoever* believeth 'in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.' You ſee here it goes as wide as the world, the world of men, to exclude fallen angels, but none of the family of fallen Adam. Therefore ſays the prophet, *To us a Son is given.* They will get no approbation of Chriſt nor his Father, who curtail and hem in this grant, as they conſult not his nor his Father's honour therein.

2. Chriſt is given to mankind-ſinners, as the manna was given to the Iſraelites. Now, the manna was given to the Iſraelites indefinitely; to them who lothed it, as well as to them who loved it, John vi. 31, 32, 33. *Our fathers did eat manna in the deſert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, Moſes gave you not that bread from heaven: but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.* And therefore Chriſt is given to ſinners indefinitely, without exception of any; therefore ſays Chriſt to the unbelieving Jews, ver. 32. 'My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.'

3. There is made to mankind-ſinners indefinitely a gift of the benefits of his purchaſe, which yet are never given but in and with himſelf, Rom. viii. 32.——'How 'ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things?' There is a gift of righteouſneſs made to them, Rom. v. 17. which is *revealed to faith*, chap. i. 17. i. e. to be believed on and truſted to. *Eternal life is given* them, 1 John v. 11. and a promiſe of entering into his reſt is left them, Heb. iv. 1.

4. *laſtly*, If Chriſt were not given to mankind ſinners indefinitely, but here were ſome in the world who have no part in the gift of Chriſt; then the miniſters of the goſpel might not offer him to all, nor might all receive him. Not the firſt; for no man has power to offer to any the Father's gift, to whom it is not given of the Father; more than a ſervant has power to offer his maſter's gift to one to whom his maſter has not made the gift. Not the ſecond; for none can lawfully take what God does not give him, John iii. 37. 'John anſwered and 'ſaid, A man can receive nothing, except it be given 'him from heaven.' It would be preſumption in thee to take a bit of bread, or a drink of water, if God gave it not thee; much more it would be to take his ſon, if he gave him not to thee. But it is no preſumption in any ſinner of mankind to take Chriſt, 1 John iii. 23. 'And 'this is his commandment, that we ſhould believe on 'the name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt.' Mark xvi. 15, 16. *And he ſaid unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the goſpel unto every creature*, &c.

Secondly, In what reſpects is Chriſt given to them? *To us the Son is given*,

1. In reſpect of allowance to take him. Ye all have the Father's allowance to take Chriſt, to poſſeſs yourſelves of him, without fear of vitious intromitting with him. The Father's allowance was proclaimed by a voice from heaven, Matth. xvi. 5.——'This is my be'loved Son in whom I am well pleaſed: hear ye him:' and by his meſſengers, Matth. xxii. 9. 'Go ye there'fore into the highways, and as many as ye ſhall find, 'bid to the marriage.' If you were deſiring ſomething of a neighbour that you needed, and he ſhould uſe no other ſolemnity in giving it you, but only ſay, Well, I

allow you, take it; would ye queſtion the gift of it, or fear to take it? Now the Father gives you the ſame allowance, and ſays, Well, I make an offer of my ſon to you, and allow you to take him; take him then as I offer him.

2. In reſpect of legal deſtination. That is more than a ſimple allowance. There is an act paſſed in the court of heaven, deſtinating and appointing a crucified Chriſt for the world of mankind ſinners, as a Saviour, 1 John iv. 14. 'And we have ſeen and do teſtify, that the Father ſent the Son the Saviour of the world.' As the brazen ſerpent was the ordinance of God for cure to the ſtung Iſraelites, the cities of refuge for manſlayers among them; ſo is Chriſt the ordinance of God for mankind-ſinners, John iii. 14, 15, 16. If ye had an act of parliament appointing a thing for you, ye would not queſtion its being given you: here ye have more.

3. In reſpect of real offer. The word in the book of God offers him to all without exception, and the preachers of the goſpel perſonally make, or may make the offer, whereſoever they come, Mark xvi. 15. *Go ye into all the world, and preach the goſpel to every creature.* Hear God's own offer, Rev. iii. 20. 'Behold, I ſtand 'at the door, and knock: If any man hear my voice, 'and open the door, I will come in to him, and will ſup 'with him and he with me;' the miniſterial offer, Mat. xxii. 4. *And he ſent forth other ſervants, ſaying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.* It is ſo real, that they will be condemned for refuſing it to whom it is intimated. So all are not only allowed, and have the gift legally deſtinate for them; but it is offered to them: God ſays, Take, and welcome.

4. In reſpect of the freeneſs of the offer. There are ſome gifts ſo hampered and clogged with conditions in the offer of them, that they are not free gifts, and are in effect put out of the reach of the party-receiver. But this gift is abſolutely free: no qualification, no condition is required of us, that we may have it, but to receive it, Rev. xxii. 17. 'And the Spirit and the bride, 'ſay, Come. And let him that heareth ſay, Come. 'And let him that is athirſt, come: And whoſoever 'will, let him take the water of life freely.' No money, no price is here demanded, Iſa. lv. 1. More than all that,

5. *Laſtly*, In reſpect of exhibition. God not only allows, has deſtinate, offers freely, this gift to you: but it is exhibited to you, preſented and held forth as with the hand, God ſaying, Ho, ſinner, here is my Son, take him. This is done in the word of the goſpel to all. The goſpel not only offers ſalvation, which it might do, though the ſalvation were far off; but it brings ſalvation along with it to the loſt ſinner, Tit. ii. 11. *For the grace of God that bringeth ſalvation, hath appeared to all men.* And God doth not ſtay the exhibiting of his Son to ſinners, till they ſay, they will take him, as we do ſometimes the bringing out of meat to our friends; as his voice reacheth their ears, his hand holds him forth, ſaying, Here he is for you, take him. Ye muſt take him, as we do ſometimes with our meat, holding it out in our hand to our friend, and telling him and preſſing him to eat.

Thirdly, In what character is Chriſt given to ſinners? He is given of the Father to ſinners of mankind in the character of a Saviour. He is given to the elect, and was from eternity, in the character of a ſurety, undertaking the payment of their debt for them. But he is given to the world indefinitely in the character of a Saviour, John iv. 42.——'This is indeed the Chriſt, the 'Saviour of the world.' 1 John iv. 14.——'The Father ſent the Son the Saviour of the world.' The world of mankind is a company ſick unto death, the earth is the hoſpital where the ſick and wounded lie, Chriſt is the phyſician given them by his Father's bounty. It is his office to be phyſician of the hoſpital, to cure the ſick, and that without any fees from them. Every ſick man and woman in the hoſpital may come to him, and employ him as their own phyſician. Such a gift in the caſe of mens bodies would be highly eſteemed; but this is a thouſand times greater, as the ſoul is of more worth than the body.

Under this much is comprehended; but I ſhall comprehend the ſame in a threefold character. He is given to mankind-ſinners,

1ſt. In the character of a light ſet up, John viii. 12. *I am the light of the world: he that followeth me, ſhall not walk in darkneſs, but ſhall have the light of life.* He is given to ſinners in a ſuitableneſs to their caſe. It is a dark world; by Adam's fall the ſun ſet on mankind: but Chriſt is ariſen the Sun of Righteouſneſs, to whoſe light the ſinner is as free as to the light of the ſun and moon, by the gift thereof made, Gen. i. 17. 'And 'God ſet them in the firmament of the heaven, to give 'light upon the earth.' And nothing is to hinder their acceſs to it, but their love of darkneſs, John iii. 19. 'And this is the condemnation, that light is come into 'world, and men loved darkneſs rather than light, be'cauſe their deeds were evil.'

2. In the character of an atoning ſacrifice, ſlain and offered up. He died in the room and ſtead of the elect only; but being offered for them, and being of ſufficiency for the needs of all, he is made the ordinance of God for taking away the ſin of the world of mankind, and as ſuch is gifted to them of the Father; even as the brazen ſerpent to the ſtung Iſraelites, and the cities of refuge to the manſlayers, to look to and be healed, to flee to and be ſafe, John iii. 14, 15. This is what John aſſerts in very expreſs terms, 1 John ii. 2. 'and he is the 'propitiation for our ſins; and not for ours only, but al'ſo for the ſins of the whole world.' Thus the Baptiſt pointed him out, John i. 29. 'Behold the Lamb of God, 'which taketh away the ſin of the world.' He taketh away the ſin of the world, not eventually, but officially. Compare chap. vi. 33. *For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.* And thus Chriſt holds out himſelf as a ſlain ſacrifice ſet down for all to eat of and feaſt on, Matth. xxii. 4. according to the prophecy, Iſa. xxv. 6. 'And in this 'mountain ſhall the Lord of hoſts make unto all people 'a feaſt of fat things, a feaſt of wines on the lees, of fat 'things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refin'ed.'

3. In the character of a crowned king, mighty to deſtroy the kingdom of Satan, to reſcue mankind-ſinners his captives and priſoners, 1 John iii. 8. 'For this pur'poſe the Son of God was manifeſted, that he might 'deſtroy the works of the devil.' 1 Cor. i. 30. 'But 'of him are ye in Chriſt Jeſus, who of God is made 'unto us——redemption.' Therefore they are called to receive him into their hearts in this character, Pſal. xxiv. 7. *Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlaſting doors, and the King of glory ſhall come in.* The caſe of the conquered world, conquered by the king of the bottomleſs pit, was ſo hopeleſs, that none was able to head them for recovery among angels or men: God therefore anointed and gave them his own Son for a King-Deliverer, Pſal. ii. 6. *Yet have I ſet my King upon my holy hill of Zion.* Iſa. lv. 4. *Behold, I have given him——for a leader and commander to the people.*

USE 1. Believe it then, that to us poor ſinners the Son of God in man's nature is given; that Chriſt is given to you in particular; that the Father has made a free gift and grant of his Son Jeſus Chriſt to you, and every one of you.

If ye believe it not, ye make God a liar, diſbelieving his goſpel, 1 John v. 10, 11. *He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, becauſe he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, That God hath given to us eternal life: and this life is in his Son.* And unleſs ye believe it, ye will never receive Chriſt; for who can receive from God his Son, when he does not believe he has given him? John iii. 27. 'John anſwered and ſaid, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.' As there can be no taking from God without a prior giving, ſo there can be no receiving of Chriſt by faith without a prior belief that he is given. Why will ye not believe it?

1. Is the gift too much to be granted? Conſider the Giver, and it is not too much for an infinite God to give. Gifts are expected agreeable to the ſtate of the giver; what is too much for an ordinary perſon, is not too much for a King. And can any thing be too much for an infinite God?

2. Is the party gifted too great to be made a gift of? Why, conſider he is gifted by his own Father; and the gifting of him tends to his own and his Father's honour, Heb. xii. 2: and he is gifted as Mediator; in which reſpect he ſays, *My Father is greater than I*, John xiv. 28.

3. Is the party-receiver too mean and low to have ſuch a great gift conferred on him? Why truly, this is the language of unbelief. Ye could eaſily believe that Chriſt is given to the righteous and holy: and ſo could the Phariſees. But to believe that he is given to the ungodly and ſinners, there lies the difficulty. But pray conſider, this gift is not given according to our worth, but our need: and it is evident ſuch need him moſt, Matth. ix. 11, 12, 13. *And when the Phariſees ſaw it, they ſaid unto his diſciples, Why eateth your Maſter with publicans and ſinners? But when Jeſus heard that, he ſaid unto them, They that be whole need not a phyſician, but they that are ſick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not ſacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance.* And Chriſt and his Father will have the greater glory in that caſe.

USE 2. Receive the gift of Chriſt then at his Father's hand: take him, and poſſeſs yourſelves of him by faith.

Motive 1. Conſider ye have an abſolute need of this gift, Matth. ix. 12. forecited. Ye periſh without him, Acts iv. 12. 'Neither is there ſalvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we muſt be ſaved.' What need a man ſtarving for hunger has of bread, the naked of clothing; that and more ye have of Chriſt. That ſoul of thine that is loſt, is crying to thee, O ſlight not a Saviour! that ſoul that is ſick unto death, Slight not the Phyſician!

Mot. 2. There are ſome who have as much need as you, to whom yet he is not given, viz. the fallen angels, Heb. ii. 16. *For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the ſeed of Abraham.* They muſt periſh for ever without remedy, for Chriſt was neither given for nor to them. Trample not on ſovereign love, that has made the gift to you then, and not to them.

Mot. 3. Ye muſt either receive or refuſe. The fallen angels, nay the poor Pagans, to whom the gift is not intimated, are neither receivers nor refuſers. But in your caſe there is no mids, to whom he is both given and intimated. Therefore we ſay as Heb. xii. 25. 'See that ye refuſe not him that ſpeaketh: For if they eſcaped not who refuſed him that ſpake on earth, much more ſhall not we eſcape, if we turn away from him that ſpeaketh from heaven.' It will be heavy to be marked *refuſers of Chriſt*.

Mot. 4. Conſider the worth of the gift. Men and angels cannot tell it, Prov. viii. 11. 'For wiſdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be deſired, are not to be compared to it.' Look into its ſuperlative worth, and reſolve to have it, not to let it go. Never ſuch a gift will or can come in your offer again. Therefore buy the truth and ſell it not; take it at any rate, part with it at no rate.

Mot. 5. Conſider the hand it comes from. Reſpect to the giver often cauſeth embracing the gift that one would otherwiſe ſlight. The giver is the infinite God. If he ſhould ſend you a piece of bread out of heaven, (as he did the manna,) or a cup of cold water; could you take it on you to refuſe it? How then will ye adventure, when he ſends and gives you his own, his beloved, his only begotten Son?

Mot. 6. Conſider that others before you have received it, and have been made up by it for ever. The ſaints in glory were once as poor as you; they received this gift: and now they are kings and prieſts, they inherit all things; and of their happineſs there will be no end. So you ſee that ye may receive it, and that it will be upmaking to you.

Mot. 7. Conſider that this gift will not always be for the taking as it is now, Heb. iii. 15. 'While it is ſaid, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.' If men will go on to refuſe it, God will call in his gift, and ſet a bar between them and it for ever, Luke xiv. 24. 'For I ſay unto you, that none of thoſe men which were bidden, ſhall taſte of my ſupper.' So that the day will come when, if ye would give a thouſand worlds for another offer of the gift, ye would not get it, Heb. xii. 17. *For ye know how that afterward when* Eſau *would have inherited the bleſſing, he was rejected; for he found no place for repentance, though he ſought it carefully with tears.*

Mot. 8. Your not receiving will be very heinouſly taken, as a deepeſt ſlight put upon both the giver and the gift. When you make an offer of a gift to a friend, how do you take it to have it ſlighted? Think then how will the Father take your ſlighting the gift of his Son; how the Son to be ſlighted in quality of a gift?

Mot. 9. *laſtly*, It will ſet you at greater diſtance from God than ever; and will kindle a keener flame of wrath againſt you to burn for ever, than if the gift had never been made you. The Lamb's wrath is dreadful above meaſure, 2 Theſſ. i. 7. 8, 9. 'The Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.' Matth. xi. 22. But I ſay unto you, 'It ſhall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of Judgment than for you.' Rev. vi. 15, 16, 17. *And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themſelves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; and ſaid to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that ſitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come; and who ſhall be able to ſtand?*

See then, ſalvation is brought to your door, Chriſt is exhibited as the gift of God his Father to you. Think how you will entertain it, and that ye muſt anſwer at his tribunal for what entertainment you give this offer.

The Government on Chriſt's Shoulder.

ISAIAH ix. 6.

——*And the government ſhall be upon his ſhoulder.*——

AS a people whoſe affairs are ruined, have great need of an active and expert governor; ſo the government of ſuch a people is a great burden. Such a people are loſt ſinners; and with reſpect to them theſe words ſpeak two things.

1. The burden and weight of heading of them, taking the government of them, and management of their affairs. The ſhoulder is the inſtrument of bearing burdens, Gen. xlix. 15.——'and bowed his ſhoulder to 'bear,' &c. Sinners affairs were ſo ruined, that it was hard to find one who had a ſhoulder fit for the burden of the government of them: but infinite wiſdom finds out one who had ſhoulders ſufficient for the weight.

2. Jeſus Chriſt the perſon on whom this burden was laid. The word ſignifies *the principality. The principality* in this caſe was laid upon this Child, this Son. It *has been (Heb.) upon his ſhoulder.* It was laid from eternity by his Father, and is, and ſhall be on him for ever. Princes are, in the ſtyle of the Holy Ghoſt, burden-bearers, Numb. xi. 17.——'And they ſhall bear 'the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it 'not thyſelf alone.' On him was laid the heading of loſt ſinners, the retrieving of their deſperate affairs, and the government and management of them to ſalvation.

This is a part of the glad tidings of the goſpel, and refers to both the preceeding clauſes, the copulative being uſed inſtead of the relative. *Q. d. Unto us a Child is preſented born, unto us a Son is given, on whoſe ſhoulder the government is laid.* So the ſenſe is, He is born, preſented, and given to us, a Prince and Governor; whom we ought therefore to ſubmit to and receive as our native prince. In this Samſon was a ſpecial type of him.

DOCT. *Jeſus Chriſt is preſented and given to us of the Father as our Prince and Governor, on whoſe ſhoulder the burden of the Government of ruined ſinners of mankind is laid for ſalvation.*

In proſecuting this doctrine, I ſhall ſhew,

I. The occaſion of ſetting up this Prince and Governor.

II. The import of this principality and government laid on Jeſus Chriſt for the benefit of mankind-ſinners.

III. The honour, power, and authority belonging to this principality and government of Jeſus Chriſt.

IV. The burden of this principality and government laid on him.

V. *laſtly*, Improve the doctrine.

I. *Firſt*, I ſhall ſhew *the occaſion of ſetting up this Prince and Governor.* It was ſinners abſolute need, from which free grace took occaſion to ſet up Jeſus Prince over them. Their need will appear in three things.

1. Their firſt prince was gone, to manage their affairs no more. Adam their natural head miſmanaged the government quite, ſunk their intereſt, rendered himſelf incapable of the government, betrayed his truſt, and deſerted them; their matters being brought to ſuch a paſs that it was quite beyond his reach to retrieve them.

2. They were left in confuſion, in the hand of the enemy Satan. They were *no more a people*, as not being God's people, Rom. x. 13. broken from God, and broken among themſelves. They were ſcattered like ſheep without a ſhepherd, having none to head them for their good, or to care for them.

3. Their affairs were deſperate. They were in a ſtate of enmity with heaven, a ſtate of ſlavery to hell. None in earth, nor among the angels in heaven, could be able for the government of them. Allude to Iſa. iii. 6, 7, 8. 'when a man ſhall take hold of his brother of 'the houſe of his Father, ſaying, thou haſt cloathing, be 'thou our ruler, and let this ruin be under thy hand: 'In that day ſhall he ſwear, ſaying, I will not be an healer, for in my houſe is neither bread nor cloathing; 'make me not a ruler of the people. For Jeruſalem 'is ruined, and Judah is fallen; becauſe their tongue 'and their doings are againſt the Lord, to provoke the 'eyes of his glory.' For their matters were beyond recovery by any creature, and no created ſhoulder fit for the burden.

For ſuch a time as this came Jeſus to the kingdom, when none other could or would take the burden of it. When the whole earth could not afford one, Heaven gave ſinners a Prince, of ſhoulders ſufficient for the burden.

II. *Secondly*, I ſhall ſhew *the import of this principality and government laid on Jeſus Chriſt for the benefit of mankind ſinners.* It ſpeaks,

1. His near relation to them; as between a king and his ſubjects by right, head and members. He is to make one body with them; he the Head, they the members; he the Prince, they the people. So that their intereſt becomes a joint intereſt; his honour and their advantage are cloſely linked together.

2. His eminency among them. Whatever perſons come into the bleſſed ſociety, he alone is the Prince there. The kings and monarchs of the earth are but ſubjects in Chriſt's kingdom, to receive, not to give laws. His eminency quite overtops all other.

3. His honourable office he has over them. He is the Governor, the only Lawgiver, to whom they all muſt ſubmit. His father put this honour on him, and ſinners ought to acknowledge it, and honour him accordingly, John v. 22, 23. 'For the Father judgeth no 'man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, 'that all men ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath ſent him.'

4. His ſovereign power and authority over them. He is made a ſovereign Prince over the children of men, therefore called *the Prince of the kings of the earth*, Rev. i. 5. He has an illimited power and juriſdiction veſted in his perſon, in this and the other world, Matth. xxviii. 18. 'All power is given unto me in heaven and in 'earth.' He has power of life and death: ſo he is called *the Prince of life*, Acts iii. 15.; and the keys of hell and death hang at his girdle, Rev. i. 18.

5. *laſtly*, The burden of the care and duty belonging to the office and ſtation. Many of the princes of the earth value themſelves on the honour, little regarding the duty of their place. But this Prince bears on his ſhoulder, takes the weight of the charge on him, and performs the duty of it: therefore he is called *a Shepherd and Biſhop of ſouls*, 1 Pet. ii. 25.

III. *Thirdly*, I ſhall ſhew *the honour, power, and authority belonging to this principality and government of Jeſus Chriſt.* I take up this in theſe four honours veſted in his perſon.

1. The legiſlative power belongs to him ſolely, Iſa. xxxiii. 22. 'The Lord is our Lawgiver.' He gathers a church, which is his kingdom. He is the ſole Legiſlator in it, Matth. xvii. 5. 'This is my beloved Son, in 'whom I am well pleaſed, hear ye him;' a miniſterial explication and application of them being all that any can pretend to, being the officers of this Prince. He is an abſolute monarch, whoſe will is the only law: and none but he has the wiſdom and goodneſs to be truſted with abſolute power. To him only belongs the appointing of offices, officers, and ordinances in his kingdom. And whatſoever of that ſort has not his ſtamp and ſuperſcription on it in his kingdom, is null.

2. The ſupreme executive power is lodged with him, John v. 22. *The Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.* And whoſoever execute the laws of his kingdom, muſt have their commiſſion from him, or they intermeddle to their peril. By him rewards and puniſhments are diſtributed, and he is Judge of all. Now he judgeth particular perſons, churches, and nations; and the time comes wherein he will appear on his throne with awful ſolemnity, and judge and ſentence the whole world, Matth. xxv.

3. The power of granting remiſſions, receiving into peace with heaven, pardoning and indemnifying criminals and rebels, Acts v. 31. 'Him hath God exalted 'at his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to 'give repentance to Iſrael, and forgiveneſs of ſins.' He exerciſed that power when he was on earth, and much more now. The ſcribes quarrelled it, Mark ii. 5, 6, 7. 'When Jeſus ſaw their faith, he ſaid unto the ſick of the 'palſy, Son, thy ſins be forgiven thee. But there were 'certain of the ſcribes ſitting there, and reaſoning in 'their hearts, Why doth this man thus ſpeak blaſphemies? who can forgive ſins but God only?' And he wrought a miracle to confirm it, ver. 10, 11. *But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive ſins, (he ſaith to the ſick of the palſy,) I ſay unto thee, Ariſe, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine houſe. And immediately he aroſe, took up the bed, and went forth before them all,* &c.

4. *laſtly,* A large and vaſt dominion, reaching to both worlds, earth, and heaven, Matth. xxviii. 18. and hell, and the paſſage between the two worlds, viz. death, Rev. i. 1. 8. In his hand is,

1. The kingdom of grace, Eph. i. 22.—'And gave 'him to be the head over all things to the church.' All grace and favours of heaven are at his diſpoſal. Kings of the earth can beſtow ſilver and gold, houſes and lands, on their favourites; but he righteouſneſs, peace, and joy, Rom. xiv. 17. 'For the kingdom of God is 'not meat and drink; but righteouſneſs and peace, and 'joy in the Holy Ghoſt.'

2. The kingdom of glory, Luke xxii. 29, 30. *And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me: that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom,* &c. The eternal weight of glory is in his hand: he is the righteous Judge, whoſe it is to give the crown of glory; he who admits to, and excludes out of that kingdom.

3. The kingdom of Providence, Eph. i. 22. 'And 'hath put all things under his feet.' He rules not only over his kindly ſubjects, but in the midſt of his enemies. The wheel of providence through the world is directed by him. In the ſame hand the government of the church is lodged, the government of the world is lodged alſo.

IV. The *fourth* thing is, *The burden of this principality and government laid on Chriſt Jeſus.* It is ſeven-fold.

1. The burden of the purchaſe of it. It behoved to be purchaſed by a price of infinite value, and it was laid upon him to do it. 'Without ſhedding of blood there was no remiſſion.' And ſo he redeemed the ſubjects, not 'with ſilver and gold, but his own blood,' 1 Pet. i. 18. 19. The Father is indeed ſaid to give it, Pſal. ii. 8. but that giving is the delivering it upon the paying down of the price, Acts xx. 28.—*Feed the church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own blood.*

2. The burden of a war with the devil, for recovering of it. However dear it coſt him, he could not have the poſſeſſion thereof, without vanquiſhing the power and force of hell, that was engaged to hold faſt what they had got. So on the croſs he encountered the ſerpent, Gen. iii. 15. and by his Spirit in the goſpel he carries on the war, raiſing his kingdom out of the devil's kingdom, reſcuing the captives and priſoners out of his hands.

3. The burden of ſubduing them. The deſigned ſubjects of his dominion are born ſubjects of the devil's kingdom, unwilling to quit with their old maſter, and to ſubmit to this their new Prince: and therefore cannot be brought over without being conquered and ſubdued. And the burden of this lies on him, Pſal. cx. 3. who is mighty in battle, and with the ſword of the Spirit makes it effectual in their converſion.

4. The burden of their reconciliation with Heaven, Eph. ii. 14. *For he is our peace, who hath made both one,* &c. He has the peace to make up betwixt God and ſinners, that his dominion may be happy in peace with God. And as he purchaſed the peace by his blood, ſo he becomes God's meſſenger of peace to ſinners, and travels between the parties till it be made up, and confirmed by a ſure covenant of peace entered into.

5. The burden of their defence and protection, Iſa. xxxiii. 21, 22. *But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and ſtreams: wherein ſhall go no galley with oars, neither ſhall gallant ſhip paſs thereby. For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king, he will ſave us.* The ſubjects of this Prince have many enemies, without them and within them. Satan the prince of this world is continually making war upon them, to withdraw them from their allegiance to their rightful Lord; employs the men and things of this world, and the corruptions lodged within their own breaſts, to advance his deſigns againſt them: but Chriſt defends them.

6. The burden of their proviſion, in all things neceſſary for life and godlineſs. He cares for them in all theſe, from the leaſt to the greateſt of their wants, 1 Pet. v. 7. 'Caſting all your care upon him, for he careth for 'you.' Their food and raiment for their bodies he has the providing of; and his viſitation preſerves their ſpirits, laying in new ſupplies of grace, exciting, quickening, and ſtrengthening it.

7. *laſtly,* The burden of the whole management and conduct of them through the wilderneſs, till they come to the heavenly Canaan. Great was the burden that Moſes had of the people of Iſrael through the wilderneſs. How unmanageable did they often prove! But that was a light burden in compariſon of that laid on this Prince. He has the burden of all believers through the world on him, in their life and death. Great are their wants, and he has them to ſupply. Their weakneſs and follies are innumerable; he has them all to bear and correct. They are broken and ſhattered ſhips, often daſhed on many rocks: he has them all to bring to land.

USE 1. Of *Information.* This informs us, that,

1. Jeſus Chriſt is the alone Head of his church, and ſupreme Governor thereof; and the Headſhip of it and ſupremacy over it, is neither competent to Pope nor any earthly King. It is a burden too heavy for the ſhoulder of any mortal, and none is fit for it but himſelf alone. And the government appointed by him in it, is not alterable by any power on earth, civil or eccleſiaſtic.

2. That the intereſts of the church, the kingdom of Chriſt, and of every particular believer, the members thereof, will certainly be ſeen to, and brought to a comfortable account at length. Such a Governor muſt needs make his dominion happy, Matth. xvi. 18. *I ſay unto thee, Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my*

church: and the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt it. Whatever enemies they have, he is able to maſter them, and will do it, 1 Cor. xv. 25. 'For he muſt reign, till 'he hath put all enemies under his feet.' Whatever wants they have, he is able to ſupply them, and will do it, Phil. iv. 19. *But my God ſhall ſupply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Chriſt Jeſus.* Whatever is neceſſary for to make them completely happy, he has purchaſed, and will confer on them, Pſal. lxxxiv. 11. 'For the Lord God is a ſun and ſhield: the Lord 'will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.'

3. Believers have all reaſon to be quietly reſigned to the divine diſpoſal, and to live by faith in confidence of a bleſſed iſſue, whatever be the difficulties they have to grapple with, either in reſpect of the caſe of the church or of their own private caſe. That holds always ſure anchor ground, Iſa. lii. 7. *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publiſheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publiſheth ſalvation, that ſaith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!*

The caſe of the church is often very low, as now: backſlidings are multiplied, iniquity abounds, the Spirit's influences are withdrawn, the diſeaſe is proof againſt all means of cure that can be uſed by men. We muſt in that caſe table the complaint before the great Governor himſelf, roll it on him, leave it with him, and be going on in our duty, Micah vii. 7. 'Therefore I will look 'unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my ſalvation; my God will hear me.' Pſal. cxix. 126. 'It is 'time for thee, Lord, to work; for they have made 'void thy law.'

The believer's own private caſe may be very difficult, in reſpect of various afflictions, temptations, and trials. But even there, there is a broad foundation for the reſt of faith, James i. 2. 'My brethren, count it all joy 'when ye fall into divers temptations.' There is not one circumſtance in all their caſe, but it is ordered by the Governor, John v. 22. for wiſe ends, Heb. xii. 10. And it is ſtill under his management, to go or come, increaſe or decreaſe, preciſely according to his order, Mat. viii. 8, 9. And he will turn them all about for good, Rom. viii. 28. as being all medicinal, Iſa. xxvii. 9.

USE 2. Of *Exhortation.* Receive him then as your Prince and Governor, renouncing all other lords which have had dominion over you, Iſa. xxvi. 13. Receive him really as your Prince and Governor, Matth. xi. 29. 'taking his yoke upon you, and learning of him;' and not in profeſſion only. The moſt part of this generation do in their practice ſend Chriſt that meſſage, Luke xix. 14. 'We will not have this man to reign over us;' and they will not be governed by him. But,

1*ſt*, Receive him as your Prince, and governor of your life, to walk according to his orders in your whole converſation; and walk no more after your luſts. And,

1. Let his Spirit be your guide and leader, John xvi. 13. *When the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth.* How long will ye be led with the ſpirit of the world, and your own corrupt ſpirit? Renounce theſe, and give up yourſelves to be led by his Spirit, or in vain do ye profeſs Chriſt to be your Lord and Governor, Gal. v. 18. 'But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye 'are not under the law.' The fulfilling of the luſts of the fleſh, ſpeaks you not to be led by the Spirit, verſ. 16. *Walk in the Spirit, and ye ſhall not fulfil the luſt of the fleſh.*

2. Let his word be your rule, Gal. vi. 16. 'And as 'many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them 'and mercy,' &c. Let that determine you what to do, and what and how not. David laid it before him, as the pattern he was to copy after, Pſal. cxix. 30. 'I have 'choſen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid 'before me.' But this generation for the moſt part throw it by, as a thing they have no uſe for. The way of the world, and their own carnal intereſt, is their rule that they walk by.

3. Let his will be the determining point to you. Let your own will be a captive to his; and follow his will, though it ſhould be againſt the will of all the world. Why will men profeſs him to be their Governor, and will not be ſwayed with his authority? Luke vi. 46. *And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I ſay?*

And receive him as Governor,

1. Of your hearts and ſpirits, Prov. xxiii. 26. 'My 'ſon, give me thine heart.' Let the proud heart be made to ſtoop to him, let the covetous heart be purged by him, and the vain fooliſh heart be made to find the weight of his awful authority. While Chriſt has not the government of thy heart, thou haſt not given him the throne.

2. Of your tongues. Who governs the lying tongue, the wicked, bitter, and malicious tongue? Not Chriſt, ſurely; but the devil. Men that will frame lies, and deliberately tell lies, their tongues are their own, not Chriſt's. Satan fills their hearts to lie, and they run a riſk of being ſtruck down with a lie in their mouth, as Ananias was, Acts v. 3. See Iſ. lxiii. 8. 'For he ſaid 'Surely they are my people, children that will not lie.'

3. Of your practice. And ye will have a practice of true piety towards God, and exact juſtice towards man, Tit. ii. 12. That is what Chriſt's true ſubjects will exerciſe themſelves in, Acts xxiv. 16. viz. in 'having a 'conſcience void of offence toward God and toward 'men.' O the fraud and deceit, the injuſtice and covetous practices that are to be found with many at this day, ſpeak them to be under the government of the god of this world, not of Chriſt!

2*dly*, Receive him as your Prince and Governor of your lot and condition in the world, reſigning the ſame to his diſpoſal, Pſal. xlvii. 4. 'He ſhall chuſe our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved.' And,

1. Be content with the lot carved out for you, Heb. xiii. 5. 'Let your converſation be without covetouſneſs; 'and be content with ſuch things as ye have: for he hath 'ſaid, I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee.' And be not murmurers and complainers, grudging, repining at, and blaming your lot. That is a ſad character, Jude ver. 16. and betrays into many ſnares. There is nothing in your lot, but what the Supreme Governor ſees meet; and where Chriſt has the government on his ſhoulders, it is unbecoming and dangerous to be malecontents.

2. Never go out of God's way to mend your condition, nor do the leaſt ill thing to better your circumſtances. That is to pull the government of your lot out of Chriſt's hand, and take it into your own. And ye may be ſure ye will have won nothing by it at long-run, Matth. xvi. 26. *For what is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?* If you ſhould gain ſome worldly profit by it, ye get it, and the curſe in it, Zech. v. 4. 'I will bring it forth, (viz. the curſe,) ſaith 'the Lord of hoſts, and it ſhall enter into the houſe of 'the thief, and into the houſe of him that ſweareth 'falſely by my name: and it ſhall remain in the midſt 'of his houſe, and ſhall conſume it, with the timber 'thereof, and the ſtones thereof.'

3. In all changes of your lot, acknowledge him for direction and guidance; that whatever way ye diſpoſe of yourſelves, you may have the comfort of your being in the way God bids you go, Prov. iii. 5, 6. *Truſt in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not to thine own underſtanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he ſhall direct thy paths.* He ſets us our ſtations, and we are not to change but at his direction. Let houſe-holders in the change of their dwellings, ſervants in their change of families, ſingle perſons in the change of their lot, and, generally, all in every change of their condition, own the Governor.

In all theſe reſpects receive Chriſt as your Prince and Governor, give up yourſelves to his government, ſurrender and ſubmit yourſelves to him. And,

1. Take him for your *only* Governor. Renounce all other lords, ſaying, Iſa. xxvi. 13. *O Lord our God, other lords beſides thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.* One throne contains not two kings. If ye will have Chriſt for your Lord, he muſt have the government of you ſolely. Let not Satan lord it over you any more, to be led captive at his pleaſure. Let not the world be your lord; nor your luſts your lords.

2. Take him for your *abſolute* Governor. Chriſt's government is, and muſt be abſolute and illimited: for he is eſſentially juſt and good, and we are naturally unjuſt and evil; therefore we can be allowed no hand in determining how he ſhall govern us; but, without limitation, we muſt reſign the government of ourſelves to him, ſaying with Paul, Acts ix. 6. 'Lord, what wilt 'thou have me to do?'

3. Take him for your *perpetual* Governor, giving up yourſelves to his government for ever, Pſal. cxix. 112. *I have inclined my heart to perform thy ſtatutes alway, even unto the end.* Some they ſwear allegiance to him at a time, and enduring for a while, they afterwards apoſtatize. But he is a Prince of whoſe kingdom there muſt be no end.

4. Take him for your Prince and Governor *preſently*, without delay, Heb. iii. 15. 'While it is ſaid, To-day 'if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in 'the provocation.' His royal proclamations are emitted inſtantly, requiring your ſubmiſſion, and he is preſented to you as your Prince. Delay not then a moment longer: the time paſt may ſuffice to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, and to have ſubjected yourſelves to other lords.

5. *laſtly*, Take him *heartily* and *willingly*. Let your whole ſouls open to receive this glorious Prince. And cordially ſubmit yourſelves to his royal ſceptre, as a Prince whoſe government will make you happy.

Motive 1. Conſider what an excellent Prince and Governor he is, to whom you are required to ſubmit. The excellencies competent to him as a Prince and Governor, are to be found in none other. He is as far above all the princes of the earth in the excellency of his government, as he is in the dignity of his perſon.

(1.) He is perfectly juſt in his adminiſtration, Deut. xxxii. 4. 'He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all 'his ways are judgment; a God of truth, and without 'iniquity, juſt and right is he.' His laws for the government of your life, and your lot too, are abſolutely ſpotleſs; and his government, and execution of theſe laws, are abſolutely holy and pure, without the leaſt ſtain of injuſtice. Behold his commands, they are moſt pure, Pſal. xix. 8. *The ſtatutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes:* and that in all points, Pſal. cxix. 128. 'I eſteem all thy precepts concerning all things to 'be right.' His providence is ſpotleſs, Pſal. cxlv. 17. 'The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all 'his works.' What faults men think they eſpy therein, are owing to their own blindneſs.

(2.) He is moſt wiſe; infinitely wiſe; and that wiſdom ſhines forth in the whole of his government, Iſa. xxviii. 29.—'Wonderful in counſel, and excellent in 'working.' His deſigns are wiſely laid, and the means for compaſſing his wiſe deſigns are wiſely managed, ſo as to prove infallibly ſucceſsful. The *wheels are full of eyes*, Ezek. x. 12. So Iſa. xlvi. 10. 'My counſel ſhall 'ſtand, and I will do all my pleaſure.' So that one may without heſitation abſolutely reſign himſelf to his conduct; and ſo faith makes men do, Heb. xi. 8. *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he ſhould after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*

(3.) He is moſt vigilant and careful, Zech. iv. 10. *The eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the whole earth.* Nothing can be a-contriving againſt any of his ſubjects by their enemies, far leſs can befal them, but he is perfectly apprized of it. There is no ſurpriſing of the Keeper of Iſrael, who neither ſlumbers nor ſleeps; and he ſees all with his own eyes, which no prince on earth can pretend to.

(4.) He is moſt tender of his ſubjects, and of all their intereſts, his government being exactly calculated for making them truly happy, Rom. viii. 28. 'All things 'work together for good to them that love God.' There is ſuch a cloſe connection of their duty and intereſt, that it is impoſſible for them to neglect their duty, but as far as they do neglect it, they prove falſe to their intereſt. He governs them as a father, with the tender affection that one does his own family, Iſa. xl. 11. 'He ſhall 'feed his flock like a ſhepherd; he ſhall gather the lambs 'with his arm, and carry them in his boſom, and ſhall 'gently lead thoſe that are with young.'

Mot. 2. While ye are not under his government, ye are under the government of Satan, Acts xxvi. 18. While this Prince governs you not, the prince of darkneſs doth. And his government, as it is moſt imperious, ſo it is moſt unjuſt, and deſtructive of the true intereſt of ſouls. He is a cruel lord, and delights in and ſeeks the miſery and ruin of his ſubjects. We may frame a true notion of his government from his managing of thoſe among whom his power is abſolute. What a wretched way does he manage the poor Pagans, the poſſeſſed, and thoſe who are in expreſs compact with him? So does he with others, though in a ſpiritual and covered way.

Mot. 3. Jeſus Chriſt is your rightful Prince and Governor. Satan is an uſurper, the throne belongs to Jeſus of right. He is ſo by the irreverſible conſtitution of Heaven, Pſal. ii. 6. 'I have ſet my King upon my ho'ly hill of Zion.' He was born a King. Ye were devoted to him in baptiſm, and as members of his church ye profeſs yourſelves his ſubjects, Luke vi. 46.

Mot. 4. *laſtly*, If ye ſubmit not to him, he will treat you as rebels, who have broken your faith and allegiance to him, and caſt off the yoke of his government. He is preſented to you as your lawful Prince born: it will be dangerous to refuſe him. The day is coming wherein he will judge the world, and behold the end of the rebels againſt his government, Luke xix. 27. *But thoſe mine enemies, which would not that I ſhould reign over them, bring hither, and ſlay them before me.*

Wherefore conſider how other lords have had the dominion over you; the neceſſity of taking him for your Lord and Governor; if he be your Saviour, he muſt be your King, Hoſ. xiii. 9, 10. *O Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf, but in me is thine help. I will be thy King.* Solemnly give up yourſelves to him.

CHRIST'S NAME above every Name.

ISAIAH ix. 6.

——*And his Name ſhall be called, Wonderful, Counſellor, The Mighty God, The Everlaſting Father, The Prince of Peace.*

HERE is held out the incomparable excellency of this Prince and Governor preſented to us. *His name is called*, ſo the original carries it, *One hath called his name*, i. e. *his name is called, Wonderful*, &c, The connection is, *Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, on whoſe ſhoulder the government is laid,* *and whoſe name is called, Wonderful,* &c.: ſo that the ſcope of this latter part of the text is, to commend the Prince preſented to us from his name, which is here unfolded to be a name above every name.

DOCT. *The name of Chriſt by which he is called, is a name above every name, fit to commend him to the ſouls of poor ſinners.*

The name is that which follows in ſeveral parts here, viz. *Wonderful, Counſellor, The Mighty God, The Everlaſting Father, The Prince of Peace.* Many glorious names are uſed by the princes of the earth: but there is no name among them all like this. None ſo high and honourable, none ſo ſweet and lovely, none ſo adapted to make the ſubjects happy. Conſider here,

I. Who calls him by this name.
II. What his being called by it imports.
III. *laſtly*, Apply.

I. *Who calls him by this name?* And,

1. His Father has called him by this name, Phil. ii. 9. 'God hath highly exalted him, and given him a 'name which is above every name.' His Father beſt knows what he is, to give him a name expreſſive of his nature. And he has by his Spirit in the Prophet, given him this glorious one. In effect he proclaimed it, Matth. xvii. 5. 'This is my beloved Son in whom I 'am well pleaſed.'

2. All his people call him by this name, flying to him in their firſt believing as ſuch a one, and depending on him all along their courſe of life as ſuch a one.

II. *What does his being called by this name import?*

1. That he really is what this name bears. God gives no empty titles, nor will empty titles anſwer the neceſſities of believers. As his name, ſo is his nature; the name truly expreſſeth what he is.

2. He manifeſts himſelf to be what the name bears. What he is called, he is found to be in the experience of ſaints.

USE. Study the name of Chriſt, as repreſented in the word, ſo as your ſouls may be enamoured of him.

CHRIST'S NAME WONDERFUL.

ISAIAH ix. 6.

——His name ſhall be called Wonderful——

HERE begins the name of him whom the Father preſents and gives to us for our Prince. The firſt ſyllable of it is, *Wonderful.* The word ſignifies *miracle*, a work paſt reach of the creature's power and ſkill, or knowledge, and ſo competent to God alone, Exod. xv. 11. 'Who is like unto thee, O Lord, a'mongſt the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holi'neſs, fearful in praiſes, doing wonders?' Pſal. lxxvii. 14. *Thou art the God that doſt wonders.* Every miracle is wonderful, but every wonderful thing is not a miracle. Our Lord Chriſt is not only a wonderful one, but miracle, a miraculous one, one moſt wonderful. He is beyond the creature's comprehenſion. So that this is fitly made the firſt ſyllable of his name, that men may know, that whatever they know of his excellencies, there is ſtill more behind; and though they may apprehend, they cannot comprehend what he is.

DOCT. *Jeſus Chriſt, who is preſented and given to us of the Father for our Prince, is and appears to be a miraculous one, a moſt wonderful perſonage.*

In proſecuting this doctrine, I ſhall enquire,
I. Under what notion Chriſt is held forth as a miracle, a miraculous perſon.
II. What is the import of Chriſt as God-man his being and appearing to be a miraculous one.
III. In what reſpects he is ſo.
IV. *laſtly*, Apply the doctrine.

I. I ſhall enquire, *Under what notion Chriſt is held forth as a miracle, a miraculous perſon.* Ye have heard already, A miracle is a divine work, and competent to God alone, beyond the reach of any creature. Now, Chriſt is and appears a miracle. Hence it follows, that he is not ſo called,

1. In reſpect of his being a miracle-worker. For it is himſelf, and not his work, that is here called *a miracle.* Moreover, the Prophets and Apoſtles were miracle-workers, John xiv. 12. Yet this name is above every name, not competent to them, but to him alone.

2. Nor in reſpect of his divine nature ſimply, and his eternal generation of the Father. This part of his name does not point him out to us ſimply as God. For beſides that that is, by itſelf, another ſyllable of his name, *The Mighty God*, the ſcripture, for all that I can diſcern, doth not warrant us to call him the work of his Father in that reſpect. And the Father works miracles through the Son by the Spirit, Luke xi. 20. compared with Matth. xii. 28. But the eternal generation of the Son is proper to the Father alone.

3. Nor in reſpect of his human nature ſimply. This part of his name does not point him out ſimply as man neither. For though man is indeed a divine work, yet he is not a work competent to God alone; for the ſcripture owns man himſelf to be the father of man's fleſh, Heb. xii. 9. But,

4. Chriſt is held forth as a miracle, a miraculous perſonage, as God-man in one perſon. This part of his name points him out to us preciſely as our incarnate Redeemer, and is given him preciſely in reſpect of his incarnation. Behold him, God man, the Word made fleſh; and ye behold the miracle, the miraculous perſon. So the text, *A Child, A Son, his name Wonderful.*

Thus he is a work done or made, John i. 14. 'The 'Word was made fleſh;' a divine work, Heb. x. 5. 'When he cometh into the world, he ſaith,——A bo'dy haſt thou prepared me;' competent to God alone, as a work of creating power, Jer. xxxi. 22. *The Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman ſhall compaſs a man.* The Son of God in our nature is a miracle indeed, a work beyond the reach of the creature's capacity. Many miracles had been wrought before the Son of God was incarnate. The ſea had been divided, the dead raiſed, a world created out of nothing, which was more: but a greater miracle than any of theſe was the incarnation of the Son of God; after all theſe had been done, this was the creating of a new thing, never any of the kind before.

Wherefore this is the name of our incarnate Redeemer; and when we hear it named, it muſt repreſent to us the Son of God in man's nature.

Uſe 1. O the love of God to poor ſinners of mankind! John iii. 16. *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his* *only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.* The greateſt work that ever God did, was for their ſalvation. He made the world for man, and gave it him, Pſal. cxv. 16. and the viſible heavens too, Gen. i. 17. *Heb.* yea the higheſt heavens alſo he made for them, and gives to them in his Son, Matth. xxv. 34. But a greater work than all theſe he did for them, when he did this miracle of the incarnation of his own Son for them; and gave him, an incarnate Redeemer, to them. O how can we eſcape the moſt fearful doom, if we neglect this great ſalvation! How worthy are they to periſh, that will not be ſaved, when God has wrought this greateſt miracle to ſave them?

2. What unaccountable ſtupidity is it in men, not to conſider, admire, and be ſwallowed up in contemplation of this miracle; and not to be in deepeſt love with this miraculous perſonage given to them? Ah! have we not all been careleſs, unmoved ſpectators of this miracle? How many have never ſpent a few minutes in the conſideration and admiration of him? Have ye not gazed on and wondered at ſome trifle, more than at this greateſt of the works of God? have ye not been more deeply in love with ſome perſon or thing for its ſhadowy excellencies, than with this miraculous perſon? Ceaſe to wonder at the Jews obſtinacy, in not being moved to believe by all his miracles; for a greater than them all is here, to wit, his miraculous ſelf; and yet we are unmoved.

II. *What is the import of Chriſt as God-man his being and appearing to be a miraculous, moſt wonderful One?* Conſidering this as the name of Chriſt, to commend him to ſinners, it imports,

1. The excellency of his perſon as God-man. He is an excellent, glorious, and lovely one, Heb. i. 3. 'Being the brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon.' Though the blind world perceive not his excellency, ſaying, as Iſa. liii. 2. 'He hath no form nor comelineſs; and when we ſhall ſee him, there is no beauty that we ſhould deſire him;' it is not but through their own default, by reaſon of their blindneſs: for his glory ſhines forth, to be perceived by thoſe whoſe eyes are opened, John i. 14. 'We beheld his glory,' &c. But the glory of the ſun is not ſeen by the blind man, nor the glory of Chriſt by unbelievers.

2. The fulneſs of excellencies in him, our incarnate Redeemer. His name is Miracle, a collective word. There is a confluence of excellencies in him; look to him in every part, and all is excellent in him, Cant. v. 16.—'He is altogether lovely.' Some excel in one thing, ſome in another; as Moſes in meekneſs, Samſon in ſtrength, and Solomon in wiſdom: but none but Chriſt in all. Moſes, we would ſay, was a miracle of meekneſs, Samſon of ſtrength, and Solomon of wiſdom. But Chriſt is Miracle all over: meekneſs, ſtrength, wiſdom, and all other excellencies, meet in him to a miracle. There is no blemiſh, no want at all in him, Col. i. 19. 'For it pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell.

3. The uncomonneſs and ſingularity of his excellencies.—Miracles are but rare, in reſpect of the common operations of providence. And Chriſt among the ſons of men is as *a ſtandard-bearer among ten thouſand*, Cant. v. 10. he is a perſonage of ſingular excellencies. It is obſerved, that what is done by miracle, doth in its kind excel what is the product of nature in that kind. The water that was made wine, was far better than the wine of the vine, John ii. 10. So the man Chriſt is *fairer than the ſons of men*, Pſal. xlv. 2. So every excellency in Chriſt, is beyond that excellency in another; ſo was Chriſt's meekneſs beyond Moſes's meekneſs, his ſtrength beyond Samſon's, and his wiſdom beyond Solomon's, as the ſun's light beyond that of the ſtars.

4. The abſolute matchleſſneſs of his perſon, for excellency and glory, Prov. viii. 11. *Wiſdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be deſired, are not to be compared to it.* Seek through all the creatures in heaven and earth, and there is none comparable to him, Pſal. lxxiii. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee.* His match is not be found among all the ranks of created beings.

1. Among created perſons, the like to him is not to be found, Jer. xxxi. 22.—*The Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman ſhall compaſs a man.* Conſider them in all their excellencies.

(1.) What are men to this miracle of men? Great men are contemptible, wiſe men fools, good mens goodneſs diſappears, in compariſon with him.

(2.) Conſider devils in their knowledge and might, the only excellencies remaining with them: and their knowledge is but ignorance in compariſon of his, Rev. v. 3. 5. their power weakneſs, Matth. xii. 29. He can bind them as eaſily as a giant a little child.

(3.) What are glorified ſaints, but ſo many bright ſtars ſhining with his borrowed light, wonders of his mercy, monuments of his free love? Rev. iv. 10.

(4.) What are angels that never ſinned? They are all his, Heb. i. 14. to worſhip him, ver. 6. He is the Son of the houſe, they are but ſervants of it. He is the Lord of angels. Moſes was not content with the offer of an angel, but would have himſelf, Exod. xxxiii. 15.—'If thy preſence go not with me, carry us not up hence:' nor was Mary content, till ſhe got himſelf.

2. Among created things his match is not to be found, however men take the ſhadow for the ſubſtance.

(1.) Worldly good things are not comparable to him in their greateſt abundance and choice of them. Riches, honour, ſtrength, &c. are a poor portion in his room and ſtead: Prov. viii. 11. 'Wiſdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be deſired, are not to be compared to it.' All of them are greater in expectation than fruition, broken ciſterns ſoon running dry, bitter ſweets uncommenſurable to the deſires of the ſoul: he the quite reverſe.

(2.) Spiritual good things do come from him as rays from the ſun. Grace is a created quality, heaven itſelf is but the place where he keeps his court. And as the prince himſelf is preferable to all the jewels in his crown, and to his palace; ſo is Chriſt above all theſe.

5. The ſhining forth of his excellencies, fit to draw all eyes upon him. A miracle is the centre of all mens eyes, to which all men are ready to look; it is a ſight every one would deſire to ſee, and to ſee narrowly. There is an attractive beauty and glory in this wonderful One. This is a myſtery to the world, who are ready to ſay as Cant. i. 9. 'What is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou doſt ſo charge us?' ſeeing nothing in him to fix their eyes on him. But,

(1.) His Father's eyes are fixed on him, as the object of his good pleaſure, Matth. iii. 17. 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed. *The Lamb is in the midſt of the throne* above, Rev. v. 6. It is a ſtrange word that is ſaid of the temple, 2 Chron. vii. 16. 'For now have I choſen and ſanctified this houſe, that my name may be there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart ſhall be there perpetually.' But a greater than the temple is meant there. The eyes of the Holy Spirit are on him, Zech. iii. 9. 'Behold, the ſtone that I have laid before Joſhua; upon one ſtone ſhall be ſeven eyes; behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, ſaith the Lord of hoſts.' Compared with Rev. v. 6. 'In the midſt of the throne, and of the four beaſts, and in the midſt of the elders, ſtood a Lamb as it had been ſlain, having ſeven horns, and ſeven eyes, which are the ſeven Spirits of God ſent forth to all the earth.'

(2.) The eyes of the angels are drawn after him, as a moſt wonderful ſight. The faces of the Cherubims were therefore made looking towards the mercy-ſeat, Exod. xxv. 20. to teach us, that Chriſt the Mediator reconciling God and ſinners, is the object of the angels wonder, 1 Pet. i. 12.——‘ Which things the angels ‘ deſire to look into.’

(3.) The eyes of all the ſaints are drawn after him, as the object of their admiration and affection. No ſooner are the eyes of the blind ſoul opened, but they fix on him, John iv. 10. *If thou kneweſt the gift of God, and who it is that ſaith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldſt have aſked of him, and he would have given thee living water.* Therefore faith is called a looking unto Chriſt, Iſa. xlv. 22. ‘ Look unto me, and be ye ſaved, ‘ all the ends of the earth. Cant. iii. 11. ‘ Go forth, O ‘ ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon,’ &c. And it is not a looking after a wonder of a few days; but it muſt remain all along their courſe through the world, Heb. xii. 1, 2. *Let us run with patience the race that is ſet before us, looking unto Jeſus, the author and finiſher of our faith.* And when they come to glory, they will fix their eyes on him for ever, never weary, but always refreſhed with the ſight. Therefore *the Lamb is in the midſt of the elders*, Rev. v. 6. *and the multitude before the Lamb*, chap. vii. 9.

And that the eyes of all men are not upon him, is becauſe they know him not, are not capable to diſcern his glory, Pſal. ix. 10. ‘ And they that know thy name, ‘ will put their truſt in thee.’

6. *laſtly*, The incomprehenſibleneſs of him to any creature. He is a miracle paſt their reach, the reach of their knowledge as well as their power, Eph. iii. 19. *And to know the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge.* Men are ſoon nonpluſſed in the works of nature; there are things there which they cannot comprehend, Job xxxviii. and xxxix. as in the wind that bloweth, John iii. 8. ‘ The wind bloweth where it liſteth, and thou ‘ heareſt the ſound thereof, but canſt not tell whence ‘ it cometh, and whither it goeth.’ Eccleſ. xi. 5. ‘ As ‘ thou knoweſt not what is the way of the Spirit, nor ‘ how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with ‘ child; even ſo thou knoweſt not the works of God ‘ who maketh all.’ How much more muſt they find themſelves at a loſs in miracles, where the laws of nature are neglected, and God works quite beyond them? Then how muſt they be quite loſt in this greateſt miracle, The Son of God become man? Agur long ago challenged the wit of all mankind to comprehend his name, Prov. xxx. 4. *Who hath aſcended up into heaven, or deſcended? who hath gathered the wind in his fiſts? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath eſtabliſhed all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his ſon's name, if thou canſt tell?* And the Son of God himſelf declared his name to be paſt reach, Judges xiii. 18. ‘ Why aſkeſt thou thus after my name, ‘ ſeeing it is ſecret?’ Whatever the ſaints know of it, the half is not known, there is ſtill more behind.

Uſe 1. Whoſoever do truly diſcern what Chriſt is, cannot chuſe but to love him above all perſons and things, and chuſe him for their portion being offered to them, Pſal. ix. 10. ‘ They that know thy name, will put ‘ their truſt in thee.’ John iv. 10. ‘ If thou kneweſt ‘ the gift of God, and who it is that ſaith to thee, Give ‘ me to drink; thou wouldſt have aſked of him, and ‘ he would have given thee living water.’ His matchleſs excellencies make him ſuch a lovely one, that the diſcovery of them does command the ſurrender of the heart to him, and captivates the affections; ſinks the value of all created things in competition with him, and inthrones him in the heart, Phil. iii. 8. ‘ Yea doubtleſs, ‘ and I count all things but loſs, for the excellency of ‘ the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord.’ Pſal. lxxiii. 25. ‘ Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is ‘ none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee.’ Hence true believers can neither be boaſted nor bribed, frighted nor flattered from his love, Cant. viii. 6, 7. *Set me as a ſeal upon thine heart, as a ſeal upon thine arm: for love is ſtrong as death, jealouſy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a moſt vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the ſubſtance of his houſe for love, it would utterly be contemned.*

2. Believers love to Chriſt muſt needs be laſting, everlaſting. For his excellencies are infinite and incomprehenſible. When we meet with an object among the creatures that commands our admiration and love, we are taken with it: but ſome defect comes afterwards to be perceived in it, and then the admiration ceaſeth, or turns into contempt. At leaſt, the perfections of the object are all ſeen through, and they become familiar, and the admiration dwindles away into nothing; and what was at firſt ſight admired as new, ceaſeth to be ſo when it affords no more new. But no defect nor blemiſh can ever be eſpied in him, who is fairer than the ſun: and there being an incomprehenſible depth of excellencies in him, there is ever place for new diſcoveries; ſo the admiration muſt be kept up for ever, Rev. xxii. 2. ‘ In the midſt of the ſtreet of it, and of either ‘ ſide of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare ‘ twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every ‘ month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing ‘ of the nations.’

3. Thoſe whoſe greateſt admiration and ſupreme love Chriſt is not the object of, are yet certainly in the midnight darkneſs of their natural ſtate. Whoſoever of you admire and love any created perſon or thing as much or more than Chriſt, ye have never yet ſeen nor known him, Pſal. ix. 10. ‘ They that know thy name, will put ‘ their truſt in thee.’ Luke xiv. 26. ‘ If any man come ‘ to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, ‘ and children, and brethren, and ſiſters, yea, and his ‘ own life alſo, he cannot be my diſciple.’ The predominant love of the world, prizing and eſteeming the things thereof above him, is a concluding evidence, that ye are walking in the dark; that the ſcales are yet on your eyes, and that Chriſt is a vailed Chriſt to you.

4. *laſtly*, See here how it is not to be thought ſtrange, that there are who ſtumble at the doctrine of an incarnate God our Redeemer. Corrupt nature is blind and venturous. Our incarnate Redeemer is a miracle, paſt the reach and comprehenſion of the creatures. They are blind, and cannot apprehend his glory; yet they are proud and lofty, and will not admit the myſtery becauſe they cannot comprehend it. Now, it cannot be comprehended; therefore either they muſt be humbled, or ſtumble at it as a ſtumbling-ſtone. See Matth. xi. 6.

III. *In what reſpects is our incarnate Redeemer a miraculous One, a moſt wonderful perſonage?* This is a ſubject which no man can fully comprehend, and will never be exhauſted by the ſaints in glory through eternity. We will touch a few things, to ſhew that he is miracle all over. He is wonderful,

1*ſt*, In his perſon and natures. He is God-man, God and man in one perſon. None ſuch in heaven or earth.

1. The man Chriſt is the true God, the ſecond perſon of the glorious Trinity, the one ſupreme moſt high God, with the Father and the Spirit, 1 John v. 20. ‘ And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath ‘ given us an underſtanding that we may know him ‘ that is true: and we are in him that is true, even in his ‘ Son Jeſus Chriſt. This is the true God, and eternal ‘ life.’ He is ‘ the brightneſs of his Father's glory, ‘ and the expreſs image of his perſon,’ Heb. i. 2, 3. Therefore he ſaid to Philip, John xiv. 9. ‘ Have I been ‘ ſo long time with you, and yet haſt thou not known ‘ me, Philip? He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the ‘ Father.’ He is the Father's fellow, Zech. xiii. 7. His equal, Phil. ii. 6.

2. Chriſt the Son of God is true man. The eternal Son of the Father is a Son of Adam, Luke iii. 23. ——38. being ‘(as was ſuppoſed) the ſon of Joſeph—— ‘ which was the ſon of Adam.’ He was really human fleſh, John i. 14. ‘ The word was made fleſh;’

and our fleſh, as *made of a woman*, Gal. iv. 4. He is a man, conſiſting of a ſoul, Matth. xxvi. 38. and a body of fleſh, and blood, and bones, Luke xxiv. 39. as really man as any man whatſoever.

So he is God and man in one perſon. Here is a wonderful perſon indeed, whom we cannot comprehend; true God, yet man; true man, yet God; A myſterious perſon, undiſcerned by moſt that ſaw him with their eyes, perceived only by the enlightened eye, John i. 14. The uniting of a ſoul to an earthly body, forming one perſon called man, was a work of wonder: but what is the putting together two pieces of clay, in compariſon of the potter's uniting with his own clay? Should we behold an angel aſſuming to himſelf and appearing in a crawling worm, as his own body; we would ceaſe to wonder at it, beholding this ſurpaſſing wonder, an incarnate God! here eternity and a being of yeſterday meet together in one perſon, a child, and yet the Everlaſting Father; here infinite and finite meet in one, God and his own creature!

2dly, In his perfections and qualifications, Pſal. xlv. 2. *Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips.* All qualities that render one deſirable and lovely meet together in him: and all theſe are in him to a miraculous pitch. So his Father is well pleaſed in him, Matth. iii. 17. and the Spirit reſted on him, verſ. 16. And every ſoul beholding him with an eye of faith, will take up its eternal reſt in him. Particularly, he is wonderful,

1. In his ſpotleſs and unchangeable holineſs and purity, Heb. vii. 26. *For ſuch an high prieſt became us, who is holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from ſinners, and made higher than the heavens.* The fulneſs of the Spirit of holineſs is in him, John iii. 34. 'God giveth not the Spirit by meaſure unto him.' The brighteſt of the ſaints here below want not their ſpots; at beſt they are but fair as the moon: but there is no darkneſs in him at all. The ſaints and angels in heaven have but each one their meaſure of holineſs, the fulneſs of a veſſel; they have none to communicate to others; but in him there is the fulneſs of a fountain, to fill all with holineſs, John i. 16. 'And of his fulneſs have all we received, and grace for grace.'

2. In his wiſdom, Col. ii. 3. 'In whom are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge.' The leaſt portion and the greateſt that any have in the world, is from him, John i. 9. *That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.* The apoſtle challenges the whole creation with that, Rom. xi. 34. 'For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counſellor?' But his name is the Counſellor, and he hath known the mind of his Father, Matth. xi. 27. and can open the ſealed book, and look into the ſecrets there. O the admirable wiſdom of Chriſt, appearing all along in the conduct of his providence in the church and in the world, whereby men and devils are outwitted!

3. In his power. There is nothing too hard for him to do. What aſtoniſhing works of power did he while he was in the world! Matth. xi. 5. *The blind receive their ſight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleanſed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raiſed up, and the poor have the goſpel preached to them.* And he is *the beginning of the creation of God*, Heb. i. 2. How often has the ſong of victory been raiſed in the church to his praiſe! Pſal. xcviii. 1. 'O ſing unto the Lord a new ſong, for he hath done marvellous things; his right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory.' His triumphing over death, devils, hell, and the grave, are laſting monuments of his power.

4. In his goodneſs, mercy, and grace. The *Prince of the kings of the earth* is the *Prince of peace.* There is grace in his lips, whereby he ſpeaks to poor ſinners, Pſal. xlv. 2.——'Grace is poured into thy lips.' Though he has power ſufficient to ſtrike terror on the ſtouteſt of his enemies, yet he is a matchleſs mirror of goodneſs, patience and meekneſs.

5. *laſtly*, In a word, he is wonderful in the concentering of all perfections in him, each in its perfection, Cant. v. 16. *His mouth is moſt ſweet, yea, he is altogether lovely.*

3dly, He is wonderful all along his duration. Some are wonderful in one part of their life, ſome in another; but he is miracle all over his duration. And particularly he is wonderful,

1. In his eternal generation of the Father, Pſal. ii. 7. 'The Lord hath ſaid unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. He was before he was born, John viii. 58. 'And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Verily, verily I ſay unto you, before Abraham was, I am.' He was in the beginning of time, John i. 1. 'In the beginning was the word;' before time, from everlaſting, Prov. viii. 22, 23. 'The Lord poſſeſſed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was ſet up from everlaſting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.' See Micah v. 2. 'But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thouſands of Judah, yet out of thee ſhall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Iſrael, whoſe goings forth have been from of old, from everlaſting.' Wonderful One! A Son, and yet from eternity, without beginning of days, Heb. viii. 3. A Son, and yet his duration of equal extent with his Father's. An incomprehenſible One! Who can comprehend this his generation? Begotten from eternity! The ſame numerical divine eſſence communicated from Father to him!

2. In his birth, Matth. i. 23. *Behold, a virgin ſhall be with child, and ſhall bring forth a ſon, and they ſhall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted, is, God with us.* Adam's body was made of the duſt, without help of man or woman; Eve's of Adam's, without the help of a woman; before the laws of generation took place. But after they took place, and had gone on uninterrupted for four thouſand years, Chriſt was conceived of a virgin, without the help of a man, Heb. vii. 3. This was a miracle, a wonderful birth, incomprehenſible to us, Luke i. 35. 'The angel ſaid unto Mary, The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee, and the power of the Higheſt ſhall overſhadow thee: therefore alſo that holy thing which ſhall be born of thee, ſhall be called the Son of God.'

3. In his life. In his private life, a wonderful infant, lying in a manger, yet worſhipped as God; Herod ſet to kill him, yet he preſerved, while the ſeveral babes about were ſlain, that he might not be miſſed! A wonderful child, ruling the whole world; yet ſubject to Joſeph and his mother. A wonderful youth, engaging the doctors at twelve years of age, having never learned, John vii. 15. His public life was one continued wonder, in his temptations, preachings, and miracles, eſpecially in the untainted holineſs which ran through his whole life; never a wrong action, word, nor thought, notwithſtanding of all he ſuffered from an ungrateful world.

4. In his death betrayed by one of his own; forſaken by them all; acquitted by his judge as innocent, yet condemned to a moſt cruel death. Aſtoniſhing wonder, God dying in man's nature! the beloved Son of God hanging on a croſs; heaven, earth, and hell, all pouring in at once floods of ſufferings on him: but he in the mean time wholly reſigned, and patient to a miracle under all; taking up the bitter cup of wrath kindly out of his Father's hand, and maintaining his confidence in him, praying for men his enemies, and triumphing over devils on the croſs. Ceaſe to wonder at mens laying down their life for their friends; at Samſon's dying with the Philiſtines. A greater wonder is here. The ſun never ſaw ſuch a wonder, and was ſtruck blind with the ſight; and death aſtoniſhed, let go its priſoners.

5. In his burial. The Lord of life lying dead in a grave; the ſpotleſs Jeſus making his grave with the wicked; the great deliverer from death carried

priſoner to its dark regions; is a wonder that may hold us in admiration for ever! The beautiful fabric of heaven and earth pulled down, heavens rolled up and caſt by like old rags, would be no ſuch wonder, as the Chriſt of God laid down in a grave, and the powers of hell ſeeming ſo to have carried the day againſt him.

6. In his reſurrection. Behold him dead and buried, a rock the walls of his grave, cloſed up with a huge ſtone, the ſtone ſealed, a guard of ſoldiers ſet to watch there; and ſo for two days the wicked world and hell triumphing over him: but all of a ſudden, on the third day, the earth and rocks fall a quaking and ſhaking; an angel rolls away the ſtone; the guards become as dead men; death itſelf loſes its gripes of him; the bands of all the elects guilt, wherewith it held him, become as tow touched with the fire; and the ſlain Redeemer riſes again, and comes forth; ſtands conqueror on the field of battle, laden with the ſpoils of his enemies, death, and hell; bringing away the keys of them with him.

7. In his aſcenſion into heaven. Behold him aſcending into heaven from the earth, where he ſtood with his diſciples; making his way through the air upward, they looking on, till a cloud received him out of their ſight, Acts i. 9. being carried up into heaven, Luke xxiv. 51. Then he was returning conqueror from the battle unto his Father's palace: and he is attended in his triumphal chariot with his captives, Pſal. lxviii. 18. 'Thou haſt 'aſcended on high, thou haſt led captivity captive;' and with joyful acclamations, and ſound of trumpet, Pſal. xlvii. 5. *God has gone up with a ſhout, the Lord with the ſound of a trumpet.* Behold how he is admired by thoſe of the upper houſe, while he was coming towards them, as a moſt wonderful One! Iſa. lxiii. 1. 'Who is this 'that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from 'Bozra? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling 'in the greatneſs of his ſtrength? I that ſpeak in righ'teouſneſs, mighty to ſave.' Then he enters the gates, and ſets them open for all his people to follow.

8. In his ſitting at the right hand of God, Heb. i. 3. When the man Chriſt came into the higheſt heavens, his Father ſeated him at his right hand, Pſal. cx. 1. The moſt favourite angel never had at any time ſuch an honour put upon him, as this moſt wonderful man was fixed in, at his firſt arrival in the upper houſe, Heb. i. 13. There he ſat, there he ſits, and there he will ſit, in a ſtate of glory, reſt, and expectation of his enemies becoming his footſtool, till the myſtery of God be finiſhed.

9. In his coming again to judge the world, 2 Theſſ. i. 7, 8, 9, 10. What tongue can expreſs, or heart conceive the wonders that ſhall then take place about him? The attendance of all the holy angels on him as the Judge, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, the reſurrection of all the dead at his coming, their compearance before him, the ſeparating of the ſheep from the goats, the ſentencing of both, driving the wicked away into hell, and taking the righteous along with him to heaven, will ſhew him wonderful at that day to thoſe who now ſee no glory in him.

10. *laſtly*, In his continuing for ever to be the eternal band of union, and mean of communion, between God and the ſaints for ever, Rev. vii. 17. *For the Lamb which is in the midſt of the throne, ſhall feed them, and ſhall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes.* Heb. vii. 25. *Wherefore he is able to ſave them to the uttermoſt, that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them.* Every ſaint ſhall ſhine there as a ſtar in the firmament; but he is the Sun for ever, from whom they ſhall derive all their light and glory, Rev. xxi. 23. 'And the city had no need of the ſun, neither of the 'moon to ſhine in it: for the glory of God did lighten 'it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.' If they are to be as the ſeven lamps in the temple above, he is and will be as the bowl in the candleſtick from which they will all be fed; he only immediately communicating with the Godhead.

4*thly*, He is wonderful in his offices. And,

1. In his prophetical office. How would men run together to ſee a prophet of the Lord; how would they admire him? But he is the great Prophet, never was ſuch a one as he. The Spirit came at times on the Prophets, but he reſted on him, Iſa. xi. 2. They had their foreknowledge of future events at ſecond hand, but it is his privilege to look with his own eyes into the ſealed book, John i. 18. 'No man hath ſeen God at 'any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bo'ſom of the Father, he hath declared him.' All that they could do, was to teach externally; but he can render his teaching effectual, and that on the weakeſt and fooliſheſt creatures that are. Hence he hath choſen the fooliſh things of the world. So that we may conclude, Job xxxvi. 22. *Behold, God exalteth by his power: who teacheth like him?*

2. In his prieſtly office. The prieſts under the law, had their altars of ſtone, or braſs, or gold; their ſacrifices of beaſts, their offerings of divers ſorts. But here is a moſt wonderful Prieſt; who is the Prieſt, the altar, and the ſacrifice, all in one. He offered himſelf a ſacrifice unto God; and from himſelf was the ſacrifice rendered acceptable. All the ſacrifices offered before his, were but as hand-writings to own the debt of ſin; but could pay none. His ſacrifice was truly expiatory, purchaſed the Spirit, reconciliation with God, and eternal life for ſinners. Never was there ſuch a prieſt nor ſacrifice. And he is the great Interceſſor, wonderful in reſpect of the ground of his interceſſion, the objects of it, the manner of it, and the infallible ſucceſs of it continually.

3. In his kingly office. Such a wonderful King the world never ſaw, among all the crowned heads that ever were on it. Zion's King is moſt wonderful in his victories, reſcuing men from the power of the devil, ſubduing their hearts to him, and conquering their wills; in his defence of his ſubjects from the devil, the world, luſts, frowns, and flatteries of the world; in ruining his enemies totally, and completing the happineſs of his friends. Chriſt's kingdom is the moſt ancient kingdom, being erected on the ſixth day of the creation; the moſt extenſive kingdom, reaching both heaven and earth. Never a kingdom had ſo many enemies and ſo potent; yet has it ſtood through all ages, and will ſtand for ever and ever, without end.

5*thly*, He is wonderful in his relations. And,

1. He is nearly related to the houſe of Heaven, and ſo has the higheſt poſſible relation. The monarchs of the earth are the creatures of God, the angels are the ſervants of the houſe of heaven; but Chriſt is the Son of that houſe, the Son of God, Heb. i. 5.; and has the management of it all in his hand, John v. 22.

2. He is nearly related to the houſe of Adam. He is a Son of that houſe too, the top-branch of it, Luke iii. 38. He has a common relation to them all. He is their Saviour by office, 1 Tim. iv. 10. the Saviour of the world, 1 John iv. 14. he has a nearer relation to the elect, he is their ſurety and repreſentative, who undertook for them in the covenant, Heb. vii. 22. John x. 15. and yet a nearer relation to believers. He is their brother, Heb. ii. 11. their father, Iſ. ix 6. their huſband, 2 Cor. xi. 2. and their head, Col. i. 18. And thus by his relation to both,

3. He is the centre of union to the two. In him they meet, John xvii. 23. 'I in them and thou in me, that 'they may be made perfect in one.' There was war declared between the two houſes; and the houſe of Adam could never have made their part good againſt Heaven; but the Son of God married our nature to himſelf, and ſo brings together the two houſes, making peace through the body of his fleſh. So, as he is the foundation-ſtone on which all believers are laid; he is the corner-ſtone, joining and knitting heaven and earth.

6thly, laſtly, He is wonderful in his love, Eph. iii. 18, 19. ‘And to know the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge,’ viz. his love to the children of men, his love will appear wonderful, if ye conſider,

1. The ſubject of it, the party loving us. He is the eternal Son of God, the Prince of the kings of the earth. That ever there ſhould have been an eye of love caſt from heaven on us not from among the courtiers, but from the throne, the King himſelf, is wonderful. That the Father's delight ſhould have made the ſons of men his delight, Prov. viii. 30, 31. may cauſe us to cry out, Pſal. cxliv. 3. *Lord, what is man, that thou takeſt knowledge of him? or the ſon of man that thou makeſt account of him?*

2. The objects of it, the parties beloved; men, ſinful men. Conſider them as to their rank of being, and they are the loweſt of the rational creatures; but a ſuperior rank, viz. angels, were paſſed over, and they were made the objects of it, Tit, iii. 4. ‘The kindneſs and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared.’ Conſider them as to their quality, and they were enemies to him, Rom. v. 10. ‘For when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.’

3. The effect, force, and energy of this love. It is abſolutely matchleſs: never did any love work ſo powerfully as his. It began, (if I may ſo ſay) before the world was, Prov. viii. 31. and engaged him in ſurety-ſhip, for the debt of an elect world. In time he died for them, he ſo loved them, Rom. v. 8. It reſts not till he have them with himſelf in the higheſt heavens, John xvii. 24. for ever.

4. *laſtly,* The qualities of it. Theſe are wonderful.

(1.) It is free love, Hoſ. xiv. 4. ‘I will love them freely.’ There was nothing in the object lovely, to engage it. But as the ſun ſhines without hire on the dunghill, as well as on the bed of roſes; ſo Chriſt's love was unhired. See the freeneſs of it, Ezek. xvi. 8. *When I paſſed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was a time of love, and I ſpread my ſkirt over thee, and covered thy nakedneſs, yea, I ſware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, ſaith the Lord God, and thou becameſt mine.*

(2.) It is ſovereign love. There were objects equally miſerable with fallen man; yet there was no love to them. Chriſt looked on the fallen part of the creation, and the angelic tribe, and the human tribe were both before him: and ſovereignty paſſes the former, but fixes its love on the latter.

(3.) It is preventing love, John xv. 16. ‘Ye have not choſen me, but I have choſen you.’ Love begets love, as one coal kindles another. But Chriſt's love to us had nothing from us of that kind, nor of any other, to kindle it. We never *love him,* till he *love us firſt,* 1 John iv. 19.

(4.) It is tender love, Iſa. xl. 11. ‘He ſhall feed his flock like a ſhepherd: he ſhall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his boſom, and ſhall gently lead thoſe that are with young.’ It is tender as of a father to his children, Pſal. ciii. 13. ‘Like as a father pitieth his children, ſo the Lord pitieth them that fear him;’ as of a mother to her ſucking child, Iſ. xlix. 15, 16. ‘Can a woman forget her ſucking child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the ſon of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me.’ It is tender, as one is to the apple of his eye, Zech, ii. 8. ‘He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye.’

(5.) It is unchangeable love, John xiii. 1. *Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.* 2 Tim. ii. 19. *The foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.* Whatever falls out in the courſe of the believer's lot and life, though the manifeſtations of that love may be very variable, yet the love itſelf never alters. See Hoſ. ii. 19. ‘I will betroth thee unto me for ever.’

(6.) *laſtly,* It is everlaſting love. It never had a beginning, and will never have an end, Jer. xxxi. 3. ‘I have loved thee with an everlaſting love.’

And thus Chriſt appears to be all over wonderful.

USE 1. for Information. See here,

1. The greatneſs of the Father's love in giving to us ſuch a wonderful one for our Prince, John iii. 16. ‘God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, &c. The love of God appears here to be a wonder. O what honour is put upon man, by making ſuch a gift to him, than which heaven could not give a greater! O what happineſs appears to be deſigned for man by this gift! We may ſay as Hiram King of Tyre ſaid to Solomon, 2 Chron. ii. 11. ‘Becauſe the Lord hath loved his people; he hath made thee king over them.’

2. The reaſonableneſs of the believer's ſuperlative love to Chriſt. Every believing ſoul loves Chriſt above all perſons and all things. They will love him more than all the world, and all that is therein, and more than their own life, Luke xiv. 26. And good reaſon there is for it; for there is no object ſo lovely. If we look to confeſſors parting with their goods, their liberty, and their worldly comforts, for Chriſt; to the martyrs parting with their lives, embracing fires, gibbets, &c. the moſt cruel deaths, for Chriſt; we will ceaſe to wonder at their ſo doing, when we conſider what a wonderful One he is for whom they undergo the loſs of all. Gaining Chriſt, they are the greateſt gainers, whatever they loſe, Phil. iii. 7, 8.

3. The reaſonableneſs of the goſpel-demand of all, to receive and ſubmit to Chriſt as their Prince and Governor. His tranſcendent excellency intitles him to the principality and government over the ſons of men. His merit requires our abſolute reſignation to him. He is the Father's choice; and in making that choice, he has acted like himſelf, having choſen for us this moſt wonderful perſonage.

4. *laſtly,* The dreadful ſin and danger of the ſlighting of Chriſt. The more wonderful and excellent he is, the deeper will the guilt be of refuſing him; the deeper the guilt, the more fearful will be the vengeance for rejecting him, Heb. ii. 3. *How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great ſalvation?*

USE 2. Of Exhortation. Be exhorted then to give this wonderful one your heart, Prov. xxiii. 26. ‘My ſon, give me thine heart.’ And,

1. Make him the choice of your ſoul, ſaying, Pſal. lxxiii. 25. ‘Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee.’ Take him for your portion, as one who is the beſt of portions. Let your ſouls ſolemnly conſent to the goſpel-offer.

2. Part with all for him, as the wiſe merchant, who *ſold all that he had, and bought the one pearl of great price,* Matth. xiii. 44, 45. Give up with your luſts and idols: renounce the devil, the world, and the fleſh, reſting on Chriſt for all, for time and eternity.

3. Dwell in the contemplation of his matchleſs excellencies. Let it be the ſubſtance of your religion to love him, to admire him, to be ſwallowed up in his love. And let love to him ſet your ſouls a-moving in all holy obedience.

Motive 1. Ye can never beſtow your hearts ſo well. What is all the world in compariſon of Chriſt, but loſs and dung? Alas, that ſhadows ſhould have our hearts, while the moſt ſubſtantial good courts it!

Mot. 2. Conſider that it is for this end Chriſt is commended to you. We preach Chriſt, that ye may fall in love with him.

Mot. 3. *laſtly,* Conſider how ye will anſwer it to him before the tribunal, that ye have preferred other lovers to the lovely One.

Christ the Counsellor.

Isaiah ix. 6.

——*His Name ſhall be called,*——*Counſellor.*——

THE ſcope of this part of the verſe being to commend the Prince preſented and given to us for our Prince and Governor, this ſyllable of his name refers to his ſingular capacity for management of matters, in reſpect of his vaſt reach in point of wiſdom. Other princes muſt have their counſellors, by whoſe advice they may act: but he himſelf is, and ſhews himſelf to be *Counſellor*, an oracle of government, a Prince in whoſe own breaſt is the oracle for right management of all things relating to his dominion.

DOCT. *Jeſus Chriſt, who is preſented and given to us of the Father for our Prince, is and ſhews himſelf to be the great Counſellor, an oracle of government.*

In proſecuting this doctrine, I ſhall ſhew,
I. In what reſpects Chriſt is the Counſellor.
II. What is the import of this part of his name.
III. *laſtly*, Improve the ſubject.

I. *In what reſpects is Chriſt the Counſellor.*

1ſt, He is of the ſecret council of Heaven, Zech. vi. 13. 'The counſel of peace ſhall be between them both.' He is a member of the cabinet council of heaven, to which the moſt favourite angel is not admitted. He has acceſs to the ſealed book of the divine decrees, Rev. v. 5.; and there is nothing tranſacted there, nor has been from eternity, but what he is acquainted with, John v. 20. *For the Father loveth the Son, and ſheweth him all things that himſelf doth.* With his Father and the Spirit he is of the council.

2dly, He is the oracle of counſel for the earth, John i. 18. 'No man hath ſeen God at any time; the only 'begotten Son, which is in the boſom of the Father, 'he hath declared him.' Matth. xi. 27. 'All things are 'delivered unto me of my Father, and no man know'eth the Son but the Father: neither knoweth any 'man the Father, ſave the Son, and he to whomſoever 'the Son will reveal him.' Many counſellors are to be found in the earth, and wicked counſellors for mens deſtruction, as the houſe of *Ahab were counſellors to Ahaziah king of Judah, to his deſtruction*, 2 Chron. xxii. 4. But he is the counſellor for ſalvation, outſhining all other good counſellors, as the ſun doth the twinkling ſtars. And,

1. He is the counſellor of the world of men, John viii. 12. *I am the light of the world; he that followeth me, ſhall not walk in darkneſs, but ſhall have the light of life.* They have all loſt their way, their affairs are all in confuſion, they know not how to right them. But he is,

(1.) Their Counſellor in reſpect of office. As the ſun is ſet in the firmament to give light on the earth, ſo is Chriſt given for a light unto the world, that whoſoever will, may have his counſel, and by his counſel get the affairs of their ſouls retrieved, John xii. 46. 'I 'am come a light into the world, that whoſoever be'lieveth on me, ſhould not abide in darkneſs.' Whoever will conſult him, are welcome; none ſhall be refuſed his wiſe counſel, John vi. 37. 'Him that cometh 'to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out.'

(2.) Their Counſellor in reſpect of capacity, Col. ii. 3. 'In him are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and 'knowledge.' The multitude and variety of their caſes cannot confuſe him; for his underſtanding is infinite. Nothing can perplex him, who, with one glance of his piercing eye, ſees at once through all caſes of all men, and can preſcribe ſuitable remedies.

2. He is the Counſellor of the viſible church more eſpecially, Micah iv. 9. and that in two reſpects.

(1.) He conſults her intereſt, for her protection and preſervation in the world, Micah iv. 9. 'Why doſt thou 'cry out aloud? is there no king in thee? is thy Coun'ſellor periſhed?' There are conſtant conſpiracies of devils and wicked men to ruin her; and oft times their plots are laid ſo ſubtilly, and ſo powerfully managed, that the church is brought to the brink of ruin: but he, as her Counſellor, diſcovers the ſnare, and powerfully counteracts her enemies; ſo that ſhe is ſtill preſerved. A remarkable inſtance of which we have in the conſpiracy of Haman to deſtroy the whole nation of the Jews, the hiſtory of which you may read in the book of Eſther.

(2.) He is ſtill actually counſelling her by his word. All her members have the advantage of Heaven's counſels, inculcated on them for their ſpiritual welfare. The counſel of God in providing a Saviour, is proclaimed there: the ſalvation is offered, and they are counſelled again and again to embrace it: their way to happineſs is cleared, Rev. iii. 18. *I counſel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayſt be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayeſt be clothed, and that the ſhame of thy nakedneſs do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-ſalve, that thou mayſt ſee.*

3. He is the Counſellor of the inviſible church of believers, and of every particular believer in it, Eph. i. 22. and that moſt eſpecially. And,

(1.) The care and management of all and every one of them, lies on him, 1 Pet. v. 7. *Caſting all your care upon him, for he firſt careth for you.* He is the great Shepherd who brings in the ſheep from their ſtraying, feeds and protects them, and at length completes their well-being. To him the Father has committed the charge of all the elect; and on him it lies to bring them to himſelf in converſion, to manage them during their ſtay in the world, and to bring them all ſafe to glory in the end.

(2.) He counſels them effectually, by his word and Spirit, Pſal. xxv. 14. 'The ſecret of the Lord is with 'them that fear him, and he will ſhew them his cove'nant.' He has eſtabliſhed a communication between him and them, whereby they have his direction and inſtruction in their particular caſes, what way to ſteer their courſe, Prov. iii. 6. 'In all thy ways acknowledge 'him, and he ſhall direct thy paths.' He is their oracle, whom they are to conſult in all things; and his word bears his counſel to them, Pſal. cxix. 24. 'Thy 'teſtimonies alſo are my counſellors;' His providence points out their way, Pſal. xxxii. 8. 'I will inſtruct 'thee, and teach thee in the way which thou ſhalt go; 'I will guide thee with mine eye!' and his Spirit makes all effectual, John xvi. 13. 'When the Spirit of truth is 'come, he will guide you into all truth.'

II. *What is the import of this part of Chriſt's name?* We may take it up in theſe ſeven particulars following.

Firſt, He is of ſingular wiſdom for conduct and management of affairs, Iſ. xi. 2, 3. 'The Spirit of the Lord 'ſhall reſt upon him, the Spirit of wiſdom and under'ſtanding, the ſpirit of counſel and might, the ſpirit of

‘ knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord: and ſhall ‘ make him of quick underſtanding in the fear of the ‘ Lord, and he ſhall not judge after the ſight of his ‘ eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears.’ Great is the truſt committed to him, in bringing the elect to glory: but he has a head ſufficient for the difficult taſk, which would be too hard for the ſkill of angels to manage. Nothing can be intricate for him, but his wiſdom can unfold it. For,

1. The fulneſs of the Spirit of wiſdom is lodged in him, to fit him for the great truſt of bringing many ſons to glory, Iſa. xi. 2. forecited; and that not by meaſure, as ſaints have the ſame; but without meaſure, to fit him for every emergent in the caſe of his truſt; ſo that he can never be at a loſs to know what to do, John iii. 34. *For God giveth not the Spirit by meaſure unto him*, being furniſhed with wiſdom, as the ſpring with waters continually.

2. He is wiſdom itſelf, the Eternal Wiſdom of the Father; under which name Solomon ſpeaks of him, Prov. viii. And Chriſt's children are wiſdom's children, Matth. xi. 19.

Uſe 1. How fit and ſuitable is Chriſt for us then, to conduct us through an evil world, to the place of perfect ſafety? We live in a deceitful world, where we are invironed with ſnares; how will we ever make our way through it? Let us betake ourſelves then to the great Counſellor for conduct, the deceit of the world prompting us to go to him.

2. Put your caſe in his hand, and truſt him with it, how intricate and perplexed ſoever it is. Though you cannot give a name to it, he can; though you can find no remedy for it in the whole creation; but all ſays, ‘ It is not in me;’ the wiſdom of the Counſellor will reach it.

3. See how weak and fooliſh things fall on and keep the way to happineſs, while worldly-wiſe men are bemiſſed and bewildered, that they never reach it, Iſa. xxxv. 8. *And an high-way ſhall be there, and a way, and it ſhall be called the way of holineſs; the unclean ſhall not paſs over it, but it ſhall be for thoſe; the wayfaring men, though fools ſhall not err therein.* The Counſellor is on their head, verſ. 4. while thoſe ſlighting him lean to their own underſtanding, and ſo wander, Eccleſ. x. 15. ‘ The labour of the fooliſh wearieth every one ‘ of them, becauſe he knoweth not how to go to the ‘ city.’

Secondly, He is a Prince of great and noble deſigns and projects, requiring counſel and wiſdom. All the deſigns and projects of the princes of the earth are but trifles, and childiſh in compariſon of his; they are quite too high for creatures of the deepeſt reach, 1 Cor. ii. 9. We may take them up in theſe three.

1. He entertained, and has accompliſhed a deſign of ranſoming an elect world, and ſo became their Redeemer, 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. ‘ There is one God, and one ‘ Mediator between God and men, the man Chriſt Jeſus; who gave himſelf a ranſom for all, to be teſtified ‘ in due time.’ This was ſuch a high deſign, that no man whatſoever was able to have fallen on a method of ranſoming one of them, Pſal. xlix. 7, 8. ‘ None of ‘ them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give ‘ to God a ranſom for him; for the redemption of ‘ their ſoul is precious, and it ceaſeth for ever.’ Silver and gold could not effect it; it behoved to be by blood, that blood behoved to be of infinite value. So the great Counſellor falls on a method to effect it, his own incarnation, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. ‘ Ye were not redeemed ‘ with corruptible things, as ſilver and gold: but with ‘ the precious blood of Chriſt, as of a Lamb without ‘ blemiſh and without ſpot.’

2. He has been and is on a project of reſcuing one and all of them from the power of the devil, John x. 16. *Other ſheep I have, which are not of this fold: them alſo I muſt bring, and they ſhall hear my voice; and there ſhall be one fold, and one ſhepherd.* This is a difficult taſk: all the wit and power of hell is engaged againſt it; and what is favourable on Satan's ſide, is, that he is in poſſeſſion; they are his captives, priſoners and ſlaves: and they themſelves ſide with him againſt Chriſt, being unwilling to be reſcued. Yet the Counſellor will not give over the project; but as he has hitherto, ſo he will to the end carry it on, till there is not one of them all left unreſcued, John vi. 37. ‘ All that the Father ‘ giveth me, ſhall come to me; and him that cometh ‘ to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out.’

3. He is on a deſign to have them altogether at home with himſelf in his Father's houſe, in a ſtate of complete happineſs, John xvii. 24. *Father, I will that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am: that they may behold my glory which thou haſt given me.* There are mountains of difficulties lying in the way of this project; but the wiſdom of the Counſellor will find a way to roll them all away. This is *the building of the temple of the Lord* which he has in view, Zech. vi. 12. and will perfect over the belly of all difficulties, Zech. iv. 7. ‘ Who art thou, O great mountain, be‘ fore Zerubbabel thou ſhalt become a plain; and he ‘ ſhall bring forth the head-ſtone thereof with ſhout‘ ings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.’ For effecting of this, there are to be rolled away mountains of difficulties caſting up in their caſe,

(1.) Before death. Their paſſage through the wilderneſs is difficult, through their manifold wants, weakneſſes, ſnares and temptations there; that if they were not under the wiſe conduct of the great Counſellor, it would be impoſſible they could miſs their carcaſſes falling there; but he will have all ſafe through, Pſal. lxxiii. 24. *Thou ſhalt guide me with thy counſel, and afterwards receive me to glory.*

(2.) In death. It is hard to get ſafe through the dark valley: but he will have them ſafe there, where many ſplit and are broken in pieces. Be the voyage never ſo dangerous, he will be their Pilot, Pſal. xxiii. 4. ‘ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow ‘ of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; ‘ thy rod and thy ſtaff they comfort me.’ Be the way never ſo much haunted by inſtruments of deſtruction, he will carry them ſafely through, Iſa. xxxv. 9. ‘ No ‘ lion ſhall be there, nor any ravenous beaſt ſhall go ‘ thereon, it ſhall not be found there: but the redeem‘ ed ſhall walk there.’

(3.) In the grave. There their bodies lie, when they leave this world, under the power of death. The bands of death wherewith they are held there, are mighty; the bars of the grave cannot be broken in ſunder by created power: but he deſigns to looſe the one, and break the other, Hoſ. xiii. 14. *I will ranſom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues: O grave, I will be thy deſtruction: repentance ſhall be hid from mine eyes.*

Uſe 1. Let us then, each for himſelf, fall in with the noble and great deſigns of this prince. Satan, the prince of this world, is carrying on deſigns of deſtruction: and men fall in with his deſigns, purſuing their worldly intereſt as their chief intereſt, and going on impenitent in their ſins. Chriſt's deſigns are deſigns of ſalvation: fall in with theſe, ſeeking chiefly the advancing of your eternal intereſt, Matth. vi. 33. repenting, and turning every one from his evil way.

2. Let us be concerned for the proſpering of his counſels, Pſal. lxxii. 15. ‘ Prayer ſhall be made for him ‘ continually, and daily ſhall he be praiſed.’ Compare Matth. vi. 10. ‘ Thy kingdom come. Thy will be ‘ done in earth, as it is in heaven.’ Satan and his agents counteract them all they can; ſtand not unconcerned ſpectators; for neutrals in this caſe are enemies to Chriſt, Matth. xii. 30. ‘ He that is not with me, is ‘ againſt me; and he that gathereth not with me, ſcat‘ tereth abroad.’ Rejoice in the proſpering of his kingdom, and mourn for the diſhonours done to him.

3. They that reject and oppoſe his counſels, are fools,

and do it to their own loſs, Luke vii. 30. For all his counſels are great and noble; and whoſo ſet themſelves againſt them, work for their own ruin, Prov. viii. 36. *He that ſinneth againſt me, wrongeth his own ſoul: all they that hate me love death.* They muſt periſh without remedy, rejecting the counſels of ſalvation.

Thirdly, He can manage all by himſelf, and needs no counſel of men. The name of the wiſeſt on earth may be *conſultor*, the wiſeſt of men ſays ſo, Prov. xi. 14. 'Where no counſel is the people fall: but in the multitude of counſellors there is ſafety.' But his name is *Counſellor*. He is ſo far a *Counſellor*, that he is a conſultor of none, Rom. xi. 34. 'For who hath known the 'the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counſel'lor?' His ſervants are about his throne, but not to pretend to give him counſel. Conſider,

1. His underſtanding is infinite. He ſees all things at once, and he ſees through every thing; whereas the creature's capacity is but finite, ſeeing but ſome things and but ſome parts of them too. There can be no lack of counſel in him; and if there were, we would be utterly unfit to make it up. Can the light of a ſmall candle increaſe the light of the ſhining ſun, or a drop from one's finger the waters of the ocean? Far leſs can finite add to what is infinite.

3. His counſels were all concerted before we had a being. The plan and method of his government in every part, was laid down immutably, before there was a man or angel. He hath not councils of yeſterday, wherein we might give advice; but *known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world*, Acts xv. 18. The elect were choſen to the kingdom from eternity, Eph. i. 4. and the kingdom prepared for them, Matth. xxv. 34. and all the diſpenſations of his providence immutably laid down, Zech. vi. 1.

3. The execution of them was begun entirely without us. What a ſweet ſurpriſe was the conduct of the great Counſellor to our guilty parents in paradiſe? Did he conſult with the guilty pair, how to remedy their caſe? No; but he ſurpriſed them with his counſel. He made us without us at firſt; and he remakes us, not only without us, but over the belly of oppoſition from us: therefore he can manage us, without us, both in nature and grace.

4. How often have we ſeen, that our counſels, had they been mixed with thoſe of the great Counſellor, would have marred all? David would have had the child to live; but the great Counſellor would have him die; for had he lived, he had lived to the reproach of David. Jacob ſays, 'All theſe things were againſt him;' yet were they for him; ſo that if they had not taken place, his family had been in ill caſe.

Uſe 1. Let us therefore wholly reſign the diſpoſal of our lot to Jeſus Chriſt the great Counſellor, Pſal. xlvii. 4. *He ſhall chuſe our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved.* Let us not carve for ourſelves, but leave that to him; believing that to be beſt for us, which he ſees beſt. Firſt commit your ſouls to him for eternal ſalvation, and then put a blank into his hand as to all other concerns. If we are his children, let our Father diſpoſe of us; if his ſubjects, let our King rule us; 'The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son,' John v. 22. Let us not refuſe for our part.

2. Let us wait on him patiently in the way of his diſpenſation towards ourſelves, and towards the church, Iſ. xxvi. 8. The church of God, and the intereſt of religion, are at very low paſs at this day: we are rowed into deep waters, from which no human ſkill can row us out again. But Chriſt is the great Counſellor; let him alone; he will ſee to his own work, and will awake as a giant refreſhed with wine. Are we in depths of affliction, trials, and difficulties? The ſtorm is never ſo boiſterous, nor the paſſage ſo hazardous, as the Pilot Chriſt needs to call a council what to do.

3. Let us beware of murmuring and fretting at, and quarrelling his conduct. There may be pieces of it which we cannot account for: but there is nothing in it that is wrong, Deut. xxxii. 4. Though we cannot ſee how all is well that he does, let us believe he does all well, Jer. xii. 1. Murmuring is a charging of the great Counſellor fooliſhly, as if he were not wiſe enough for to manage us; and that we might pretend to direct him. Remember his name, and be ſilent, and ſatisfied in all his diſpoſals.

Fourthly, His manner of conduct, and method of management, is deep and uncommon. Solomon tells us, that *counſel in the heart of man is like deep waters*, Prov. xx. 5. Chriſt's name is *Counſellor*, pointing out his counſels as great deeps; and ſo they are, Pſal. xcii. 5. 'O Lord, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts 'are very deep.' The contrivances of the greateſt wits among men, are but thin and ſhallow, in compariſon of the way of the great Counſellor, Pſal. lxxvii. 19. *Thy way is in the ſea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footſteps are not known.*

1. It is not eaſy ſeen into. His way in his conduct of matters, is truly myſterious; there is need of wiſdom to diſcern it, Pſal. cvii. 43. and carnal wiſdom will not do it, 1 Cor. ii. 14. 'For the natural man receiveth not 'the things of the Spirit of God: for they are fooliſh'neſs unto him; neither can he know them, becauſe 'they are ſpiritually diſcerned.' Earthly princes have their ſecrets of government; and therefore no wonder that Chriſt has his ſecrets of government, who is the great Counſellor. It is ſuch a deep, and ſo hard to be ſeen into, that,

(1.) Carnal unrenewed men make wretched blunders about it, and quite miſtake it. They cannot at all ſee into the myſtery; it is as a parable to them, that they cannot underſtand, Mark iv. 11. They are none of the King's friends, and they cannot penetrate into his counſels, nor find out his deſigns, in his diſpenſations, Pſal. xcii. 5, 6, 7. *O Lord, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep. A brutiſh man knoweth not; neither doth a fool underſtand this. When the wicked ſpring as the graſs, and when all the workers of iniquity do flouriſh; it is that they ſhall be deſtroyed for ever.* Yea, they quite miſtake the matter to their own deſtruction, Mal. iii. 14, 15. 'Ye have ſaid, It is in vain to 'ſerve God; and what profit is it, that we have kept 'his ordinances, and that we have walked mournfully 'before the Lord of hoſts? And now we call the proud 'happy; yea, they that work wickedneſs, are ſet up; 'yea, they that tempt God, are even delivered.' Hoſ. xiv. 9. 'Who is wiſe, and he ſhall underſtand theſe 'things? prudent, and he ſhall know them? for the 'ways of the Lord are right, and the juſt ſhall walk in 'them: but the tranſgreſſors ſhall fall therein.'

(2.) Even the godly themſelves are often mightily puzzled and perplexed about it; they know not what to make of it. How was Aſaph plunged in the caſe of the proſperity of the wicked, and adverſity of the godly? He was brought to the borders of Atheiſm by it. And there was no recovering, till he gave over looking with the eye of carnal wiſdom, and looked with the eye of faith, Pſal. lxxiii. 12. &c.

2. His manner of conduct, and method of management, is not to be ſeen through while we are here, by any whatſoever, Rom. xi. 33. *O the depth of the riches both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God! how unſearchable are his judgments, and his ways paſt finding out!* Even thoſe who ſee into his conduct, cannot ſee through it. There are many plies of the manifold wiſdom of God that they cannot unfold; but will remain hid till the light of glory do diſcover them. By faith we may ſee ſo far as to ſay, 'He does all things well.' But when the whole web of providence being cut out, is laid before the ſaints in the light of the upper houſe, they will doubtleſs diſcern a great deal of beauties therein, which they do not now ſee. For a ſwatch of theſe depths, you may take theſe.

1. Things let go on to the uttermoſt point of hope.

leſſneſs, before a hand is put to, to work the delivery. This is not the manner of men, whoſe maxim is, to withſtand the beginnings, before the diſeaſe grows deſperate:

Principiis obſta: ſero medicina paratur,
Cum longa per moras invaluere mala.

But nothing is more ordinary in the conduct of the great Counſellor, than to let things go on to the utmoſt extremity, and then to take the opportunity, Deut. xxxii. 36. 'For the Lord ſhall judge his people, and repent 'himſelf for his ſervants; when he ſeeth that their 'power is gone, and there is none ſhut up, or left.' The chief thing in the diſpenſation was about himſelf: before he was delivered, he was dead, and buried, the ſtone ſealed, the watch ſet, he lying ſtill ſo long in the grave: and after that pattern, the greateſt deliverances his church, or any believer gets, is wrought; as in the caſe of Joſeph.

2. The Prince's friends treated like enemies, and his enemies treated like friends. Solomon obſerves it, Eccl. viii. 14. 'There is a vanity which is done upon the 'earth, that there be juſt men unto whom it happeneth 'according to the work of the wicked: again, there be 'wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the 'work of the righteous.' This is not the way of men neither, to careſs their enemies, and heap favours on them; and to pinch, and lay their hand heavy on their friends. But this is one of the Counſellor's depths of management. The ungrateful butler is at court in favour, but Joſeph in a dungeon: waters of a full cup wrung out to the ungodly, but godly Aſaph plagued every day: Herodias dancing and making merry; but John Baptiſt's head ſtruck off in a priſon.

3. The moſt unlikely inſtruments and means choſen, and the moſt promiſing laid by. This is not the way of men neither, who chuſe what bids faireſt for the purpoſe; but it is the way of the Counſellor. When the people chooſe a king, he was one that was the moſt ſtately among them; but not ſo was the Counſellor's choice, 1 Sam. xvi. 7. Cain was rejected and Abel accepted. Sarah, who had no procreative faculty, is choſen, when waſted and worn with age, to be the mother of the ſeed promiſed to Abraham; and not to Hager, who was in the bloom of youth. So Mary eſpouſed to a carpenter, and none of the ladies of Judea, was pitched upon to be the mother of our Lord. He choſe his apoſtles from among fiſhermen generally, not from among the learned men of the age; Paul only excepted.

4. Things brought about by means in their own nature, and in the eyes of men quite contrary to the deſign. Neither is this the manner of men; but it is his. The blind man is cured with clay laid on his eyes. Joſeph is advanced by means of his being ſold as a ſlave, and put into the dungeon. The wheel of providence that ſeems to drive away from the deſign, doth often but take an unknown road to it.

Uſe 1. Let us judge nothing before the time, nor be haſty in our concluſions on the conduct of providence. It will but proclaim our raſhneſs and folly, and we will be forced at length to retract our cenſures, Pſal. cxvi. 11, 12. 'I ſaid in my haſte, All men are liars.' His method of management is often what we cannot rightly judge of till we ſee the end, James v. 11. *Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have ſeen the end of the Lord: that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.*

2. Let us beware of penning up the great Counſellor to our known roads. Hence God's people often torment themſelves in vain, thinking, that, becauſe they cannot ſee him in all the roads within their view, he is not coming to them at all. In the mean time he may be making ſpeed towards them, though in a darned road, where they look not for him as in the conduct of Jeſus towards the diſciples, Matth. xiv. 25, 26, 27. 'And in the fourth watch of the night, Jeſus went unto them walking on the ſea. And when the diſciples 'ſaw him walking on the ſea, they were troubled, ſaying, It is a ſpirit; and they cried out for fear. But 'ſtraightway Jeſus ſpake unto them, ſaying, Be of good 'chear, it is I, be not afraid.' There are many methods of deliverance known to the Counſellor, that fall not within the compaſs of our narrow view; and when we are ſet on them, we know not whither they do lead, Iſa. xlii. 16. *And I will bring the blind by a way that they know not, I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkneſs light before them, and crooked things ſtraight. Theſe things will I do unto them, and not forſake them.*

3. See here the neceſſity of acquaintance with ſcriptures, and of faith, 2 Pet. i. 19. 'We have alſo a more 'ſure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye 'take heed, as unto a light that ſhineth in a dark place, 'until the day dawn, and the day-ſtar ariſe in your 'hearts.' There the myſteries of the kingdom are unfolded, and by faith the beauty of them is perceived. Thoſe who are ſtrangers to the book of the word, cannot miſs to blunder in the book of providence to their own ſouls hurt; and unbelief of the word makes beautiful pieces of providence look very odd; for it fixes mens eyes, as if one ſhould ſtare on the wrong ſide of arras hanging, having no power to turn up the right ſide of them, Pſal. lxxiii. 16, 17. *When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me. Until I went into the ſanctuary of God, then underſtood I their end.*

Fifthly, He does nothing without a becoming reaſon. There is not one random ſtroke in the whole of the conduct of providence, Eph. i. 11. 'In whom alſo we 'have obtained an inheritance, being predeſtinated according to the purpoſe of him, who worketh all things 'after the counſel of his own will.' The red and black horſes came out between the mountains of braſs, as well as the reſt, Zech. vi. 1. 2. and every event is written in the ſealed book, Rev. v. There is a reaſon for every diſpenſation; and it is a reaſon that is good and valid. This appears, if ye conſider, that,

1. His infinite wiſdom ſees all things at once perfectly, Pſal. cxlvii. 5. 'His underſtanding is infinite.' The fitneſs of a means for compaſſing an end, cannot be hid to him, as it is often unto men: and he cannot be liable to miſtake in that matter; though men through their weakneſs as often pitch on means unfit as fit, Ezek. i. 18. and x. 12. Therefore he does all fitly and reaſonably, ſince he is withal infinitely good.

2. Even thoſe things which ſometimes cannot be diſcerned to have a fitneſs in them for any good purpoſe, do in end appear beautiful; thoſe that appear confuſed at firſt, when done out appear orderly: ſo that in end his people are made to ſay, He has done all things well. So was the diſpenſation anent Joſeph, Gen. l. 20. *But as for you, ye thought evil againſt me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to paſs, as it is this day, to ſave much people alive.* All of them, whatever compaſſes they make, do by virtue of the promiſe concenter in God's glory and his people's good, Rom. viii. 28. and ix. 22. 23.

Thus are the myſterious ſteps of providence before named, all managed, and may be accounted for.

1. Things are let go on to the utmoſt point of hopeleſſneſs, that the power of God may appear the more in bringing about the delivery, and that it may be the more ſignal mercy to his people, and fill them the more with joy and wonder, John xi. 14, 15. The Lord left his people in Babylon, till they were like dry bones lying about the graves; why? ſee Ezek. xxxvii. 13. 'And ye 'ſhall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened 'your graves, O my people, and brought you up out 'of your graves.' Pſal. cxxvi. 1. 4. *When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the ſtreams in the ſouth.* Deliverance is ſweet at any time;

but the more hopeleſs, the more ſweet and ſurpriſing is it when it comes.

2. By treating his friends with afflictions and trials, he pours contempt on the world, and all its honour, wealth, and eaſe; ſhewing to all thereby, that thoſe things which carnal men ſet their hearts on, are ſuch things as he hath no value for; elſe he would never diſpoſe of them at the rate he does. Thereby he invites his enemies to repentance, and renders them inexcuſable if they be not gained thereby, Rom. ii. 4. And he tries the faith, love, and patience of his own, and thereby lays up for them a greater weight of glory, 1 Pet. i. 6, 7.

3. He chooſeth the moſt unlikely inſtruments and means to accompliſh his purpoſes, that he may ſtain the pride of all glory, Iſa. xxiii. 9. that all may be referred to himſelf as the firſt cauſe and laſt end of all things, which is the reaſonable order, 1 Cor. i. 31. Therefore he *put the treaſure in earthen veſſels*, 2 Cor. iv. 7. and for the ſame reaſon, not in the fineſt, but the coarſeſt of the ſort.

4. He works by contrary means, that he may ſhew himſelf to be above means, and to have them at his beck; and to ſurpriſe his people the more ſweetly with the unlooked-for effect of them. The character of divine power is the more deeply engraven on the effect, that the means of themſelves are not of that tendency.

Uſe 1. Then all that God does, is well done. There is nothing amiſs in it, Deut. xxxii. 4. in the blackeſt diſpenſation there is a line of purity. The ſmoking oven is joined with a burning lamp, Gen. xv. 17. Compare Iſa. lxii. 1. In the whole fabric of providence towards the children of men, there is nothing awry, but every thing lies ſtraight to its end.

2. When ye cannot find out the reaſon, a becoming reaſon of ſome diſpenſation towards the church or yourſelves; yet believe that it is not without a becoming reaſon, and be ſatisfied in your minds that it is well done, becauſe the Counſellor has done it. When you put a ſtraight ſtick in the water, it appears to your eyes to be crooked; yet you do not think or believe in your judgment that it is really crooked. That appearance is owing to your eye ſight, not to the ſtick itſelf, which remains ſtraight. So it is with us oft-times in reſpect of the diſpenſations of providence. But let faith correct the errors of ſenſe in this matter, Jer. xii. 1.

3. Wait ye, and the reaſon of the moſt myſterious diſpenſation will appear in a clear light at length. There is a promiſe for it, John xiii. 7. *What I do, thou knoweſt not now; but thou ſhalt know hereafter.* Since the Counſellor does nothing without a reaſon, he will for his own honour ſatisfy all his friends with it, and ſilence his enemies for ever: and thereby he will bountifully reward believing waiters, and confound unbelieving quarrellers of his conduct.

Sixthly, He manageth all with a depth of wiſdom. Counſel ſpeaks not only a reaſonable management, but a depth of wiſdom: for it is to things of the greateſt weight and difficulty that counſellors are required, Prov. xx. 5. 'Counſel in the heart of man is like deep water: but a man of underſtanding will draw it out.' Hereof take the following evidences.

Evidence 1. His compaſſing a great variety of ends by one and the ſame means, and all theſe deſigned. What a vaſt variety of ends did he compaſs by Joſeph's being ſold into Egypt? Hereby Jacob was tried, the naughtineſs of his ſons diſcovered, Joſeph himſelf proved, Jacob's poſterity provided for, Chriſt was typified, way was made for the greateſt events under the Old teſtament, &c. So ſome ſuffer, and the Counſellor deſigns the good of many thereby, 2 Cor. i. 6. *And whether we be afflicted, it is for your conſolation and ſalvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the ſame ſufferings, which we alſo ſuffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your conſolation and ſalvation.* In mens management there may be happy undeſigned hits; but all theſe are deſigned by the infinite mind of the Counſellor.

Evid. 2. That no man can fully reach what is in the womb of providence, in the moſt open and obvious ſteps of it. He may ſee this and the other deſign in it, but ſtill there is ſomething beyond what he ſees, Pſal. xcii. 5. 'O Lord how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep.' Sober-minded men of learning will own, that they cannot have a full and comprehenſive notion of the leaſt inſect: they know not but the Creator may have put in it ſome quality which they cannot diſcern. And ſober minded Chriſtians will own the ſame in the moſt obvious ſteps of providence, Rom. xi. 33. 'O the depth of the riches, both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God! how unſearchable are his judgments, and his ways paſt finding out!'

Evid. 3. The greateſt variety of deſigns in a diſpenſation is guarded on every ſide by the wiſdom of the Counſellor, that one ſhall not overthrow, nor interfere with another. Man's wiſdom cannot prevent, that where they have many irons in the fire together, ſome of them muſt cool, while others of them are working: but every the leaſt deſign of the Counſellor muſt take by his wiſe management, Iſa. xlvi. 10. 'My counſel ſhall ſtand, and I will do all my pleaſure.' See Joel ii. 7, 8. 'They ſhall run like mighty men, they ſhall climb the wall like men of war, and they ſhall march every one on his ways, and they ſhall not break their ranks, neither ſhall one thruſt another, they ſhall walk every one in his path; and when they fall upon the ſword, they ſhall not be wounded.' For the wheels are full of eyes round about.

Evid. 4. His bringing the greateſt of things out of the ſmalleſt beginnings. O how often does the Counſellor, in the depth of his wiſdom, rear up golden pillars on leaden baſes, and make the cloud like a man's hand at firſt, cover the whole face of the heavens? Thus he manages in the kingdom of nature: for an inſtance of which, man needs not go without himſelf; but conſider what a minute thing it is from which this body of his, growing to ſuch a bulk, in ſuch comely proportion, with ſuch a variety of organs, doth take its riſe, Pſal. cxxxix. 14. I will praiſe thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that my ſoul knoweth right well.' In the kingdom of grace; in its beginning in a ſoul, and in the world, it is as a grain of muſtard-ſeed, Matth. xiii. 31. So Pſal. lxxii. 16. 'There ſhall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof ſhall ſhake like Lebanon, and they of the city ſhall flouriſh like graſs of the earth.' How long were the beginnings of that kingdom which has now filled the earth? The ſtone is become a great mountain, filling the earth, Dan. ii. 35.

Evid. 5. His making the moſt weighty and ſurpriſing turns in matters, upon the ſmalleſt of events. If we trace the turn the affairs of the church took in Mordecai's days, to the overthrowing of Haman's deſperate plot, to the firſt ſpring of it; we will find it was a vapour that had got up into Ahaſuerus's head that he could not ſleep, Eſth. vi. 1. In the ſmalleſt of things God is very great. He that hangs the earth upon nothing, often makes a very minute circumſtance to be the hinge on which great things turn, 2 Kings iii. 23.

Evid. 6. His counteracting ſucceſsfully the united force of devils and men, in all ages ſet for the overthrow of his kingdom, Prov. xxi. 30. *There is no wiſdom, nor underſtanding, nor counſel againſt the Lord.* The ſubjects of Chriſt's kingdom are weak, and eaſily beguiled; Satan is moſt ſubtle, watchful, and inceſſant in his acting againſt them; the war has been carried on by hell againſt them through all ages; the generality of the world is on Satan's ſide: often the feet of the ſaints are almoſt ſlipt; yet the church is preſerved, not one of Chriſt's kindly ſubjects loſt. This proclaims aloud the depth of wiſdom in her King, Micah iv. 9. See Gen. iii. 15.

Evid. 7. *laſtly,* His outſhooting the devil in his own bow, and bringing good out of evil, Phil. i. 12. The malice of hell never appeared more, than in the ſufferings Chriſt himſelf was put to: yet out of theſe was the ſalvation of an elect world brought, and theſe were they that ſhook the kingdom of Satan to the foundations. The very temptations and falls of the ſaints are over-ruled to ſome advantage, Rom. viii. 28.

Uſe 1. Then whatſoever he doth, is not only well done, but beſt done, Eccleſ. iii. 14. If thou art out of Chriſt, whatever thou meeteſt with in the providence of God, it is that which for the time is beſt for the glory of God. If thou art in Chriſt, whatſoever thou meeteſt with, is for the time beſt for God's honour, and beſt for thee too. For all is the product of the depth of wiſdom. The reaſon of the difference is, that the believer being in God's covenant, God's honour and his good are joint intereſts ſecured by the covenant; unbelievers not ſo.

2. The believer may ſecurely truſt him to whom he has committed his ſoul, with the management of all that concerns him, Pſal. xxxvii. 5. *Commit thy way unto the Lord: truſt alſo in him, and he ſhall bring it to paſs.* Our anxiety ſhould be confined to our duty: to be otherwiſe anxious, as for proviſion, protection, and the like, is but the fruit of unbelief, Luke xii. 29. *And ſeek not ye what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.* Since God ſtands in the relation of a Father, and is infinitely wiſe, there is a complete ground for the ſecurity of faith, Matth. vi. 8. 'Your Father 'knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye aſk 'him.'

3. In the caſe of doubtful events, believe that the Counſellor will do what is beſt. This is what ye are to believe in ſuch a caſe, Pſal. lxxxv. 12. 'The Lord will give 'that which is good.' Here is the reſt of faith in caſes of a doubtful iſſue: and here one may ſecurely reſt waiting the iſſue, which the depth of wiſdom ſhall in due time bring forth. *Dominus meus omnia,* &c. *Luther.*

Seventhly, and *laſtly,* He is the beſt Counſellor; there is none like him. There are many counſellors; no body wants ſome: but his name is *Counſellor,* as if there were not another; for he is the Counſellor by way of eminency.

Here we ſhall,

1ſt, Confirm the truth of this aſſertion, That Chriſt is the beſt Counſellor.

2dly, Shew wherein he counſels ſinners.

3dly, How he gives his counſel.

Firſt, To *confirm the truth of this aſſertion, That Chriſt is the beſt Counſellor,* conſider,

1. He is of the Father's choice, and nomination for a Counſellor to us, 1 Cor. i. 30. 'He is made of God 'unto us wiſdom.' When the Father from eternity pitying fallen man in his ruined ſtate, was thinking on a Counſellor, that might by his wiſdom retrieve their ſinking affairs, he pitched on Jeſus Chriſt, Pſal. lxxxix. 19. *I have laid help upon one that is mighty.* The higheſt angel was too weak for ſuch a burden; but the Son, who was of the cabinet-council of Heaven, was the choice; and ſinners are referred to him, Matth. xvii. 5.

2. He is the ſaints choice in all ages for a Counſellor; who all with one voice ſay, Pſal. lxxiii. 24, 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee. My fleſh and my heart faileth: but God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* Men are by nature out of themſelves, and ſo will keep the guiding of themſelves in their own hands: but as ſoon as they come to themſelves, they renounce their own wiſdom, will no more believe their own eyes, but by faith chuſe him for their Counſellor.

3. He never miſſeth the point in his counſelling, Prov. xxx. 5. 'Every word of God is pure: he is a 'ſhield unto them that put their truſt in him.' The beſt of counſellors among men will miſs at a time: but infinite wiſdom is not liable to miſtake. He ſees, and ſees through all that is paſt and preſent, and thoroughly foreſees all that is to come. How can he err in his counſel?

Secondly, Wherein doth Chriſt counſel ſinners? He counſels them,

1. In their greateſt concerns, their concerns for eternity. In theſe they have leaſt ſkill; in theſe a miſtaking of their meaſures is moſt fatal: ſo his counſel reſpects theſe chiefly. And he counſels them,

(1.) To the way of peace, which they know not, Rev. iii. 18. The goſpel is Chriſt's counſel to ſinners: thereby he points them the way to the favour of God, the pardon of their ſin, the ſecuring to themſelves a right to heaven, and freedom from the wrath and curſe of God. He preſſeth and plies them to take that counſel, with the ſtrongeſt arguments.

(2.) In the way to peace and happineſs, how they being ſet on it, may keep it till they arrive at perfect happineſs, Pſal. lxxiii. 24. His clients are in a wilderneſs while in this world; and he is to be inſtead of eyes to them there. In every new emergent difficulty, they have acceſs to his counſel, what courſe to take in ſuch a temptation, dark ſtep, or caſe.

2. In their leſſer concerns, viz. the things of time. He refuſes not to be their Counſellor, in the matters of this preſent life. And,

(1.) In their matters of greater weight, he allows ſinners to ſeek his counſel; and it is their ſin that they neglect it, Joſh. ix. 14. There is an oracle to be conſulted in our temporal, as well as in our ſpiritual affairs; for the promiſe reacheth the one as well as the other, Pſal. cxii. 5. *A good man——will guide his affairs with diſcretion.*

(2.) In their ſmalleſt matters, Prov. iii. 6. 'In all thy 'ways acknowledge him, and he ſhall direct thy paths.' There is nothing ſo ſmall but the providence of God reaches it, even to the very hairs of the head, Matth. x. 30. and on very ſmall things great matters may depend. Things ſmall in themſelves may be very great in their conſequences; therefore we have need of a Counſellor in the leaſt.

So Chriſt is a Counſellor for ſinners in all their matters, of whatſoever kind. And it is a peculiar excellency of this Counſellor, that he can give counſel in every thing. Men conſult divines in their ſoul's caſe, phyſicians in the caſe of their body, laywers in the caſe of their eſtate, men experienced in their occupation: but Chriſt is a Counſellor in them all.

Thirdly, How doth Chriſt give his counſel?

1. He propoſeth his counſel in and by his word, Pſal. cxix. 24. *Thy teſtimonies are my——counſellors.* If ye would have his counſel, ye muſt go believingly to his word. That is it by which the anſwer is given to thoſe that conſult the holy oracle. And there is no caſe can happen to one, but in the word there is proper counſel for it. This is a myſtery to the formal and prophane; but the exerciſed Chriſtian knows it by experience to be true.

2. He clears it, and opens it, and confirms it by his providence, Pſal. xxxii. 8. *I will inſtruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou ſhalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.* Providence taken by itſelf, without reſpect to the word, is a very uncertain light to walk by, as in Jonah's finding the ſhip going to Tarſhiſh: but when providence is conſidered in ſubordination to the word, it is of eminent uſe for diſcovering the Lord's mind in particular caſes, as in the caſe of Peter, Acts x. 17. 'Now while Peter doubted in himſelf what this 'viſion which he had ſeen ſhould mean; behold, the 'men which were ſent from Cornelius, had made in'quiry for Simon's houſe, and ſtood before the gate.' And therefore all tender Chriſtians will be ſerious obſervers of providence, Pſal. cvii. 43. 'Whoſo is wiſe, and 'will obſerve theſe things, even they ſhall underſtand 'the loving-kindneſs of the Lord.'

3. He makes it effectual by his Holy Spirit, John xvi. 13. 'When he the Spirit of truth is come, he will

'guide you into all truth.' He ſhines on the word, and on the work of providence, ſets both in a clear light, and enables as well as determines the believer to follow it. So the counſel of the great Counſellor is the *light of life*, John viii. 12. promiſed to all Chriſt's followers. Men following their own wiſdom and deluſive counſels, cannot expect the Spirit's efficacy; and the word and providence cannot be effectual without the Spirit; but the Spirit makes both effectual to thoſe that wait for Chriſt's counſel.

USE 1. Then take him for your Counſellor, renouncing all other. And,

1. Renounce your own wiſdom, Do not lean to your own abilities for the management of yourſelf; but know your own wiſdom to be but weakneſs and folly, Prov. iii. 5, 6. *Truſt in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own underſtanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he ſhall direct thy paths.* Fallen man loſt his ſpiritual eye-ſight, and he can ſee nothing aright in ſpirituals till he go to the Counſellor, Rev. iii. 18.; and he is apt to go wrong even in other things.

2. Renounce the counſel of the world, and ſhut your ears to it, Prov. xix. 27. 'Ceaſe, my ſon, to hear the 'inſtruction that cauſeth to err from the words of know'ledge.' Mind it is the character of a happy man, that he *walks not in the counſel of the ungodly, nor ſtandeth in the way of ſinners*, Pſal. i. 1.; and the character of one in a natural ſtate, Eph. ii. 2. *to walk according to the courſe of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air.* They who make the way of the world their rule, muſt periſh with the world.

3. Take Chriſt for your Counſellor inſtead of all other, Prov. xxiii. 26. 'My ſon, give me thine heart; 'and let thine eyes obſerve my ways.' Give up yourſelves wholly to his management; let him be your ſole Counſellor, and that for all things. You need a guide, the Father has given him to you for that end, Iſa. lv. 4. 'Behold, I have given him for a leader unto the people.' Cloſe with him as your Guide and Counſellor.

USE 2. Follow the counſel that he is giving you. Chriſt is counſelling you all in the goſpel; even thoſe that will not conſult him, and have refuſed his counſel, he is counſelling ſtill. His counſels are two.

1. He is counſelling you to believe in himſelf, John vi. 29. to come to him, to come to his market of free grace, and buy there without money or price, Rev. iii. 18. Iſa. lv. 1. to take him for a Head, and Huſband, for all.

2. To be holy; to give up with your ſinful courſes, that will ruin you; and to betake yourſelves to the way of holineſs; without which there is no ſeeing the Lord, Ezek. xviii. 31. *Caſt away from you all your tranſgreſſions, whereby ye have tranſgreſſed, and make you a new heart, and a new ſpirit; for why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael?* See both together, Prov. ix. 5, 6. 'Come, eat 'of my bread, (ſaith Wiſdom,) and drink of the wine 'which I have mingled. Forſake the fooliſh, and live; 'and go in the way of underſtanding.'

USE 3. *laſtly*, Then make uſe of Chriſt as a Counſellor, by your conſulting him daily, that ye may not walk but by his direction. And,

1. Be habitually tender in labouring to know the mind of God, as to ſin and duty, in particular caſes; and in your common, as well as in your religious affairs, Iſa. xxviii. 26.

2. Be upright and ſincere in your conſulting him, lying open to the divine determination, Jer. xlii. 20. compare chap. xli. 17.

3. Humbly entertain the divine determination though it fall to be croſs to your inclination. Do not, like Balaam, tempt God, till ye get an anſwer to your own mind, Numb. xxii.

4. Beware of going croſs to duty cleared, and rejecting God's counſel given, 1 Kings xiii.

5. *laſtly*, Pray much; ejaculatory, and ſecret; and carefully obſerve providences, while ye are waiting for the Lord's counſel. The light is from the Lord, if it is ſtrengthening to duty, and overpower corruptions againſt it.

CHRIST the MIGHTY GOD.

ISAIAH ix. 6.

——*His Name ſhall be called——The Mighty God*——

These words in the Hebrew are, God Mighty One. This is the third ſyllable of the name of our Lord Redeemer; and as this name is given to him as God-man, ſo this ſyllable of it natively reſpects both. As he is God, he is the true God; as he is man, he is the Mighty One; the greateſt heroes are but weaklings to him.

DOCT. *Jeſus Chriſt, the Prince preſented and given to us of the Father, is and ſhews himſelf to be true God, the Mighty One.*

In diſcourſing this doctrine, I ſhall ſhew,
I. That Chriſt is the true God.
II. That the man Chriſt is the Mighty One.
III. *laſtly*, Apply,

I. I ſhall ſhew, that *Chriſt is the true God.* This appears from theſe following things.

1. That he is the true God, the ſcripture expreſsly calls him, and aſſerts him to be ſo, John i. 1. 'In the 'beginning was the Word, and the Word was God.' Acts xx. 28. *Feed the church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own blood,* Rom. ix. 5. 'Of whom as con'cerning the fleſh, Chriſt came, who is over all, God 'bleſſed for ever;' the true God, 1 John v. 20. 'This 'is the true God, and eternal life;' Jehovah or Lord, Mal. iii. 1. 'The Lord whom ye ſeek, ſhall ſuddenly 'come to his temple; even the meſſenger of the co'venant.' This name is peculiar to God only, Pſal. lxxxiii. 18. *That men may know, that thou whoſe name alone is Jehovah, art the Moſt high over all the earth.*

2. The attributes or perfections of God, diſtinguiſhing God from all created beings, are in him, and aſcribed to him. He is eternal, or from everlaſting, Micah v. 2. independent and almighty, Rev. i. 8. every where preſent, John iii. 13. omniſcient, John xxi. 17. and unchangeable, Heb. i. 11, 12.

3. The works peculiar to God alone, are done by him, and aſcribed to him. He is the creator of all things, John i. 3. and preſerver of them in their being, Heb. i. 2, 3. He raiſeth the dead by his own power, and at his own pleaſure, John v. 21. 26. He is the Saviour of ſinners, Hoſ. i. 7. and there is no ſaviour beſides God, chap. xiii. 4. yea, whatſoever the Father doth, he doth, John v. 19.

4. Divine worſhip, which muſt be given to God only, Matth. iv. 10. is due to him: for the angels are commanded to *worſhip him*, Heb. i. 6. Every one is to give the ſame honour to him, as to the Father, John v. 23. They are bleſſed that truſt in him, by faith reſting on him, Pſal. ii. 12. while they are curſed that put

their truſt in man, Jer. xvii. 5. He is the object of prayer, Acts xxvii. 59. and we are baptized in his name, Matth. xxviii. 19.

5. *laſtly*, He is equal with the Father, Phil. ii. 6. and one with him, John x. 30. Now, ſeeing God will not give his glory to another, Iſa. xlviii. 11. it follows, that though Chriſt is a diſtinct perſon, yet he is not a diſtinct God from the Father. And therefore he is, with the Father and Holy Ghoſt, the one Supreme Moſt High God.

II. I ſhall ſhew, *That the man Chriſt is the Mighty One.*

1*ſt*, He doth and has done works that no other could do, John xv. 24. His works proclaim him the Mighty One in all reſpects; mighty in the reach of his wiſdom, mighty in treaſures, mighty in moyen and intereſt, and mighty in battle. And there are four mighty works of Chriſt to which there is an eye in this his name.

1. His fully anſwering all the demands of the broken law, in the room of the elect, Pſal. lxxxix. 19. A work none elſe could have done; a weight none elſe could have borne; a vaſt debt none elſe could have paid, and cleared. But he did it by his birth, life, and death; and completely, ſo that he got up the diſcharge, 1 Tim. iii. 16.

2. His deſtroying of ſin, Gen. iii. 15. The whole ſin of the whole elect, he gave a dead blow to, at once upon the croſs; to the guilt and power of it; ſo that its utter deſtruction in them all was as much ſecured thereby, as Chriſt's death by his being nailed to the croſs, Rom. vi. 6. *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of ſin might be deſtroyed, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve ſin.* He is now purſuing that blow, in the converſion and ſanctification of the elect; driving out ſin by degrees from among them: he will give the laſt ſtroke at the laſt day, and then that helliſh flood ſhall be as much dried up, as it had never been.

3. His victory over death and the grave, Hoſ. xiii. 14. 'I will ranſom them from the power of the grave: 'I will redeem them from death; O death, I will be 'thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy deſtruction.' Sin entering, death went out over the world a conqueror, armed with a ſting that none could pluck out. But Chriſt encountered death, and dying was the deſtruction of it, and of the grave its fellow, viz. in reſpect of all his. The victory will be complete at the laſt day, 1 Cor. xv. 26. Then *the laſt enemy that ſhall be deſtroyed, is death,* Iſa. xxv. 8. Then God *will ſwallow up death in victory.*

4. *laſtly*, His victory over the devil, Gen. iii. 15. Satan conquered all mankind in Adam; but here was a man match and more for him. He engaged with the enemy as a tempter, in the wilderneſs, and he foiled him; as a roaring lion on the croſs, and overcame him, Col. ii. 15. as a violent poſſeſſor, in the hearts of the elect, from time to time; and he turns him out, out of one after another, till he ſhall not have a foot of ground in the elect world. And then he will attack him in his proper poſſeſſion, viz. the reprobate, ſtanding on the left hand of the Judge, and drive him and them away off the earth into the pit. So may we ſay, Pſal. xcviii. 1. 'O ſing unto the Lord a new ſong, for he hath done 'marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm 'hath gotten him the victory.'

2*dly*, He hath all at his command in heaven and earth, whether created perſons or things, Matth. xxviii. 18. The man Chriſt is heir of all things, Heb. i. 2. Lord of all the works of God's hands, Pſal. viii. What a Mighty One muſt he then be?

3*dly*, *laſtly*, Being God as well as man, his power is infinite. Not that infinite power is ſubjected in the human nature of Chriſt; a created thing, and ſuch is his human nature, is not capable of infinite perfections. But the human nature and divine nature make but one perſon in him; and ſo he who is the man, is of infinite power.

USE 1. This ſerves to refute the damnable hereſy of thoſe who impugn the ſupreme Godhead of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. This age of apoſtaſy, having been unfruitful under the goſpel, comes naturally to queſtion the foundation-points of Chriſtianity. And ſuch is this, that overthrows all our ſalvation at once. When the Father provided a Prince for loſt ſinners to ſave them, he gave them one who was *God Mighty One.* None of inferior dignity could ſerve the purpoſe.

2. It ſpeaks terror to all the enemies of Chriſt, in principles or practice. Ah! ſinners, why do ye reject him for a Prince, trample on his laws? &c. Ye cannot make head againſt him, who is *God Mighty One,* who can cruſh you in pieces as a moth. True, he does not at every occaſion exert his power againſt the rebellious ſons of men; but pray, conſider this is the time of his grace, wherein he is waiting for your repentance: if that were over, then follows that, Luke xix. 27. *But thoſe mine enemies, which would not that I ſhould reign over them, bring hither, and ſlay them before me.*

3. It ſpeaks comfort to the church and every believer in their low eſtate. Whatever be your wants, he is able to ſupply them; your weakneſs, there is might enough in him; be your caſe never ſo hopeleſs, it is never without the reach of his help. Let believers learn to rejoice in their Prince, their head in whom they are complete.

4. *laſtly*, It ſerves to exhort all to take him for their Prince. O kiſs ye the Son preſented to you in the goſpel-offer! renounce other lords, and by faith embrace him. And therefore conſider,

(1.) His might will be for you, for your proviſion, protection, and happineſs, if ye be his.

(2.) It will be againſt you for time and eternity, if ye refuſe him.

CHRIST the EVERLASTING FATHER.

ISAIAH ix. 6.

——*His name ſhall be called——The Everlaſting Father*——

THIS is the fourth ſyllable of Chriſt's name. Having called him a *Child*, a *Son*: a *Child born*, a *Son given*: it is ſhown here, that though he is a *Son*, he is a *Father* too; yea, though he is a *Child born*, he is the *Father of eternity*, i. e. *The everlaſting Father*, which plainly leads us to his divine nature.

DOCT. *Jeſus Chriſt, the Prince preſented and given to us of the Father, is himſelf the everlaſting Father.*

In handling this doctrine, I ſhall ſhew,

I. In what reſpects Chriſt is the everlaſting Father.

II. What a Father he is.

III. *laſtly*, Improve the ſubject.

I. *In what reſpects is Chriſt the everlaſting Father?*

1*ſt*, He is the Father of all things, who was from everlaſting before all. He is with his Father and Spirit one God, the common Father of all by creation, 1 Cor.

viii. 6. ‘ But to us there is but one God, the Father, ‘ of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord ‘ Jeſus Chriſt, by whom are all things, and we by him.’ Hence he is called *the beginning of the creation of God*, Rev. iii. 14. from whom all had their beginning. So he is the Father of all men more particularly, Mal. ii. 10. of their ſouls and bodies, but eſpecially of their ſouls, Heb. xii. 9. all men, yea, all creatures whatſoever, owing their being to him, as a ſon to the father. And ſo being before all creatures, himſelf is uncreated and eternal, Prov. viii. 23.

2*dly*, He is the Father of all believers, in a peculiar manner, who will be to everlaſting; and that in two reſpects.

1. As he is, with his Father and Spirit, one God, Eph. iv. 6. the one God and Father of the family of heaven, who has adopted believers for his ſons and daughters, 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. And thus we call him with the Father and Spirit, our Father, Matth. vi. 9.

2. As he is Mediator God-man, Heb. ii. 13. ‘ Behold, I, and the children which God hath given me.’ So believers are his children, his ſeed, Iſ. xliii. 10. ſtanding in a peculiar relation to him as ſuch. And of this relation there is a threefold ground.

(1.) Believers are of his fleſh and of his bones, Eph. v. 30. A plain alluſion to the woman's being formed of Adam's body; whereby it comes to paſs, that all mankind do entirely owe their original to Adam; all his poſterity being born of a woman who was made of him. So all believers owe their original entirely to the body of Chriſt, caſt into the ſleep of death on the croſs, Rom. vii. 4. ‘ Ye are become dead to the law by the body of ‘ Chriſt, that ye ſhould be married to another, even to ‘ him who is raiſed from the dead.’ Iſa. liii. 10. ‘ When ‘ thou ſhalt make his ſoul an offering for ſin, he ſhall ‘ ſee his ſeed.’ And herein Abraham was a type of him; of whoſe body, when in a ſort dead, a ſeed innumerable as the ſtars did ſpring, Rom. iv. 18, 19. Heb. xi. 12. So from the body of Chriſt dead on the croſs and grave, ſpring the innumerable company of believers that ever were, are, or ſhall be, John xii. 24. 32. ‘ Verily verily I ſay unto you, Except a corn of wheat ‘ fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone: but if ‘ it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. And I, if I be ‘ lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.’

(2.) They are begotten of him into their new life and nature, which they have as believers, Deut xxxii. 6. 18. The ſeed is the word of the goſpel, James i. 18. that incorruptible ſeed, 1 Pet. i. 23. quickened by his Spirit, John vi. 36. whereby being made to believe, and ſo united to Chriſt, they are made new creatures, Eph. i. 13. 2 Cor. v. 17. So that as they owe the purchaſe of their gracious being to his merit, they owe their actual gracious being to his Spirit, both wholly.

(3.) They do in a particular manner bear, and were appointed to bear Chriſt's image, as children of that Father, Rom. viii. 29. Believers bear not only the image of God, but the image of Chriſt. There is a difference betwixt theſe two. The latter implies all that the former does; but it takes in more alſo. There are two parts of it.

1. Conformity to Chriſt in his holineſs. And in this reſpect believers are like him, as the wax impreſſed with the ſeal bears the like figure, Eph. i. 13. John i. 16. And here is the image of God, which all believers do bear, and which is a part of the image of Chriſt. This image of God believers have not at the firſt hand, as Adam had it; but at the ſecond hand, viz. from Chriſt; as Adam's children would have had it from him, if he had ſtood, and as we now actually have Satan's image, impreſſed by Satan at the fall on Adam, and by Adam communicated to us. So God being to reſtore his image to fallen man, firſt impreſſed it on the man Chriſt, that from him it might be communicated to believers in him. The man Chriſt was made like God, as a ſon is like a father; and believers are made like the man Chriſt. On the man Chriſt that image was impreſſed, and from him it is expreſſed on us, and thence called *Chriſt's image*.

That is, God making the man Chriſt the ſecond Adam, made him after his own image, in knowledge, righteouſneſs, and holineſs, with dominion over the creatures. So believers being created again in Chriſt, he communicates to them of that knowledge, righteouſneſs, &c. which image of Chriſt is begun now, will be perfected after in all believers. All this is clear from 1 Cor. xv. 49. ‘ As we have borne the image of the ‘ earthly, we ſhall alſo bear the image of the heavenly.’ Rom. viii. 29. ‘ For whom he did foreknow, he alſo ‘ did predeſtinate to be conformed to the image of his ‘ Son.’ Hence believers are ſaid to be *created in Chriſt*, Eph. ii. 10. As Eve was made in the image of God, being made in the image of Adam, Gen. ii. 18. ſo the church is made in the image of Chriſt.

2. Conformity to Chriſt in his ſufferings. This is it that is particularly aimed at, Rom. viii. 29. compared with ver. 28. Hence believers are ſaid to be *partakers of the ſufferings of Chriſt*, 1 Pet. iv. 13. and their ſufferings are called *his*, 2 Cor. i. 5. In his ſufferings he gave us an example to follow, 1 Pet. ii. 21. What can be more natural than that the members of a ſuffering head be ſuffering members? that the followers of a crucified Chriſt bear the croſs after him?

This conformity lies in three things; for the wicked ſuffer too.

(1.) Believers ſufferings are deſtructive of ſin, Iſa. xxvii. 9. *By this therefore ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his ſin.* The more Chriſt ſuffered, the more the works of the devil were brought to ruin. The man who by his ſufferings is made more holy, more looſed from the world, more preſſing after God in Chriſt, is conformed to Chriſt in his ſufferings. Though indeed the progreſs may not be ſenſible ſometimes, more than that of the ſun in the firmament, or a tree in the earth.

(2.) Believers welcome their ſufferings on that account, as they tend to the ruin of ſin; as the ſick man does a bitter drug for the ſake of health, Matth. xvi. 24, 25. It is true, they may have their fits of impatience under the rod, and may be deſirous to be free; but they will turn towards a reſignation. Our Lord Jeſus, who never in the leaſt murmured, ſaid, Matth. xxvi. 39. *O my Father, if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from me: nevertheleſs, not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

(3.) Believers ſufferings will have a happy and glorious iſſue. As Chriſt went to the crown by the croſs, ſo will they, 1 Tim. ii. 12. While the ſufferings of others will end in eternal ſuffering, their preſent ſufferings will end in glory: their longeſt and blackeſt night will have a bleſſed morning, an eternal day; with which their worſt nights of trouble are not to be compared, Rom. viii. 17.

Thus he is the believer's Father; and he is their everlaſting Father.

1. The relation is never interrupted from the firſt moment it is made. Once in God's family, never out of it again, for ſhorter or longer time. Their Father may frown on them, and chaſtiſe them, and hide his love from them; but he is their Father ſtill, Pſal. lxxxix. 30.——33. The adoption laſts, they are ſtill of Chriſt's body, their new nature is never loſt, and his image is never quite defaced in them.

2. The relation is never ended. He will be their Father through all eternity. Among men there is no interruption of the Fatherly relation, while the father and the ſon live; but death diſſolves it. But here death cannot diſſolve the relation, Rom. viii. 38, 39. He will be, and they will be forever: and he will be their Father for ever, and they his children, Rev. xxi. 7.

II. *What a Father is Chriſt?* He is a non-ſuch Father.

1. He is the moſt honourable Father; the King of kings, and Lord of lords. None whoſe eyes are opened, but they value this relation to Chriſt more than all the fading honours of the world, 1 John iii. 1. *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the ſons of God!* Moſes preferred it to the being called the ſon of the daughter of a king, Heb. xi. 24, 25.

2. The moſt loving and compaſſionate Father. His love has gone beyond that of fathers and mothers too, even to their ſucking children, Iſa. xlix. 15, 16. David wiſhed he had died for his rebellious ſon, but Chriſt really died for his.

3. The moſt helpful Father. Many times fathers, though they fain would, cannot help their children; but he can help his in all caſes. In the greateſt danger he is a refuge; in all wants, he has ſtore for their ſupply; if they be held at ſhort commons at any time, it is becauſe he ſees it beſt for them. In death, when neither father nor mother can help, he will, Pſal. xlviii. 14. *This God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.* He is ever a preſent help.

4. The richeſt Father, that has the beſt inheritance to give his children, 1 Pet. i. 4. 'An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for them.' He has prepared for them a better country, a glorious city, a palace for their manſion-houſe; and the richeſt treaſures; and theſe ſuch as ſhall never go from them, nor they from them.

5. The wiſeſt Father, *God only wiſe.* To his diſpoſal one may ſecurely reſign himſelf abſolutely. He ever ſeeks his childrens welfare: and he cannot be miſtaken in his meaſures.

6. *laſtly,* He has provided the beſt attendants for his children in their life. Angels are miniſtering ſpirits to them during their life, Heb. i. 14. and at their death they carry their ſouls into heaven, Luke xvi. 22. Yea, himſelf is ever with them, in life and in death.

USE. Then, ſinners, take him for your everlaſting Father. Come out of Satan's family: *Come out from among them, and be ye ſeparate. Forget your father's houſe, and your own people.* He is preſented and given to you the Everlaſting Father; receive him. And,

1. Ye that are fatherleſs. The Father of your fleſh is dead and gone; ye have the fewer to care for you, and ſee to your welfare. Here is an everlaſting Father for you.

2. Ye that ſee yourſelves in a helpleſs caſe like orphans in the world. Created props and pillars have been taken from you, one after another; and ye ſee yourſelves fram'd ſted. Here is a father for you, Hoſ. xiv. 3. 'In thee the fatherleſs findeth mercy.'

3. All of you will find yourſelves in ſuch a caſe as none in the world will be able to relieve. Chuſe him now for your Father, who will be everlaſting.

Motive 1. He is your Father by creation, let him be your Father by choice. He has the firſt and beſt right to you: if one is to ſerve, will he not rather chuſe to ſerve his father than another?

Mot. 2. There are bleſſed privileges of this ſtate. As,

(1.) You will have acceſs to him with holy boldneſs, Eph. iii. 12. He will be well pleaſed with your voice, Cant. ii. 14.

(2.) Special immunities and freedoms, as king's children, freedom from the law as a covenant of works; free from the curſe; free from the hurt of every thing.

(3.) Fatherly love and pity, Pſal. ciii. 13. He will diſtinguiſh between weakneſs and wickedneſs. He corrects with a fatherly reluctancy, Lam. iii. 33. *He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.*

(4.) Protection, Prov. xiv. 26. 'In the fear of the Lord is ſtrong confidence: and his children ſhall have a place of refuge.' Proviſion both for ſoul and body, and ſeaſonable correction.

(5.) An inheritance and portion according to the Father's quality, Rom. viii. 17. *Heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt.*

Mot. 3. *laſtly,* If ye take him not for your Father, ye cannot eſcape him as your wrathful Judge.

CHRIST the Prince of Peace.

ISAIAH ix. 6.

——*His name ſhall be called the*——*Prince of Peace.*

THIS is the laſt ſyllable of the name of our glorious Redeemer. It conſiſts of two letters. (1.) He is a *Prince,* an eminent one, (2.) *Peace.* He is *The Prince of peace.* As *the Father of eternity* is the everlaſting Father; ſo *the Prince of peace* is the peaceful Prince.

DOCT. *Jeſus Chriſt preſented and given to us of the Father, is the peaceful Prince.*

Of Chriſt's principality we have already ſpoken; we are now to conſider him as the peaceful Prince. And in proſecuting this doctrine, I ſhall only ſhew, in what reſpects Chriſt is the peaceful Prince; and then make ſome practical improvement.

In what reſpects is Chriſt the peaceful Prince? And, Firſt, More generally, we take it up in theſe three particulars. He is the peaceful Prince,

1. In reſpect of diſpoſition. He is a Prince of the moſt peaceable diſpoſition, Matth. xi. 29. *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.* Peace is woven into his nature, though he is the mighty One, who is of ſuch power as to frown a ſinner to deſtruction; yet his great power is tempered with the greateſt meekneſs and peacefulneſs. The prince of this world is the roaring lion; the Prince of heaven, the Lamb, John i. 29. even on his throne, Rev. v. 6.

2. In reſpect of action and operation. Peace is his work he purſued all along, and doth ſtill purſue, Eph. ii. 14. 'For he is our peace.' He is the great Peacemaker. Adam's ſin and the ſin of his poſterity ſet all at red war, and kept them ſo, but Chriſt the ſecond Adam travels for peace. Bleſſed are the peace makers, and he is bleſſed for ever on his peace-making, Phil. ii. 8, 9.

3. In reſpect of the ſtate of his kingdom, Rom. xiv. 17. 'The kingdom of God is——peace.' Peace in the language of the Holy Ghoſt in the Old Teſtament is proſperity; ſo a peaceful Prince is a proſperous one. Thus Solomon was a type of him, who had a reign of the greateſt peace and proſperity, Pſal. lxxii. 7. His ſubjects may enjoy peace, whoever want it.

Secondly, more particularly. And,

Secondly, More particularly. And,

1ſt, He is the peaceful Prince, peaceful of diſpoſition, in the following reſpects.

1. He bears long with his enemies, he is *long-ſuffering*, 2 Pet. iii. 9. Many calls he gives them which they neglect; but he calls them ſtill: many affronts they do to him, yet his deſerved wrath is held in: and ſtill he waits, if ſo be they may be brought to repentance, Rom. iii. 4. There muſt be a mighty inclination to peace where it is ſo.

2. He bears much at the hands of his friends, but never caſts them off, John xiii. 2. O the weakneſs, witleſſneſs, and folly that hangs about them! O the ingratitude, untenderneſs, and backſlidings they fall into! They reflect diſhonour many times on him by their way; but they experience him to be the Prince of peace, Pſal. lxxviii. 38.

3. He is eaſy of acceſs, for poor ſinners. The worſt of ſinners may have acceſs to him, if they will, John vi. 37. ‘Him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out.’ Papiſts make mediators to him: but there needs none to him; whoever comes to him, is welcome. And there needs none to God but him. Whatever is their buſineſs in the court of heaven, he will readily do it for them.

4. He is *ready to forgive*, Pſal. lxxxvi. 5. His offending friends are readily pardoned, and reſtored to wonted favour: his rebellious enemies are readily pardoned on their ſubmiſſion, and received into the number of his friends. His peacefulneſs is ſuch, that peace is his delight.

5. He is very familiar with his true ſubjects. He treats all his ſervants, not as ſervants, but as friends; and communicates to them his ſecrets, John xv. 15. ‘Henceforth I call you not ſervants; for the ſervant knoweth not what his lord doth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my father, I have made known unto you.’ Love and good will ſhines forth in his countenance.

6. The afflicting of his people, is as it were againſt the grain with him, Lam. iii. 33. *He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.* There is a neceſſity for it, for which he is obliged to do it, 1 Pet. i. 6. ‘Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a ſeaſon (if need be) ye are in heavineſs through manifold temptations.’ The apoſtle diſtinguiſheth between mens correcting and his, in Heb. xii. 10. *They verily for a few days chaſtened us, after their own pleaſure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holineſs.* And in it he carries along the pity of a father, Pſal. ciii. 13, 14. and ſo is *afflicted in their affliction*, Iſ. lxiii. 9.

7. *laſtly*, He bore his own ſufferings with the utmoſt peaceableneſs, meekneſs and patience. The angels ſang at his birth, *Peace on earth:* and the earth never ſaw ſuch a pattern of peace. In his life, which was a continued ſuffering, he never ſhewed the leaſt diſcompoſure. In his death he prayed for his enemies.

2dly, He is the peaceful prince, peaceful in action and operation. He acted for peace, as never another did. He brought about ſuch peace as never had been known, if he had not taken it in hand. And here we may conſider,

1. What peace is effected by this Prince of Peace.

(1.) Peace with God, Iſa. liii. 5 *The chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him.* Sinners were at war with God, and God with them; and there could be no peace betwixt the parties, till the Prince of peace turned to be mediator of the peace. The war went on, ſinners doing as they could againſt God, and God in a ſtate of war with the ſinner, blocking up all commerce with heaven of a ſaving ſort, &c. But he ſteps in, lays hands on both, and makes up the peace.

(2.) Peace among men. Mens peace with God being loſt, the peace among themſelves was broken too. See the caſe of mankind by nature in this point, Tit. iii. 3. ‘For we ourſelves alſo were ſometimes fooliſh, diſobedient, deceived, ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.’ But Chriſt brings them together again in him, to love and charity one to another, Iſ. xi. 6. And wherever he makes peace with God for a man, he implants love to men in that man's heart. Particularly, he made peace between Jews and Gentiles, Eph. ii. 14.

(3.) Peace within men, peace of conſcience, Rom. xiv. 17. *The kingdom of God is righteouſneſs and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.* Sin by itſelf breaks the peace within one's own breaſt. The guilt of it is like a thorn in the fleſh, that till it be plucked out, ceaſes not to gall; the reign of it is like a tyrant in the houſe, that inſlaves, and keeps in diſturbance all therein. Chriſt the Prince of peace by his blood and Spirit, only can reſtore the true peace within.

2. What is his work about the peace, that three-fold peace?

(1.) He purchaſed it by his precious blood, Eph. ii. 14, 15. There is a peace the wicked have, that is a ſtolen and uſurped peace, known by this mark, that it is a peace in ſin, James iii. 17. But the peace of the Prince of peace is a dear bought peace. It coſt him to be denied to his own peace, and ſwim through a red ſea of ſuffering for it, Iſa. liii. 5. *The chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him.*

(2.) He makes the peace by his own efficacy. The covenant of grace is the covenant of peace, and he is the Mediator of it. He travels betwixt God and the rebel ſinner, till the reconciliation is made. He does by his Spirit bring the ſinner into the covenant of peace, and by his interceſſion obtains peace with God for him. He by the ſame Spirit unites men to himſelf by faith, and to one another in love. And by his blood ſprinkled on the ſoul, he removes the guilt of ſin, and plucks out the thorn; and by his ſanctifying Spirit breaks the power of turbulent luſts, and ſo he creates peace, Iſa. lvii. 19.

(3.) He maintains the peace made, Iſa. xxvi. 3. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whoſe mind is ſtayed on thee: becauſe he truſteth in thee.* He is the believer's reſident at the court of heaven, that takes up emergent differences, and hinders matters to come to a total rupture betwixt God and them any more. And it is by the efficacy of his blood and Spirit that peace within men and love among men who are his, are continued.

(4.) He reſtores the peace when at any time it is brangled, Iſa. lvii. 18. *I have ſeen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him alſo, and reſtore comforts unto him, and to his mourners.* While believers are in this world they are upon a ſea; and in that ſea they often meet with ſtorms. Sometimes the ſtorm blows from above, ſometimes from without, ſometimes from within; ſometimes fightings without, and fears within; yea ſometimes all three blow together. But the Prince of peace again clears the ſky above, Job xxxiii. 23, 24. He ‘ſtills the tumult of the people,’ Pſal. lxv. 7. and quells all diſturbance within, Iſa. lvii 19.

(5.) *laſtly*, He perfects the peace. It is begun now, but he will not leave it imperfect, Pſal. cxxxviii. 8. ‘The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me.’ He began Iſrael's peace in bringing them out of Egypt, and perfected it in bringing them to Canaan: ſo he begins his people's peace in their converſion, and perfects it in glorification. Their peace now is liable to a great mixture of diſturbance: but he will render it perfect at length, without the leaſt trouble, Rev. xxi. 4.

3dly, He is the peaceful Prince, in the peaceful ſtate of his kingdom, in the proſperity attending it. He is the true Solomon (Peaceful;) and no king of Iſrael had ſuch a peaceable and proſperous reign as Solomon; that his kingdom might be a type of Chriſt's, the Prince of peace, as David's was a type of it in the wars thereof. And,

1. Every one of his ſubjects is, by his wiſe management, put in a ſtate of peace, Micah iv. 4. *They ſhall ſit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and none*

ſhall make them afraid. He has procured them peace with God, among themſelves, and within themſelves: what then ſhould diſcompoſe them? It is true, *in the world they muſt have tribulation,* but in their prince *they have peace* to balance that, John xvi. 33. Having a good God, communion with good people, and a good conſcience; they may, in peace, bear through all the troubles of a preſent evil world.

2. The peace of his kingdom is the fruit of war, and victory in that war. What made Solomon's reign ſo peaceable, was David's wars and victories. Our Lord Chriſt was a man of war; he fought and overcame ſin, death, and the devil; and the peace of his kingdom now, is the fruit of that. The wicked's peace is the fruit of a conqueſt, like that of Iſſachar, who *ſaw that reſt was good, and the land that it was pleaſant; and bowed his ſhoulder to bear, and became a ſervant unto tribute,* Gen. xlix 15 and like that of the ſtrong man keeping his houſe, in which caſe all things are at peace. So their peace is merely precarious; but God's people's peace is ſure.

3. Hence in his kingdom is the greateſt wealth and abundance. There is an abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteouſneſs, which his ſubjects receive, Rom. v. 17. ſo that they are made a *royal prieſthood,* 1 Pet. ii. 9. The fruits of the victory over ſin, death, and Satan, are among them; they are enriched with the ſpoil of their enemies: free commerce is ſettled between heaven and them; and all that oppoſe their entrance into the heavenly Canaan, are overcome.

4. The good of his kingdom is advanced from all airths, and there is nothing but it is turned to the profit thereof, by the infinite wiſdom of the Prince, Rom. viii. 28 Go matters what way they will, his kingdom is advanced by them; his ſubjects reap benefit by them. Out of the eater is brought forth meat by our Lord Jeſus; yea, peace, order, and proſperity, out of war, by the Prince of peace. Is not that a proſperous kingdom that proſpers in all emergents?

5. *Laſtly,* In end the peace of his kingdom will be abſolute. Solomon's reign was more peaceable in the beginning of it, than toward the end. But Chriſt's kingdom is contrariwiſe; though indeed it will never end. But at laſt all occaſion of diſturbance from without, or within, will be utterly cut off.

USE 1. Is Jeſus Chriſt preſented and given to us the peaceful Prince, peaceful in action and operation, the procurer maker, maintainer, reſtorer, and perfecter of peace? Then,

1. Sinners in a ſtate of enmity with God, ye may have peace with God through him. There is a Mediator of peace provided for you, able and willing to make up the peace betwixt God and you. This is the good news the goſpel brings, Luke ii 14. If ye periſh in a ſtate of enmity with God, it is not becauſe ye could not, but becauſe ye would not have peace. There is nothing on heaven's part to hinder the peace, but all is ready for it on that ſide, Matth. xxii 4. Therefore,

2. Apply yourſelves to the buſineſs of making your peace with God through him, 2 Cor. v. 20. Be no more at peace with yourſelves, till ye be at peace with God through Chriſt.

Motive 1. Ye are naturally in a ſtate of enmity with God. So Adam left us all; and the breach is ſtill made wider by actual ſins, while unconverted. Ye have a real enmity againſt God, Rom. viii. 7. If ye are not ſenſible of it, your works declare it, Col. i. 21. God bears a legal enmity againſt you as rector of the world; even as a judge againſt a malefactor, whom in juſtice he muſt purſue and condemn, Pſal. vii. 11, 12, 13.

Mot. 2. While ye are at enmity with God, ye have not one faſt friend in all the creation: ſo you are never ſafe. The very beaſts, fowls, and creeping things, are your enemies, as enemies to their Creator, and are ready to diſpatch you on the leaſt ſignal from him, Hoſ. ii. 18. Job v. 22, 23. Frogs, lice, &c. were employed to plague Pharaoh and his people; and worms to devour the bloody Herod. The meat thou eateſt, and the drink thou ſwalloweſt, may be a means to choke thee, and ſend thee to the pit. The friendſhip of the world, being enmity with God, can never be faſt.

Mot. 3. Ye are not able to make your part good againſt him. When the clay ſtrives with the Potter, it is eaſy to ſee who ſhall have the better. An angry God will be a party too ſtrong for the ſtouteſt ſinner. And do ye not ſee how many, fluſhed with the world's ſmiles, forget God and themſelves, and in a moment are daſhed in pieces; and go out like the crackling of thorns under a pot? 1 Cor. x. 22. Infinite wiſdom and power are what will be too hard a match for you, Job. ix. 4. 'He is wiſe in heart, and mighty in ſtrength, who hath hardened himſelf againſt him, and hath proſpered?' It is wiſdom then to yield, and make peace with one with whom we are not able to war, Luke xiv. 31, 32.

Mot. 4. Conſider what loſers ye are, while not at peace with God.

(1) Ye loſe all the advantages of commerce with heaven. When war breaks out betwixt nations, there is no more trade or commerce between them, all acceſs to that is blocked up. So you have no acceſs to import your prayers, deſires, &c. into heaven, nor to export pardons, grace, &c. therefrom.

(2) You loſe the ſap and ſoyſon of all you have in the world. There is a blaſting, withering curſe on it, Prov iii. 33 Deut. xxviii. 17. Hence it will do you no good, but evil, Prov. i. 32. The very thought, that ye are at enmity with God, is ſufficient to blaſt all your enjoyments.

(3) You loſe true peace within your own breaſt. Conſcience is not your friend, ſince ye are at enmity with God. Therefore that joy, 2 Cor i. 12. is a joy ye cannot intermeddle with. A ſleep of conſcience, which will have a fearful awakening, ye may have; but peace of conſcience ye cannot have, Iſa. lvii. 21. 'There is no peace, ſaith my God, to the wicked.'

(4) Ye will loſe your ſouls in end. That will be the iſſue of the war with heaven; and what can countervail that loſs? Matth. xvi. 26. *For what is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?* That is to loſe thyſelf, Luke ix. 25. *For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and loſe himſelf, or be caſt away?* The ſoul is the man.

Mot. 5. The ſlighting of offered peace now, will make an eternal war againſt you, in the keeneſt manner. The peace is purchaſed by the blood of the Son of God; it is offered to you on free coſt: if ye reject it, ye pour contempt on the blood of Chriſt, and the grace of God; and while God is God, he will purſue that quarrel, in a more fiery manner than if ye had never heard of peace, Matth xi. 23, 24. 'And thou Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, ſhall be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I ſay unto you, that it ſhall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee.' 2 Theſſ. i. 7, 8, 9. 'The Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.' Wherefore conſider what ye do; for life and death are here ſet before you, Iſa. xxvii. 4, 5. 'Fury is not in me: who would ſet the briers and thorns againſt me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together. Or let him take hold of my ſtrength, that he may make peace with me, and he ſhall make peace with me.'

Queſt. How may we get peace with God? *Anſw.*

Through the mediation of Chriſt; as thoſe of Tyre and Sidon in another caſe made the king's chamberlain their friend, ſo do ye. It is *through faith in his blood,* Rom. iii. 25. That blood is held out to you as a covert to flee in under: and you will be wrapt up in that cover, by believing the efficacy of it to bring peace to ſinners, and to you in particular, and wholly truſting on it for your peace with God. This implies a deſire of peace with God, and a willingneſs to lay down your weapons.

3. Saints, ſee here how ye will get your peace maintained, reſtored, and perfected. You muſt be daily making uſe of Chriſt, his blood, interceſſion, and Spirit, for maintaining it. What time it is broken, exerciſe faith anew, for reſtoring it, Pſal. lxv 3. 'Iniquities 'prevail againſt me; as for our tranſgreſſions, thou ſhalt 'purge them away.' And hang on him for perfecting it.

Use 2. Is he the peaceful Prince, peaceful of diſpoſition? Then,

1. Whoſoever deſire to employ him for peace, ſaints or ſinners, be not frighted away from him, but come to him with holy boldneſs, as one who is a peaceful Prince, of eaſy acceſs, and ready to help: Heb. x. 22. *Let us draw near with a true heart, in full aſſurance of faith.* There is love and good will to wretched ſinners of mankind in his heart and in his face; and it is the work of faith to perceive it, by means of the glaſs of the word, John i. 14.

Satan and an unbelieving heart hold him out to the trembling ſinner to be an auſtere man Luke xix. 21. And this is more riſe in the world than we are aware of; it being the natural report of a guilty conſcience concerning him. And hence men are ready to ſay as Jer. ii. 25. 'There is no hope' But oppoſe to that report of him, the report of the word; according to which he is the Prince of peace, 1 John iv. 8. 'God is love.' Hang by this in all accuſations of conſcience, and believe it, Iſa. liii. 1.

2. Then reſemble him in that diſpoſition, as ever ye would prove yourſelves his ſubjects; 1 John ii. 6. 'He 'that ſaith he abideth in him, ought himſelf alſo ſo to 'walk, even as he walked.' Is he the peaceful Prince? be ye peaceful men, Heb. xii. 14 'Follow peace with 'all men.' He bids you learn it of him, Matth. xi. 29. *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.* Nay, if ye be not men of peace ye are none of his, Iſa. xi. 9. The proud, fiery, miſchievous ſpirit that ſome are poſſeſſed with, evidence them to be none of his, Tit. iii 3.

Use 3. Is he the peaceful Prince, in the proſperous ſtate of his kingdom? Then,

1. Let his enemies, and thoſe of his church and people know, that their attempts againſt the ſame ſhall be in vain, and ſhall return on their own heads, according to that promiſe, Zech xii. 3. *And in that day will I make Jeruſalem a burdenſome ſtone for all people: all that burden themſelves with it, ſhall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together againſt it.* There is a peace of his kingdom that they cannot reach to take away, John xiv 27. 'Peace I leave with you, 'my peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be 'troubled, neither let it be afraid.'

2 Let his friends rejoice in his peace and proſperity, by faith, Rom. xv. 13. particularly knowing, that his kingdom ſhall proſper over the belly of oppoſition, yea, that it ſhall proſper by means that threaten to overthrow it, as in the caſe of Paul's ſufferings, Phil. i. 12. that their particular trials ſhall promote their proſperity, John xv. 2. and that in him they may have peace in the midſt of trouble, John xvi. 33.

3. *laſtly*, Join yourſelves to this proſperous and peaceful Prince and kingdom. Great is the noiſe of wars and commotions through the nations, ſtrong confederacies on all hands a-forming. Join ye the Prince of peace in the covenant of grace; and ye ſhall have peace, though all ſhould be in red war, Pſal xlvi 1.—4.

Thus Chriſt has been directly commended to you.

(1.) Do ye believe the report that has been made of Chriſt to you from the word, or not? that he is indeed the *Wonderful One, the Counſellor, the mighty God, the Everlaſting Father, the Prince of Peace?* that he is preſented, yea, given to you of the Father? If ye do, I am ſure the vain world, and your luſts, will be ſunk in their value with you. If they be not, it is an evidence it is not believed, Iſa. liii. 1.

(2.) Will ye take him or not, for and inſtead of all? If ye do, *let theſe go away*, Luke xiv. 26. He will be your *Wonderful one*, your *Counſellor*, &c. If ye will not, be it known to you, you refuſe heaven's preſent to you, you caſt back its gift made to you; and ye muſt anſwer it.

The Unſucceſsfulneſs of the Goſpel, the Nature of the Goſpel-report, the Rarity of believing it, and the Neceſſity of divine Power in order to Faith.

Several SERMONS preached at Ettrick, in the year, 1726.

Isaiah liii. 1.

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

NONE ſpoke ſo much of Chriſt as this evangelical Prophet He had been ſpeaking of him in the former chapter, verſ. 13. and downward; and he was to ſpeak more of him here. But in the words now read, he makes a melancholy reflection on the cold entertainment the word met with in his own time, and would meet with in after times.

The words are a heavy complaint and lamentation. And if we conſider,

1ſt, To whom it was made, we find from parallel ſcriptures that it is made to the Lord himſelf, John xii. 38. Rom. x. 16. *Lord, who hath believed our report?* &c. From powerful preaching he betakes himſelf to mournful prayer, lamenting the unſucceſsfulneſs of his meſſage.

2dly, Whom it reſpects. It reſpects the hearers of the goſpel in his own time, and in after times too, John xii. 37, 38. *But though he had done ſo many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the ſaying of Eſaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he ſpake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?* The Jews to whom Chriſt himſelf preached: and both Jews and Gentiles, to whom the apoſtles preached, Rom. x. 16. No wonder than it extend to thoſe to whom miniſters now preach.

3dly, The matter of this heavy lamentation.

1. The unſucceſsfulneſs of the goſpel, and prevailing unbelief among them that heard it. Where conſider,

(1.) What the goſpel is. It is *a report*; a report from heaven brought by Chriſt himſelf, the apoſtles and prophets, to be believed unto ſalvation. The word ſignifies *a hearing, i. e.* a thing to be heard and received by faith, as a voice is received and heard by the ear. Hence is that expreſſion, *the hearing of faith*, Gal. iii. 2.

(2.) What faith is. It is *a believing that report.* The word rendered *believing*, doth properly ſignify to *truſt*. So it is in the Hebrew, *Who hath truſted to our report?* Faith is a giving credit to the goſpel, and a truſting our ſouls to it, as on a word that cannot fail.

(3.) How rare that faith is: *Who hath believed?* Few, very few, have believed the report. It is brought to multitudes: but where is the man that really truſts to it, as news from heaven that may be relied on? They are but here and there one, who truſt it: the generality regard it but as idle tales.

2. The great withdrawing of the power of God from ordinances: *And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? The arm of the Lord* is the power of God: and this arm is ſaid to be revealed or uncovered, when it exerts itſelf in acting powerfully; as men put up their ſleeves when they are putting themſelves in order for working with the hand. And this implies three things.

(1.) That there is a neceſſity of the mighty power of God being exerted on a man, to cauſe him believe, John vi. 44. 'No man can come to me, except the father which hath ſent me draw him.' The truſting to the report of the goſpel, is ſo far from being an eaſy effort of imagination, that it is beyond the power of nature.

(2.) That few, very few, felt this power. *To whom?* Heb. *Upon whom* is the arm of the Lord revealed? The goſpel was but an empty ſound to the moſt part; they found not the power of the Spirit coming along with it.

(3.) That hence ſo very few believed. Where there is no feeling of that power, there is no believing. Firſt the arm of the Lord muſt draw, ere the ſinner can come: therefore theſe two are of equal latitude, Eph. i. 19. *What is the exceeding greatneſs of his power to us-ward, who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.* Four doctrines are deducible from the words.

DOCT. I. *The little ſucceſs of the goſpel, and great rarity of divine power coming along with goſpel ordinances, will be matter of heavy lamentation to the godly, and particularly to godly miniſters.*

DOCT. II. *The goſpel is a report from heaven, to be believed and truſted to for ſalvation.*

DOCT. III. *Though many hear, yet few believe or truſt to the report of the goſpel.*

DOCT. IV. *There is no true believing or truſting to the report of the goſpel, but what is the effect of the working of a divine power on the ſoul for that end.*

We ſhall handle each of theſe doctrines in order.

DOCT. I. *The little ſucceſs of the goſpel, and great rarity of divine power coming along with goſpel-ordinances, will be matter of heavy lamentation to the godly, and particularly to godly miniſters.*

In diſcourſing this doctrine I ſhall ſhew,

I. What is that ſucceſs which the goſpel ſometimes hath.

II. What is that divine power which ſometimes comes along with goſpel ordinances.

III. Give the reaſons of the doctrine.

IV. *laſtly*, Apply.

I. *What is that ſucceſs which the goſpel ſometimes hath?* We may take it up in theſe two generals. It is ſucceſsful.

1. When ſinners are thereby brought to faith in Chriſt, Rom. i. 17. The goſpel is a good report of Chriſt the bridegroom of ſouls, ſpread in the world: and then the end of it is gained, when the ſinner is brought to behold him ſo altogether lovely, that he gives up with all his former lovers, and is married to him, to be his only, wholly, and for ever, Pſal. lxxiii. 25.

2. When they are thereby brought to holineſs of life; when they are transformed into the image of him in whom they have believed, 2 Cor. iii. 18. It is a holy goſpel, and true believers of it are caſt into the mould of it, Rom. vi. 17. and being united to Chriſt, put on Chriſt, Gal. iii. 27. walking as perſonating him, 1 John ii. 6. Theſe things are ſo excellent, that it is very lamentable there is ſo little of them among men.

II. *What is that divine power which ſometimes comes along with goſpel-ordinances?* There is,

1. A heart and life diſcovering power, 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. The word comes, and the Lord's arm comes with it, and opens the volume of a man's heart and life: and it is as if the preacher were reading the ſecret hiſtory of a man's thoughts and actions, Heb. iv. 12. 'For the word of God is quick and powerful, and ſharper than any two-edged ſword, piercing even to the dividing aſunder of ſoul and ſpirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.' This is called the watchman's finding the ſpouſe, Cant. iii. 3.

2. A ſharp convincing power, whereby the ſinner does not only ſee his ſin, but ſees the ill and danger of it, and is touched to the heart with it, Acts xxiv. 25. That is the finger of God at the man's heart, according to John xvi. 7, 8. 'When the Spirit is come, he will reprove the world of ſin, and of righteouſneſs, and of judgment. So it was with theſe, Acts ii. 37. 'They were pricked in their heart, and ſaid men and brethren, what ſhall we do? And O, it is promiſing when men are ſent home with a breaſt full of convictions, from the word. But if that arm of the Lord be not revealed, one will be very eaſy, come the word never ſo cloſe to his caſe.

3. A drawing and converting power, John xii. 32. 'And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.' Pſal. xix. 7. 'The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the ſoul.' While the word comes, ſome ſecret power comes along, that the man is not able to reſiſt it: but the iron gate of the heart is looſed, and of its own accord opens wide, to receive the king of glory. Such a power Zaccheus felt with that word, *Come down*, that made his heart, which was like a ſtrong caſtle to keep out Chriſt, come as faſt down, as ever an old houſe did being undermined, Luke xix. 5. While this comes not, ſinners will not come to Chriſt, John v. 40.

4. A quickening power, Pſal. cxix. 50. 'Thy word hath quickened me.' Sometimes the ſpiritual ſenſes have all been bound up, that the ſoul could neither ſee, hear, taſte, ſmell, nor feel ſpiritually, more than it had been dead: and a word has been dropt in with ſuch a power, that it has been like the barley-cake tumbling down on the tents of Midian, or like the honey Jonathan taſted in the wood; it has cleared their eyes, unſtopped their ears, &c. Cant. vii. 9. While this is wanting, the word cannot awaken people.

5. A clearing power, reſolving doubts, removing miſtakes and darkneſs in certain particulars, whereby one is retarded in their ſpiritual courſe, Pſal. xix 7, 8. Many a time ſouls have been ſo imbarraſſed with ſome doubts or miſtakes, that they have thereby been made to go like a fettered bird, perhaps many a day and year: till at length they have got a word with ſuch power, that it has made theſe their fetters fall off, like Peter's chains when the angel gave him a touch on the ſide, Acts xii. 7. Cornelius had ſweet experience of it, Acts x. 6. 44. While the power comes not, they come and go with their chains on them.

6. A comforting power, Pſal. cxix. 49, 50. *Remember thy word unto thy ſervant, upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.* Diſcouragement is a great load; the diſcouraged ſoul is like one going with a clog at his heels. Great preſſures of affliction are apt to diſ-

courage, make the heart faint, and the hands weak, and the knees feeble: but ſometimes the word comes with ſuch power, as that it ſtays the fainting ſoul, Pſal. cxix. 92. 'Unleſs thy law had been my delight, I ſhould then 'have periſhed in mine affliction.' Sometimes ſuch a high ſpring tide of power comes with the word, that the clog drops off, and the affliction that was ſo heavy is not the weight of a feather, but the man rejoices in the Lord, and leaps like an hart, Iſa. xii. 3. For the comfort of the word has looſed all his bands, Rom. xv. 13. Heb. x. 34.

7. A ſtrengthening power, Pſal. xcvi. 6. *Strength and beauty are in his ſanctuary.* Sometimes a man has great temptations to conflict with, and he knows not how to ſtand before them; till he come to the ſanctuary with Aſaph, Pſal. lxxiii. 16, 17. and with Paul get a word with power, 2 Cor. xii. 7. Then he is like a giant refreſhed with wine, and in the ſtrength of that word goes out like David againſt Goliah. The Spirit with the word blowing on the dry bones, makes them ſtand on their feet like a great army.

8. *laſtly*, A ſoul elevating and heart raviſhing power, Luke xxiv. 32. *Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the ſcriptures?* Sometimes ſuch a power has come along with the word, as if in heaven, not a window only but a door had been opened: that the man has made no doubt to ſay, Gen xxviii. 16, 17. 'Surely the Lord is 'in this place.——This is none other but the houſe 'of God, and this is the gate of heaven.' And Chriſt has come ſo near him, as he could tell what was the ſmell of his garments, Pſal. xlv. 8. and the ſermon or communion place would have been gladly embraced as the dying place, Luke ii. 29.

III. The *third* thing is, *The reaſons of the point.* And, 1*ſt*, It muſt be matter of lamentation to the godly, in general. For,

1. The honour of Chriſt is thereby overclouded. He is not honoured, but highly diſhonoured by ſinners diſbelieving the report of him, not receiving him in the goſpel offer, John viii. 49. Hence it was a part of Chriſt's humiliation, that his report was not believed out of his own mouth, John xii. 37, 38. and after his exaltation his apoſtles were to do greater works than he, John xiv. 12. And when he goes forth in the goſpel conquering, a crown is ſaid to be given him, Rev. vi. 2. But that crown is obſcured in a time of the goſpel's unſucceſsfulneſs. And Chriſt's honour will be dear to the godly, whatever it be to others; and the affronts done him by unbelievers will lie near their hearts.

2. The glory of the glorious goſpel is thereby vailed. The goſpel is in itſelf glorious, 2 Cor. iv. 4. 1 Tim. i. 11. It is a radiant jewel, of greater worth than all the glory of the world; but the glory of it is hid, while it is not believed, and divine power does not accompany it: therefore having *free courſe*, it is ſaid to be *glorified*, 2 Theſſ. iii. 1. And this cannot but affect the godly, who reliſh the goſpel.

3. Souls are thereby loſt, while ſalvation is come to their door. The goſpel brings ſalvation; but none can ſhare of it where it is not believed, Heb. iv. 2. What a lamentable ſight is it to ſee men ſlighting and deſpiſing their own mercy; neglecting the great ſalvation, continuing filthy ſtill under means of cleanſing, growing worſe by the means of grace doing them no good; and, finally, aggravating their own condemnation? John xv. 22.

4. The godly themſelves ſuffer loſs. The thronger Chriſt's family is, the better thriven are the children; and contrariwiſe. The calling of the Jews will be as *life from the dead*, Rom. xi. 15. The ſaints in the worſt of times will always get as much as will keep in their life, Micah ii. 7. But there is a difference between fend and fare well. If there were more converting, there would be more confirming work too.

2*dly*, And particularly to godly miniſters. For,

1. Thereby their care and pains is much loſt, and in vain. To toil all night and catch nothing is a heavy taſk. Miniſters are like candles: while they give light to others, they waſte themſelves. And that is a heavy tale, Iſ. xlix. 4. *I have laboured in vain, I have ſpent my ſtrength for nought, and in vain.* O there is much need of faith in the work of the miniſtry! the huſbandman, ſhepherd, and tradeſman, ſees ordinarily the fruit of his labours; if it miſs at one time, it will readily proſper at another; but there is much ſpiritual ſeed ſown, where there is no viſible fruit.

2. Thereby their work is rendered more difficult and weariſome. When the arm of the Lord is revealed to carry on the work on men's ſouls and conſciences, it is made lightſome: they are then like a ſhip going with a fair wind. But when the Spirit is withdrawn, they are like the ſhip in a dead calm, that takes much ſtrength to work her, and yet ſhe comes but little ſpeed.

3. *laſtly*, Thereby the ſeals of the miniſtry are but ſmall. They are the ſavour of death to many, the ſavour of life to few; for the one or the other they will be to all, 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16. If they be not, by mens receiving their teſtimony, inſtruments to further their ſalvation; they will be witneſſes againſt them to aggravate their condemnation.

USE. Then let it touch our hearts, and cauſe us to lament, that there is ſo little ſucceſs of the goſpel, and ſo great a rarity of divine power coming along with ordinances at this day in the land, and among us. Of this there are ſeveral evidences.

Evidence 1. The ſlighting of goſpel ordinances that ſo much prevails. How eaſy is it for many to ſit at home and make to themſelves ſilent ſabbaths, while the Lord puts an opportunity in their hands to attend ordinances! for others, if they be but touched againſt the grain, and diſobliged, to caſt them off for good and all! a ſad evidence the goſpel has had little ſucceſs or power with them: for the experience of the power would give men a higher value for them than ſo, Pſal. lxiii. 1, 2. and lxxxiv. 1, 2, 3.

2. Little reformation of life under the diſpenſation of the goſpel. Miniſters may ſay with Jeremiah, chap. vi. 10. *To whom ſhall I ſpeak and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumciſed, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach: they have no delight in it. He that was filthy, is filthy ſtill.* The glaſs of the word is held before mens eyes, that they cannot but ſee their ſpots; yet do they not wipe them off. Under the goſpel of the grace of God they live ungodly lives; in the land of uprightneſs they deal unjuſtly; rebelling againſt the light.

3. Much formality in attendance on ordinances, Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32. People ſatisfy themſelves with the work done. Few take heed how they hear. They ſeek not to be ſpiritual in the work, to have communion with God in ordinances; nor do they mourn when they obtain it not. They do not miſs the power of God in ordinances; or if they do, they can eaſily bear the want.

4. *laſtly*, Little of the work of converſion or ſoul-exerciſe in our day. The goſpel is the great mean of converſion, of bringing ſinners into a ſtate of grace; but converts are rare. Conviction, compunction, and humiliation, are rarely made now by the word; and rarely iſſued in kindly converſion to God. Sometime the word would have raiſed ſoul exerciſe in them that heard it, and the word again would have brought the Chriſtian's exerciſe to a happy iſſue: but alas! that is ſeldom the caſe now.

Now this may be for a lamentation, that it is ſo; that there is ſo little ſucceſs attending the diſpenſation of goſpel ordinances, and that there is a great rarity of divine power coming along with them. For,

1. This ſays, that the Lord is in a great meaſure departed from us, miniſters and people, Iſa. lxiv. 7. 'There 'is none that calleth upon thy name, that ſtirreth up

‘ himſelf to take hold of thee; for thou haſt hid thy ‘ face from us, and haſt conſumed us, becauſe of our iniquities.’ We may lament, that he is become *as a ſtranger in the land*, Jer. xiv. 8. Ordinances are the tryſting-places where he is to be met with: and when he is ſo little found there, it is time to lament his departure. We may ſay, as 2 Kings ii. 14. ‘ Where is ‘ the Lord God of Elijah?’ We have the chair of ſtate: but where is the King himſelf? Here is the napkin and linen cloaths lying, but where is the Lord that was wrapt in them?

2. That we have ſinned away his preſence, Iſ. lix. 1, 2. *Your iniquities have ſeparated between you and your God, and your ſins have bid his face from you, that he will not hear.* When the glory departed to the threſhold, Ezek. x. 4. from the threſhold, verſe 18. from the midſt of the city to the mountain, chap. xi. 23. it was for the abominations done in the houſe, chap viii. Why doth he lothe our ſacrifices, refuſe to ſmell in our aſſemblies, but becauſe we have made ourſelves and them vile before him? Iſa. i. 11. to 17. Had we entertained the blowings of his Spirit when we had them, he had not left us in ſuch a dead calm.

3. That the Lord has a controverſy with us, that we are not yet convinced of, and humbled for, Hoſ. v. 15. People may be long under the Lord's withdrawings, ſo far inſenſible of the cauſes thereof, as not to be lamenting over them, 1 Sam. vii. 2. Now there is no convincing of us of the cauſes of God's controverſy. But if ever the Lord return to ordinances as heretofore, ye will ſee there will be a convincing and humbling influence, that will bring miniſters and people to their knees, taking ſhame to themſelves.

4 That wrath and heavy judgments are abiding us, come from what airth they will. Matth. iii. 10. It is not to be thought, that the contempt of the goſpel, and unfruitfulneſs under it, will get paſſed without ſome ſpecial mark of the divine indignation. When the invitations to the goſpel-feaſt prevail not, the King's armies are ſent forth to deſtroy, Matth. xxii 7. When the white flag of peace is contemned, the red flag of war is hung out.

5. That theſe judgments will be very ſore when they come, according to the meaſure of light ſinned againſt. Capernaum exalted to heaven is thruſt down to hell, Matth. xi. 23. After the white horſe, the red and black follow, Rev. vi. Never did a generation enjoy ſuch a clear light of the goſpel as the Jews in the time of our Saviour and the apoſtles, and accordingly wrath came to an extremity, *to the uttermoſt*, 1 Theſſ. ii. 16.

6. *laſtly*, That it is high time to be lamenting after the Lord, and wreſtling and ſupplicating for his return to ordinances. Stir up yourſelves therefore unto this, that it be not ſaid as Iſa lxiv. 7. *There is none that calleth upon thy name, that ſtirreth up himſelf to take hold of thee.* Conſider,

1. It is a ſad ſign to be unconcerned about it. It ſpeaks, (1.) Such a one to be a ſtranger to the experience of the power of the word, and the precious enjoyment of communion with God in ordinances, Pſal. lxiii. 1, 2. (2.) To be too eaſily ſatisfied in the matters of God with the huſks, the ſhadows, inſtead of the foyſon and ſubſtance. (3.) To be unacquainted with Chriſt, and none of his; ſince the withdrawing of his preſence is not heavy to him. (4.) That they could even be content Chriſt would never come again: for they that reliſh not his coming in ordinances, can never reliſh his ſecond coming.

2. Great would be the advantage of his return to ordinances. (1.) It would be well for particular hearers of the goſpel who ſhould ſhare in it themſelves. Strangers would be converted, and converts ſtrengthened. Duties would be a delight. Whereas a form of godlineſs is all that can be reached otherwiſe. (2.) It would be well for the church in general; it would cure our diviſions; all being by that means brought to acknowledge their offences, and return to the Lord, and ſo to one another in him.

Doct. II. *The goſpel is a report from heaven to be believed and truſted to for ſalvation.*

In proſecuting this doctrine, I ſhall conſider,

I. The goſpel as it is a report.

II. Faith as it is a truſting to this report.

III. The report of the goſpel, and the truſting to it, conjunctly.

IV. *laſtly*, Apply.

I. We ſhall conſider *the goſpel as it is a report.* And here we ſhall view it,

1*ſt*, In the nature of a report in general.

2*dly*, In the nature of a report to be truſted to, for ſome valuable end.

Firſt, We ſhall view the goſpel *in the nature of a report in general.* And,

1. There is the ſubject of a report, or the thing that is reported, viz. ſome deſign, action or event, true or falſe. The ſubject of the goſpel report is, a love-deſign in God for the ſalvation of ſinners of mankind, 2 Tim. i. 9, 10. Such was the goſpel-report that was firſt made in the world, Gen. iii. 15. It is the report of an act of grace and kindneſs in God, in favours of them, whereby he has given them his Son for a Saviour, John iii. 16. Iſa. ix. 6. and eternal life in him, 1 John v. 11. The report of the event of Chriſt's dying for ſinners, and a crucified Chriſt's being ready for marriage with ſinners, Matth. xxii. 4. A ſubject of the utmoſt importance.

2. There is the place whence the report originally comes. And the place here is heaven, the boſom of the Father. Hence the goſpel is called *heavenly things*, John iii. 12. revealed from the boſom of the Father. The original place of a report is the place of the tranſaction, and that at ſome diſtance from where it is reported. So,

(1.) The goſpel is a report from heaven, where the deſign of love was contrived, the gift of the Son was made, and from whence he came to die for ſinners, and where he is ready to match with them. The goſpel may come from one place of the earth to another, as it did from Jeruſalem to other places of the world, Iſa. ii. 3. Luke xxiv. 47. But it came from heaven originally, Luke ii. 13, 14.

(2.) The goſpel is *good news from a far country*, and ſo ſhould be as acceptable as *cold water to the thirſty*, Prov. xxv. 25. The farther off a country is from whence a report comes, we think ourſelves the leſs concerned in it: and ſo do carnal men treat the goſpel report. Far indeed it is; but as far as it is, we muſt ſpend our eternity in it, or elſe in hell: and therefore it does moſt nearly concern us.

3. The matter of a report is ſomething unſeen to them to whom the report is made. And ſo is the matter of the goſpel-report. It is an unſeen God, John i. 18. an unſeen Saviour, 1 Pet. i. 8. and unſeen things, 2 Cor. iv. 18. that are preached unto you by the goſpel. So the goſpel is an object of faith, not of ſight, Heb. xi. 1. We receive it by hearing, not by ſeeing, Iſa. lv. 3. It is not what we credit on our eye ſight, but upon the teſtimony of another, viz. of God. Hence the carnal world are fond on ſeen objects, Pſal. iv. 6. but ſlow to believe the goſpel.

4. There is a reporter or reporters. And in this caſe the report is made by many. But,

(1.) The firſt hand reporter is an eye witneſs, viz. Jeſus Chriſt. Chriſt himſelf was the raiſer of the report of the goſpel, Heb. ii. 2. And who elſe could have been ſo? John i. 18. What he reported he ſaw, and gives us his teſtimony of the truth of it on his eye-ſight, John iii. 11. Hence he is propoſed to us as *the faithful and true witneſs*, Rev. iii. 14. who was from eternity privy to the whole deſign revealed to us in the goſpel.

(2.) The prophets and apoſtles, and miniſters of the goſpel. They are the ſecond hand reporters. The former had it immediately from Chriſt, the latter from them again. But none of them were eye witneſſes, but ear witneſſes properly ſpeaking. For even the apoſtles, who ſaw Chriſt with their eyes, yet owed their knowledge of the goſpel to their faith originally, though they were confirmed by what they ſaw, John i. 14. So it is determined, Pſal. lxviii. 11. 'The Lord gave the word; 'great was the company of thoſe that publiſhed it.'

5. *laſtly*, There is a manifeſtation of the thing by the report, to the parties to whom the report is made. So is the grace of God to poor ſinners, manifeſted to them by the goſpel, 2 Tim. i. 9, 10. It is no more kept a ſecret from them, but they are let into the knowledge of the deſign, action, and events which concern their ſalvation. The goſpel opens up and reveals the ſecret of God's grace to ſinners, with the method of communicating it, even the whole plan of ſalvation, which from eternity was hid in the breaſt of God, John i. 18. Let us view the goſpel,

Secondly, *In the nature of a report to be truſted to, for ſome valuable end.* And ſo it is,

1. A true and faithful report, that one may ſafely truſt, 1 Tim. i. 15. 'This is a faithful ſaying, and 'worthy of all acceptation, that Chriſt Jeſus came into 'the world to ſave ſinners.' It was originally brought from heaven by Jeſus Chriſt, Heb. ii. 2. *the faithful and true witneſs*, Rev. iii. 14. Many falſe reports are going in the world; and thoſe that are brought from afar, we are not in a capacity to contradict: but the truth of the goſpel has been confirmed by the greateſt evidence, particularly by the death of Chriſt, and by the experience of the believers of it in all ages.

2. An infallible report. A report may be true where there is no infallibility: but the report of the goſpel is an infallible truth, Acts i. 3. for it is *the word of God that cannot lie*, 1 Theſſ. ii. 13. Though men bring it to you, God has put it in their mouths from his written word; and the ſpeaker is Chriſt himſelf, they are but the voice. And the Spirit of the Lord demonſtrates it to believers, as divine truth, 1 Cor. ii. 4.

3. A good and comfortable report. It is not only good in itſelf, as the report of the law's curſe is; but it is good for us. Hence it is called *good* or *glad tidings*, Luke ii. 10. As the contrivance of ſalvation is ſtated in the goſpel, it is adapted in all points to our caſe. And the convinced ſinner helped to believe, ſees it ſo; that it is a good report of God, bringing the tidings of a contrivance every way good for him.

4. *laſtly*, A weighty report, even of the greateſt weight as concerning man's eternal intereſt, how he may be ſaved from the wrath of God, and made happy for evermore.

II. We ſhall conſider *faith as it is a truſting to this report, the report of the goſpel.* And ſo it is not only divine faith, but ſaving juſtifying faith, Rom. x. 8, 9. It may be taken up in theſe two. Faith is,

1*ſt*, A truſting of the goſpel report as true. It is a believing of the doctrine of the goſpel, Acts viii. 37. Faith is the ſoul's echo to the joyful ſound. That Chriſt came to ſave ſinners is true, ſaith the goſpel: true, ſaith faith. Hence the goſpel is called a *hearing* in our text, and *the hearing of faith*, Gal. iii. 2. The voice from without entering the ear, is conceived and ſounds there: the voice of the goſpel entering the heart, is conceived and ſounds like an echo, from the heart: and that is faith, Rom. x. 9. When a word is heard that one does not believe, there is as it were a repelling it from within; and it is all one to the purpoſe of the ſpeaker, as if it were not heard at all. So unbelief repels the goſpel teſtimony, receives it not as true, 1 John v. 10. But faith receives it as true; and the ſpeaker ſo far gains his deſign. And faith truſts it as true,

1. In the general, with reſpect to the multitude whom it concerns, 1 Tim. i. 13. *It is a faithful ſaying, Chriſt came to ſave ſinners.* Here is the goſpel; here is faith's aſſent to it as true with reſpect to ſinners in general. It is the report of a common good, the common ſalvation for ſinners of mankind. The great body of mankind looks on it as idle tales: but faith receives it as a true report; and admires the love of God to fallen man, and not to fallen angels.

2. In particular, with reſpect to one's ſelf, 1 Tim. i. 15. *This is a faithful ſaying, that Chriſt came to ſave ſinners; of whom I am the chief.* Here is the application of faith, without which the report of the goſpel is not truſted as true: He came to ſave me. Faith believes there is a fulneſs in Chriſt for poor ſinners, and for one's ſelf in particular; that Chriſt and all his ſalvation is in earneſt offered to ſinners, and to one's ſelf in particular; that he is the Saviour of the world, and their Saviour in particular, John iv. 42. 'We know that this is in'deed the Chriſt, the Saviour of the world,' chap. xx. 28. 'Thomas ſaid unto him, My Lord and my God.' This is evident, if ye conſider, that the goſpel comprehends you, and every one of you, John iii. 16. 'God 'ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, 'that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, 'but have everlaſting life.' Prov. viii. 4. *Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the ſons of men.* If then you do not believe it with reſpect to yourſelf, if you ſhould believe it with reſpect to all the world beſides; ye diſbelieve it, ye deny credit to it, in that which is the main point for your ſalvation, 1 John v. 10, 11. You believe in that caſe no more than devils do, Mark i. 24. Nay, you do not believe ſo much as the devils do: for they cannot help believing your intereſt in the goſpel, as well as the intereſt of others; and therefore are at ſo much pains to keep you from believing it, leſt ye be ſaved: if ye had no intereſt in it, they would tell you ſo much for your torment.

Object. But where is it written in the goſpel, that Chriſt came to ſave me, or that he is my Saviour? I am ſure my name is not in it. I may believe the goſpel then, though I do not believe it to hold with reſpect to myſelf.

Anſw. Where is it written in the law that Adam ruined you? I am ſure your name is neither in the commands of the law, nor in the curſe of it either. But do you think you could indeed believe the law, without believing its commands and curſe reaching you? No; if ye believe not that, you contradict the expreſs terms of the law, Gal. iii. 10. *For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curſe: for it is written, Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* O, but ſay ye I am comprehended in the curſe as a breaker of the law: True; but are ye not as much comprehended in the the goſpel as a ſon of Adam? Prov. viii. 4. Is not the promiſe of the goſpel in as extenſive terms, John iii. 16. as the curſe of the law?

Wherefore, let no body deceive themſelves, thinking they believe the goſpel, while they believe it not with particular application to themſelves. True faith truſts the goſpel as true, with reſpect to one's ſelf; and ſo truſts it.

1. As certain truth. It does not receive the goſpel-report only as a thing that is probable, and likely to be true. That is opinion and conjecture, not faith. Faith embraceth the goſpel as certain truth, as a thing one is ſure there is no falſhood in, John vi. 69. 'We believe, 'and are ſure that thou art that Chriſt the Son of the 'living God.' Paul was ſo much perſuaded of the truth of the goſpel, that he could declare an angel accurſed that ſhould contradict it, Gal. i. 8, 9.

2. As infallible truth, as a thing there can be no falſehood in. The reaſon of which is, That faith truſts the goſpel as the teſtimony of God himſelf that cannot lie,

1 Theſſ. ii. 13. It receives the joyful ſound as the voice of God, John iii. 33. To believe the goſpel becauſe good miniſters and good books ſay ſo, or becauſe it appears agreeable to our reaſon, is not faith, but opinion. Faith believes it becauſe God ſays ſo The tidings of the goſpel are beyond our ſight, and above our reaſon, as the myſtery of an incarnate God, an imputed righteouſneſs. &c. But becauſe we ſee the divine teſtimony for theſe things, therefore we believe them by true faith, juſt on the credit of God's word, Mark xvi. 15. Hence it appears,

1. That there is an aſſurance in the nature of faith, whereby the believing perſon is ſure of the truth of the doctrine of the goſpel, and that with reſpect to himſelf particularly, 1 Theſſ. i. 5. *For our goſpel came not unto you in word only: but alſo in power, and in the Holy Ghoſt and in much aſſurance.* So that whatever were his doubts of it, and carnal reaſonings againſt it, he is brought at length to aſſent thereto as moſt firm truth.

2. That there is a neceſſity of an inward illumination by the Spirit, in order to the faith of the goſpel, 1 Cor. ii. 14. 10. 'The natural man receiveth not the things of 'the Spirit of God: for they are fooliſhneſs unto him: 'neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually 'diſcerned. But God hath revealed them unto us by 'his Spirit.' The Spirit of the Lord opens the eyes, and demonſtrates the truth of the goſpel to the ſoul, verſe 4. 'My ſpeech and my preaching, was——in de'monſtration of the Spirit, and of power;' otherwiſe there is no reaching the divine faith of it, verſe 5. *That your faith ſhould not ſtand in the wiſdom of men, but in the power of God.* This caſts down the man's carnal reaſonings againſt it, and awes him and overcomes him into a belief of the truth, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

Queſt Is there no doubting then conſiſtent with the faith of the report of the goſpel? *Anſw* All doubting is contrary to faith, Matth. xxi. 21. But ſince faith is not perfect more than other graces, it may have a mixture of its contrary, chap. xiv 31. 'O thou of little faith 'wherefore didſt thou doubt? Howbeit, the more doubting the leſs faith; and the more faith, the leſs doubting. As long as doubting is predominant in a ſoul to be brought to Chriſt there is no faith. But the Spirit of the Lord lays in a weight of light, and the balance is caſt on the ſide of the truth of the goſpel, and the doubting is downweighed, and faith ſprings up in the ſoul. The ſoul is aſſured of the truth of the goſpel, appearing in his venturing himſelf for eternity upon it, in the ſight of a holy, juſt God; though perhaps he is not without all doubting; as there may be a moving of the heavier ſcale by the lighter weight, though the balance is fully caſten.

2*dly*, There is in faith a truſting to the goſpel report as good. Faith does not only truſt the goſpel, but truſts to it, truſts much to it, lays ſtreſs on it, not only as a true thing, but as a good thing. Faith,

1. Looks on the goſpel as a good thing in itſelf, and deſirable. For it is done with the heart, Rom. x. 10. Look how a Saviour, a righteouſneſs and a pardon, muſt needs be good things in the eyes of ſinners ſeeing themſelves loſt; ſo the goſpel that brings theſe to ſinners, muſt needs appear good. As the belief of the report of the law, imports not only an aſſent to it as true, but a horror of it as evil; ſo the belief of the report of the goſpel, imports not only an aſſent thereto as true, but a reliſh thereof as good. So it is holden out to faith under the notion of good, Iſa. lv. 2. 'Hearken diligently 'unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your 'ſoul delight itſelf in fatneſs.'

2. Faith looks on the goſpel as good for one's ſelf in particular. The believing ſoul ſays, This is good news, and good for me, 1 Tim. i. 15. 'Worthy of all accep'tation.' When there is a report of a phyſician come to a country that infallibly cures ſuch and ſuch a diſeaſe, the whole people ſay, That is good; but the ſick of theſe diſeaſes ſay more, That is good for me. What makes one think a thing good for him, is, the ſuitableneſs of it to his mind and caſe. Many hearers of the goſpel may account the goſpel good in itſelf, but they do not look on it as good for them, at leaſt as yet: As one who may account ſome kind of meat good, but he is not for it. He has better before him, more agreeable to his ſtomach; or perhaps he has no ſtomach for the time, ſo it muſt be ſet up. Thus Chriſt is good, and his ſalvation; but the man has the world and his luſts to feed on, that are more agreeable to him: let them ſtay off till death, and then he will be for them. But the goſpel is to the believer not only good in itſelf, but good for him, and that juſt now.

And ſo he truſts to it as good for him. And if ye aſk, What it is that he truſts to it? Why, he truſts his ſalvation to it, in a word: for that is it the goſpel brings to ſinners, Tit. ii. 11. marg. 'The grace of God that 'bringeth ſalvation to all men, hath appeared.' And the truſt of faith relates to it, Eph. i. 12, 13. *That we ſhould be to the praiſe of his glory, who firſt truſted in Chriſt. In whom ye alſo truſted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the goſpel of your ſalvation.* The ſoul ſees itſelf loſt; the goſpel offers ſalvation. And faith thereupon truſts for it, Acts xvi. 31. even for Chriſt's whole ſalvation. Which may be taken up in theſe two.

1. The relative part of it; which comprehends the ſoul's juſtification, reconciliation, adoption, and all other benefits of the like kind. Theſe the goſpel offers, together with the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, upon which they are founded: and faith truſts to it for all theſe, Rom. i. 17. 'For therein is the righteouſneſs of God 'revealed from faith to faith.'

2. The real part of it; which comprehends the ſoul's ſanctification and glorification, and all other benefits of that kind. Theſe alſo the goſpel offers, together with the Spirit of Chriſt, by whom they are to be wrought in ſinners: and faith truſts to it for all theſe, Gal. iii. 2.

Thus faith lays the greateſt of weight on the report of the goſpel, even the weight of the man's ſalvation for time and eternity; dealing with God for that his greateſt intereſt, in the way of truſt on his word of the goſpel; truſting to that report for his own ſalvation in particular, Acts xv. 11. *But we believe that, through the grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, we ſhall be ſaved.*

Now, as faith is a truſting to the report of the goſpel for one's own ſalvation, according as ſalvation is offered in the goſpel, it implies theſe following things.

1 Not only a willingneſs, but a ſincere deſire to be ſanctified, and delivered from ſin, as well as to be juſtified and delivered from wrath; to be delivered from the reigning power, practice, pollution, and inbeing of ſin, as well as from the guilt of it, Rom vii. 24, 25. 'O 'wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from 'the body of this death! I thank God, through Jeſus 'Chriſt our Lord.' A perſon may fear from one what he does not deſire; but what he deſires not, he cannot truſt in one for. Therefore where there is no ſuch deſire, there is no truſting to the goſpel, there is no faith.

2. A renouncing of all other confidence for his ſalvation. Faith truſting to the report of the goſpel, quits ſelf confidence, law confidence, and creature confidence, Jer. xvi. 19. 'O Lord, my ſtrength and my fortreſs, 'and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles 'ſhall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and 'ſhall ſay, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vani'ty, and things wherein there is no profit,' Phil iii. 3. *We are the circumciſion, which——have no confidence in the fleſh:* like the woman with the bloody iſſue, who quit all her phyſicians, truſting for healing to a touch of the hem of Chriſt's garment.

3. A hearty approbation of the way of ſalvation manifeſted in the report of the goſpel, Matth. xi. 6 *Bleſſed is he whoſoever ſhall not be offended in me.* Faith here views Chriſt in the glaſs of the goſpel, as a crucified Saviour, 1 Cor. ii. 2.: believes his ſufficiency as ſuch to ſave ſinners, and them in particular, from ſin, and

from the wrath of a holy God, in the eye of the holy law, and to make them completely holy and happy, Phil. iii. 9.; and acquieſceth in that way for their own ſalvation; 1 Cor. i. 24.

4. A betaking one's ſelf entirely to that way of ſalvation, by truſting to it wholly for our own ſalvation, Ruth ii. 12. Even as a poor beggar, having riches and wealth made over to him by his friend, leaves off his begging, and betakes himſelf to that entirely for his throughbearing. This is the ſoul's coming to Chriſt, fleeing for refuge, receiving the atonement, and rolling its burden on him.

5. laſtly, A confidence or truſt, that he will ſave us from ſin and wrath, according to his promiſe, Acts xv. 11. *We believe, that through the grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, we ſhall be ſaved.* This is that truſt which ſhall never be diſappointed, Rom. x. 11. that building on Chriſt which ſhall never fall, 1 Pet. ii. 6.

III. We ſhall conſider *the report of the goſpel, and the truſting to it, conjunctly.*

1. The goſpel is a report from heaven, of ſalvation for poor ſinners, from ſin, Matth. i. 21 and from the wrath of God, John iii. 16. however dear-bought, yet freely made over to you in the word of promiſe; ſo as ye may freely take poſſeſſion of it, Iſa. lv. 1.

This report being brought to the ſinner, faith truſts it as a true report, believing that God has ſaid it; and truſts to it as good, laying our own ſalvation upon it. So the ſoul greedily embraceth the Saviour, and the ſalvation brought to it in that report, as ever a drowning man would take hold of a rope let down to bring him out of the waters, Cant. i. 3.

2. The goſpel is the report of a crucified Chriſt made over to ſinners, as the device of heaven for their ſalvation. It is proclaimed by the authority of heaven, that Chriſt has died, and by his death purchaſed life and ſalvation for loſt children of Adam; and that they, and every one of them, may have full and free acceſs to him, Matth. xxii. 4.

Faith truſting this report as true and good, the ſoul concludes, The Saviour is mine; and leans on him for all the purchaſe of his death, for life and ſalvation to itſelf in particular, 1 Cor. ii. 2.

3. The goſpel is the report of a righteouſneſs wherein we guilty ones may ſtand before a holy God, Rom. i. 17. *For therein is the righteouſneſs of God revealed from faith to faith.* And by faith one believes there is ſuch a righteouſneſs, that it is ſufficient to cover him, and that it is held out to him to be truſted on for righteouſneſs: and ſo the believer truſts it as his righteouſneſs in the ſight of God, diſclaiming all other, and betaking himſelf to it alone, Gal. ii. 16.

4. The goſpel is a report of a pardon under the great ſeal of heaven, in Chriſt, to all who will take it in him, Acts xiii. 38, 39 'Be it known unto you, that through 'this man is preached unto you the forgiveneſs of ſins: 'and by him all that believe, are juſtified from all 'things.' This pardon is proclaimed openly by the authority of heaven, full and free, without exception of any of loſt Adam's race, to whom the report comes.

The ſoul by faith believes this to be true, and applies it to itſelf, ſaying, This pardon is for me; it is good and ſuitable to my caſe; I will therefore lean to this word of grace for my pardon, and come in, for this is the word of God that cannot lie.

5. The goſpel is the report of a phyſician that cures infallibly all the diſeaſes of the ſoul, Matth. ix. 12, 13. Heb. vii. 26. and freely, Hoſ. iv. 4.; and rejects no patients, John vi. 37.

The ſoul believes it, and applies it to its own caſe; and ſays, Then I will truſt him for the removing the ſtony heart out of my fleſh, for curing me of the falling evil of backſliding, the fever of raging corruption, the running iſſue of the predominant luſt, and the univerſal leproſy of the corruption of my nature.

6. The goſpel is the report of a feaſt for hungry ſouls, Iſa. xxv. 6. to which all are bid welcome, Chriſt himſelf being the maker and matter of it too, Iſa. lv. 2.

The ſoul weary of the huſks of created things, and believing this report, accordingly falls a feeding on Chriſt, his fleſh which is meat indeed, and his blood which is drink indeed; believing and applying to itſelf all that Chriſt was, did, and ſuffered, as that whereof the ſoul ſhall reap the benefit; which is the feeding by faith on a ſlain Saviour.

7. The goſpel is a report of a treaſure, 2 Cor. iv. 7. In it are the precious promiſes, within them precious Chriſt, with his merit, like the gold mentioned, Rev. iii. 18. 'I counſel thee to buy of me gold tried in the 'fire, that thou mayeſt be rich.' The field it is hid in, may be yours, Matth. xiii. 44.; the goſpel offers you the covenant as that field.

Faith believes the report; and the ſoul lays hold on the covenant, and truſts entirely to the treaſure hid there for the payment of all its debt, for its throughbearing during life, and through death, and for procuring it eternal happineſs.

8. The goſpel is the report of a victory won by Jeſus Chriſt over ſin, Satan, and death, and the world, Pſal. xcviii. 1. and that in favours of all that will join the glorious Conqueror.

Faith believes this report; and the ſoul truſts to it for its victory over all theſe, as already foiled enemies, 1 John v. 4. To name no more,

9. *laſtly*, The goſpel is the report of a peace purchaſed by the blood of Chriſt for poor ſinners, Eph. ii. 14. and offered to them, Iſa. xxvii. 5.

Faith believes it; and truſting to it, the ſoul comes before God as a reconciled Father in Chriſt, brings in its ſupplications for ſupply before the throne, believing the communication to be opened betwixt heaven and them, which during the war was blocked up.

USE I. of *Information.* This ſhews, that,

1. The goſpel is the mean of divine appointment for the ſalvation of ſinners. Therefore it is called *the goſpel of our ſalvation*, Eph. i. 13. and to *bring ſalvation*, Tit. 11. The light of nature is not the external mean or inſtrument of ſalvation; for it brings no report of Chriſt, Acts iv. 12. The law is not it neither; it is the miniſtration of death and condemnation, 2 Cor. iii. 7. 9.; but the goſpel only: for it is in the goſpel only that a righteouſneſs is revealed for the unrighteous, Rom. i. 16, 17. and in which the Spirit is conveyed to dead ſinners, Gal. iii. 2. To ſlight the goſpel then, is to ſlight the only mean of ſalvation.

2. The goſpel however will not be of any ſaving effect to us without faith, Heb. iv. 2. 'The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in 'them that heard it.' The goſpel is the net: but the ſoul is not catched, to be drawn out of the waters of wrath, untill it believe, 1 Cor. i. 21. *It pleaſed God by the fooliſhneſs of preaching to ſave them that believe.* If the goſpel be hid to us, it is an evidence we are yet loſt: and it remains hid to all unbelievers, who ſee not the truth, goodneſs, nor glory of the goſpel

3. The goſpel method of ſalvation takes away all ground of glorying in the leaſt, from the ſinner: for it is by the faith of the goſpel, Rom. iv. 16. 'Therefore it is of faith 'that it might be by grace.' The way how a ſinner is to be brought into a ſtate of ſalvation, is not by doing of a law, or any work of a law; but by believing or truſting to a report. Faith is a believing or truſting, which of all things is the fartheſt removed from the nature of a work: and it is an injury done to the free grace of God, to look upon it as a work, or to explain it ſo, as hardly to leave any believing or truſting in it.

USE 2. of *Exhortation.* Let the goſpel gain truſt with you, as ever you would be ſaved from ſin or wrath. And

1ſt, Truſt the goſpel as true, as univerſally true, and that certainly and infallibly, as from God himſelf.

Motive 1. Conſider the manner of its diſcovery, clearly appearing to be from God, being delivered by Jeſus Chriſt and his apoſtles. It is a doctrine confirmed by the life and death of Chriſt, and particularly by his reſurrection from the dead; by the miracles wrought by him and his apoſtles, John iii. 2.

Mot. 2. Conſider the manner of its propagation in the world. It overturned Judaiſm and Paganiſm, the only two religions in the world when it entered: and that neither by the ſubtilty of men and learning, nor by the force of arms; but by the means of a few fiſhermen, declaring it in its ſimplicity: againſt whom the learning of the ſchools and the power of the magiſtrate and ſword, were engaged.

Mot. 3. *laſtly*, Conſider its effects on men, ſubduing their luſts, rendering them holy as God is holy; cauſing them to embrace it, over the belly of their worldly intereſt, and in ſpite of all hazards ſet before them by its enemies; and carrying them up comfortably in the midſt of the moſt cruel death.

2*dly*, Truſt to it, and lay the ſtreſs of your ſalvation on it as good. For which cauſe conſider,

1. It diſcovers a righteouſneſs in which a ſinner may ſtand before a holy God, Rom. i. 17. The law requires righteouſneſs, a perfect righteouſneſs, under the pain of the curſe, Gal. iii. 10. but it affords none, nor any ſtrength whereby it may be wrought: but the goſpel tells us of a righteouſneſs already wrought, and offers it to the ſinner, Rom. viii. 3, 4. 'For what the law 'could not do, in that it was weak through the fleſh, 'God ſending his own Son in the likeneſs of ſinful 'fleſh, and for ſin condemned ſin in the fleſh, that the 'righteouſneſs of the law might be fulfilled in us.' And in it there is what, in the eye of the law, will juſtify the ſinner before God, and give perfect peace in one's own conſcience, Rom. v. 1. *Being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

2. It ſets before us the moſt glorious life of moſt perfect happineſs, in the cleareſt and ſureſt way, 2 Tim. i. 10. The brighteſt ſcheme of happineſs, and the moſt illuminated map of Immanuel's land, is therein laid before us; fit to draw mens hearts to it, over the belly of all oppoſition. The reſearches of happineſs made by moraliſts, were as midnight darkneſs; the diſcoveries of it in the Moſaic diſpenſation, were but as the twilight; but in the goſpel as the mid-day.

3. *laſtly*, It is the only channel of ſalvation, in which ſalvation is conveyed to loſt ſinners, Acts iv. 12. 'Neither is there ſalvation in any other; for there is none 'other name under heaven given among men whereby 'we muſt be ſaved.' And,

1. It is the channel of ſalvation, to which whoſoever do betake themſelves by faith, ſhall undoubtedly be ſaved, Rom. i. 16. 'The goſpel is the power of God unto 'ſalvation, to every one that believeth.' There they ſhall find quickening, ſanctifying, and ſaving influences as by a mean appointed of God for that very end.

2. There is no other channel of ſalvation, no not the law as contradiſtinguiſhed thereto, 2 Cor. iii. It was the channel of life to innocent man once; but to a ſinner never. When ſin entered, it quite dried up as to all ſtreams of life, Gal. ii. 16. 'By the works of the law 'ſhall no fleſh be juſtified.' In a ſinking ſtate of the church, the law and goſpel are confounded, and the law juſtles out the goſpel, the dark ſhades of morality take place of goſpel light; which plague is this day begun in this church, and well far advanced. Men think they ſee the fitneſs of legal preaching for ſanctification; but how the preaching of the goſpel ſhould be ſuch a mean, they cannot underſtand, through want of experience of the power of the goſpel on their own ſouls. But,

(1.) The goſpel, and not the law, has the word of divine appointment for that end, Eph. i. 13. 'In whom 'ye alſo truſted, after that ye heard the word of truth, 'the goſpel of your ſalvation: in whom alſo after that 'ye believed, ye were ſealed with that holy Spirit of 'promiſe.' It is the word of ſalvation, Acts xiii. 26. the word of grace, chap. xx. 32. and the word of life, Phil. ii. 16. But the law, as contradiſtinguiſhed to it, is under no ſuch appointment; but is the miniſtration of condemnation and death, 2 Cor. iii. 7. 9. Abana and Pharpar ſeemed as fit in the eyes of carnal men to cure a leper as Jordan; but Jordan had the word of divine appointment. And without ſuch an appointment nothing can avail.

(2.) The goſpel and not the law as contradiſtinguiſhed thereto has the bleſſing annexed to it. There and only there, is *the power of God to ſalvation* to be expected, Rom. i. 16. It alone is *the miniſtration of the Spirit*, 2 Cor. iii. 8. So the apoſtle could appeal to the experience of the Galatians, Gal. iii. 2. 'This only (ſays he) would 'I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of 'the law, or by the hearing of faith?' Now, that can never be the channel of ſalvation from which the Spirit is ſeparated.

Wherefore know, that your life lies here, and that there is no ſalvation but in the way of truſting to the report of the goſpel.

DOCT. III. *Though many hear, yet few believe or truſt to the report of the goſpel.*

In diſcourſing this doctrine, I ſhall,

I. Confirm this point, that though many hear, yet few believe or truſt to the report of the goſpel.

II. Give the reaſons why ſo few believe the report of the goſpel.

III. *laſtly*, Apply.

I. I ſhall *confirm this point, that though many hear, yet few believe or truſt to the report of the goſpel.* It is clear, if ye conſider and view theſe two things.

1*ſt*, A view of the church in all ages, and the entertainment the goſpel has met with among them to whom it came.

2*dly*, A view of the church ſetting aſide thoſe whom the ſcripture determines to be unbelievers.

Firſt, Let us take a view of the church in all ages, and the entertainment the goſpel has met with among them to whom it came. It has been a deſpiſed and diſbelieved goſpel in all ages, and under all diſpenſations. Few believed it,

1. Under the patriarchal diſpenſation, from Adam to Moſes. It was firſt preached in paradiſe to Adam and Eve, being comprehended in the promiſe of Chriſt to come. By them indeed it was believed, and Adam preached it; but Cain ſlew Abel, and headed an apoſtaſy. And in the days of Enos, the ſon of Seth, there was a profeſſed diſtinction made between profeſſors and others, Gen. iv. 26. *Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.* Noah, a preacher of righteouſneſs, his doctrine was ſo little believed, that that generation was ſwept away with the flood. An unbelieving Ham was in the ark; and Nimrod ſhortly after headed a generation of unbelieving apoſtates, that built the tower of Babel. Abraham was called alone from his country, where his fathers ſerved other gods. And his poſterity in Egypt had little knowledge of either law or goſpel left them: Rom. v. 13. *For until the law ſin was in the world.*

2. Under the Moſaic diſpenſation, they had the goſpel, though vailed with types and figures. But the body of the generation that came out of Egypt, believed not, but fell in the wilderneſs, Heb. iv. 2. How often did the body of that nation fall off into idolatry? What heavy complaints did their prophets make time after time of the unbelief prevailing in their generations?

3. Under the Chriſtian diſpenſation. The word out of Chriſt's own mouth was generally diſbelieved, John xii. 37, 38. 'But though he had done ſo many miracles 'before them, yet they believed not on him: that the 'ſaying of Eſaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which

he ſpake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and 'to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?' The goſpel had never ſo great ſucceſs as in the apoſtles days; yet even but few believed it in compariſon of others in the world, Rom. x. 16. *But they have not all obeyed the goſpel.* The ſtate of the church for the times thereafter may be ſeen, Rev. vi. in the firſt ſix ſeals. Then in the time of Antichriſt, the world wondered after the beaſt, the witneſſes were reduced to two, and the church of believers driven to the wilderneſs. At the reformation the goſpel had remarkable good ſucceſs; but yet believers were but few comparatively: and there have been but few all along ſince that time.

Secondly, Let us take a view of the church, ſetting aſide thoſe whom the ſcripture determines to be unbelievers; and we will ſoon ſee that but few do remain. Set aſide,

1. The groſly ignorant of Chriſt, and of the truths of the goſpel. Theſe God himſelf caſts out of the number, Iſa. xxvii. 11. *It is a people of no underſtanding: therefore he that made them, will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will ſhew them no favour.* There may be a believing in an unſeen, but not an unknown Chriſt. How can they believe the goſpel that know not what it is?

2. The profane, who are Chriſtians in name, becauſe they live in a Chriſtian country: but have not a ſhape of Chriſtianity about them. Surely theſe do not believe the goſpel: Tit. i. 16. *They profeſs that they know God: but in works they deny him, being abominable, and diſobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. Sanctification and belief of the truth* go together, 2 Theſſ. ii. 13. The goſpel is the great mean of God's appointment for reforming the world, if then it prevail not to the reforming of men's lives, it is an evidence they believe it not, Heb. iv. 2.

3. The carnal and worldly, who make the world their chief good, mainly ſeeking that, and ſavouring it only. Theſe undoubtedly are unbelievers, Phil. iii. 19, 20. 'Whoſe end is deſtruction, whoſe God is their belly: and whoſe glory is in their ſhame, who mind earthly things.' No ſooner doth a man believe the report of the goſpel anent the unſeen world, but the preſent evil world ſinks in its value with him, Matth. xiii. 44. 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto treaſure hid in a field: the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and ſelleth all that he hath and buyeth that field.' But to the moſt part the matters of faith are as the bird in the buſh; what they ſee with their eyes is the bird in hand, Pſal. iv. 6. *There may be many that ſay, Who will ſhew us any good?*

4. Mere moraliſts, all whoſe religion is confined to ſome pieces of the ſecond table. Theſe are they who are juſt in their dealings with men, but know nothing of dealing with God through Chriſt, and make no conſcience of the duties of worſhipping of God. They come but the one half of that Phariſee's length, mentioned Luke xviii.; and to be ſure are unbelievers, for Chriſt ſets them aſide, Matth. v. 20. 'For I ſay unto you, that except your righteouſneſs ſhall exceed the righteouſneſs of the ſcribes and Phariſees, ye ſhall in no caſe enter into the kingdom of heaven.'

5. Groſs hypocrites, who have a profeſſion of religion, and worſhip God, but in the mean time are looſe and licentious in their walk. Theſe are they who on their knees are like ſaints, but have no more religion than what lies in theſe external duties of worſhip. Them Chriſt ſets aſide as unbelievers, Matth. vii. 21. *Not every one that ſaith unto me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven;* and will diſown any ſaving relation to them, Luke vi. 46. 'Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I ſay?' That goſpel that cleanſes not a man's hands from unjuſt dealing; his mouth from lying, ſwearing, and filthy ſpeaking; and his converſation from the pollutions of the world, is certainly not believed.

6. Cloſe hypocrites, whoſe outward converſation is blameleſs in the eye of the world, but in the mean time are inwardly ſtrangers to God and Chriſt. Such were thoſe in the church of Sardis, of whom our Lord ſays, Rev. iii. 1. 'I know thy works, that thou haſt a name that thou liveſt, and art dead.' They are not unacquainted with the practice of outward duties both towards God and man: but they are abſolute ſtrangers to the life of faith, communion with God, and experimental religion. They are walking on in the dark, and dreaming they are in the way; yet never have one foot on it. Theſe are unbelievers; for *faith purifies the heart*, Acts xv. 9. They are ſelf juſticiaries, like the Jews of old, 'who being ignorant of God's righteouſneſs, and going about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, did not ſubmit themſelves unto the righteouſneſs of God,' Rom. x. 3.

7. *Laſtly*, All unregenerate perſons; for they are certainly unbelievers, as believers are regenerate: as is clear from John i. 12, 13. 'But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the ſons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' And ſuch are all thoſe who have never been convinced of their ſin and miſery; nor humbled, and brought to be content with a Saviour on any terms; who have never had Chriſt revealed in them; nor been ſavingly determined and enabled to embrace him.

Now they of theſe ſeveral ſorts make the throng of the multitude of the hearers of the goſpel. And it is but here and there one that is not of one or other of them. Set aſide then all theſe, few remain, few believers, few who truſt to the goſpel report.

II. I ſhall give *the reaſons why ſo few believe the report of the goſpel.*

1. There is a natural impotency in all, John vi. 44. 'No man can come to me, except the Father which hath ſent me, draw him.' This is cured in few; to few is the *arm of the Lord revealed.* Believing the report of the goſpel is not, as ſome think, an eaſy effort of imagination. It is beyond the power of nature. Yea, every thing in nature is againſt it, and riſes up againſt it, till the Spirit of the Lord overcome them into belief of the report of the goſpel.

2. The predominant power of luſts, to which the goſpel is an enemy. There our Lord lodges it, John iii. 19. *This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds were evil.* The goſpel is a light; but they love darkneſs better: and therefore they will not receive the light by the belief thereof. They are ſet upon preſent things, things of ſenſe; and therefore eſteem the things of faith but as idle tales, John v. 44.

3. There is a judicial blindneſs on many. Men have refuſed to believe the goſpel, that they might get continued in the embraces of their luſts, therefore God hath given them over into the hand of Satan, who has blinded them ſo, as they cannot behold the light and glory of the goſpel, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

USE I. of *Information.* Hence learn, that,

1*ſt*, There is great odds between hearing and doing, James i. 22. Many hear, but few obey; many are called, but few choſen. The goſpel comes to the ears of many, who receive the ſound with an air of reverence, but never receive it into their hearts by faith. Do not then lay ſtreſs on your attendance on ordinances, as if that would render you acceptable to God, Jer. vii. 4. 'Truſt ye not in lying words, ſaying, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are theſe.' Such a conceit will be ſadly expoſed at the laſt day, as is clear from what our Lord ſays will be the language of ſome at his awful tribunal, 'We have eaten and drunk in thy preſence, and thou haſt taught 'in our ſtreets.' Unto all ſuch he will ſay, *Depart from me all ye workers of iniquity*, Luke xiii. 26, 27.

2dly, This may remove the occaſion of ſtumbling by theſe three things. Do not ſtumble at it, (1.) Becauſe the goſpel hath ſo few friends in an evil day. The ſcripture hath told us before, that few believe it at any time. It is a greater wonder, that one adheres to it over the belly of perſecution, eſpecially even to death, than that hundreds forſake it; conſidering how rare the faith of it is even in a time of peace. (2.) That the foundations of Chriſtianity come at length to be attacked by men of corrupt minds. For what wonder is it, that, in a time of long peaceable enjoyment of the goſpel, they that never truly believed it, come at length to queſtion it, and in end downright to deny it? (3.) That the lives either of profeſſors or miniſters of the goſpel are altogether unſuitable to it. For men may profeſs and preach the goſpel too, that they never believed. Man's arm may fit men to profeſs and preach it, but it is the arm of the Lord only that can bring men to believe it.

OBJECT. But is not that ground to queſtion it, that ſo few believe it? ANSW. That is no juſt prejudice againſt it. For, (1.) There are many natural truths, which yet are believed by very few. I ſuppoſe the thouſandth, not to ſay the ten thouſandth perſon in the world that ſees the ſun and moon, does not believe the ſun to be bigger than a cart wheel, or any ſtar to be ſo big as the moon; and yet learned men demonſtrate by reaſon, that the ſun is bigger than the whole earth by far, and the moon leſs than any ſtar. But the goſpel is ſupernatural truth, which cannot be comprehended or received by mere reaſon, 1 Cor. ii. 14. 'For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are fooliſhneſs unto him; neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.' Therefore there is no ground to queſtion the goſpel report, becauſe few believe it. (2.) The moſt part of men are wedded to their luſts and paſſions, which the goſpel is ſet for the rooting out of, Tit. ii. 11, 12. 'For the grace of God that bringeth ſalvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, in this preſent world.' It is the intereſt of their luſts that the goſpel be not believed: and therefore the general unbelief of the goſpel is no prejudice againſt it; becauſe men generally have a ſtrong bias againſt it, from the mighty power of their luſts, John iii. 19. forecited. But the belief of it is of equal latitude with a ſincere deſire of enjoying God, and being like him: which is man's chief happineſs.

3dly, The common way of the world is not God's way; and they are rare perſons that are right. This is evident from our Lord's exhortation, Matth. vii. 13, 14. *Enter in at the ſtrait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to deſtruction, and many there be which go in thereat: becauſe ſtrait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.* Many will be waled out of the viſible church, and thrown away as naught, till they be left but as one of a city and two of a family, as the gleanings of the vintage, that are to be carried to Zion above. They are *men wondered at*, Zech. iii. 8. therefore not ordinary: *God's jewels*, Mal. iii. 17. therefore not common ſtuff; Chriſt's *little, little flock*, Luke xii. 32. *Greek*.

4thly, laſtly, Surely many deceive themſelves as to their faith of the goſpel, thinking they believe the goſpel while they really believe it not: Hoſ. viii. 2, 3. 'Iſrael ſhall cry unto me, My God, we know thee. Iſrael hath caſt off the thing that is good.' The apoſtle obſerves, 2 Theſſ. iii. 2. that 'all men have not faith;' and our Lord ſhews it to be very rare, Luke xviii. 8. 'When the Son of man cometh, ſhall he find faith on the earth?' I ſuppoſe it will be found, that few believe this very truth we are inſiſting on. For as few as there are who believe the goſpel, if the queſtion were put through us, Do you believe the goſpel? Do you believe it? I reckon few, if any, particularly of the unbelievers, but would ſay, They do. The reaſons of the miſtake are theſe.

1. They were brought up in the profeſſion of the goſpel, and they never queſtioned their belief of it. Many among us have no more for their belief of the goſpel, than Papiſts in Italy have for their belief of Popery, and Pagans in America for their belief of Paganiſm. Their fathers, and mothers, and prieſts told them ſo; and ſo they have a human faith of Popery and Paganiſm, upon that human teſtimony. And ſo many a Scotſman has no more but a human faith of the goſpel, which they have taken up on the word of their fathers, mothers, and miniſters; and they never queſtioned it. But the divine faith of the goſpel is another thing, and that they will find when they come to a pinch in that matter: Matth. xvi. 17. 'And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Bleſſed art thou Simon Barjona: for fleſh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.' 1 Theſſ. ii. 13. 'For this cauſe alſo thank we God without ceaſing, becauſe when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh alſo in you that believe.'

2. They never had much ado with their faith of the goſpel. Such as it is it has lien by them idle all their days; like a book by a ſcholar he never had occaſion to conſult, or a piece of money one never offered in payment to his neighbour. Their faith of the goſpel was never tried with barefaced ſatanical temptations, obſtinately inſiſted in; nor with their afflictions; nor with ſound and thorough convictions of their loſt and miſerable ſtate: and all is good untried. But the trial would have diſcovered another thing, James i. 12. that is true faith of the goſpel that will abide a trial, 1 Pet. i. 6, 7.

3. They ſatisfy themſelves with a general hiſtorical faith of the goſpel, knowing nothing of truſting to it for all Chriſt's ſalvation to themſelves. And if that be the believing of the goſpel-report, the devils are as good believers as they, and better too, James ii. 19. for *the devils believe, and tremble.* They know not what it is to be at the inſtance of the law, ſet before the tribunal of God, in the court of conſcience, and to have the law there preſſing them particularly with its demands and curſes; and for their own defence to be fain to plead there as for their life, the holineſs of Chriſt's nature, the righteouſneſs of his life, and ſatisfaction for ſin, and that upon the credit of the goſpel report.

But there are four things which may evince, that moſt of the hearers of the goſpel, whatever they think, do not believe the goſpel, nor truſt it as true, nor truſt to it as good.

1. It does not purify their hearts and lives, Acts xv. 9. The belief of the truth is the means appointed of God for ſanctification, 2 Theſſ. ii. 13. 'God hath from the beginning choſen you to ſalvation, through ſanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth,' Eph. v. 25, 26. 'Chriſt loved the church, and gave himſelf for it, that he might ſanctify and cleanſe it with the waſhing of water, by the word.' And it is the word of the goſpel that is ſo, John xv. 3. *Now ye are clean through the word which I have ſpoken unto you.* The word of the goſpel received into the heart by faith, is like a ſpring that works out the mud, 1 Theſſ. ii. 13. *The word of God effectually worketh in you that believe.* It is like leaven that ſeeks through the whole maſs. For the Spirit of Sanctification is in it, John vi. 63. *It is the Spirit that quickeneth. The words that I ſpeak unto you, they are ſpirit, and they are life.* So they whoſe heart and life is not purified by the goſpel, they do not really believe it, Heb. iv. 2.

The profane man, he that is ungodly with reſpect to God, unrighteous with reſpect to men, not ſober with reſpect to himſelf, does not believe the goſpel: for it 'teacheth us, that, denying ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, in this preſent world,' Tit. ii. 11, 12.; and is effectual in believers, 1 Theſſ. ii 13. forecited. But ſuch an one is maſter of it, it is not maſter of him. Rom. i. 18. He *holds the truth in unrighteouſneſs.* The man that is a ſlave to his paſſions, his pride, wrath and revenge, believes not the goſpel, Iſ. xi. 6. The man whoſe God is the world, the covetous, the unjuſt, the ſenſual, the vain, &c. believes not, Matth. xiii. 45, 46 forecited.

2. It does not make them fruitful to God, as it does in believers, Col. i. 5, 6. That faith is vain that is without works, James ii. 20. The word of the goſpel is a heavenly ſeed, which received into the heart by faith, never miſſeth to bring forth fruit. As it puts out the fruits of the fleſh, it brings in the fruits of the Spirit. It makes the man to live to Chriſt, and live for him, Phil. i. 21.; as the woman of Samaria did, who not only lived unto Chriſt herſelf, but induced others, by her example, to believe in him, as their Saviour. See John chap. iv.

The man that makes no conſcience of ſerving his generation by doing good to others, that lays not out himſelf to be uſeful for God in his place and ſtation, that thinks it enough that he does not ill to others, and hangs not out a flag of defiance againſt the honour of God, is as really an unbeliever of the goſpel, as he that is noxious, in reſpect of God and man: for where is his fruit? Col. i. 6. ſee Matth. xii. 30. *He that is not with me, is againſt me: and he that gathereth not with me, ſcattereth abroad.*

3. It is not their chief comfort, as it is to the ſaints, Pſal. cxix. 49, 50. 'Remember the word unto thy ſervant, upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.' The ſcripture calls the believer's great hope, *the hope of the goſpel,* Col. i. 23. And it has been proven to be ſo by their ſufferings even of death for it, Mark viii. 35. 'For whoſoever will ſave his life, ſhall loſe it; but whoſoever ſhall loſe his life for my ſake and the goſpel's, the ſame ſhall ſave it.' What bears up a man in his greateſt ſtraits, muſt needs be his greateſt comfort. The goſpel is that which bore up the hearts of believers, under their greateſt hardſhips. Therefore it has been found, that brown bread and the goſpel has been pleaſant fare to many a believer. Take away the goſpel, and take the ſun out of the world. Whatever are their ſtraits or their ſtorms, the goſpel is their plight anchor.

But alas! there are few thus minded. Give them full pantries and a warm fire ſide they could be right cheary without the goſpel. It is corn and the cattle, good markets, &c. they know the comfort of theſe: but many that know that, know little of the comfort of the goſpel. If they be lifted up at any time, it is not the goſpel that does it, but ſome creature comfort. If ſome affliction befal them, ſome creature comfort removed; what helps them is not the comfort of the goſpel, but ſome other creature comfort put in its room, or hoped for.

If one had his ſtock in a ſhip at ſea, whatever joys or ſorrows he met with in his means at home, they would not be his chief ones; the chief would be about the ſhip. The goſpel is the ſhip the believer's ſtock is in; and whatever joys or ſorrows he meets with in the world, yet his chief ones are in the goſpel, Hab. iii. 17, 18. *Although the fig tree ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive ſhall fail, and the fields ſhall yield no meat, the flock ſhall be cut off from the fold, and there ſhall be no herd in the ſtalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my ſalvation.* There is ſuch a difference betwixt a believer and an unbeliever, as betwixt a laird and tenant in a harveſt flood ſweeping away the corn. The corn being ſwept away the tenant has nothing left. Micah ſaid, when his gods were taken away, 'What have I more?' The other comforts himſelf, Yet it has not ſwept away the land. So Job vi 13. 'Is not my help in me? and is wiſdom driven quite from me?'

4. It is not their chief concern, what come of it. Oft-times they have no concern at all about it; they will profanely put that off to them that live by it. Be it ſo, then all that believe it, live by it, and it will be their chief concern, Iſa. xxxviii. 16. John vi. 63. It is the word of life, and believing it is the way to live, Iſa. lv. 3. 'Hear and your ſouls ſhall live.' They will be concerned for it as for their life, Deut. xxxii. 47. and take away their hope from that airth, they would reckon themſelves moſt miſerable, 1 Cor. xv. 19. Therefore they will ſtrive for the faith of the goſpel as their all.

But I fear many a hearer of the goſpel would take it for no ill news, if any body could make them ſure of it, that the whole goſpel is but a fable: A plain evidence that it is not the thing they mainly truſt to, elſe they would be mainly concerned for it.

USE 2. Be ſtirred up then to a weighty concern to attain to the true faith of the report of the goſpel; that ye may be of thoſe who really truſt it as true, and truſt to it as good. Theſe following things may be of uſe to put a peculiar edge on your ſpirits for this.

1. That there are ſo few that really believe it in a ſaving manner. When Chriſt ſaid, *One of you ſhall betray me,* the diſciples ſaid, *Is it I?* And the conſideration that ſo few believe the report of the goſpel, ſhould put every one to ſee to himſelf, that he be not an unbeliever.

2. Your ſalvation or damnation turns on this point, Mark xvi. 16. 'He that believeth ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not, ſhall be damned.' Many will be affected with ſome groſs ſins of theirs againſt the law, who never ſee the venom of their unbelief of the goſpel. But this is the ſin that draws deepeſt: and therefore that is the ſin which the Spirit is in a ſpecial manner to convince of, John xvi. 8, 9. 'And when he is come, he will reprove the world of ſin, and of righteouſneſs, and of judgment: of ſin, becauſe they believe not on me.' And that is the great ſoul-ruining ſin, John iii. 19. 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds were evil.'

3. Doing this ye do all, Mark v. 36. 'Be not afraid, only believe.' This is the ſhort way, and the only way to ſanctification. It is the belief of the goſpel that brings ſinners to the obedience of the law; for thereby the ſoul is united to Chriſt, the ſtore-houſe of grace, and of the Spirit of holineſs, Eph. iii. 17. John i. 16. Hence it purifies the heart, Acts xv. 9. and the heart being purified, the life will be ſo too. So the apoſtle runs up obedience to it, 1 Tim. i. 5.

4. If ye do not this ye do nothing, 1 John iii. 23. 'This is his commandment, that we ſhould believe on the name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt.' John vi. 29. 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath ſent.' All that ye do in the way of obedience without it, will be but as ſo many cyphers, that will amount to juſt nothing in the ſight of a holy God, Heb. xi. 6. 'Without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God.' Your prayers, tears, juſtice, ſobriety, &c. all will be loſt without faith. Whatever good works any does without faith, are but dead works; they may have the ſhape of good works, but the ſoul and life is wanting. Here is the reaſon why endeavours of reformation with unbelievers do not ſucceed: Why, when the doctrine of the goſpel is corrupted, and preachers, inſtead of preaching Chriſt, turn their ſermons into harangues of moral virtue, they and their hearers loſe both grace and virtue, and turn profane.

5. *laſtly,* If ye really believe the goſpel, nothing can ruin you: if ye do not, nothing can ſave you. Under the law, the Jews were a ſtubborn, diſobedient generation, every now and then falling into idolatry, till the Babyloniſh captivity: yet were they preſerved, God minding to try them with the diſpenſation of the goſpel. But when they rejected and diſbelieved the goſpel, though

they had quite left their idolatry, they were deſtroyed.

So whatever is your guilt, if ye believe the goſpel, it will be wiped out, Acts xvi. 31. ' Believe on the Lord ' Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved ;' if not, whatever good ye do, ye will periſh, John iii. 36. ' He that ' believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee life ; but the wrath ' of God abideth on him.' The goſpel is the laſt method of heaven for the ſalvation of ſinners : where the law failed, the goſpel came to help out, Rom. viii. 3. But if ye miſs ſalvation in the way of the goſpel, there is not another method to follow : ſo it is the laſt ſhip bound for Emmanuel's land, and therefore the only one.

I ſhall conclude with ſome directions how to believe the goſpel.

1. Perſuade yourſelves that the faith of the goſpel is beyond the power of nature, John vi. 44. that there is a neceſſity of a power from on high to bring you to believe. This will raze the old foundation, and cauſe you look up for it.

2. Urge on yourſelves the faith of the law. It alſo is the teſtimony of God. Believe it with application to yourſelves. See the authority of God in its commands binding on you ; the truth of God, in its threatening and curſe, reaching you and holding you faſt.

3. *laſtly*, With an eye to the Spirit's working in you, conſider and apply the promiſe of the goſpel : for that is not only the object, but the means of faith, Rom. x 17. *Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

Doct IV. *There is no true believing or truſting to the report of the goſpel, but what is the effect of the working of a divine power on the ſoul for that end.*

In proſecuting this doctrine, I ſhall,

I. Evince the truth of it.

II. Shew what is that working of divine power whereby the ſoul is brought to truſt to the goſpel-report.

III. *laſtly*, Apply.

I. I ſhall evince the truth of the doctrine. Conſider for it,

1. Expreſs ſcripture-teſtimony, John vi. 44. ' No ' man can come to me, except the Father which hath ' ſent me, draw him.' The apoſtle calls it therefore *the faith of the operation of God*, Col. ii. 12. and *the work of faith with power*, 2 Theſſ. i. 11. is *fulfilled*. Hence *believing* is ſaid to be *given*, Phil. i. 29. Yea, no leſs power is put forth in it, than that which was exerted in the raiſing of Chriſt from the dead, Eph. i. 19, 20.

2. The ſtate that by nature we are in, *dead in ſin*, Eph. ii. 1. Faith is the firſt vital act of the ſoul, quickened by the Spirit of life from Jeſus Chriſt ; which therefore a ſoul without the Spirit of life, is no more capable of, than a dead man of breathing, walking, &c. The raiſing of the dead is a work competent to God alone ; the raiſing of dead ſouls as well as bodies, John v. 25, 26. ' Verily verily I ſay unto you, The hour is ' coming, and now is, when the dead ſhall hear the ' voice of the Son of God : and they that hear ſhall live. ' For as the Father hath life in himſelf, ſo hath he given ' to the Son to have life in himſelf.'

3. There can be no faith without knowledge ; and the knowledge of ſpiritual things man is by nature incapable of, 1 Cor. ii. 14. ' The natural man receiveth ' not the things of the Spirit of God ; for they are fool- ' iſhneſs unto him : neither can he know them, becauſe ' they are ſpiritually diſcerned.' How can one truſt to the report of the goſpel, without diſcerning the goſpel in its glorious excellency ? But the eye of man naturally is out as to theſe things. Natural truths he can diſcern by natural powers : but ſupernatural truths are above his reach without ſupernatural abilities.

4. Man is naturally under the power of Satan, a captive of the devil, who with his utmoſt efforts will hinder the work of faith, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. *If our goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt : in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.* Such a caſe the goſpel finds men in, Iſa. lxi. 1. ; and it is the deſign of the goſpel to bring them out of it, Acts xxvi. 17, 18. But how can ſuch be the deſign of the goſpel, but becauſe it is the inſtrument of a ſuperior power, Rom. i. 16. and is rendered effectual by the Omnipotent himſelf ? 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. The ſtrong man muſt be caſt out by a ſtronger.

5. Man's truſt is by nature firmly pre-occupied by thoſe things which the goſpel calls them to renounce. He is wedded to other confidences naturally, which he will therefore hold by, till a power above nature carry him off from them. And therefore it is a differencing character between the Lord's people and all others, that they have *no confidence in the fleſh*, Phil. iii. 3.

(1.) Self confidence is natural to man. And therefore it is the firſt leſſon at Chriſt's ſchool, to *deny ourſelves* ; which is inwrapped in the very nature of faith, or truſting to the goſpel, Matth xvi. 24. Man going away from God as his chief end, ſet up himſelf for his chief end : and ſo it is as natural for him to act from and for himſelf, as for birds to fly in the air. So that to unſelf a man, which is done in the work of faith, muſt needs be a work of divine power.

(2.) Creature confidence. Man not being ſelf ſufficient, muſt needs ſeek ſomething without himſelf wherein to reſt his heart. Being eſtranged from God, he goes to the creature, Jer. ii. 13. And to it he is ſo wedded in confidence, that after a thouſand diſappointments, he ſtill maintains it. And the truth is, it is impoſſible to get the heart carried off it, except to abſolute deſpair, without putting a better in the room thereof ; which is done only by faith taking a God in Chriſt inſtead thereof, Matth. xiii. 45, 46. This ſure requires a ſupernatural power, Jer. xvi. 19.

(3.) Law confidence. The law was Adam's covenant ; and as he was to work and win his wages, ſo that is the natural religion of all his poſterity. Nature knows no other way of acceptance with God : and men ſtick by it till death, and a violent death too, do part them, Gal. ii. 19. ' For I through the law am dead to ' the law, that I might live unto God,' Rom. vii. 4. *Wherefore, my brethren, ye alſo are become dead to the law by the body of Chriſt.* An evidence that it is another power than their own muſt bring them off it.

6. Man has a ſtrong bias and bent againſt believing or truſting to the goſpel, Rom. x. 3. ' For they being ' ignorant of God's righteouſneſs, and going about to ' eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, have not ſubmitted ' themſelves unto the righteouſneſs of God,' John v. 40. *And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.* The contrivance of the goſpel lies croſs to the mind and will of natural men, and they to it : ſo that the one is the very reverſe of the other. Hence the Jews and Greeks both were oppoſite to the goſpel, and in their wiſdom reckoned it folly. So that the ſoul muſt be new-moulded by a divine power, ere it can receive it, 1 Cor. ii. 14. forecited.

7. *laſtly*, It is the product of the Holy Spirit, wherever it is, Gal. v. 22. ' But the fruit of the Spirit is—— ' faith.' Hence Chriſt is called the author of it, Heb. xii. 2. as working it in the elect by his own Spirit, 2 Cor. iv. 13. It was promiſed in the covenant for the elect, to be effected by the Spirit : and it is peculiar to them, Acts xiii. 48. as being the work of God's Spirit only. And the goſpel is the only immediate outward mean of it, becauſe it only is *the miniſtration of the Spirit.*

II. *What is that working of divine power whereby the ſoul is brought to truſt to the goſpel-report ?* There is a twofold work of divine power on the ſoul for that end.

Firſt, A mediate work, which is preparatory to it ; whereof the Spirit is the author, and the inſtrument is the law. It is twofold.

1ſt, An awakening work ; whereby the ſecure ſinner is rouſed up, and made to lay ſalvation to heart, which he was little concerned about before, ſleeping ſecurely. And that is done by the Spirit's bringing home the law on the ſinner's conſcience. And,

1. There is a divine power bringing home on the ſinner's conſcience the commands of the law, Rom. vii. 9. *For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, ſin revived, and I died.* And thereby they are diſcovered, (1.) In their divine authority, as the commands of the eternal ſovereign God, which clothes them with an awfulneſs they were not wont to appear in to the ſinner; each of them being prefaced with a *Thus ſaith the Lord.* (2.) As binding on the ſinner in particular; ſo that the bond of the command is found by him girding him ſtrait; however he felt little of it before, Rom. vii. 10. *And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.* It is obſervable, that the ten commands are all in the ſecond perſon, ſpeaking to every man, as if they concerned no other but him, *Thou ſhalt not*, &c. And when the Spirit comes, he ſpeaks them the ſame way to the ſinner's conſcience, Rom. vii. 7. 'What ſhall we ſay 'then? Is the law ſin? God forbid. Nay, I had not 'known ſin, but by the law: for I had not known luſt, 'except the law had ſaid, Thou ſhalt not covet.'

Now hereby the ſinner is convinced of ſin, and brought in guilty before the Lord, John xvi. 8. Rom. iii. 19. His ſins, original and actual, of heart and life, of thoughts, words, and actions, are ſet before him, Pſal. l. 21. And he is like *a thief found*, Jer. ii. 26.

2. This divine power brings home on the ſinner's conſcience the curſe of the law, John xvi. 8. *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of ſin, and of righteouſneſs, and of judgment.* And it is diſcovered to be, (1.) God's curſe, heavier than mountains of lead; which in virtue of his greatneſs, is inſupportable, in virtue of his infiniteneſs eternal, and in virtue of his truth, infallible: though before it was but like the ſounding again of the mountains, in his conceit. (2.) God's curſe on him in particular, ſtaking him down to revenging wrath. The Spirit of the Lord ſays within the man, as Mal. iii. 9. 'Ye are curſed with a curſe; for ye have robbed me, 'even this whole nation.' As long as the ſinner can ward off the particular application of the curſe to himſelf, he will little value the goſpel, Rev. iii. 17. But the word delivers it in the general, Gal. iii. 10. *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them;* and a divine power obliges the conſcience to apply.

Hereby the ſinner is convinced of his miſery, and ſees himſelf loſt and undone, Luke xv. 17. And ſo he is,

(1.) Stung to the heart and galled with remorſe, Acts ii. 37. Waves of killing grief go over his ſoul: he ſees he has been murdering his own ſoul, and he groans out an elegy over his dead ſelf, Rom. vii. 9. *I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, ſin revived, and I died.*

(2.) Frighted with terror, Acts xvi. 29. with the terror of God, the terror of death, and the terror of eternity.

(3.) Racked with anxiety, Acts ii. 37. Sometimes he hopes, ſometimes he fears, but is always anxious. This anxiety fills head, heart, and hands; ſwallows up all other cares, for the man ſees how true it is, Matth. xvi. 26. 'What is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the 'whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? or what ſhall a 'man give in exchange for his ſoul?'

2dly, An humbling work, whereby the proud ſinner is brought low to the duſt: not only finding a need of ſalvation, but an abſolute need of Chriſt for ſalvation; that there is no other way of help for him: but if he get not Chriſt he muſt periſh. So he is broken off from,

1. Self-confidence, Luke xv. 17. He ſees he has deſtroyed himſelf, but cannot help himſelf, Hoſ. xiii. 9. He finds that he is without ſtrength, light, or life; that his work is quite beyond his reach; his debt beyond his ability to pay; the bonds of ſin, in the guilt of it, and the power of it quite above his might to break aſunder, Rom. vii. 9.

2. Creature-confidence, Luke xv. 16. While his conſcience was aſleep, he pleaſed himſelf in his enjoyment of the creature; but now that is awake, the emptineſs of the whole creation is felt by him. His lawful comforts are foyſonleſs, while he thinks God is his enemy: his unlawful comforts have left a ſting behind them, which the whole creation cannot pull out. There is no reſt for his heart now, but in a God.

3. Law-confidence, Rom. vii. 9, 10. Time was when he had hopes of acceptance with God by the deeds of the law, and ſet down his duties of firſt and ſecond table as ſo much clear gain; but now he ſees they are all but loſs, Phil. iii. 6, 7. So he deſpairs of mending his caſe that way; and that he cannot pay his own debt in whole or in part. And all this is by means of the law too, diſcovered in its ſpirituality and ſeverity, Gal. ii. 19. 'I through the law am dead to the law, that I 'might live unto God.'

Secondly, This work of divine power is an immediate work; whereby faith is produced in the ſoul, it cauſed to truſt to the goſpel report; whereof the Spirit is the author, and the goſpel the inſtrument. And it is,

1. A quickening work; whereby the dead ſoul is called again to ſpiritual life, Eph. ii. 1. 'You hath he 'quickened who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins.' Therefore the ſame power is ſaid to be exerted in that caſe, as in raiſing Chriſt from the dead, re-uniting his ſoul with his body, Eph. i. 19, 20. So the Spirit of Chriſt enters into the dead ſoul, and the dry bones live, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. which Spirit is communicated in the word of the goſpel, as the vehicle thereof, ſo to ſpeak, Gal. iii. 2. Hence the word of the goſpel is ſaid to be ſpirit and life, John vi. 36. as being the miniſtration of the Spirit. An emblem of which is in the reſurrection of the dry bones. And hence there is,

(1.) A power to believe, as in a living man to breathe. So the Spirit of life being the Spirit of faith in the ſoul, it has a ſupernatural power, for that ſupernatural act, 2 Cor. iv. 13. In vain do we call the lame man to walk, who has no ability of walking: but the Spirit with the call of the goſpel entering into the ſinner, he is enabled to embrace Chriſt on the goſpel report.

(2.) A diſpoſition to believe, Pſal. cx. 3. 'Thy people 'ſhall be willing in the day of thy power;' as in Laazrus brought to life, to come out of the grave, and to lie no longer there. So the ſoul becomes pliable to the goſpel call, content to come to Chriſt, content to be made clean. Death's bands being looſed, the neck is no more as an iron ſinew; but the life given diſpoſes to what is agreeable to it.

2. An illuminating work. There is a knowledge in faith, which is therefore called knowledge, Iſa. liii. 11. John xvii. 3 No man will truſt to the report of the goſpel until he know it, and know it by a ſupernatural diſcovery too, 1 Cor. ii 14. And the Spirit of the Lord makes that diſcovery, Acts xxvi. 18. ſhewing the treaſure hid in the goſpel field, Matth. xiii. 44. This the Spirit doth by bringing home the goſpel-report to the ſoul: in which he demonſtrates it to the ſoul with the greateſt certainty, 1 Cor. ii. 4. He demonſtrates it to be,

(1.) God's own word, 1 Theſſ. ii. 13. The report comes in the word, that Chriſt is ſent in the character of Saviour of the world; that he is able to ſave, and willing to ſave the worſt of ſinners; and that whoſoever 'believeth in him, ſhall not periſh, but have everlaſting 'life,' John iii. 16. The Spirit of the Lord ſets this in ſuch a clear light, as that the ſinner ſees it is not a report of fallible men; but the word of the eternal God that cannot lie; the divine teſtimony, which is ſo certain that it cannot be falſe, 1 Cor. ii. 4.

(2.) God's word to that ſoul in particular, as really as if a voice from heaven did ſpeak to him by name, ſaying, Such an one, Chriſt is your Saviour, able and willing to ſave you; and you truſting on him, 'ſhall not periſh, 'but have everlaſting life,' 1 Theſſ. i. 5. This is as it were an internal word, applying to the ſoul in particular, the external word which is general: and without it the ſpecial application of faith will not be. Hence the Spirit is ſaid to convince of righteouſneſs, as well as of ſin; which he does by a particular application of the law in the one, and of the goſpel in the other, John xvi. 8. And the Spirit's teſtimony of Chriſt is diſtinguiſhed from the preacher's teſtimony, John xv. 26, 27. 'But 'when the Comforter is come, whom I will ſend unto 'you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which 'proceedeth from the Father, he ſhall teſtify of me. 'And ye alſo ſhall bear witneſs, becauſe ye have been 'with me from the beginning.'

(3.) A determining work, effectually and irreſiſtibly determining them to believe, ſo that they can no longer not believe. This is called the Father's drawing, viz. by his Spirit, John vi. 44. The Spirit of the Lord freely wins the ſoul, over the belly of all oppoſition.

(1.) To believe and truſt the report of the goſpel, as true. For the demonſtration of the Spirit is accompanied with power, 1 Cor. ii. 4. Some things are ſo clear to all, as that two and three make five, that no body can not believe it. Some things are ſo demonſtrated by ſight, or by reaſon, that though one could not believe them before, they can as little not believe them, or withhold their aſſent from them, after. So the goſpel being demonſtrated by the Spirit, cannot but be believed, and truſted as true: and therefore it is ſaid to have *come in much aſſurance*, 1 Theſſ. i. 5. as a thing ſeen by the ſoul, or demonſtrated to it.

And ſo faith is the ſoul's echo to this demonſtration of the Spirit; the ſoul ſaying, he is the Saviour of the world, and my Saviour, able and willing to ſave ſinnets, and to ſave me; on whom I truſting ſhall not periſh, like Thomas, *My Lord and my God*, John xx. 28.

(2) To truſt to the report of the goſpel as good. For the ſame demonſtration of the Spirit ſo diſcovers the excellency, and abſolute ſuitableneſs of Chriſt to the ſinner's caſe, and full ſecurity for its ſalvation that is in him, upon the infallible truth of the goſpel report, that it being earneſtly deſirous of ſalvation, cannot but truſt to it as good for them, and good ſecurity.

So then here faith takes up the ſoul's eternal reſt, reſting wholly on Chriſt held forth in the goſpel for ſalvation, upon the ſecurity of the word of the goſpel.

USE 1. of *Information*. Hence learn, that,

1. The faith of the goſpel is to be ſuſpected, that ſprings up without a work of mighty power to the producing of it. Theſe are not of that ſort, Eph. i. 19, 20. who have experienced 'the exceeding greatneſs of his 'power toward them in believing, according to the 'working of his mighty power: which he wrought in 'Chriſt, when he raiſed him from the dead.' Wild oats ſpring up without any pains about them, but it is not ſo with good grain. So a falſe faith may ſpring from nature, without divine influence; but true faith is the fruit of the mighty power of God. It is the loſs of many, that they come eaſily by their religion, they know not how, but as in a morning dream it coſts them nothing.

It is true grace is *a ſeed that ſprings and grows up a man knows not how*, Mark iv. 17. But it is one thing to ſpring up without tilling and ſowing; another, to ſpring up out of ground tilled and ſown, one knows not how. The huſbandman knows very well how he comes by his crop, what pains he was at in labouring the ground, though he cannot account for that how the ſeed he ſowed did turn into ſuch a fair breard. So faith ſpringing up in the heart may be myſterious to the believer, as to the time and way of it; who yet knows there was an awakening, humbling, enlightening, and powerfully determining work on him for that end.

Some indeed may be ſanctified from the womb: But that will appear in grace's exerciſe beginning with the exerciſe of reaſon: and Satan will readily aſſault their faith after, that they ſhall find a difficulty in the exerciſe of it.

2. See whence it is that moſt mens faith of the goſpel has no ſanctifying effect on their lives. It is a mere natural faith, and therefore cannot change their natures. If their faith were the produce of a mighty work of divine power on their ſouls, whereby they were quickened, humbled, enlightened, and powerfully determined, it would make a ſuitable change on the whole man. It would be a *moſt holy faith*, Jude ver. 20. as making holy; produced by the Holy Spirit; and uniting the ſoul to the holy Jeſus, and drawing ſanctifying virtue from him.

3. The ſalvation of ſinners is altogether of free grace. Man can do nothing to purpoſe for himſelf any manner of way. In the law-way, perfect obedience is required: that is certainly beyond his reach. In the goſpel way, faith is required: and that is beyond his power too, Eph. ii 8. *By grace are ye ſaved, through faith; and that not of yourſelves; it is the gift of God.* The goſpel caſts out a rope to hale ſinners to land; but the ſinner has no hands to lay hold on it: his very faith muſt be wrought in him by the Spirit.

4. Believers have reaſon to be humble, and to acknowledge that whatever difference in the matter of faith and holineſs is betwixt them and others, it is purely owing to the work of the Spirit, not to themſelves, agreeable to what the apoſtle ſaith, 1 Cor. iv. 7. 'Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what haſt thou 'that thou didſt not receive? now, if thou didſt receive 'it, why doſt thou glory, as if thou hadſt not received 'it?' Sinners are all naturally dead in ſin; and free grace ſends the quickening Spirit to one, not to another; that 'he that glories, may glory in the Lord.'

5. The difficulty that ſome find in believing, is rather a good ſign, than an ill one. They were the diſciples that ſaid, Luke xvii. 5. 'Increaſe our faith.' The ſoul that finds a difficulty in believing the goſpel, and is weighted with that ſlowneſs to believe, and looking out to the Spirit of the Lord to help him to believe, is in a hopeful caſe as to the work of faith, Mark ix. 24. The Lord makes the truth of faith, and his own power in working of it, to appear the better, by letting men find the power of their own unbelieving hearts.

USE 2. of *Exhortation*. Let us look to the Lord for the operation of his mighty power to cauſe us to believe. There is need of this, (1.) For the begetting of true faith in us. Natural powers aſſiſted with the beſt means of external revelation, will not do it. (2.) For the increaſing and exerciſe of faith. New ſupplies are neceſſary for this. And with reſpect to both, both miniſters and people have need to look to the Spirit of God. As the ſhip will make but ſorry progreſs, if the wind blow not: ſo the goſpel will be but ill improven, if the Spirit of the Lord do not blow.

DOCT. *The feeling of this power of God is oft-times very rare among the hearers of the goſpel.*

We need not inſiſt on the proof of this; our own caſe is a viſible evidence of it. With reſpect to which we may conſider, 1. What are the cauſes of it; and 2. Our duty.

I. *What are the cauſes of it? Why is it ſo with us?*

1. An old ſtanding quarrel that God has with our mother. The ſins of Manaſſeh were a ſtanding quarrel in the days of his grandſon Joſiah, 2 Kings xxiii. 26. and his great grandſon Jehojakim, chap. xxiv. 3. God is ſaying concerning us as, Hoſ. ii. 4, 5. 'And I will not 'have mercy upon her children; for they be the children of whoredoms. For their mother hath played 'the harlot; ſhe that conceived them hath done ſhamefully; for ſhe ſaid, I will go after my lovers, that give

'me my bread and my water,' &c. Do we aſk, Why the Lord has ſo much withdrawn himſelf in our land? Ah! what wonder is it, his ſoul ſo much abhors a land wherein a covenant ſworn to him with upliſted hands, was broken purpoſely, burnt diſgracefully, his ordinances changed, his ſaints perſecuted and murdered, and his name inſulted and blaſphemed; and theſe things never yet ſufficiently mourned for: I doubt much if ever Scotland ſhall recover her ancient ſpiritual glory, through the preſence of the Lord remarkably and gloriouſly with her, till ſhe go back to God in the way ſhe came away.

2. A preſent courſe of backſliding among all ranks in church and ſtate. In reforming times the Spirit of the Lord returns to a land, Pſal. cii. 16, 17. *When the Lord ſhall build up Zion, he ſhall appear in his glory. He will regard the prayer of the deſtitute, and not deſpiſe their prayer.* And ſo it was ſeen among our forefathers. oftener than once. Our preſent caſe, in reſpect of the Lord's withdrawing, doth therefore write us a back ſliding generation; whoſe judgment and ſin ſee Iſ. lvii. 17. *For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs was I wroth, and ſmote him: I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.* The generation is ſouring apace; the elder ſort loſing the life in religion that ſometime they had; and the younger neither knowing any thing about it, nor caring for it. A ſad evidence of the Spirit's being in a great meaſure gone.

3. Worldlineſs prevailing through long peace. Times of perſecution were times of much of God's preſence: enemies kept profeſſors ſtirring. And the more they afflicted them, the more they grew: the young folk were engaged to embrace a perſecuted religion. But now the generation is ſunk in worldly cares and eaſe; and religion is ſo cheap, that it is quite undervalued. It is as Joſh. xxiv. 31. 'Iſrael ſerved the Lord all the days of 'Joſhua, and all the days of the elders that overlived 'Joſhua, and which had known all the works of the 'Lord, that he had done for Iſrael;' implying, that after the elders were gone too, the generation went away from God, for good and all. Truly, we may ſay in our caſe, Our Joſhuas are away long ago; and our elders that have overlived them, are by this time near away. So the Lord, and his great works he did in the land, are almoſt worn out of ken, and out of mind, with this generation: and the generation that knew not Joſeph and his afflictions, are filling the ſtage faſt, and proclaiming themſelves unconcerned in them; trampling on that religion that others ſuffered for. But let them take heed that ſadder ſufferings be not abiding them, that they will neither get ſhifted, nor be ſo well buckled for. See Judges iii. 1. *Now theſe are the nations which the Lord left, to prove Iſrael by them, even as many of Iſrael as had known all the wars of Canaan.*

4. Grieving and quenching of the Spirit, Iſa. lxiii. 10. The Spirit is compared to a fire: and when that holy fire is cheriſhed and nouriſhed, a ſmall ſpark may become a great flame: but being neglected, and ſought to be extinguiſhed, it abates. Many have been the methods taken publicly and privately to quench the Spirit in the generation: and they have prevailed far, till that which remains is even ready to die. God who by his own hand has given ſeveral ſharp knocks at the door of ſome ſinners hearts, who yet would not open, has therefore been provoked to go and leave them.

II. *What is our duty in ſuch a caſe?*

1. Mourn over it: lament the lord's withdrawings, as thoſe who are ſenſible of the great loſs, 1 Sam. vii. 2.

2. Pray much and earneſtly for the return of his powerful preſence to ordinances, Cant. iii. 1.—4. Iſa. lxiv. 7.

3. *laſtly*, Conſider the word of the goſpel as the word of the eternal God, 1 Theſſ. ii. 13. and labour to walk up to what ye know of the word, John vii. 17. If ye do ſo, ye ſhall feel, that his 'words do good to him 'that walketh uprightly,' Micah ii. 7.

The WAY to LIFE, and the WAY to DESTRUCTION, unfolded:

Several SERMONS preached at Ettrick, in the year, 1731.

MATTH. vii. 13. 14.

Enter ye in at the ſtrait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way which leadeth to deſtruction: and many there be which go in thereat. Becauſe ſtrait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth to life, and few there be that find it.

MEN in this life are but on their way, not in their home-houſe, where they are to abide: and it nearly concerns all, ſince life on the one hand, and deſtruction on the other, are before them, having their different gates and ways leading to them, to take heed which gate, which way they chuſe, to enter and go by. *Enter ye in at the ſtrait gate*, &c.

The ſcope of theſe words is, to remove a great ſtumbling block, againſt ſerious religion, that lies in the way of the world; that is, the great difficulty there is in ſuch a courſe of life, and the very ſmall number of thoſe that follow it. This makes terrible havock in the world, and time after time men fall over this ſtumbling-block. Our Saviour had been preaching his ſermon on the mount, wherein he gives ſuch a view of true and real religion, as could not miſs to be very unacceptable to carnal men. They were ready thereupon to ſay, Theſe were hard ſayings, few will ever fall in with them: the vote of the plurality of men is againſt that way, and points to a far eaſier courſe: and can we imagine, but there is ſafety in the trodden path, and ſhall we forſake it for an overgrown one? To remove this, our Saviour peremptorily determines the wide and beaten road wherein the throng of the world goes, to be the way to deſtruction; and that the way to life is a very narrow one, hard to find, and hard to walk in: and therefore, from the neceſſity there is of obtaining eternal life, and eſcaping eternal deſtruction, at any rate, coſt what it will, exhorts us to enter in at the ſtrait gate.

In the words we have two things.

I. An exhortation and warning, how to direct our courſe for the other world, which this world and life is but the avenue to: *Enter ye in at the ſtrait gate*, &c. And here we have,

1. The courſe pointed out to us, which is the ſafe one, the ſtrait gate. A gate is properly the port of a city, as Acts xii. 10. or of a court, as Acts iii. 10. But I do not find it uſed for the door of a houſe. So here it is plain there is a metaphor. And ſome think the metaphor is double: namely, (1.) That heaven is here com-

pared to a houſe, into which a ſtrait gate leadeth; (2.) To a city, to which is a narrow way. But if heaven is here compared to a city, hell is ſo too; for there is a wide gate, and a broad way leading to deſtruction, as well as a ſtrait gate, and a narrow way leading unto life. But I think it is not the ſcripture way to ſpeak of hell under the notion of a city. I judge then the metaphor is one: that heaven is here compared to a houſe, as Luke xiii. 25. 'When once the maſter of the houſe is 'riſen up,' &c. as hell alſo is, being held out under the notion of a priſon, pit, dungeon, &c. but ſuch a houſe as has a court before it, where is the gate, which they muſt enter by that would enter into the houſe. So it is plain, that the gate, the way, and the entering in at the gate is in this world, and in this life, Gen. xxviii. 17. And ſo it is in the caſe of hell. Wherefore the godly, true converts, are, as it were, in the outer court of heaven; the ungodly and unregenerate in the outer court of hell; both making forward to their place.

2. A courſe hinted at, which is unſafe. For ſpeaking of the ſtrait gate, he ſuppoſes there is alſo a wide gate: the which alſo he directly teaches after. So there are two gates before us, very different in themſelves, and leading to very different periods.

3. Our duty and intereſt with reſpect to theſe gates. It is to enter in at the ſtrait one. Here the Lord directs our choice as to theſe gates. As ſoon as we begin to diſcern betwixt good and evil, we begin as it were to enter at one of theſe gates: and we will be ſure to chuſe the wide one as eaſieſt, till we hear the voice of Chriſt, and be perſuaded to change our courſe. Satan invites to the wide one, the world throngs in at it, it is moſt agreeable to the fleſh: but our Saviour bids us chuſe the ſtrait one, warns us to beware of the wide one. This is a ſhocking call and warning to nature, hard to digeſt. Who would chuſe to thruſt in by a ſtrait gate, where there were a broad one in which one might have full ſcope? Therefore we have,

II. A reaſon for this exhortation and warning; conſiſting of two parts.

Firſt, That though the other gate is eaſy, and much frequented: yet it is moſt dangerous: and they are fools that prefer the road unto deſtruction, to the road unto life, becauſe the former is eaſier than the latter: for what wiſdom can there be in fondly embracing that preſent eaſe, which muſt end in eternal agony? Here then our Saviour points out the oppoſite gate, the gate oppoſite to the ſtrait one, that we may avoid it: and he points it out together with the way conform thereto. The gate and the way, I think, are not to be conceived as ſeparate things, as a way leading to a city, and a gate leading into a houſe; but as an undivided ſpace; however the gate and the way may be diſtinguiſhed, they are to be conceived as making one undivided ſpace: for our Saviour ſpeaks of them as one, *that go in thereat*, or *by it*, not *by them*.

Some take the way in this metaphor, for the ſpace between the two ſides of the gate: at which rate the gate contains the way. But this makes the gate the immediate entrance into the houſe: which I do not find that word uſed for: for certainly the way lands one in the houſe, according to the text. Beſides, the mention of the way of the ſame nature with the gate, would at this rate be ſuperfluous; for wherever there is a wide gate, there muſt be ſuch a broad ſpace: and where a ſtrait gate, there muſt be ſuch a narrow ſpace. For it is the broadneſs or narrowneſs of the ſpace left betwixt the ſides of the gate, that makes the gate broad or ſtrait. Wherefore I judge the gate and the way are to be conceived as a continuous ſpace, the one terminating in the other.

Some conceive the way to lead to the gate, and ſo to be firſt in order. But this ſtill makes the gate, the gate of the houſe, or the door of it; which we have found cannot be admitted; and our Saviour himſelf diſtinguiſhes theſe two, Luke xiii. 24, 25.

Wherefore I conceive, that, according to the order of the text, the gate is before the way; ſo that *entering in by it*, we enter into the way; as one going in at the gate of an outer court, and paſſing through it, paſſes on the way into the houſe. And thus ye have the metaphor ſtated; which is neceſſary for underſtanding the mind of the Spirit in the text, as to the ſpiritual doctrine taught thereby. Now here we have,

1ſt, The nature of the gate oppoſite to that we are called to enter in by, and of the way joining it.

1. The *gate* is a *wide* one. The entrance into the way to hell is very eaſy. It is a room port and ſpacious, whereat multitudes may throng in, without troubling one another. None will need to thruſt through here, it will admit them with all eaſe; for it is perfectly agreeable to the fleſh, to the natural inclinations. It is ſo wide, that people may cloſe their eyes, run at random, and not miſs it; even young ones may get in at it without difficulty.

2. The *way* that joins it is *broad*. When they are through the gate, they are on a way that is a broad one, where they will get full ſcope and elbow-room. They will not find themſelves pent up there, as in a narrow road. There they are not hampered in their natural inclinations, by conſcience, Bible, &c. but get full ſcope for the vanity of their minds, the averſion of their wills to good, and proneneſs to evil, and all diſorderly affections.

2dly, The uſe made of it. It is much frequented; *many there be which go in thereat*. The wideneſs of the gate, and breadth of the way, affording ſo much eaſe to paſſengers, invite people to it: and it takes ſo, that the throng of the world goes that way. There are many different diſpoſitions of carnal men, theſe contrary one to another: there are covetous and prodigals, profane and formaliſts, &c. but however oppoſite they are one to another, they meet there; and the gate and the way are ſo wide, that there are roads therein for each of them.

3dly, The end of it, and tendency. The end of it is *deſtruction*, and to that it tends, *Gr. leads away*. However eaſy the gate and way are, every ſtep taken therein is a ſtep to eternal ruin. So, however inviting the beginning and progreſs in it be, the end of it is frightful. There is a pit at the end of the broad way, which may ſcare men from entering on it.

The ſecond part of the reaſon is, That though the gate we are called to enter in by is indeed difficult, yet it is ſafe, and a happy one.

1ſt, The nature of the gate, and way joining it.

1. The *gate is ſtrait*. The entry into the way of religion is difficult: it will require a great deal of reſoluteneſs to get in by it. Luke xiii. 24. *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate*. One muſt thruſt through it, caſt off their burdens; they will not get in with them on their backs, they muſt bring themſelves into a narrow compaſs, leaving all *ſuperfluity of naughtineſs* at the entry. The Jewiſh doctors ſpeak of the gate of repentance, the gate of prayer, and the gate of tears. Theſe and the like are indeed the gate we are to enter by; and they are ſtrait.

2. The *way* joining it is *narrow*, *Gr. afflicted* or *compreſſed*. It is like a ſtrait ſhoe that preſſes the foot. It is not eaſy walking in it, more than in ſuch a ſhoe, or in a way where there is little room for the foot. Afflictions and temptations beſet it, and it leads over the belly of natural inclinations; which march cannot be eaſy.

2dly, The unfrequentedneſs of it; *few find it*. There is no difficulty to find the wide gate, it glares in the eyes of every paſſenger: and no difficulty of entering by it. But there be *few* that ſo much as *find the ſtrait gate*: they ſeek it not; blinded with corrupt luſts, they cannot take it up: and, conſequently, few enter by it; either they perceive it not, or if they do, the ſtraitneſs of it frights them.

3dly, and *laſtly*, The happy tendency and end of it, notwithſtanding: *Gr. which leadeth away into life.* It is not a ſtepping into it, but a going to it in a continued courſe. It leads away from the devil, the world and the fleſh; and brings at length through many a weary ſtep into eternal life in heaven. So all the hardſhips of the gate and way is compenſed at length in that end.

Several doctrines are deducible from the words.

DOCT. I. *Whoſoever would direct their courſe aright for the other world, muſt neceſſarily enter in by the ſtrait gate.*

In diſcourſing this doctrine, I ſhall,
I. Shew what is ſuppoſed in it.
II. Conſider this ſtrait gate.
III. The entering in by it.
IV. *laſtly*, Apply.

I. *There are ſome truths ſuppoſed in this.* It ſuppoſes that,

1. All men here are on their journey to the other world, Eccleſ. ix. 10. 'Whatſoever thy hand findeth 'to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor 'device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom in the grave, 'whither thou goeſt.' This life is but the avenue to the other life, and this world but a thorough-fare to the other world; like a town lying on the road to a city, which paſſengers go through on their journey, Eccleſ. i. 4. However men talk, none have a tack of life. The young are but on their journey, even as the aged. All know what part of their way is paſſed, but none knows what remains.

2. We will get all there at length, one way or other, without all peradventure. There is no doubt of finding a courſe that will carry us thither: all the difficulty is in falling on and ſteering the right courſe, Pſal. xlix. 10. Many have taken journeys which they have never got to the end of; many have been baulked of the end of their intended journey, becauſe they took the wrong way. But right or wrong, we will all get to the other world.

3. There is a wrong courſe for the other world, which we are in hazard of taking. It is a wrong one, as leading, though ſurely enough to the other world, yet to the wrong part of it, the land of death and deſtruction eternal: *for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to deſtruction, and many there be which go in thereat.* And we are in hazard of taking that road; for the natural bent of our ſpirits lies that way. Satan is buſy to decoy us into it, and the example of the throng of the world has great influence.

4. Yet there is a right courſe for that world too; a way to it opened, which if we can fall on, it will bring us ſafely to that part of the other world that is the land of eternal light and life. It is true, it was once blocked up; but Chriſt, by his obedience and death, hath opened it, Heb. x. 19, 20. This ſhould be gladly received by us, ſince it is of ſuch a vaſt moment to us.

5. It is poſſible we may fall on this right courſe. It is true, we cannot without ſerious conſideration, and applying ourſelves thereto: we will never ſtumble on it, nor ſnapper on it going at random, as we may on the courſe of deſtruction: but if we will hear the voice of Chriſt our Director, and direct our courſe accordingly, we will not miſs it, Prov. ix. 4, 5, 6. Pſal. cxix. 9.

6. But naturally we are off that courſe: we have our entrance on it to make. Adam, and in him all mankind, was once upon the ſtraight road to life: but there was ſuch a miſt raiſed by the breath of the old ſerpent, that he loſt his way; and ſo we in him were led off the way, Rom. v. 12. *As by one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin; and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned.* And now in the firſt place we are wandering on the mountains of vanity: there Chriſt finds us as ſtrays, and gives us direction how to direct our courſe, where to enter, what to ſtand off from.

7. The gate we muſt enter by, is a ſtrait one, not eaſily found, hard to enter by. The courſe to hell, is wide at the beginning of it, ſtrait at the end, exceeding ſtrait, Rom. ii. 9. *Tribulation and anguiſh upon every ſoul of man that doth evil,* &c. The courſe to heaven is ſtrait at the firſt, and broad at the end, Rev. xxi. 7. 'He 'that overcometh ſhall inherit all things, and I will be 'his God, and he ſhall be my ſon.' Happy they that digeſt the ſtraitening at firſt! they are in the way to eternal liberty, Rom. viii. 21.

8. *laſtly*, There is no gate but the ſtrait gate, to enter on that courſe by. There is no choice here, for heaven: for however men may imagine wide gates to it, the ſcripture acknowledges only a ſtrait gate leading to it; ſo that he who cannot endure to think to be abridged of his liberty, or to thruſt in by a ſtrait gate, muſt give over thoughts of life in heaven.

II. *We ſhall conſider this ſtrait gate.* And here we ſhall ſhew,
1*ſt*, What that ſtrait gate is.
2*dly*, What makes it ſo ſtrait.

Firſt, What is that ſtrait gate? According to what was ſaid in the explication of the words, it is the entrance into religion, whereby men become really religious, John x. 9. *I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he ſhall be ſaved,* &c. Heb. iv. 3. *For we which have believed, do enter into reſt,* &c. This is converſion unto God, by faith in Jeſus Chriſt, Hoſ. xiv. 1. compared with John xiv. 6. Hence the *door of faith,* Acts xiv. 27. is expounded of converſion, chap. xv. 3. This is the gate we muſt enter by. For,

1. This is the gate of the outer court of heaven, which one having entered through, he is immediately in the court of heaven, Heb. iv. 3. forecited. And he is ſo in the court of it, that he cannot miſs it in end, Phil. i. 6. No converts nor true believers can periſh, more than one can pluck out of Chriſt's hand what he minds to hold, John x. 28. And therefore they are reckoned *fellow-citizens with the ſaints,* Eph. ii. 19. making up one family with thoſe above, chap. iii. 15. For the one are but within the houſe, the other are in the court of the houſe.

2. This is the gate by which men are ſet on the way to heaven, and begin their journey thitherward. They that have paſſed through this gate, are travellers to Emmanuel's land, now fairly upon the road, Cant. viii. 5. with the ſmell of heaven about them, chap. iii. 6. They are come out of Egypt, they have paſſed through the red ſea, and they are now in the wilderneſs, in their way to the promiſed land.

3. This is the gate that looks directly to the door of heaven, and by the way lands them in it. As the wide gate looks directly to hell, and lands the paſſengers there, if they go forward: ſo the entrance into real religion, by converſion, through faith, looks to heaven, and lands the paſſengers there.

4. This is the gate by which men turn their backs on the wide gate and broad way; for it is juſt oppoſite to them, Heb. iv. 10. Men may ſhift about from one way and courſe of life to another: but till they enter this gate, they are ſtill in the broad way to deſtruction, Matth. xviii. 3. where there is room enough to ſhift to oppoſite ſides. But once entered here, they are fairly ſeparated from the world lying in wickedneſs, and joined in with the family of God, 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. and they ſhall never mix with them again, Pſal. xii. 7. 'Thou ſhalt keep 'them, O Lord, thou ſhalt preſerve them from this generation for ever.'

Now, this gate is a ſtrait gate. The entrance into a courſe of ungodlineſs is not ſtrait; nay, the entrance into a form of godlineſs is not ſtrait; men may be got in there by the gentle bow of good education, like Joaſh; by a common eaſy work of the Spirit on their affections by the goſpel, Matth. xiii. 20, 21. by the current of example running ſtrong that way at a time, like

Simon, Acts viii. 12, 13. The ſtraiteſt entrance into it, is by an abortive law work, as the Iſraelites, Exod. xx. 18, 19. But even that is ſo wide, that it does not preſs the unholy heart to purity, Deut. v. 27. 29.

But the entrance into real religion by a ſound converſion, is a ſtrait gate, in theſe reſpects.

1. It is ſo ſtrait, that it is not eaſily taken up by the eye, Matth vii. 14. *Becauſe ſtrait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.* Moſt part of the world never notice it, more than if there were not ſuch a gate at all. How many live joyfully year after year, never once troubling their heads with the queſtion, What converſion is? whether they be as yet converted or not? When the Spirit of the Lord begins to deal with others, they miſtake it for melancholy fancies. Yea, many times the parties themſelves do not know what it is that is dealing with them, for a time: and it remains ſtill a myſtery in great meaſure, John iii. 8. Maſters in Iſrael this day own it not; but inſtead thereof ſet up the reforming of virtuous habits, and applying to the practice of virtue, with as little ſucceſs towards reforming the generation as there is truth in the principle: though, if we had it, it would not carry us beyond the length of ſome Pagan moraliſts.

2. It is hard entering into it at all. Many ſeeing it at a diſtance, are frighted from it by the ſtraitneſs of it, John vi. 60. 66. Many entered actually, came out again, and made their eſcape from it, unable to bear the preſſure of the very firſt entry, like Felix, Acts xxiv. 25. who trembled at Paul's preaching, and ſaid to him, *Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient ſeaſon, I will call for thee.* Sound conviction of the ſin of our life and nature, with the miſery we are therefore liable to, will bring a man to his knees, and ſtraiten and preſs him ſore: like thoſe, Acts ii. 37. who *were pricked in their heart, and ſaid, Men and brethren, what ſhall we do?* Many a man in the entry of it comes to think, that he will never get through, but that he will certainly die in the birth.

3. The paſſage through it is difficult. Sometimes it is ſhorter, ſometimes longer; and often does mens want of wiſdom make it longer than otherwiſe it would be, Hoſ. xiii 13. But ſhort or long, it is difficult for the time.

(1.) For men cannot get the ſcope there that they were wont to have. They are abridged of their ſinful liberty. Hence they give many a greedy look back to the fleſh pots of Egypt; which they would actually turn back to, were there not a ſtrong hand puſhing them forward, 2 Theſſ i. 11.

(2.) They cannot get up their head there; but muſt as it were creep through on their knees. There is a power from heaven that brings down the man from his former heights. The converting word to Zaccheus was a humbling word, *Come down*, Luke xix 5. And if there was no myſtery in theſe words, but they only looked to his coming down from the tree, whence aroſe that mighty change immediately wrought on him? Nay converting work is ſoul humbling work, Acts ix. 6. 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. And they will never get up their head, till they be through at God in Chriſt by faith, Acts xv. 11.

(3.) They are preſſed there, to the laying aſide of all their ſuperfluities that they were wont to carry along with them, James i. 21. There is no room in the gate for them, and theſe too. Chriſt ſays, *If ye take me, let theſe go away.* Hence the wiſe merchant ſells all, and buys the pearl. It preſſes not only the purging of the life of ſome ſins, but all ſins, even the darling idol among the reſt; and not of the life only, but the heart too, Pſal. xxiv. 3, 4.

Secondly, What makes this gate, the entrance into religion, ſo ſtrait?

1. The mighty contrariety of our nature to it, Rom. viii 7. *The carnal mind is enmity againſt God; for it is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.* Take a fiſh out of the water into the open fields, it is reſtleſs: it pants as if it were pent up in the narroweſt ſpace. There is a ſtrong propenſity in our nature to evil, and averſion to God and goodneſs: ſo that much of the power of converting grace is employed in making the ſoul willing, Pſal. cx. 3. And when it is made willing, it is preſently through the gate; the main work is done, the ſoul readily comes to God through Chriſt.

2. The various luſts hanging about the ſoul. The gate is room enough for receiving of the man: but it is ſtrait and pinching to him, when he comes with all theſe about him.

(1.) There is a variety of theſe luſts unmortified about every unrenewed man, Tit. iii. 3. They hang about him like a numerous family to be fed, crying, Give, give. When the man comes to the gate, he finds it ſtrait; for there is an old man with him, that is to be put off, which there is no acceſs for into the houſe, Eph. iv. 22. But they are loth to part.

(2.) Theſe luſts are of a ſwelling nature at all times. They are the ill weeds in the ground of the corrupt heart, that wax well. He brings with him rude deſires, that would require much room, Hab. ii. 5. And therefore becauſe they muſt be preſſed till they be contracted, and brought to one for all, the gate feels ſtrait, Pſal. xxvii. 4.

(3.) They ſwell in a particular manner when one is entering the gate, Rom. vii. 9. 'I was alive without 'the law once; but when the commandment came, ſin 'revived, and I died.' The law cloſely applied to an unrenewed heart, has an irritating power upon it; that is, luſts, that, in time of ſecurity, ly dormant, awaken for their own defence, when there is an attack made on them to throw them out. They lift up themſelves then, and move like an ant's neſt ſtirred and diſturbed; and like a furious horſe, that rages the more that he is checked.

3. The keen oppoſition made by Satan to the ſoul's entry. When the ſoul begins to entertain thoughts of turning to God, hell is alarmed, and its forces brought out to oppoſe it with all vigour, Rev. xii. 12. They whom he diſturbed not, while his goods were at peace, are then dogged with temptations, and all oars are laid to the water to row them againſt the ſtream that flows from the Spirit of God to carry them into real religion. Satan plies them with,

(1.) The force of the example of the multitude, Acts xxviii. 22. He preſſes them with the odiouſneſs of being ſingular in the world; that if there were ſuch danger in the broad way, it could not be ſo throng; that with the multitude there is ſafety, and that if it be ill with them, it will be ill with many. That failing, he plies the temptation,

(2.) Of time enough after; what needs to turn to ſuch a ſtrict courſe ſo ſoon? The young get, by the ſleight of hell, a fair broad view of many years they have to come, wherein they may get all done at leiſure, in time enough: and by that means the time of youth is given up with many to the broad way; the entering on religion in earneſt being put off, till once they be ſettled in the world. When that is come, then they find they have another thing to care for, for that time, Luke xiv. 20.; and it is put off to old age, which moſt part never ſee. But if they do, cuſtom in ſin has taken away the ſenſe of it; and it is put off to a death bed: and if they get it there, the toſs of ſickneſs renders them incapable; or when their time comes at laſt, the wind from heaven riſes not; ſo they ſink in the harbour, never get away to the gate. But if that will not do,

(3.) They are plied with their being over-long a-doing, and that the time is paſt, the day of grace over; to drive them to deſpair like Judas. Satan will run with them from one extreme to another; and from defender of the ſecure, he will turn accuſer of the awakened. He will preach to them then the juſtice of God, to perſuade them he will be inexorable: he will muſter up their ſins before them, to render them hopeleſs; and ſhew them their repeated ſlights of Chriſt, to bear them in hand that they have forfeited the benefit of his mediation.

(4.) *laſtly*, And for that cauſe he will dog them with temptations to ſin, more than ordinary; that finding corruption more ſtrong and prevalent than before, they may be brought to quit hopes of ever obtaining the victory.

4. The enmity of the world againſt religion, 1 Cor. xvi. 9. 'There are many adverſaries.' Theſe are ſet up to nip the work of heaven in the bud, and to mar any good work as it begins to appear, Cant. ii. 15. The carnal world is the great agent for Satan; and carries on his work in this caſe, by giving inſtruction cauſing to err, by force, or by fraud, by mockeries, or by ſlight healing of the wounded.

5. *laſtly*, The nature of the thing makes it a ſtrait gate. A law work, cannot miſs to be ſtraitening to a ſinner, Conviction of ſin, of heart, lip, life, and nature, cannot but preſs ſore: the Spirit of bondage girding the ſoul with the cords of death, and the curſe of the broken law, makes a ſtrait entry, Rom. viii. 15. And it will be a hard pull for an awakened, law condemned, and ſelf condemned creature, to gripe and hold the gripe of the promiſe of grace in Chriſt.

III. We ſhall conſider, *the entering in by the ſtrait gate*. And here three things muſt be ſpoke to.

1ſt, What they enter into by it.

2dly, How they enter in.

3dly, What this entering bears.

Firſt, What do they enter into by the ſtrait gate? They enter by it,

1. Immediately into the narrow way of the practice of religion, in a holy life, and walk ſuited to the goſpel, Acts ii. 41, 42. There it is the ſtrait gate ſets them. How long their way may be from the gate to the houſe, they know not; but once entered they hold on,

(1.) In a new road, a quite new one, 2 Cor. v. 17. *Therefore if any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature: old things are paſt away, behold, all things are become new.* They enter into a new road they never travelled before; where they have a new rule to walk by, new company to walk with, a new guide to follow after, a new ſcope and end to aim at. And thus are they entered as it were into a new world, being no more of this world, though in it.

(2) In a ſafe road, however unacquainted with it they were before, Prov. i. 33. *Whoſo hearkeneth unto me, ſhall dwell ſafely, and ſhall be quiet from fear of evil.* Before they entered the ſtrait gate, they were in a moſt dangerous road, however eaſy and ſafe it appeared, Prov. ix. 17, 18.; but then they are entered into a ſafe one, however dangerous it appears. It is covered above, that no ſtorms of wrath can fall there; and what riſes from below, they will get ſafely through, Cant. iii. 11.

2. Mediately, they enter by it into heaven. That is the houſe the ſtrait gate looks to: which none can come into but by that gate; and all that come in by that gate, do certainly reach at length, Matth. xviii. 3. Acts iii. 19. Thus entering by the ſtrait gate, they enter at length.

(1.) Into a room houſe, John xiv. 2. 'In my Father's 'houſe are many manſions.' How ſtrait ſoever the gate is, there is no ſtraitening in the houſe. While they that took the wide gate, ſhall when they come to their houſe, be ſtraitened like priſoners crammed together in a pit; they that enter the ſtrait gate, ſhall in their houſe walk at liberty in white.

(2.) Into a houſe of all eaſe and fulneſs, Rev. xxi. 7. There will be nothing wanting there for their ſatisfaction. If it was with much anxiety, fear, and ſorrow they got through the ſtrait gate; yet there will not be the leaſt veſtige of theſe things there, Rev. xxi. 4. *God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain: for the former things are paſſed away:* but they will, by entering the ſtrait gate, enter into joy: whereas others, by entering the wide one, ſhall enter into eternal anguiſh.

Secondly, How do they enter in by this gate? They enter in by it,

1. Coming out of themſelves, Matth. xvi. 24. God by his Spirit ſets fire to their neſt, and brings them out there. He opens their eyes in conviction, pricks them to the heart in compunction, brings them to the duſt in contrition and humiliation; till he overturns the foundations of the houſe of their former reſt, and leaves them not a foot of their own to ſtand on. They are made to deſpair of ſalvation by themſelves. Their former gain is counted loſs, Phil. iii. 7, 8.; and they are carried off their own bottom, for juſtification, ſanctification, and eternal life in heaven.

2. Coming to Chriſt in the free promiſe of the goſpel by faith, John x. 9. Many think this an eaſy ſtep: but ſo far from it, that if there is not an arm of omnipotence to thruſt the ſoul forward, it will never make that part of the ſtrait gate, Iſa. liii. 1. Mean while the Spirit of God deals with the enterer rationally; ſo that ſeeing all refuge elſe failed, he cannot go back, but thruſts forward to Chriſt in the free promiſe, Jer. ii. 22, 23. like the drowning man griping haſtily to the rope at all adventures.

3. Coming unto God by Chriſt, Hoſ. xiv. 1. compared with John xiv. 6. This is converſion, which true coming unto Chriſt always terminates in, Heb. vii. 25. For man having by ſin turned away from God as his God, Lord, Lawgiver, and Maſter; the Mediator Chriſt was ſent, to bring us back to him again, 1 Pet. iii. 18. 'For Chriſt alſo hath once ſuffered for ſins, the 'juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to God.' And by faith in Chriſt we do come back to him, to live to him, and for him, Acts xx. 21 This ſhews the faith of many in Chriſt to be but pretended: while by it they do not return to God as their Lord and Lawgiver, to live to and for him, Matth. xiii. 20, 21.

Thirdly, What does this entering bear which we muſt ſet ourſelves for?

1. A diſcerning of the gate, the ſtrait gate, Mat vii. 14. Many had travelled over that ſpot of ground called Bethel, Gen. xxviii. who never diſcerned the gate of heaven there; but Jacob ſaw it, verſ. 17. So, many go up and down the world, come to ordinances, where the gate is pointed out; and yet are never able to take it up. Nay, that gate is to us like the well to Hagar, Gen. xxi. never ſeen by us till the Lord open our eyes. O pray, that God may diſcover this gate to you.

2. A finding of an abſolute neceſſity of entering by it, Luke xv. 17. We will never enter there, while we are careleſs and indifferent about our ſtate in the other world; while we have the folly to think, that we may get a wide gate to heaven. This fooliſh imagination ruins thouſands: What need they ſtraiten themſelves entering by the ſtrait gate, while a more room one will do as well? But ye muſt be convinced, that the ſtrait gate, and it only, is that by which you can ever get there.

3. Reſoluteneſs for a happy arrival in the other world at any rate, Matth. xi. 12. *The kingdom of heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.* Till once men come to this, they will never enter the ſtrait gate; or if they do, they will never go through. The enterers are all ſuch as muſt be forward, coſt what it will: becauſe they ſee they are ruined for ever, if they get not forward, Luke xv. 17, 18.

4. A contentment to forego our preſent eaſe, in order to our getting ſafe to the other world, Matth. xvi. 24. *If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs, and follow me.* This life is appointed of God for our trial with hardſhip and labour, and the place of reſt for the labourers is in the other. But O how hard is it to bring ſinners to be content to forego their eaſe for the preſent! They hang by the

ſoft eaſy courſe, till their neſt be fired, and their bed of ſloth be ſtrawed with thorns and briars, that there is no reſt there any longer, Prov. vi. 9, 10. Acts ii. 37. But till once they are brought content to ſacrifice their eaſe, there is no entering.

5. A reſolute entering into the gate, Luke xv. 18. However ſtrait and uncouth it appears, they will not be frighted from it. They dare no more meddle with the wide gate, conſidering whereto it leads. The ſoul in this caſe is like the ſlayer fleeing to the city of refuge, who whatever difficulties be in the way, breaks through them, till he be within the gates of it.

6. *laſtly*, A reſolute going through it, without turning back from it, as Felix did, Acts xxiv. 25. or ſticking in it as Ephraim, Hoſ. xiii. 13. However ſtrait the gate is, the true enterer will thruſt forward, ſtriving againſt all difficulties, and reſtleſs till he get forward to God in Chriſt, Luke xiii. 24. For he ſees that till he be there, there is no ſafety, how eaſy ſoever the blind world is.

Use 1. Of *Information*. This informs us, that,

1. No body walking careleſly, inconſiderately, and at all adventures, will ever get a ſafe arrival that way in the other world. They may go to the pit that way; for ſleeping or waking they go with the ſtream, and it will carry them down; but the courſe to heaven is rowing againſt the ſtream, that will never do at that rate. Wherefore there is need of conſideration, and *working out our ſalvation*, Phil. ii. 12.

2. They muſt begin well who would end well; and enter by the ſtrait gate, who would lodge for ever in the room and ſpacious houſe above. It is the narrow way that leads to life, the ſtrait gate that enters into the narrow way. To expect life then without entering by the ſtrait gate, is a vain thing: it is in effect, to think that holding the courſe to hell in this life, we ſhall for all that land in heaven at death. *But* Gal. vi. 7. *be not deceived: God is not mocked: for whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap.* An ungodly life will make a wretched end.

3. There is a neceſſity to beſtir ourſelves, lay ſalvation to heart, and ſee what courſe we take for the other world. The ſecure ſinner muſt awake, leſt he ſleep the ſleep of death, 1 Cor. xv. 34. 'Awake to righteouſneſs 'and ſin not.' The careleſs, thoughtleſs about eternity, muſt begin to look to himſelf, that he do not periſh, Prov. vi. 9. 'How long wilt thou ſleep, O ſluggard? 'when wilt thou ariſe out of thy ſleep?' There is a ſtrait gate ſet before us, which we will not get into ſleeping: and if we get not into it, and through it too, we are gone.

4. There is an abſolute neceſſity of converſion for every one of us; for that is the ſtrait we muſt enter by, if ever we come to heaven, Matth. xviii. 3. *Except ye be converted, ye ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* If there is not a work of converting grace wrought on us, we will never get to glory. We are ſo totally corrupted by nature, that if there is not ſuch a change made on us as amounts to a new birth, we cannot ſee heaven, John iii. 5, 6. 'Except a man be born of water, 'and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom 'of God.' We are ſo far off the way naturally, that we muſt be converted.

5. They do but deceive themſelves, who imagine they are in the narrow way to life, who are yet ſtrangers to a work of converſion. This is an entering into religion, without coming in by the door, but climbing up ſome other way. And to ſuch may that be applied, John x. 1. 'He that entereth not by the door into the ſheep'fold, but climbeth up ſome other way, the ſame is a 'thief and a robber.' It is lamentable, that ſo few appear to betake themſelves to the way of religion; and that among the few who do, there are ſo many who miſs or neglect the firſt ſtep. Many come too eaſily by their religion, and ſo fares of it, it comes to no good account in end.

6. *laſtly*, Vain are their pretences to religion, and vain are their hopes of heaven, who are ſo prejudged at religious ſtrictneſs, that they cannot endure it, nor think of being bound up to it. What is that, but to be utterly averſe to the ſtrait gate and narrow way? And where is ſuch people's religion for the preſent, and what hopes can they have of heaven for the future? Will the courſe of the world, the wide way, ever bring them thither? Will men pretend to be followers of Chriſt, and yet be lothers of religious ſtrictneſs? Or will they think to be partakers of heaven, and yet not be followers of Chriſt?

Use 2. of *Reproof*. It ſerves to reprove,

1. Thoſe who are in no concern to direct their courſe aright for the other world. And ſuch are all they who make no inquiry for the ſtrait gate, nor trouble their heads about it. It is an evidence they are not for Zion, Jer. l. 4, 5. It had been better for theſe they had never heard the goſpel; for at this rate they ſlight the warning Chriſt has given; they neglect the gate he is pointing out to them; and they ſay in effect, What needs all this ado about the other world, and the ſafe gate to it?

2. Thoſe who keep by the wide gate deſpiſing the ſtrait one, and hope to do well enough in the end too. Truly this is to hope that the Bible will be found a fable; and all the warnings of danger to ſinners but mere ſcarecrows. Such may read their doom, Deut. xxix. 19, 20. 'And if it come to paſs when he heareth the words 'of this curſe, that he bleſs himſelf in his heart, ſaying, 'I ſhall have peace, though I walk in the imagination 'of mine heart, to add drunkenneſs to thirſt: the Lord 'will not ſpare him, but then the anger of the Lord, 'and his jealouſy ſhall ſmoke againſt that man, and all 'the curſes that are written in this book, ſhall lie upon 'him, and the Lord ſhall blot out his name from under heaven.' And in end they will find it not a ſound of big words, but ſuch as will preſs them down for ever.

3. Thoſe who will neither enter themſelves, nor ſuffer others ſo far as they can hinder them, Matth. xxiii. 13. There is a generation of enemies to the ſtrait gate, who do what they can to keep others from it, as well as themſelves, and ſo vent the malignity of their diſpoſition againſt religion. They lay all the hindrances in their way that they can; take all opportunities to diſcourage them in any attempts that way; they lay out themſelves to tempt them to evil, and lead them into ſin. Alas! whoſe work is it ye do, when ye ſo do? Is it God's work, Chriſt's work? Surely ye cannot imagine that. Nay, it is Satan's work, who himſelf is buſy at it, whom you ſerve: and your reward will be accordingly. Particularly.

4. Mockers of religious exerciſe, who make a jeſt of ſeriouſneſs and ſerious perſons. We are warned, that in the laſt days there ſhould be ſuch, 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4. *Knowing this firſt, that there ſhall come in the laſt days ſcoffers, walking after their own luſts, and ſaying, Where is the promiſe of his coming? for ſince the fathers fell aſleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.* Obſerve of them that they are profane: for none but thoſe of very profane ſpirits will dare to jeſt on ſacred things. They are atheiſtical: for none that have the belief of the being of a God to judge them, and of the Bible's being really his word, will be a ſcoffer at others for their regarding it. O that ſuch would conſider their danger, the bands that are abiding them for their looſeneſs, Iſa. xxviii. 22. 'Be not ye mockers, leſt 'your bands be made ſtrong.'

5. *laſtly*, Thoſe who being employed to direct others what courſe to take for the other world, make no conſcience of directing them to the ſtrait gate. They call to men continually, Do, do this and the other duty, exerciſe this and the other virtue, without endeavouring to lead them to Chriſt in the firſt place, and the great duty of believing in him: as if men needed nothing but application or plying themſelves to make them Chriſtians. But converſion to God by his Spirit is overlooked: and vital union with Chriſt, the neceſſary ſpring of

all holy obedience, John xv. 5. is neglected, Eph. ii. 10.

USE 3. of *Exhortation*. Then, as ever ye would direct your courſe aright for the other world, enter ye in by the ſtrait gate. I ſhall branch out this in two particulars.

Firſt, As ever ye would direct your courſe aright for the other world, lay aſide your prejudices againſt religious ſtrictneſs: lay your account with, and peremptorily ſet yourſelves for thruſting through the ſtrait gate into the narrow way, that ſo ye may get to heaven, bidding farewel to the wide way of the world. This exhortation is,

1. For the young that are ſetting out in the world. I would have you to ſet out in the mean time for the other world too; becauſe, whether you do it or not, ye are really going thither; and how ſoon you may be there, you know not. And pray take heed how you direct your courſe at that time of your day; for accordingly as ye begin then, ye will readily hold on after, Prov. xxii. 6. 'Train up a child in the way he ſhould go; and 'when he is old, he will not depart from it.' O have a care that prejudices againſt religious ſtrictneſs get not a ſeat in you; but be reconciled to it, and ſet to it in earneſt.

2. For the aged that are gone out into the world. I would have you to ſet out at length for the other world alſo, directing your courſe aright thither; the rather that ye are far on already in the way to it, and for the moſt part off the right way as yet. It is high time you were begun to change your courſe, leſt if ye go on longer, ye harden in an ill courſe without remedy.

Many are the prejudices both old and young have againſt religious ſtrictneſs, the conceited hardſhip of it, the ſingularity and unfaſhionableneſs of it, and many others I will not now ſtand upon. But pray, let what our Saviour here advances againſt them, ſerve to ſtrike the bottom out of them all; that is, the abſolute neceſſity of it. In vain do men diſpute about a way to a place, and object againſt it as rough, &c. when there is no other way to it: for in that caſe it is plain, they muſt either take the way as it is, or give over thoughts of the place.

Now our Lord has told us, *The gate is ſtrait;* and I would therefore have you to ſet yourſelves for it, ſtrait as it is; and peremptorily to lay your account with enduring hardneſs now, in firm hope that ſo you may ſafely arrive at length in the other world, where ye ſhall for ever walk at liberty. Bid an eternal farewel then to the wide gate and way, and be reſolute to enter and go through the ſtrait one.

Motive 1. All prejudices you entertain againſt religious ſtrictneſs, are in favour of the corruption of your nature: and does that need any thing to feed and ſtrengthen it? 2 Theſſ. iii. 12. Do but impartially conſider any one prejudice you have againſt it; and you will find it is in favour of ſome one luſt or other, and that it is a ſcreen to defend it, Rom. i. 18. compared with Jer. ii. 25. It is the corrupt affection biaſſeth the judgment, and ſets men on palliating licentious courſes, and unfavourably repreſenting religious ſtrictneſs. And judge ye, what muſt be the iſſue of feeding the corruption of our nature which is to be mortified.

2. All the difficulty in religious ſtrictneſs ariſeth only from corruption in ourſelves and others, Rom. vii. 14. 'For we know that the law is ſpiritual; but I am carnal, 'ſold under ſin.' Religious ſtrictneſs is in heaven carried to its utmoſt pitch, Rev. xxi. 27. 'There ſhall in 'no wiſe enter into it any thing that defileth, neither 'whoſoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lye; but 'they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.' Yet there they are at perfect liberty, Rom viii. 21. Why? becauſe corruption is perfectly purged out. Learn therefore, that any uneaſineſs there is in religious ſtrictneſs, the blame of it is not to be laid at religion's door, but our own. Religious ſtrictneſs grates only on,

(1.) Our own corrupt hearts; as the ſhoe ſtraitens and pains the ſore foot, and cannot be ſuffered on it, though it was very eaſy while the foot was whole, Rom. vii. 23, 24. Though we would think it intolerable to be held any conſiderable time in the water, the fiſh are not at all ſtraitened in it; for it is agreeable to their nature: and ſo would the way of holineſs be to a holy heart. Now, a courſe of life grating on the corruptions of our hearts, is even as neceſſary for our partaking of Chriſt's eternal ſalvation, as Chriſt's courſe of ſuffering in his life and death was for the purchaſe of it, Gal. v. 24. 'They that are Chriſt's, have crucified the fleſh, 'with the affections and luſts.'

(2.) A corrupt ſinful world, Rev. xi. 10. They cannot endure it: they wonder what ſhould carry any unto it, and they are apt to reproach one for it, 1 Pet. iv. 4. *Wherein they think it ſtrange that you run not with them to the ſame exceſs of riot, ſpeaking evil of you.* No great wonder the dempſter's voice grate on the malefactor's ears; for he pronounces his doom: and ſo the godly by their religious ſtrictneſs pronounce doom againſt the wicked, Heb. xi. 7. But why ſhould we care to pleaſe the world lying in wickedneſs, in thoſe things that will ſink them in ruins? or ſeek to walk with them with whom we would not lodge with at the journey's end?

3. The greateſt difficulty in religious ſtrictneſs, is at firſt entering into it. It is with religion as with other uſeful and profitable courſes of life, trades, or employments: the greateſt hardſhip is at the beginning; afterwards it becomes more eaſy through uſe, Matth. xi. 29, 30. May be ſome's experience may contradict this: it is a good while ſince they attempted, and it is as hard this day as then. What is the reaſon of that? Ye are ay but beginning, ye do not hold cloſe to it. So it fares with you as with children at the ſchool, who being now and then kept at home, learning is a conſtant pain to them; whereas it turns eaſy to them that are held cloſe to it, Prov. ii. 1.——6. Therefore be peremptory, and reſolute, and conſtant: and of a truth it will be otherwiſe.

4. Whether would you chuſe your eternal ſtate with the religiouſly ſtrict, or with the more gay and worldlike part of mankind, that walk more looſely? No doubt that will be the language of every heart, Numb. xxiii. 10. *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my laſt end be like his.* Then pray live with them, and walk with them. If ye like their end, lay by your prejudices againſt their way, which they walk in unto it. If ye have a horror of the end of them that walk looſely, and yet like their way beſt, ye will be ſelf condemned. If ye would be eaſt, ye would travel with the company going that way, not with that going weſt.

5. *laſtly*, Religious ſtrictneſs is the only courſe in which any will get to heaven: the looſe courſe will land men in deſtruction. The text is very expreſs; and it makes no exception of great or ſmall, rich or poor, young or old. There is no body, but will be ſtraitened ſometime or other; it is impoſſible that any ſhould get always walked at liberty. Chuſe ye then whether ye will take your ſtraitening before or after death, for a time or for eternity.

If ye imagine, that ſome were far from religious ſtrictneſs, that yet got to heaven at length; conſider, then they were brought to repentance for their neglect of it. And will ye follow a pattern, that thoſe who gave it bitterly repented of? If ye do, ye muſt follow it out in repentance too, elſe ye are ruined. And is it a wiſe courſe, to be laying up matter for repentance, and to ſtand off from a courſe, the neglecting whereof ye muſt repent or ye periſh? Pray conſider that repentance will be more eaſy now, than on the brink of eternity; and it will be more ſure too, for it is what very rarely is reached at that time of day.

As for ſome directions or helps, I offer only theſe two.

1. Set before you, in the firſt place, the death of Chriſt for your juſtification and reconciliation with God, deliverance from the curſe and eternal wrath: and by faith

flee in under the covert of his blood, for theſe effects. Without theſe men may reach civility, the moraliſt his practice of virtue, the legaliſt a form of godlineſs; but no true religious ſtrictneſs, more than the curſed fig-tree could ever bear fruit after, Luke i. 74, 75.

2. Set before you the life of Chriſt in the world, as the rule, the reaſon, and the endearment of religious ſtrictneſs. Every Chriſtian ſhould ſet before him the life of Chriſt, and often view it: for it is,

(1.) The rule of religious ſtrictneſs, the example and pattern we are to copy after, John xiii. 15. 1 Pet. ii. 21. 1 John ii. 6. Here it is we have the perfect draught of religious ſtrictneſs. The ſtricteſt of the ſaints have had their out of the way ſteps: vain men have pieces of ſtrictneſs, which is not according to this pattern, being nothing but the product of their blind and proud minds. But in the example of Chriſt, we have a perfect pattern of religious ſtrictneſs: for in him we ſee what is that ſort of walk really pleaſing to God, in as much as we ſee there, how God himſelf become man did walk. And when he has condeſcended to this, will we not eye it?

(2.) The reaſon. We have the naked divine authority, call, and command to religious ſtrictneſs, in the law. In the life of Chriſt we have that authority inforced by his own example, obliging us the more forcibly unto it. The example of ſuperiors is an additional law, binding the inferiors to conformity. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the ſupreme, the moſt high God, as well as he is man, and ſince as he was man, he was religiouſly ſtrict; certainly for that very reaſon we ſhould be ſo too.

(3.) The endearment. How forcible is that exhortation to religious ſtrictneſs? Eph. v. 1, 2. *Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children: and walk in love as Chriſt alſo hath loved us, and hath given himſelf for us, an offering and a ſacrifice to God for a ſweet ſmelling ſavour.* There is no ſuch powerful remedy againſt prejudices at religious ſtrictneſs, as the believing conſideration of the death of Chriſt. Is it poſſible that faith's view of the death of Chriſt ſhould leave us indifferent to, and far more averſe to the life of Chriſt? No, ſure; 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. ‘For the love of Chriſt conſtraineth us, becauſe we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live, ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto him which died for them, and roſe again.’ Let your conſciences be ſprinkled with his blood, and your hearts will be knit to religious ſtrictneſs. But alas! it is want of faith in his death, that makes us ſo indifferent to the imitation of him in his religious ſtrictneſs.

Secondly, As ever ye would direct your courſe aright for the other world, be concerned, that, in the firſt place, ye may be truly converted; that ye may be found converts in the firſt place, entering the ſtrait gate by a work of thorough converſion wrought on you.

Motive 1. Conſider the neceſſity of converſion to God. It is abſolutely neceſſary by our Saviour's declaration, Matth. xviii. 3. ‘Except ye be converted, ye ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven:’ and by the nature of things too; for how is it poſſible they ſhould walk with God in the narrow way, who have not entered by the ſtrait gate, being once truly turned to God? This is the beginning of the Chriſtian courſe, without which it is impoſſible there ſhould be any progreſs in it, or happy end thereof.

Mot. 2. To think to be truly religious, without being once true converts, is a vain thing, a deluſion, becauſe a contradiction. It is a building on the earth without a foundation, Luke vi. 49. which can turn to no good account in end. True religion is to walk in Chriſt; but one muſt firſt be in him, Col. ii. 6. ‘As ye have therefore received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, ſo walk ye in him.’ It is to *walk in newneſs of life*, but we muſt be *new creatures* firſt; Rom. vi. 4. It is to walk with God, but we muſt firſt be converted to him.

Mot. 3. Without it all your religion will amount to no more but a form of godlineſs, deſtitute of the power, 2 Tim. iii. 5. It will be but as a body without the ſoul; and all your performances will be but *bodily exerciſe*, that will *profit little. For God is a Spirit; and they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth*, John iv. 24. But how can that be without converſion? Phil. iii. 3. ‘For we are the circumciſion, which worſhip God in ſpirit.’ Though the wall is fair plaiſtered, it is looſe in the heart; and ſo makes but a fair ſhew, like a whited ſepulchre.

Mot. 4. *laſtly*, The want of it is a ſpring of apoſtaſy, 1 John ii. 19. ‘They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifeſt that they were not all of us.’ How many do for a time bloſſom fair in religion, who at length totally wither? They give their names to Chriſt, pretending to have ſeparated from the world; but afterwards they prove deſerters, and get away to the enemy's camp. Why truly, if they had ever by ſound converſion come out from among them, they had never gone back, Pſal xii. 7. *Thou ſhalt keep them, O Lord, thou ſhalt preſerve them from this generation for ever.* But the ax of converting grace never went to the root of the tree with them; wherefore, though ſome branches of ſin were lopt off, the root of bitterneſs untouched, ſpreads again. For your help here, labour to impreſs your hearts with concern to have a good foundation laid. And,

1. Think it not enough to reform your lives, and to cleanſe the outward man. Remember religion is the hidden man of the heart, 1 Sam. xvi. 7. So the power of the natural enmity muſt be broken, and the heart reconciled to the holy law, not in ſome, but in every point thereof known to you, Heb. viii. 10. ‘This is the covenant that I will make with the houſe of Iſrael after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they ſhall be to me a people. For this only is true converſion, the heart being turned back again to God, 1 Kings xviii. 37. in cordial reconciliation with, and abſolute reſignation to his holy will expreſſed in his law.

2. For this cauſe, ye would ſtudy to diſcern the law in its ſpirituality and vaſt extent, and cloſely apply it to your own ſouls ſtate and caſe. Here Paul's converſion began, Rom. vii. 9. *I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, ſin revived, and I died.* By this means ye will be convinced of the total corruption of your nature, heart, and life; what a gulf of guilt ye are ſunk in under the curſe: the which may fill you with fear, ſorrow, and anxious concern what courſe to take to be ſaved. Then ſtudy to diſcern the promiſe of the goſpel, in its ſufficiency and ſuitableneſs to your caſe; and to ſee Chriſt in it: and cloſely apply that to your own ſoul. For this is it that completes converſion, Heb. vii. 19. ‘For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.’ By this means ye will be enlightened in the knowledge of Chriſt, as a ſuitable Saviour, having a fulneſs of grace in him to be communicated for your regeneration, and a fulneſs of merit to carry off your guilt: which will be a fit means to raiſe in you a deſire of him, and hope of remedy through him; and ſo to draw you to him by faith, and by him unto God.

DOCT. II. *There is a wide gate to enter by, and a broad way joining it: but it leads away to deſtruction.*

Here we ſhall conſider,
I. The wide gate there is to enter in by.
II. The broad way joining the wide gate.
III. This way's leading away to deſtruction.
IV. *laſtly*, Improve the ſubject.

I. We ſhall conſider, *the wide gate there is to enter in by*. Were there no other but the ſtrait gate in the courſe to the other world, then there would be no fear of going wrong, all behoved to go that way, or none at all; and it would have been ſo, if there had been no part of the other world but the happy one. But there is another part of that world, a hell as well as a heaven; and ſo there is a gate towards the former, as well as the latter; and that is the wide one, which we are to beware of.

According to what is ſaid of the ſtrait, the wide gate is the entrance into a courſe of ungodlineſs, whereby men become actually ungodly. Thus men ſet their face towards hell, and begin to move towards the land of darkneſs, Eph. ii. 1. 2. Whenſoever this entrance is made, then they are on the courſe whoſe end is deſtruction: and it is made very early.

And that entrance or wide gate, is the gate of the corrupt natural inclination of the heart, Prov. iv. 23. Mark vii. 21, 22, 23. The gate begins to open to us with the firſt dawnings of reaſon, and opens wider and wider as we grow up, Gen. viii. 21. Our firſt looks in the world are aſquint; we diſcover a caſt to the wrong ſide, an averſeneſs to good, and proneneſs to evil, Rom. viii. 7. 'The carnal mind is enmity againſt God.' That is the natural inclination of the heart, that ſoon ſhews itſelf in what we call the innocent babe, and widens more and more through the ſeveral periods of childhood, youth, and manhood, Prov. xxii. 15.

This gate was ſet up by Adam's fall, Rom. v. 12. He breaking the firſt covenant, broke out this gate to deſtruction, to and in himſelf and all his poſterity: and mankind naturally ruſh in at it, not conſidering whereto it leads. Beſides this, there had never been another gate to the other world for fallen man, had not Jeſus Chriſt by his ſuffering, life, and death, opened it.

This gate is a two-leaved gate, opening wide.

1ſt, On the one hand, it opens wide toward the creature, away from God, Jer. ii. 13. That is the way the natural inclination of the heart lies. When God made man, he gave him a ſet of heart towards himſelf as his reſt and happineſs, Eccleſ. vii. 29. 'God made man 'upright;' without any motion towards the creature, but in God and for God: and good reaſon, for all the good of the creature lay there, it being otherwiſe but a cypher ſignifying nothing without him, Matth. xix. 17. But Satan in the firſt temptation ſet up the creature ſeparately from God, and over againſt him; and though ſo it was mere emptineſs, he blew it up with wind from hell, and made it appear a reſt for the heart, and cheated our firſt parents into a choice of it for their reſt, Gen. iii. 6. So the firſt leaf was opened, and has ſtood open to this day with mankind. And this I ſay,

(1.) Opens wide toward the creature, the vain and empty creation, Hab. ii. 5. compared with Prov. xxx. 15, 16. As the beaſts incline to the earth, the birds to the air, and the fiſhes to the waters; ſo does fallen man to the creature. He knows no other happineſs naturally, deſires no other, cannot underſtand how there can be another, He falls as naturally to ſeek it here, as the infant to ſuck the breaſts that bare it.

This is a broad leaf, opening very wide; becauſe of the boundleſs deſires of the heart to be ſatisfied, the vaſt variety of the creatures to try the experiment on, and the inſufficiency and unſatisfactorineſs of them all, Eccl. i. 2. Iſa. lv. 1, 2. The wide hungry heart that is without God, the wide world filled with nothing but vanity and lies, makes the leaf of the natural inclination to the creature open very wide.

(2.) It opens away from God, Heb. iii. 12. 'Take 'heed, brethren, leſt there be in any of you, an evil 'heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.' It is not poſſible, but that the heart turning to the creature for a reſt and happineſs, muſt turn away from God, Matth. vi. 24. *For no man can ſerve two maſters.* The heart of man naturally contracting a friendſhip with the world, ſtates and declares an enmity againſt God, Jam. iv. 4. *Know ye not that the friendſhip of the world is enmity with God? Whoſoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God.* And the children of men ſetting out in the world, while they ſet their face thus to the creature, caſt God behind their back, Ezek. xxiii. 35. They know him not, deſire him not: it is a myſtery to them, how the enjoyment of him can make one happy: they are apt to think it is but a fancy, Pſal. iv. 6.

Thus this natural inclination of the heart to the creature is the one leaf of the wide gate. But here it is

OBJECTED, How can the inclination of the heart to the creature be accounted a leaf of the gate to hell, when every creature of God is good, and we are allowed the enjoyment of it, and an inclination towards it is lawful, and in ſeveral caſes expreſsly required?

ANSW. The creature may be conſidered two ways. (1.) By itſelf, ſeparately from God. (2.) In God and for him. The firſt way it is regarded as a fountain and original ſpring to drink at for ſatisfaction; in the other, as a ſtream only coming from God, and leading back to him. Now, it is not in the latter, but the former reſpect, that we call the inclination to it a leaf of the broad gate. And it is in that firſt reſpect that the heart is naturally inclined to it. Upon it, ſeparately from God, the heart naturally fixes, looking for that from it, which it ſhould only look for in God; whereby it is put in the room of God. And this godleſs purſuit of the creature, ſeparately from God, not in him; for itſelf, and ourſelf, not for God, was never allowable, and is no other but the courſe of them that are gone in at the wide gate, Eph. iv. 17, 18. Conſider here,

1. The inclination to it ſeparate from God, plainly diſcovering itſelf, in either a prophane neglect of him, or elſe a crafty ſhifting of him, in our deſires after, or enjoyment of the creature. No doubt one may lawfully have an inclination towards health, wealth, relations, &c. But then it ſhould be in God; in his fear, regulated by his word; but as an incaſt to the great bargain of his favour, not as a principal. But the generality of men quite neglect him in theſe, Pſal. x. 4. while others that have ſome principles formed in them, craftily lay the thoughts of him aſide in theſe things, that they may not be hampered in their deſire or enjoyment of the creature, Jer. ix. 6. A glaring evidence of inclination to it ſeparate from God.

2. The inclination to it for it or ourſelf, not for God, diſcovering itſelf, in that there is no regard had, in the deſire, or enjoyment, to the honour of God to be advanced thereby, but to pleaſe ourſelves merely; though 1 Cor. x. 31. *whether we eat or drink, or whatſoever we do, we ſhould do all to the glory of God.* It is purely ſomething in the creature itſelf, not any thing of God about it, that grounds the inclination to it: and that is a piece of ſpiritual idolatry, and a debaſing of the ſoul, to deſire any creature for itſelf merely.

2dly, On the other ſide, it opens wide towards ſin, away from the holineſs of God expreſſed in his law, Pſal. lviii. 3. *The wicked are eſtranged from the womb, they go aſtray, as ſoon as they are born, ſpeaking lies.* When God made man, he gave him a ſet of heart toward holineſs, Eccl. vii. 29. ſo that as God himſelf was the reſt of his heart and portion, ſo his holy will and law was the rule of his walk. But the heart of man falling out of its reſt in God, unto the godleſs purſuit of the creature, the yoke of obedience to him came to be thrown off. So the natural inclination of the heart opens wide,

(1.) To ſin, Jer. xvii. 9. *The heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked: who can know it?* The taſte is quite vitiated; nothing reliſhes with men naturally but ſin. As, on the one hand, they go to the creature, to ſuck its dry breaſts; ſo, on the other, they are bent on the fulſome breaſts of their corrupt luſts, Eph. ii. 3. Theſe corrupt luſts as ſo many brats of hell, naturally bred in the heart, open their mouths wide, crying, Give, give: and nothing can ſatisfy them, but the puddle waters of ſin, which are agreeable to their nature.

(4.) Away from the holineſs of God expreſſed in his law, Rom. viii. 7. There is not only a careleſſneſs of and indifferency to holineſs, but an averſion to it; ſuch as an untamed bullock has to the yoke. Hence holy walking and ſpiritual exerciſes, are naturally burdenſome to the corrupt heart, which loves ſinful liberty, and hates to be hampered by the holy commandment. So that what of theſe the man is in a ſort brought to, it is but bodily exerciſe, the heart is not at it, Ezek. xxxiii. 31.

This alſo is a broad leaf, opening very wide. For the corruption of nature is an unfathomable gulph, that there is no filling up off: the ſinner may be ſurfeited, but never can be ſatiated. The way of ſin, as being the way of error or wandering, has no end; one evil ſtep ſtill leading on to, and making way for another. Thus ye ſee the wide gate, that opening to all the children of fallen Adam, they are all ready diſpoſed to enter into. Which entering is next to be noticed.

The entering into this wide gate, is the giving way to the corrupt natural inclination of the heart; the not reſiſting of it, but yielding unto it, Rom. vi. 12. ‘Let not ſin reign in your mortal body, that ye ſhould obey it in the luſts thereof.’ This gate ſhould of right be cloſed: the bitter fountain ſhould be ſtopt immediately, the weeds of corruption ſhould be nipt in the bud, and men ſhould preſently begin a war with themſelves in mortification of their luſts. But inſtead of that, they ſoon begin to follow the corrupt natural inclination; and that in,

1. Giving way to *the vanity of their minds*, Eph. iv. 17. They find in them a reſtleſs heart, and they go in purſuit of that reſt, not to God, but to the creature. Man's mind is naturally blinded; and what it points out to him for happineſs and ſatisfaction, he purſues; the heart going as the vain mind leads. Thus men are lured on. The vain mind firſt points out a ſatisfaction to us in meat, then in gay cloathing, then in mirth and jollity; at length it opens as we grow up, into the wide field of pleaſures, profits, and honours: and here men wander as in a wilderneſs, ſeeking reſt, thinking to find it in this and the other vanity, and ſtill diſappointed: yet after all diſappointments, the vain mind ſtill has a new vanity to preſent unto us, and we go to it with new hopes of ſatisfaction, Iſa. lvii. 10. *Thou art wearied in the greatneſs of thy way; yet ſaidſt thou not, There is no hope; thou haſt found the life of thine hand: therefore thou waſt not grieved.* Now, the engaging in this purſuit is entering the wide gate with a witneſs.

2. Giving way to the corrupt bent of the heart towards ſin, and againſt the way of holineſs, Rom. iii. 11. 12. ‘There is none that underſtandeth, there is none that ſeeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doth good, no not one.’ Luſts begin to ſtir in the heart and crave of them; and inſtead of ſtarving them, they begin to think of feeding and ſatisfying them. So they break over the hedge of the divine law, and get over into the devil's ground, omitting their duty to God, and committing ſin againſt him, in compliance with the natural inclination. This alſo is a plain entering of the wide gate. Now, there is a twofold entering of this wide gate.

1ſt, One that is more ſecret and undiſcerned to the party himſelf. Thus we are all once entered into it, ere ever we are aware, by the early ſproutings of corruption in childhood: doing ſinfully and corruptly ere ever we begin to conſider what we are doing, Pſal. lvii. 3. Prov. xx. 11. Thus we are entered into the ſervice of ſin and Satan, ere we begin to conſider who or what they are. And where pains is not taken by good education to curb theſe early ſproutings, they grow readily too ſtrong afterwards to be holden down, either by one or other, Prov. xxix. 15. ‘The rod and reproof give wiſdom: but a child left to himſelf, bringeth his mother to ſhame.’

2dly, Another that is more deliberate, and of choice. Thus when the children of men are come to the years of diſcretion, and can diſcern between good and evil, they ſee on the one hand the ſtrait gate of religion, and the wide gate of ſin and vanity; and having a bias and caſt in their nature to the wrong ſide, they refuſe the ſtrait gate, and chuſe the wide one as the moſt agreeable to them, Jer. ii. 25. Of this there are three more notable kinds.

1. The throwing off the bonds of good education, as things wherewith they are hampered. Thus many ſet out into the broad way, and land in deſtruction at length, Prov. v. 11, 12, 13. Parental government is the firſt government that God puts us under: therefore in the proverbs written to give the young—knowledge—the very firſt exhortation is verſ. 8. *My ſon, hear the inſtruction of thy father, and forſake not the law of thy mother*, How dangerous muſt it then be, either to throw it off before God takes it off; or when he has, to throw off the impreſſions made thereby? None of them can be, but in compliance with the corrupt natural inclination to give it the ſwing.

2. Caſting one's ſelf into ill company. The ſecond exhortation in the Proverbs reſpects that, verſ. 10. *My ſon, if ſinners entice thee, conſent thou not.* We are ſo ready to be caſt into the mould of the company we chuſe, eſpecially if it be ill, that when one is ſo engaged, he may be reckoned to be gone in at the wide gate. If he had no mind to go with them, why would he chuſe their fellowſhip?

3. Apoſtatizing from a profeſſion and appearance of religion; when one having for ſome time given promiſing tokens of a religious diſpoſition, throws off all, and goes plainly into the way of the prophane world, Heb. x. 38. ‘If any man draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him.’

The ſnare leading to this is readily the predominant ſin. That makes its entrance moſt eaſily unto us, and moſt powerfully prevails to carry us into the broad way.

II. We ſhall conſider *the broad way joining the wide gate.* Agreeable to what is ſaid of the *gate*, *the broad way* joining it is the way of mens own heart, Iſa. lvii. 17. ‘For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs was I wroth, and ſmote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart:’ Which heart being naturally a corrupt heart, is the way of irreligion and ungodlineſs, Pſal. i. 1. As ſoon as men have entered the gate of the corrupt natural inclination, giving up themſelves thereto, they are on the broad way, the way of their own heart. And here I ſhall ſhew,

1ſt, That the way of one's own heart or natural inclination, is indeed the broad way.

2dly, What are the parts of this broad way leading to deſtruction.

3dly, Speak of the broadneſs of this way.

FIRST, I ſhall ſhew that *the way of one's own heart or natural inclination, is indeed the broad way.* This appears,

1ſt, From that corrupt ſet or bent which the hearts of men have got by Adam's fall. Whatever vain men give out concerning the dignity of human nature, the teſtimony of God concerning the heart of man is quite otherwiſe, Jer. xvii. 9. ‘The heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked; who can know it?’ Our Saviour repreſents it as a poiſoned fountain, Mark vii. 21, 22. and what poiſoned it, was the fall of Adam, Rom. v. 12. The way then that it leads, muſt needs be the broad way to deſtruction, and therefore ‘all we like ſheep have gone aſtray: we have turned every one to his own way,’ Iſa. liii. 6. In that ſet,

1. There is a bending away from God, who originally was, and of right is our chief end, Pſal. xiv. 3. Jer. ii. 13. The heart of man has not only left its reſt in God, but is filled with natural enmity againſt him, Rom. viii. 7. has a diſlike of his nature, which is holy, and of his law, which is a tranſcript of his holineſs. There is a

downright contrariety in his nature againſt the nature of God, and in his will againſt the will of God: Job xxi. 14. *Therefore they ſay unto God, Depart from us; for we deſire not the knowledge of thy ways.*

2. A bent towards the creature as the chief good, in the room of God, Jer. ii. 13. Hence the natural voice of the heart in man is, ‘Who will ſhew us any good?’ Pſal. iv. 6. For Adam falling from God betook himſelf to the creature, to get out of it that ſatisfaction, which he was to have had from God: and in this caſe he left us; and naturally we go on that way, till powerfully turned to God again by grace.

3. An averſion to good, ſuch as an untamed bullock has to the yoke, Jer. xxxi. 18. It is a pain to the natural man to admit the yoke of Chriſt, Hoſ. iv. 16. ‘Iſrael ſlideth back, as a backſliding heifer.’ So that a ſlaviſh fear of puniſhment, and a ſervile hope of reward, are the main things that can move them to duty; whereas if the heart were left to its free choice, without theſe extrinſic motives, they would never yoke with it.

4. A proneneſs to evil, Hoſ. xi. 7. ‘My people are bent to backſliding from me: though they called them to the Moſt High, none at all would exalt him.’ The bias of the heart lies that way, ſo that is the very firſt way the children of men go, Pſal. lviii. 3. ‘The wicked are eſtranged from the womb, they go aſtray, as ſoon as they are born, ſpeaking lies.’ None need to teach them the way of ſin: leave them to their choice, they will as naturally go that way, as water will go downward, or ſparks of fire upward. Who then can doubt, but the way of the heart is the broad way?

2dly, This appears from the neceſſity of regeneration, which is abſolute and univerſal, John iii. 3. *Except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of heaven.* Men muſt be made new creatures ere they can do good works, Eph. ii. 10. united to Chriſt by faith, ere they can do any thing to purpoſe, John xv. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing.* This neceſſity ſprings from the total corruption of our nature, whereby it is indiſpoſed to all good, John iii. 6. *That which is born of the fleſh, is fleſh.* Whence it is evident, that the natural way of the heart is the broad way: for that which is wholly corrupt, cannot act but corruptly; and that nature which muſt be made new, ere it can do good, muſt needs, till it be renewed, be ſtill going wrong.

3dly, laſtly, This appears from the difficulty there is in the converſion of ſinners unto God, Jer. xiii. 23. ‘Can the Ethiopian change his ſkin, or the leopard his ſpots? Then may ye alſo do good, that are accuſtomed to evil.’ Great is that difficulty. Mercies will not do it, judgments will not: the ſinner will trample on the goodneſs of God leading to repentance; he will go on in ſin, though the fire of wrath is flaſhing on his face. A preacher from the dead would not convert a ſinner, Luke xvi. 31. It is only the irreſiſtable power of grace changing the heart that will do it, Jer. xxxi. 18. This ſpeaks the natural way the heart goes, to be the broad way, and no other.

SECONDLY, We ſhall conſider *the parts of this broad way leading to deſtruction.* It is ſo very broad, that we cannot enter into a detail of the particular parts thereof. But in the general, there are two parts of it. 1. The way of vanity; and 2. The way of vileneſs.

1ſt. The way of vanity, Eph. iv. 17. As ſoon as one has entered by that part of the wide gate of the natural inclination, opening towards the creature, away from God, he is upon the way of vanity, a broad ſpacious way to deſtruction. He then begins a vain life, a courſe of vanity of converſation, 1 Pet. i. 18. And in this way moſt men, yea all, but regenerate men, are going. And it is,

1. A way that ſets a man farther off from God. With the prodigal, he is then on his journey into the far country, Luke xv. 13. Every ſtep in this way is a ſtep farther away; and the older he grows in it, the relative diſtance betwixt God and him is increaſed. God and the ſinner part at the point of original corruption; and the ſinner taking the way of vanity, is ſoon far from him.

2. A way wherein he applies himſelf cloſe to the creature for his chief good, Jer. ii. 13. Having left God, he takes up with the empty creation, to hammer a happineſs to himſelf out of creature comforts; in imitation of fallen Adam embracing the forbidden fruit inſtead of a God. And here four things are to be conſidered.

(1.) The man is ſenſible of a want, Pſal. iv. 6. *Who will ſhew us any good?* He is conſcious to himſelf, that he is not ſelf-ſufficient. There is an empty ſpace in his heart, which he muſt needs labour to have filled up. And it cannot be otherwiſe, ſince he has loſt God, and is without him in the world, Eph. ii. 12; and that God is the only object capable of filling the heart, an infinite good only being commmenſurable to the boundleſs deſires of the ſoul.

(2.) Having loſt ſight of God as man's happineſs, he looks about through the creation for the ſupply of his want, for a match to his ſoul, which he finds cannot live alone by itſelf, Eccleſ. vi. 9. Though the man has loſt God, if he had not loſt his eyes too, he would ſee there was no way for him, but to ſee to recover the enjoyment of God again. But his eyes are darkened in this broad way, that he cannot ſee how God, and God only, can be happineſs to him, 1 Cor. ii. 14. The word of the goſpel tells him this of God, and Chriſtians tell it from their experience; but he cannot comprehend it: therefore he looks about for it elſewhere.

(3.) In this caſe the creature ſhews fair; the world appears in its beauty and gaudy dreſs. It diſplays its wealth at a diſtance, and looks out with all its charms, *the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life*, 1 John ii. 16. And the man is taken, thinking if he had it, he would be well. He looks on it as a fit match for his heart, and is not without hopes of gaining his point. And Satan is buſy here to forward the project, repreſenting the creature moſt ſpeciouſly, and inflaming the ſinner's deſire after it. See Matth. iv. 8.

(4.) The ſinner being taken, falls a-courting of the creature, for the enjoyment of the wanted happineſs in it, Pſal. iv. 6. Fluſhed with big hopes, he ſets out on this project, and plies it cloſely. And this is the broad way of vanity, in which he travels endleſsly, till either the grace of God open his eyes, and turn him back to God; or elſe that in hell he lift up his eyes, and ſee he has been ruined with courting all along a deceitful ſhadow.

This courting of the creature to be a match for the heart, is not ſlightly managed. But,

1. It is begun early, Pſal. lviii. 3. As ſoon as ever the children of fallen Adam are ſenſible of a want, they go to that door for ſupply; while as yet there are no deſires after God, they are gaping wide after the creature. Behold the little children, how fond on things grateful to the taſte, and pleaſant to the eye, while the compaſs of their underſtanding reaches no farther! What a mighty ſatisfaction do they promiſe themſelves in theſe! And as they grow up, and the world opens out to them, and ſpreads its deceitful glories; how do their deſires after it, and hunting for them, increaſe proportionally!

2. It is proſecute aſſiduouſly, no time being loſt for the purpoſe. The project is cloſely purſued, that if it prove ſucceſsleſs, it is not through careleſſneſs, Iſa. lvii. 20. Pſal. cxxvii. 2. They are early and late at the creature's door. Whatever diſappointment they meet with, it makes no change of their mind, nor do they go to another airth for their happineſs, Rom. vi. 20.

3. It is managed vigorouſly. They are not indifferent about their ſucceſs, but in good earneſt; their heart is wholly ſet on it. The moſt valuable talents they have are laid out upon it, Iſa. lv. 2. They take true pains upon it; they are not loiterers, but labour for to gain their point, Iſa. lv. 2. Matth. xi. 28. and that to wearineſs in the midſt of difficulties, Hab. ii. 13. They are

like hewers in ſtone, on the matter, Jer. ii. 13.; and ſtrike on rocks till the fire flaſh in their faces.

4. *laſtly*, It is continued all along, till the Lord from heaven put a ſtop to it; either in mercy, ſhewing them their error, and bringing them back unto God in Chriſt, to take up their reſt in him; or elſe in wrath, taking them away from it by death, and ſo plucking up their hopes by the roots, Matth. xv. 45, 46. Luke xii. 20.

Now this way is the way of vanity, in that,

1. It is a falſe and deceitful way, Pſal. cxix. 128. and can take with men only by means of darkneſs, blindneſs, and ignorance, ver. 104. In it ſhadows are propoſed to the heart inſtead of a ſubſtance, the creature promiſing that which it is not able to perform; cauſing men to expect that out of it that is not in it. In it the bait appears; but the hook is hidden, which yet effectually ruins, 1 Tim. vi. 10. And in it men hunt their own ſorrows and deſtruction.

2. It is an unprofitable way. In it a life is ſpent to no valuable purpoſe; and at the end it appears to have brought no laſting advantage, Rom. iii. 12. But thus, men are running in the broad way, wearying themſelves for a thing of nought; like children running in a ſunny day catching butterflies, miſſing many of them, and the beautiful coloured wings of thoſe they catch, going to aſhes between their fingers. It is unprofitable,

(1.) In that they quite fall ſhort of the great end God propoſeth to men, viz. his glory, Rom. iii. 23. Inſtead of living to his honour, they live to his diſhonour, preferring the creature to the Creator, and putting it in his room as their chief good. And that muſt needs be a vain life, which does not reach the chief end it was given for. What then can be expected, but the doom of the unprofitable ſervant?

(2.) In that they quite fall ſhort of the end they propoſe to themſelves, viz. happineſs, or a reſt to their hearts, Hoſ viii 7 This is what all their days they ſeek, but never get in any of their days, nor at the end; nor is it poſſible to get it in that way; for it is the way of vanity. And is not that a vain life, where one muſt die diſappointed of the great thing they mainly ſought all their life?

3. It is a trifling way, in which one trifles away a lifetime, buſy doing nothing, no ſubſtantial laſting good, nothing that will give comfort in a dying hour, nothing for the better world, Pſal. xc. 9. God has ſent us into this world, to do buſineſs for eternity, to paſs trials for the happy world to come; but men going the broad way, forget their buſineſs, and trifle away time; it lies like lumber on their hand, and they are fain to go in queſt of this and the other vanity, to get it driven off, as if they had nothing to do.

4. It is a reſtleſs way, Matth. xi. 28, 29. Solomon ſpeaks of a vanity toſſed to and fro, Prov xxi. 6. Such is the whole life of one in the broad way. There is no reſt for the heart in this way. Whatever amuſements for a time they may get in it, they can never lay the heart to reſt. Laying down the head upon one vanity to reſt, the pillow is ſoon drawn away; or there is a thorn of uneaſineſs found in it, and they muſt ſhift themſelves to another vanity, which quickly proves as unſatisfying as the other. So that they are like one on the top of a maſt, they can get no reſt.

5. *laſtly*, It is a way of endleſs wandering, through repeated diſappointments. Here men are like the Sodomites about Lot's houſe, ſtruck with blindneſs. They are going about for ſatisfaction, and groping for it every where, but can never find it; wearying themſelves to find that door, but all in vain. But there is no end; but after a thouſand diſappointments a new vanity is tried, and the experiment made on another, Iſa. lvii. 10. And ſo men are ſtill going the round of vanities: till either grace is dropped into their hearts, turning them to reſt in God; or elſe they turn into the grave dying diſappointed.

2dly, The *broad way* is *the way of vileneſs*, Pſal xiv. 1. As ſoon as one is entered by that part of the wide gate of the natural inclination opening towards ſin, away from the holineſs of God expreſſed in his law, he is upon the way of vileneſs leading ſtraight to deſtruction, Tit. i. 15, 16. Rev. xxii. 15. And it is,

1. A way wherein men vile by nature ſoon grow more vile, and lothſome in God's ſight, by going farther away from the holineſs required in his law, Jer. ix. 3. 'They proceed from evil to evil, and they know not 'me, ſaith the Lord.' Here actual ſin is heaped on original ſin, a ſinful life added to a ſinful nature, and the natural corruption ſpreads itſelf in heart, lip, and life: ſo the farther they go on in it, the farther from all good.

2. A way wherein they apply themſelves to the ſatisfying inſtead of ſtarving and mortifying their luſts, Pſal. lviii. 3. Having no heart for the way of holineſs, they ſet themſelves to the way of ſin, and purſue the ſame at the expence of the honour of God, and the wounding of their own conſciences, till in end they land in the pit of deſtruction at the end of the way, if repenting not. And here four things may be conſidered.

1. The heart of man is naturally poſſeſſed with a fry of ſinful corrupt luſts craving to be ſatisfied. See what proceeds out of the heart, Mark vii. 21, 22. *Evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetouſneſs, wickedneſs, deceit, laſciviouſneſs, an evil eye, blaſphemy, pride, and fooliſhneſs.* And if they were not in it, they would not come out of it. They are bred in the womb of the corruption of our nature: and by influence from hell they are ſoon brought to ſpread out themſelves. Theſe gape and open wide for to be ſatisfied with what is agreeable to their nature.

2. The ſinner, inſtead of ſtarving them, ſets himſelf to make proviſion for them, inſtead of denying them to gratify them, Pſal. lxxviii 18. And this is a hard taſk, the hardeſt that ever one took in hand; for it is like feeding of a fire, that never ſaith, It is enough. Luſts may be ſurfeited, but will never be ſatisfied. So it is a weary taſk the ſinner has, Jer. ix. 5. and a laborious one, as in a cloſe battle, James iv. 1, 2, 3.

3 The creature lying within the bounds of the law, cannot ſatisfy them: and no wonder; for it was never appointed to be ſatisfactory to us, ſo as to afford the reſt of the heart. Even in paradiſe there was a want, which nothing but the enjoyment of God could fill up. The regular deſires of a heart houſed in God, and centering in him, the creature may ſatisfy in the regular uſe of it; but nothing regular will ſatisfy irregular luſts.

4. Wherefore the ſinner breaks over the hedge unto that lying without the bounds of the holy law: and the ſatisfaction not found in allowed, it ſeeks in forbidden fruit, Prov. ix. 17. Thus the man wandering in the way of vanity, is ever now and then turning to the way of vileneſs: he is like the beaſt on a bare paſture, that having ate up all within the hedge to the red earth, at length breaks over the hedge; as Dinah gadding abroad in the way of vanity, at length fell into a pit of vileneſs and defilement. And here two things preſent themſelves to the entertainment of theſe vile luſts.

1. The deſires of the fleſh to be fulfilled, Eph ii. 3. And here is a mire of vileneſs for the ſinner to wallow in, in the broad way, called *the filthineſs of the fleſh*, 2 Cor. vii. 1. In it are to be ſeen drenched drunkards, gluttons, unclean perſons, filthy ſpeakers, and all ſenſualiſts, whoſe great buſineſs it is to gratify their ſenſes, neglecting their ſouls; as if they were nothing but living fleſh, or their ſouls only as ſalt to keep their bodies from corruption.

2. The deſires of the mind to be fulfilled, Eph. ii. 3. This mind is called *the filthineſs of the ſpirit*, 2 Cor. vii. 1. Here are endleſs depths of enmity againſt God, rancour of ſpirit againſt and diſtaſte of true holineſs and purity, unbelief of the goſpel, pride and ſelfiſhneſs, covetouſneſs, and earthly-mindedneſs, and innumerable evils

more, in which ſinners indulge themſelves in the broad way.

Theſe two iſſue in a fourfold road of the broad way, in each of which are many walking.

1. Black ignorance, wherein not a few reſt ſatisfied without a tolerable knowledge of the foundations of religion, Pſal. lxxxii. 5. They are taught to work, but not to read; if they were, either they forget it, or elſe they make no due uſe of it. The deſires of the fleſh and mind wholly take them up: and they neither have, nor deſire to have the knowledge of God and his ways, Job xxi. 14. They know it would but hamper them in thoſe things which take beſt with darkneſs, and cannot abide the light, John iii. 20. *For every one that doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, leſt his deeds ſhould be reproved.* But alas! they conſider not, that it will end in everlaſting darkneſs, Hoſ. iv. 6. Iſa. xxvii. 11.

2. Bare morality, lying in conformity to the letter of the ten commandments; whereby they keep ſome decency in civil ſociety, but are utterly eſtranged from religion, and have not ſo much as an appearance of it. They are good neighbours, but no good Chriſtians; deal fairly in things of this world, but have no dealing with things of the other world; mind their buſineſs and affairs of life, but quite forget the one thing needful. Their greateſt excellency lies in negatives, like the Phariſee, Luke xviii. 11. *I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjuſt, adulterers, or even as this publican:* as if they did not look on themſelves obliged to honour God, farther than not to affront him openly. This is a road of the broad way, Matth. v. 20. *For except your righteouſneſs ſhall exceed the righteouſneſs of the ſcribes and Phariſees, ye ſhall in no caſe enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

3. A form of godlineſs: wherein men go the outward round of the outward duties of religion, but ſtill continue ſtrangers to the life and power of it, 2 Tim. iii. 5. Theſe are the whited ſepulchres, men who tack a new life to the old heart; who ſometimes have taken up from their extravagancies, but were never truly converted; who with their religion, ſuch as it is, ſtill retain the predominant love of ſin; and always have ſome beloved luſt, in the room of God in Chriſt. They are like thoſe beaſts, of which there is nothing good but the ſkin, and hence ſo many apoſtates, who turning their back on religion, ahd proving ſcandalous and profane in their lives, do but appear in their native colours, and what they always were, before they caſt off their maſk. Let ſuch conſider theſe ſcriptures, Pſal. cxxv. 5. 'As for 'ſuch as turn aſide unto their crooked ways, the Lord 'ſhall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity,' Matth. xxiv. 51. *The Lord ſhall cut him aſunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there ſhall be weeping ahd gnaſhing of teeth.*

4. Open profanity: wherein men bear the devil's mark on their foreheads, giving themſelves the looſe in the open courſe of ſcandalous enormities, Gal. v. 19, 20, 21. Theſe are they that *declare their ſin as Sodom, and hide it not;* who take pleaſure in making themſelves vile; ſcorn to be hampered with the rules of religion, ſobriety, and decency; who make a mock of ſin, and are going to deſtruction jovially, as with tabret and pipe. This ſurely is the broad road in the broad way; and they cannot be thought to be deceiving themſelves with hopes of heaven, for they cannot think it a place for dogs and ſwine. If they do, they will be diſappointed, Rev. xxii. 15. *For without are dogs,* &c. A profane life will make a miſerable end, Eph. v. 6. 'Let no man deceive 'you with vain words; for becauſe of theſe things 'cometh the wrath of God upon the children of diſo'bedience.'

Now this is the way of vileneſs, wherein men render themſelves lothſome in the ſight of God: their ſouls in this way ſtill gathering more defilement to them, and all the defilement ſticking, none carried off, while they are upon it. Every ſin leaves a blot on the ſoul, whereby it is laid under pollution agreeable to its nature. Thereby,

1. The ſoul is rendered unlike God; and the more ſinful, the more unlike him in his moral perfections. Now, God cannot but love himſelf, and his own purity; and therefore he cannot but hate and lothe what is made unlike him, and contrary to him.

2. The ſoul being made unlike God, its beauty is marred, and it becomes lothſome. Holineſs is the glory or beauty of God, Exod. xv. 11. 'Who is a God like 'unto thee, glorious in holineſs?' and God being the ſupreme pattern of all perfection, holineſs muſt alſo be the beauty of the creature; and conſequently ſin muſt be the deformity of the ſoul.

THIRDLY, We ſhall conſider the broadneſs of this way; which we may take up in theſe two things.

1. There is large room in it for paſſengers to walk in. The vain and vile mind is an unfathomable depth; and the way to deſtruction is an unmeaſurable breadth. So the mind has room to wander up and down, and to range to and fro in the broad way. Endleſs vanities preſent themſelves there, innumerable vileneſſes are to be found there, acccording to Jer. xvii. 9. *The heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked: who can know it?* ſo that he who has diſreliſhed one, may betake himſelf to another; and every luſt of the heart may find wherewith to gratify it there.

2. There is no hampering with hedges in it. It is the way of lawleſs liberty; the very nature of it is to lay aſide all reſtraints, and to allow all licentiouſneſs. In that way the bands are broken aſunder, and the cords caſt away from the travellers. Bible rules, dictates of conſcience, and ſuggeſtions of the Spirit of holineſs, are laid aſide in that way, as things that would narrow it. Hence,

1. It is eaſy to fall on it. It is ſuch a broad way, that there is no difficulty to hit it, Pſal. lviii. 3. Though one ſhut his eyes, and walk at all adventures, he will not miſs it; becauſe it is the way of natural inclination; ſo all the difficulty is to keep off it.

2. It is eaſy walking in it. There is full room there for all the ſinners vain and vile inclinations. They go with the wind while they are on it; they row with the ſtream: for the natural bent lies that way, Jer. iv. 22. They have no more ado but follow it.

3. It is not eaſy to get off it, Jer. xiii. 23. *Can the Ethiopian change his ſkin, or the leopard his ſpots? then may ye alſo do good, that are accuſtomed to do evil.* Many ſeem to themſelves and others for a time to leave it; and yet they do not change their way, but only their road; going off from one road of the broad way to another, as from profanity to formality.

III. We ſhall conſider *this way its leading away to deſtruction.*

Here we ſhall,
1ſt, Shew the import of it.
2dly, Confirm it.

Firſt, We ſhall ſhew the import of this. It imports, that,

1. Deſtruction is at the end of this way, however the travellers notice it not, Prov. ix. 17, 18. 'Stolen waters 'are ſweet, and bread eaten in ſecret is pleaſant. But 'he knoweth not that the dead are there, and that her 'gueſts are in the depths of hell.'

As ſure as heaven's happineſs is at the end of the narrow way, hell and deſtruction are at the end of the broad way. There is no ſeparating what God has thus joined.

2. The farther one goes in that way, the farther away he is from ſafety, and the nearer to deſtruction. Progreſs in the broad way carries one ſtill farther from God from holineſs, and from ſalvation, Pſal. cxix. 155. *Salvation is far from the wicked: for they ſeek not thy ſtatutes.* They are far from the God of ſalvation, the way

of ſalvation, and ſo from ſalvation itſelf; and ſtill they draw nearer to deſtruction.

3. Holding on the way, they cannot miſs of deſtruction, Rom. iii 16, 17. 'Deſtruction and miſery are in their ways.' They will land at length in the place of deſtruction, Pſal. ix. 17. 'The wicked ſhall be turned into hell, and all nations that forget God.' They will find themſelves in the ſtate of deſtruction, Matth. xxv. 46. A deſtruction of their well being, not of their being; for they will not be ſubſtantially deſtroyed, or annihilated, to make an end of their being; but deſtroyed as to their comfort and eaſe, or tormented to make an end of their well being. What is deſtroyed is not therefore annihilated, Luke iv. 34. compared with Matth. viii. 29. Annihilation properly is momentary, their deſtruction will be everlaſting, 2 Theſſ. i. 9. annihilation brings into a ſtate of negative reſt, but they will have no reſt, Rev. xiv. 11. but be tormented for ever and ever, chap. xx. 10. *Their worm that dieth not*, muſt have a ſubject to live in: and the fire is not everlaſting, but for everlaſting puniſhment, Matth. xxv. 41. 46.

Secondly, To confirm that this way leads to deſtruction, conſider,

1. This is the conſtant voice of the word. God himſelf at the beginning ſpoke it firſt of all, Gen. ii. 17. 'In the day thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely die.' The text is Jeſus Chriſt's declaration of it. It was the common and conſtant voice of all the prophets and apoſtles, to be found in almoſt every leaf of the Bible. Thus the truth of God inſures it: and if men will promiſe themſelves peace in it over the belly of all this, what help is there for it? But they will be miſerably diſappointed, Deut. xxix 19, 20. 'The Lord will not ſpare him, but then the anger of the Lord, and his jealouſy ſhall ſmoke againſt that man and all the curſes that are written in this book ſhall lie upon him, and the Lord ſhall blot out his name from under heaven.'

2. The rectoral juſtice of God demands it, Gen. xviii. 25. compared with 2 Theſſ. i 6. *He that ruleth among men muſt be juſt*; and therefore muſt puniſh crimes, as well as reward good ſervices: and muſt not the Ruler and Judge of the world do juſtice too? Yea, his own honour, and the good of mankind, require it; and it is the intimation of that juſtice that keeps ſome decency in the world. We ſee very well, that ſome men have a ſun-ſhine of peace in the broad way, while others have much adverſity in the narrow way. There muſt then be a judgment for puniſhment at the end of the broad way. And ſome ſinners are puniſhed now in their way, as an earneſt of it; but all are not, for aſſuring it.

3. The nature of things duly conſidered, manifeſts it. The ſoul of man is immortal, and dropping the body, lives ſtill. God alone can be our happineſs, as being alone commenſurable to the boundleſs deſires of our ſouls. Now the broad way leads away from God, conſequently away from happineſs: and the future ſtate being not a ſtate of trial, but of recompence, the ſeparation from God there muſt be total and final, and conſequently the miſery of the creature complete. What can be the end of the way of vanity, but abſolute diſappointment, cutting and galling of the ſoul; how can that diſappointment be evited, when men paſs away out of this world, and this world ſhall periſh, and ſo they can never have more of what they ſought their ſatisfaction in? What can be the end of the way of vileneſs but deſtruction, while nothing of their vile ways remains with them, but the luſt after them, the cutting remembrance of them, without any poſſibility of gratifying their luſts more?

4. *laſtly*, The voice of the natural conſcience confirms it, Rom. i. 32. and ii. 15. There is ſomething within the ſinner that forebodes deſtruction to him in this way; though through the violence of luſts it prevails not, or is not heeded, Job xv. 21. It is their conſciouſneſs of this that makes them always in a hurry, and to ſtave off ſerious communing with themſelves: for if they would deſcend into themſelves, and give the broad and narrow way a fair hearing, they would find conſcience within them frighting from the former, and preſſing to the latter.

Use 1. of *Information*. Hence we may learn,

1. That the way of one's ſetting out in the world is a matter of vaſt conſequence. It is of great weight, how one begins his courſe of life. It is begun well, it will readily end well: if the beginning be ill, the end will be conform, if there is not a ſound change made. Ye ſee there is a wide gate to enter by, and it ſets on a broad way leading to deſtruction. What need then is there to enter right, ſince if we enter wrong we cannot proceed right, till we enter again by a new gate? This calls aloud to,

(1.) The young to look well at what gate they enter, how they begin their courſe, and ſet off in the world, Eccleſ. xii. 1. *Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.* This for the moſt part is little conſidered: but the young go forward at random, thinking it of little moment how their firſt years be ſpent, hoping their ripers years may be ſpent regularly. This is to enter the wide gate, leaving your ſoul in pawn, that ye will come back again, and will not go forward. But one ſtep makes way for another, and the return for the moſt part is forgot, and the pawn loſt.

(2.) The aged to review their entering; and now that they are far on in their way, to conſider what gate they entered by. It is impoſſible ye can be on the right way, whatever your way is, if ye entered not by the right gate. May be your way now is not quite ſo dirty as your entrance was; ye have perhaps left the follies of an ill ſpent youth, and taken up yourſelves; but ye may have done all that, and yet be on the broad way. Is there a ſound work of converſion in your caſe? Are ye become new creatures? 2 Cor. v. 17. If not, ye are ſtill in the old way.

2. That giving ſcope to the natural inclination of the heart, ſets one ſurely on the broad way to deſtruction. For that inclination is the wide gate, which the broad way joins, the former iſſuing in the latter. People generally think little of the opening of their hearts towards the creature, and towards ſin: but if there is not a ſtruggle begun againſt both, but way given to any of them, the party is entered by the wide gate, and is on the broad way. Our worſt enemy is within; and that heart will ruin a man, that is not ſtruggled againſt, but yielded to, and carries away a man in its way. The pliableneſs that way is frowardneſs againſt God, Iſa. lvii. 17.

3. *laſtly*, The way and courſe of life that is moſt grateful and eaſieſt to our corrupt nature, is moſt dangerous; it is the way to deſtruction. Nature likes not to be hampered, but to go at liberty, ranging the treaſures of vanity, and wallowing in the mires of vileneſs. But that preſent eaſe is a pledge of future deſtruction; that lawleſs liberty betrays one into eternal confinement; that caſting off of the bands of duty, prepares one for the bands of wrath in the end.

Use 2. of *Exhortation*. And,

1*ſt*, Conſider your way, what way ye are on, whether on the broad way or not, Hag. i. 5. *Thus ſaith the Lord of hoſts, Conſider your ways.* Should one cry to you, that about the place where ye are going there is a way that is deadly dangerous, ye would certainly look to your feet, to ſee that ye were not on it. Here is a voice from heaven telling you, that in this world where ye are, there is a way leading to deſtruction: O then be not ſecure, but conſider ſeriouſly what way ye are on, whether on it or not. Lay then this matter to heart, examine your ſtate and way, and put this queſtion to yourſelves, What way am I on?

Motive 1. This is a piece of duty ye owe to God, in return of all the calls of heaven to you by ordinances and providences, Micah vi. 9. Rev. iii. 20. Sometimes he ſpeaks to you by his word, ſometimes by providences; will ye not give him a hearing, ſtanding and conſidering what way ye are on, and whither it leads? It is dangerous to give a deaf ear to all, Prov. i. 24.

Mot. 2. It is a piece of juſtice ye owe to your own ſouls, 2 Cor. xiii. 4. Were a man driving a parcel of beaſts, and one tell him, There is a way thereabouts that ends in a precipice, he would certainly conſider whether he were on it or not. But it is ſounded again and again in mens ears, that there is a broad way that leads to deſtruction; yet they will not do their ſouls the juſtice once ſeriouſly to conſider whether they are on it or not, but juſt drive forward at all adventures.

Mot. 3. As is the way ye are on, ſo will the end be. Death and life hang on the way ye are on. If ye are on the broad way, ye are on the way of death and deſtruction; if not, ye are on the way of life; and is not that worth your conſidering the matter?

Mot 4. *laſtly*, It would be of great uſe to have that point cleared. Should ye find yourſelves not on the broad way, ye might have the comfort of it, that ye are in the way to life, and ſhall certainly get thither. If ye were convinced of your being on the broad way, ye might get off from it yet, and ſo eſcape being ruined by it. Some need be at no great pains to find out this, if they would but conſider things calmly and impartially. But I ſhall drop theſe few things about it.

1. Thoſe that never yet ſaw themſelves on the broad way, and deſtruction awaiting them at the end of it, are certainly upon it, by that token that they are going on their way blindfolded, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. Unconvinced ſinners are ſurely unconverted; for who will ever go right that once are wrong, till they ſee themſelves wrong?

2. They that have not entered by the ſtrait gate of converſion and regeneration, but have climbed up another way to the way they are in, Matth. xviii. 3. John iii. 3. They who, whatever changes have been made in their head, in point of light to diſcern the truth: in their affections, in point of reliſh of it; and in their life, in point of eſcaping the pollutions of the world; yet their nature has never been changed, never got the new heart impreſſed with inclination towards the whole law, and reconciled to the whole yoke of Chriſt, but the predominant love of ſin ſtill remains in them, are certainly on the broad way.

3. They that have a reigning diſguſt at the narrow way, whether in themſelves or others, Rom. viii. 7. There is a generation that chuſe ſuch a meaſure of religion for themſelves, but they can have no more of it, they cannot think to be bound up to all the rules of it; they hate it in others, and cannot admit it in themſelves. Theſe are in the broad way, by this token, that all the ſaints aſpire to a perfection of holineſs, and love it, Phil. iii. 13, 14.

4. *laſtly*, They whoſe choice is a looſe and licentious way, in the way of vanity or vileneſs, and can find no pleaſure but in ſuch a way, Rom. viii. 5. This argues a temper of ſpirit wholly carnal, and eſtranged from the life of God; that cannot ſavour the things of God, but of the fleſh; and that is a deadly condition, Rom. viii. 5, 6. To ſuch heaven as a holy place, would be a priſon, a place wherein they could have no pleaſure; and they may be ſure they ſhall never be brought thither; ſince they are not by heavenly diſpoſition made meet for it. Col. i. 12, 13.

2*dly*, Ye that are brought off the broad way, be ſuitably affected with, and walk worthy of the deliverance, as being brought off the way of deſtruction. And,

1. Be thankful to God for it, who by his grace drew you off from it, Pſal. cvii. 20, 21. Look back to the precipice that ye were once careleſsly ſtanding on, to the way of deſtruction that ye were ſecurely going forward in: bleſs him that opened your eyes, to ſee your danger there, and to ſee another way ſafe, however narrow: that by his grace determined you to forſake the broad way, and chuſe the narrow; and by the power of his Spirit drew you off the one, and ſet you on the other.

2. Entertain no hankering after that way again: beware of giving rueful looks back to it. It is an exhortation given to thoſe eſpouſed to Chriſt, Pſal. xlv. 10. *Hearken, O daughter, and conſider, and incline thine ear; forget alſo thine own people, and thy father's houſe.* And it is not given in vain: for in the beſt there is an old man, remaining corruption, which perceiving the free and unhampered gate of the carnal world, in the way of vanity and vileneſs, is apt to envy them in a ſort, and ſecretly to wiſh they had the ſame ſcope with them: Prov. xxiii. 17. ‘ Let not thine heart envy ſinners; but be ‘ thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.’ This is moſt dangerous, which, if not timely ſuppreſſed, will inflame the whole ſoul, and lay it in ruins, Numb. xi. 4, 5, 6. 33, 34. therefore *remember Lot's wife*, Luke xvii. 32.

3. Do not grudge your difficulties and hardſhips in the narrow way, 1 Pet. iv. 12. James i. 2, 3, 4. In it you meet with correction, but in the other ye would have met with deſtruction; and there is no more reaſon to grudge than one brought off a way where he would have broke his neck, has to grudge, his breaking his toes on the ſafe way that he is brought on. The hardſhips of the broad and narrow way, differ as much as the curſe and the croſs, as the killing ſword and the ſurgeon's lance, as eternal wrath and God's fatherly rod.

4. *laſtly*, Pity them that are on the broad way, and be concerned for their recovery. Pity them; for alas! they know not what they do, where they are, the deadly danger they are in. Be concerned for them; for they are going to deſtruction, and are not aware of it, Prov. vii. 22, 23. and ix. 17, 18. How can ye miſs to be ſo affected towards them, if ye are ſenſible what once was your own caſe? Tit. iii. 3. ‘ For we ourſelves alſo were ‘ ſometime fooliſh, diſobedient, deceived, ſerving divers ‘ luſts and pleaſures, living in malice and envy, hateful, ‘ and hating one another.’

3*dly*, Sinners on the broad way turn off from it as the way of deſtruction. *Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?* Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

Motive 1. There is no eſcaping of deſtruction continuing on it, whatever ye may imagine, 1 Theſſ. v. 3. God has ſaid it: how can ye hope for ſafety in that way, over the belly of an expreſs declaration from heaven? He is infinite in knowledge, ye cannot outwit him; in power, and ye cannot outbrave him; he is eſſentially true, and ye will not be able to make him a liar, Numb. xxiii. 19. See Deut. xxix. 19, 20.

Mot. 2. It will be a total deſtruction it will bring you to, 2 Pet. ii. 12, 13. A deſtruction of your ſouls, bodies, and comforts, Prov. vi. 32. and viii. 36. Iſa lxvi. 24. Luke xvi. 24. Look as it was with Sodom when it was utterly overthrown, there was nothing left, but they and all theirs were deſtroyed: ſo will the end of the broad way be to you.

Mot. 3. It will be an eternal deſtruction, 2 Theſſ. i. 9. *Who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.* A deſtruction not of your being indeed, but of your well-being; ever dying, but never dying out, Matth. xxv. 46. Rev. xiv. 11. and xx. 10. Your way may be long indeed, but the deſtruction at the end of it will be longer: ye will compaſs your way at moſt in a few years; but the deſtruction will never end, but go on through eternity.

Mot. 4. Ye may get out of it now, and ſo eſcape deſtruction in it, Ezek. xviii. 30. Satan and an evil world may perſuade you to go on in it, but they cannot force you thereto. There is no neceſſary connection betwixt your having gone in it hitherto, and your going on in it ſtill. It is a courſe that may be broken off; the grace of God is able to bring you off it; and if ye be truly willing, will bring you off it, Jer. xxxi. 18, 19.

Mot. 5. God is calling you to turn from it, and leave it, Ezek xxxiii. 11. Christ has opened to you another way, a way to life, and is inviting you earneſtly into it.

He is propoſing himſelf as the way, John xiv. 6. and calling you to him, Matth. xi. 28. This his voice ſounds in the way, and reaches your ears while ye are on it, the broad way, Prov. ix. 5. 6. But it is not to be heard at the end of the way. Therefore it is ſaid, ‘To-day, if ye will hear his voice.’ At the end of the way, the voice of the Lamb of God ceaſes as ſuch, and becomes the roaring of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, Luke xix. 27.

Mot. 6. laſtly, The calls you have to turn from it, will be an aggravation of your deſtruction if ye go on, Matth. xi. 22. The remembrance of them at the end, will be cutting and galling, when there will be no remedy. It will be the never-dying worm, that will gnaw for ever; to think, that, for the pleaſure of walking at your liberty in the broad way for a few years, ye brought yourſelves to be ſhut up in the pit of deſtruction for ever. Therefore (Heb. xii. 25.) *See that ye refuſe not him that ſpeaketh; for if they eſcaped not who refuſed him that ſpake on earth, much more ſhall not we eſcape, if we turn away from him that ſpeaketh from heaven; leſt* (Prov. v. 11, 12.) *thou mourn at the laſt, when thy fleſh and thy body are conſumed; and ſay, How have I hated inſtruction, and my heart deſpiſed reproof?*

Now, if ye would change your way, and leave the broad gate,

1. Be peremptory in it, and reſolute for it: for ye will not want oppoſition. Satan will oppoſe the change violently by his temptations: the carnal world will oppoſe it: your former licentious companions will be ſure to counſel, and mock you from it, if they can; and your own luſts within will be an active party againſt it. But remember, (Matth. xi. 12.) ‘the kingdom of heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.’

2. Do not delay it, but turn immediately, as the Pſalmiſt did, Pſal. cxix. 60. ‘I made haſte, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.’ If your reſolutions for it be ſincere, they will not admit of a moment's delay, more than the caſting of a burning coal out of your boſom. If ye delay till the next day or the next hour, ye may be at the end of your way before that time: and what avails your purpoſe of turning then? As when the cry of fire in a houſe is made, men go immediately to quench it, knowing that every minute the fire is proceeding and gaining ground: ſo when men are convinced in earneſt, they will forthwith ſet to turn.

3. Set yourſelves by all means for the ſtrait gate, and do not think of getting over into the narrow way at the broad ſide, Luke xiii. 24. ‘Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate; for many will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able.’ This is a fundamental miſtake in the conduct of many; whereby, leaving the way of looſeneſs and careleſſneſs, they commence mere moraliſts or legal formaliſts, but no more true Chriſtians than they were before. Satisfy not yourſelves without a deep conviction of your ſin and miſery, faith in Jeſus Chriſt uniting you to him, true repentance and converſion unto God by Chriſt.

4. *laſtly*, Be not frighted at, diſcouraged by, or made to turn back becauſe of the ſtraitneſs of the gate; but peremptorily enter, and reſolutely thruſt forward, till ye be quite through on the narrow way of holineſs, Luke xiii. 24. forecited.

Doct. III. *The wide gate, with the broad way joining it, does ſo take with mankind, that the multitude of the world goes in by it, at all adventures.*

In diſcourſing this ſubject, I ſhall,

I. Explain the point.

II. Confirm this ſad truth, That the multitude of the world go in by the wide gate into the broad way.

III. Shew how it comes to paſs, that the multitude take the broad way, notwithſtanding of the deſtruction at the end of it.

IV. *laſtly*, Apply.

I. We ſhall explain this point. And we may take up the ſenſe and import of it in theſe four things, all of them the genuine import of the text.

Firſt, There is among mankind a going in at the wide gate. However dangerous it is, yet it is frequented by poor unthinking ſouls. Though of right it ſhould be lothed for the pollution of it, and ſhould be ſhunned with a horror thereof, yet men do go in at it. That is,

1*ſt*, They enter and paſs through the wide gate, giving way to the corrupt natural inclination of their hearts, when they begin their courſe of life in the world, Pſal. lviii. 3. This, according to what was ſaid, lies in two things.

1. Giving way and ſcope to the bias of their heart towards the creature, away from God. The children of fallen Adam naturally go away from God, when they begin their courſe, Pſal. xiv. 2, 3.; and they go to the creature in his room and ſtead, Jer. ii. 13. They find they want, they need, and cannot but deſire to have ſupply: they want a reſt to their hearts, a match for their ſouls, ſomething that may ſatisfy their deſires. But what door go they to for the ſupply of their want? not to God's, but to the creature's, Pſal. iv. 6. John v. 40. There they faſten on the dry breaſts, refuſing the Lord's offers, Iſa. lv. 1, 2.

2. Giving way to the bias of the heart towards ſin, away from the holineſs required by the law. God in Chriſt calls them to take on his yoke, Matth xi. 29. but they cannot ſubmit their necks to it, Rom. viii. 7. They chuſe ſinful liberty, and look aſquint on the way of God's commandments. Beginning their courſe in the world, and ſinful liberty and religious ſtrictneſs being both before them, they reject the latter, and readily embrace the former. Sin appears delightful and pleaſant, holineſs rugged and unſightly to them: ſo they go with the bentſail of their hearts towards ſin, hoping to find there what will ſatisfy.

2*dly*, Paſſing through the wide gate, they are ſet on the broad way; they go in thereat, viz. into the broad way; which the wide gate is the entry to, and ſo they go on,

1. Walking in the way of vanity, Eph. iv. 17. They ſpend their lifetime in a vain purſuit of happineſs in the creature, which all along diſappoints them, and in the end worſt of all, Jer. ii. 5. ‘Thus ſaith the Lord, what iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?’ They weary themſelves in the purſuit, and in end obtain nothing that can ſatisfy, Hab. ii. 13. Their whole life is filled up with mere amuſements: and beyond this they reach not to any ſolid and laſting happineſs, which can only be had in the enjoyment of a God in Chriſt, Luke xvii. 28, 29.

2. Walking in the way of vileneſs, Eph. ii. 3. The creature within the hedge of the divine law not affording the deſired ſatisfaction, they break over the hedge, and range up and down among forbidden profits and pleaſures; if ſo be that ſtolen waters may make up to them what is wanting in allowed ones. And none of theſe anſwering expectation neither, they go from one act of vileneſs to another; and the diſappointment ſtill renewed, their luſts crave anew of them, and they ſeek afreſh to ſatisfy them. Thus their life is ſpent, till their way is at end, and they fall in end into deſtruction. This is the going in thereat.

Secondly, They go in thereat at all adventures; raſhly and heedleſly, without conſidering. Great is the danger of that way, deſtruction being at the end of it. They are told their danger: conſcience tells them of it; they are warned of it from the word; providence ſets many frightful examples before them, one being made example to another: but all in vain. Their vain minds and corrupt luſts hurry them forward: they fix their eyes on the bait that is pleaſing, but notice not the ruining hook; and ſo they go on at all adventures, whatever be the iſſue.

Thirdly, They are many that thus go in at the wide gate into the broad way. As deſtructive as it is, there is a multitude of the children of men on it, Whoever mind for it, they need not fear want of company of fellow-travellers therein. They are many,

1. Abſolutely There is never wanting on the broad way a number of travellers, to encourage one another. There is a multitude to do evil. There they are of all ranks and qualities, great and ſmall, of all profeſſions, ages, and ſexes.

2. Comparatively, in compariſon of thoſe on the narrow way. So ſaith the text. There is ſuch an odds between the two parties, that the broad way men make the many, the other but a few. If broad way of ſinful liberty, and the ſtrait way of religion and godlineſs, were put to the vote in the world, the former would undoubtedly carry it; thoſe for it being ſo far ſuperior in number to thoſe for the other.

Fourthly, The wideneſs of the gate and broadneſs of the way influenceth this. The agreeableneſs thereof to the corrupt minds of men, inviteth powerfully to enter and come on; and being entered and come on, it keeps them from going back, and prompts to go on. It is a powerful influence, which the deſtruction at the end of the way is not able to balance.

II. We ſhall *confirm this ſad truth. That the multitude of the world go in by the wide gate into the broad way.* This may appear from,

1ſt, Scripture-teſtimony, which is the teſtimony of God himſelf, who neither can deceive nor be deceived. Scripture-light all along diſcovers the multitude of the world to be on the broad way. This it doth ſeveral ways; and particularly,

1. Witneſſing the univerſal corruption of human nature, Pſal. xiv. 2, 3. ‘The Lord looked down from hea-‘ven upon the children of men: to ſee if there were ‘any that did underſtand, and ſeek God. They are all ‘gone aſide, they are all together become filthy: there ‘is none that doth good, no not one.’ If ye think this was meant only of thoſe in the Pſalmiſt's day, ye may be cured of that miſtake by the apoſtle's application of it to all the world, Rom. iii. 12. 19. ‘They are all gone ‘out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, ‘there is none that doth good, no not one. Now we ‘know that what things ſoever the law ſaith, it ſaith to ‘them who are under the law: that every mouth may ‘be ſtopped, and all the world may become guilty be-‘fore God.’ This ſpeaks it to be natural to man, to betake himſelf to the broad way, though not primitively natural, for (Eccleſ. vii. 29.) ‘God made man upright;’ yet ſecondarily and accidentally, as our nature was corrupted in Adam, John iii. 6. ‘That which is born of ‘the fleſh is fleſh.’ Job. xiv. 4. ‘Who can bring a clean ‘thing out of an unclean? not one.’ So that this is the firſt way all men go, and in which they hold on till turned by grace.

2. Witneſſing the general depravity of men's lives. How forcible is that teſtimony, 1 John v. 19. ‘The ‘whole world lieth in wickedneſs.’ The godly are ſuch a ſmall number in the world, that the name of the world is left to the corrupt part: and they are ſo very corrupt, that they are ſaid to lie in wickedneſs. The ſtraying in the broad way begins very early, Pſal. lviii. 3. ‘The ‘wicked are eſtranged from the womb, they go aſtray ‘as ſoon as they be born ſpeaking lies;’ and God's elect ones are once engaged therein as well as others, Iſ. liii. 6. ‘All we like ſheep have gone aſtray;’ and go on till returned unto Jeſus Chriſt, 1 Pet. ii. 25. *For ye were as ſheep going aſtray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Biſhop of your ſouls.* But ſtill the multitude ſtrays on, Phil. ii. 21. *For all ſeek their own, not the things which are Jeſus Chriſt's.*

3. The conſtant call to the multitude to repent and turn. That call ſuppoſes them to be quite wrong, and out of the way, Matth. ix. 13. ‘I am come—to call ‘ſinners to repentance.’ It was the ſound the prophets and apoſtles made in the world, each of them in their time, where they executed their commiſſion. So the houſe of Iſrael is beſpoken, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. ‘As I ‘live, ſaith the Lord God, I have no pleaſure in the ‘death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his ‘way, and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; ‘for why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael?’ So ſaith the apoſtle, Acts xvii. 30. ‘And the times of this igno-‘rance God winked at; but now commandeth all men ‘every where to repent.’ And in all ages the neceſſity of this call to repent does continue, there being but few who anſwer it.

4. *laſtly*, The ſweeping judgments a holy God has at times ſet on the world, were ſure tokens of the multitude being on the broad way. Once the whole inhabitants of the earth, ſave eight perſons, were deſtroyed by a deluge of water. Sodom and Gomorrah were conſumed with fire from heaven, only Lot and his family eſcaping; whereas God was ready to have ſpared the whole, if there had been but ten righteous ones in the place. The deſtruction of Jeruſalem was another diſpenſation of that kind, of which our Saviour ſaith, Matth. xxiv. 21, 22. ‘For then ſhall be great tribulation, ſuch as was ‘not ſince the beginning of the world to this time, no, ‘nor ever ſhall be. And except thoſe days ſhould be ‘ſhortened, there ſhould no fleſh be ſaved; but for the ‘elect's ſake thoſe days ſhall be ſhortened.’ And the burning up of the world with fire at laſt, is a ſpeaking evidence that ſtill the multitude will take the broad way.

2dly, From our own obſervation, if we will but take a view of the world, as we have acceſs to be acquainted with it by ſeeing and hearing. I ſhall not ſpeak of the many nations lying in Pagan idolatry, nor others without the verge of the viſible church. It is plain, that among thoſe that have the light of the goſpel ſhining among them, the multitude is on the broad way.

1. Every body may ſee, how quite unlike to the rules of the goſpel are the lives of the generality that hear it, Tit. ii. 11, 12. Sobriety, righteouſneſs, and godlineſs, are taught by it; but few learn the leſſons. What exceſs of paſſions and vanity of mind carry moſt men beyond all bounds of ſobriety, to their own hurt? What unrighteouſneſs prevails to the injuring of others, ſo that in every ſociety, greater and leſſer, there are heavy complaints of this kind? And how little regard to God, his honour, his law, and intereſts, is to be ſeen among men, to the provoking of the eyes of his glory? If the multitude is not on the broad way, how is it thus? Truly, if ye ſee not that the multitude is upon it, it is an evidence ye do not know it by that name, and are unacquainted with the narrow way.

2. They that have eyes may ſee, how rare experimental religion is in the world. The multitude trouble not their heads about it; but live at eaſe, without any ſaving acquaintance with Chriſt, ignorant of the life of faith, and ſtruggle againſt the body of ſin and death. Conviction of one's loſt ſtate by nature, is very rare; the work of converſion is yet more rare. Few have a profeſſion or appearance of religion; and among thoſe that have it, how many are utter ſtrangers to the power of godlineſs? The truly ſerious will be convinced of this; for they muſt be ready to take up Micah's lamentation, Mic. vii. 1, 2. &c. See it.

III. *How comes it to paſs, that the multitude take the broad way, notwithſtanding of the deſtruction at the end of it?* This may be accounted for, if we conſider theſe following things.

1. It is the moſt agreeable way to their corrupt nature. It is the very way of their heart, Iſa. lvii. 17. The heart of man naturally is a treaſure of vanity, a fountain of vileneſs, Jer. xvii. 9. Mark vii. 21. How can the broad way of vanity and vileneſs miſs to be agreeable to it? Likeneſs begets love and liking: ſo their ſouls natively chuſe the broad way, wherein are to be found what

things promiſe, though deceitfully, ſatiſfaction to the vanity of their minds, and the corrupt luſts of their hearts.

2. The blindneſs of their minds, Eph. iv. 17, 18. They ſee not the danger, to fright them away from it; they cannot, they will not ſee it. Their unmortified luſts caſt up ſuch miſts as darken the eyes of their mind, that though the danger is told them a thouſand times they cannot perceive it, Prov. ix. 17, 18. will not believe it, Deut. xxix. 19, 20. they ſee not any of thoſe things that might draw them from off it, 1 Cor. ii. 14. There is an attractive virtue, beauty, and glory in the contrary way, Prov iii. 17. but they do not perceive it.

3. Prejudices againſt the narrow way. They not only have not a good opinion of it; but they have an ill opinion of it, are prejudiced againſt it, Acts xxviii. 22. It appears to them an overgrown, rough, and frightful path: which, if they conſult their intereſt, they muſt hold off from. Chriſt's yoke is taken for an uneaſy yoke, his burden for a very heavy one. And ſo they determine againſt it, without giving it a fair trial.

4. The broad way is really eaſieſt for the time: *Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to deſtruction, and many there be which go in thereat.* In it one has no more ado, but to follow the inclination of his own heart; to go with the wind of corrupt paſſions and affections; but in the narrow way he will have that wind in his face, and muſt keep up a ſtruggle againſt his luſts, to mortify them. Thus preſent eaſe engages them to that way that ends in deſtruction, and preſent difficulty frights them from the way that leads to life in the end.

5. Satan the enemy of their ſalvation, has a mighty influence on them to carry them to, and keep them on that way. He is *the god of this world*, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. and men are naturally under his power, Acts xxvi. 18. He has a favourable party within them; ſo that the way he would have them go, is the way their natural bent lies. Hence he has eaſy work to prompt them forward, for he rows with the tide. Add to this his ſubtilty, whereby he can eaſily over-reach them: and his diligence, whereby he ſlips no occaſion to put them on: and no wonder he drives the multitude before him.

6. Example contributes exceedingly to it, Matth. xviii. 7. One goes into that way, another follows, and ſo on. It is true, there are examples on the other ſide too: but good example has not ſuch influence as bad; becauſe men are naturally corrupt, and therefore want but one to go before, that they may follow according to their natural inclination, like water going down a hill, where the paſſage is cleared. But it is againſt the grain to follow good example.

7. *laſtly*, Want of conſideration, Luke xv. 17. Few are at pains to weigh things, and deliberately to chuſe their way; but they take the broad way upon truſt, as that which firſt offers to them. They look not afar off, beyond the preſent time: they conſider not what the end will be, but embrace the fair appearance for the preſent before them. They are engaged in the broad way ere they are aware; 'for childhood and youth are vani'ty,' Eccl. xi. 10. Youth is head ſtrong; and men are hurried on with ſtrong and impetuous paſſions, till they have got a ſet they cannot throw off, Jer. xiii. 24. 'Can 'the Ethiopian change his ſkin? or the leopard his ſpots? 'then may ye alſo do good, that are accuſtomed to do 'evil.'

USE 1. of *Information.* Hence we may learn, that,

1. Prevailing ſloth, and love to carnal eaſe, makes terrible havock in the world. Theſe are they that make the wide gate and broad way ſo taking, that the multitude go in thereat: and conſequently this betrays them into utter ruin, Prov. vi. 9, 10, 11. Sloth ſo prevails, that they cannot think to abide a ſtreſs, no not for things of the greateſt weight: but what is eaſieſt and requires leaſt pains, that is accounted beſt; and they cannot be moved with the after-reckoning.

2. The broad way that leads to deſtruction, is the throngeſt way in the world. Some take another way indeed, but the multitude is on the broad way. Many are the civil and religious differences among men: but here the multitude meet altogether upon one way, notwithſtanding of all their differences. There are different roads in this way, for the rich and the poor, the old and young, the profeſſor and the profane; but their way is one, and leads to the ſame place, where theſe differences will ſubſiſt no more, Pſal. cxxv. 5. Matth. xxiv. 51. At preſent they join to make up the multitude in the broad way.

3. What a poor defence of one's way and manner of life is it, That it is the way that generally prevails, that the moſt part follow? Alas is not the multitude on the broad way? But will that make it a way for our imitation? The apoſtle deſcribing the walk of the Epheſians when they were dead in ſins, tells us, it was according to the courſe of the world, Eph. ii. 2. And he urges the Romans not to conform to it, Rom. xii. 2. That way is to be ſuſpected that is the moſt taking with the multitude.

4. What it is that keeps ſin and iniquity in countenance in the world. It is the multitude of its followers, 1 Pet. iv. 4. Sin has a baſeneſs or filthineſs about it, which is a ſpring of ſhame: yet men will refuſe to be aſhamed of their vile and corrupt courſes, Jer. viii. 12. and ſome will pride themſelves in them, glorying in their ſhame. Why? The multitude ſtamp theſe courſes with their authority; and ſo they may appear with open face: for blackneſs is no reproach among Blackmoors. But Chriſt appearing in the glory of his Father, and all the holy angels with him, in the end, will ſink the glory of the authority of the multitude; then ſhame will cover them, Dan. xii. 2.

5. No wonder the ſerious godly have a lonely, uncomfortable, and deſpiſed life in the world. Iſrael was a type of them in that caſe, Numb. xxiii. 9. 'Lo, the 'people ſhall dwell alone, and ſhall not be reckoned a'mong the nations.' Micah laments his lonely caſe, becauſe of the multitude being on the broad way, Micah vii. 1. &c. he could have few to take part with him, few to unboſom himſelf to. Hence God's people are the world's wonder, Zech. iii. 8. Pſal. lxxi. 7. They are deſpiſed as an humourſome, odd, fantaſtick kind of people, addicted to ſingularities; becauſe the multitude is on another way they dare not take.

6. The church's peace and proſperity in the world cannot be long laſting; for the corrupt party in the world bears the ſway, the multitude being on the broad way, Cant. ii. 2. So 'the ſilence in heaven is but for half an 'hour,' Rev. iii. 1.: the corrupt multitude ſoon fill all with confuſion again. Hence,

(1.) Her peace has oft-times been broken with perſecution, the prevailing multitude crying, *Crucify him, crucify him.* The multitude then like ſwelling waters go over her head, and threaten to ſwallow her up, to raze Jeruſalem to the very foundations. And had not the Lord been on our ſide, they had deſtroyed her quite and clean long ere now.

(2.) Her peace reſtored, her purity is removed, Cant. i. 6. The multitude on the broad way deface her glory and beauty, and ſhe is made to *lie among the pots*; for a corrupt multitude will ſtill do corruptly, and like the mixed multitude infect all ſocieties, till the infection ſpread, and the corruption become univerſal.

We ſee it is our caſe this day. Time was when perſecution, blood, and violence rode in triumph; and nothing was heard from the multitude in church and ſtate, but Crucify, raze, &c. Now that humour is changed, and the perſecutors as well as the perſecuted are deſpiſed: but there is a general corruption in principles and practice, whereby truth and holineſs are wounded in the vitals; a hundred times more dangerous to the church, than the perſecution was.

USE 2. of *Exhortation.* As ever ye would eſcape deſtruction in the end, do not go the way of the multitude, the way the moſt go. And,

1. Believe it, that the multitude is on the broad way to deſtruction. Believe it, ſince Chriſt has ſaid it. Open your eyes, and ye may ſee it. Ye have the more need to be fixed in this principle, that we are naturally prejudiced in favour of a multitude, and to think, that the truth and goodneſs of a cauſe muſt needs be on the ſide of the many. And if that obtain with us in this caſe, we will be ready to embark, and go down the ſtream with them.

2. Never think to ſhelter yourſelves in an ill way, among the throng of them that are on it. The throng there may blind you as to the deſtruction at the end of the way, but can never afford you protection. If the the whole world were on the broad way, they could not alter the nature of it, and make that which is evil and deſtructive, good and ſafe.

3. In your courſe of life, follow not the multitude of the world, but diſtinguiſh yourſelves from them, though ye ſhould undergo the cenſure of being ſingular, Exod. xxiii. 2. Rom. xii. 2. Make not the many in the world your pattern; but chuſe that way which the beſt, not which the moſt are on.

Motive 1. Conſider the way of the multitude is the way to deſtruction, as is clear from the text: and however people may pleaſe themſelves with companions in ſin, it will be no comfort to go to hell with company, as may be learned from Luke xvi. 28. Why ſhould regard to a multitude prevail with us, to go to deſtruction with them?

Mot. 2. There will be no getting to heaven without ſtriving againſt the ſtream of the multitude of the world, Eph. vi. 12. God calls you to *come out from among them*, 2 Cor. vi. 17. to *forget your people*, Pſal. xlv 10. yea, to *ſave yourſelves from them*, as from a company of deſtroyers, Acts ii. 40. Ye muſt fight your way through them, if ever ye would receive the crown; reſolute not to go along with them, coſt what it will; as our Lord teacheth, Luke xiv. 26. 'If any man come to me, and 'hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and ſiſters, yea, and his own life 'alſo, he cannot be my diſciple.'

Mot. 3. This was the way the cloud of witneſſes went before us, refuſing the way of the multitude. Thus did Noah in the old world; and thus did Abraham, Moſes, and all the prophets. Thus our Saviour himſelf had the multitude againſt him, he and they walking in a way and manner of life quite oppoſite: and ſo all his apoſtles. Can we think then to travel with the multitude, and lodge with the ſaints in the end?

Mot. 4. What is a multitude againſt God? Job ix. 4. Is it reaſonable that the authority of men ſhould take place againſt the authority of God? All men are liars; God neither can deceive, nor be deceived. Why then ſhould not his word be our rule to be ſtuck to in things that it requires or forbids, ſay the contrary who will? Can a multitude ſecure you from the puniſhment due to ſinful ways? No; they cannot ſecure themſelves, Pſal. ix. 17.

Mot. 5. *laſtly*, To follow the multitude, is to ſtrengthen the conſpiracy againſt God. And how will ye anſwer it to him, that when ye ſaw the ſtream going againſt him, his work, and his way, in the world, ye went along with it, and ſo added to the force of it? In ſuch a caſe, he is ſaying, 'Who is on my ſide? Will ye alſo go 'away?' It concerns all to ſee what they will anſwer to this.

Advice. Let not the ſcarecrow of ſingularity fright you into the way of the multitude. Noah was a very ſingular man in the old world, and Lot in Sodom; and had they not been ſo, they had periſhed with the reſt. None will ſee heaven, but a ſingular kind of folk, Mark viii. 38.

DOCT. IV. *It is a ſtrait gate and narrow way that leadeth unto life.*

In ſpeaking to this, we will conſider,

I. The ſtrait gate.

II. The narrow way leading away unto life.

III. *laſtly*, Apply.

I. We ſhall conſider *the ſtrait gate.* And having ſpoken of this already, I ſhall here drop but a few things of it.

1ſt, The ſtrait gate is the entrance, and the only entrance into the narrow way that leadeth unto life. This ſpeaks four things.

1. That mankind naturally are off the way to life, Rom. iii. 12. And if they hold on the way they begin, they will never ſee it. There is an abſolute neceſſity for all men once to chuſe a new way, and turn off from the way they are naturally going in. God ſet upright Adam on a way to life, the way of perfect obedience, Eccleſ. vii. 29.; but he left it, and all his poſterity in him, Rom. v. 12. There is *a new and living way* opened by Chriſt, the way of walking in him, Col. ii. 6. This is the narrow way; and that unbelievers were never on.

2. There is acceſs for ſinners off the way to life, yet to get on it, Prov. ix. 4, 5, 6. Wanderers may be yet ſet right; they that are going in the way of death, may yet be ſet on the way of life. While they are not arrived at their journey's end, there is ſtill hope: therefore (Matth. v. 25.) 'Agree with thine adverſary quickly, 'whiles thou art in the way with him,' &c. But once come to the journey's end by death, there is no more hope, Eccleſ. ix. 10.

3. There is a gate, though a ſtrait one, by which they may get through to the narrow way to life. This is the appointed entrance into it: whoever would be in on it, muſt go about, and enter by it: and going through the gate, they ſhall be undoubtedly on the way, John x. 9. Look about then to diſcern it.

4. *laſtly*, There is no getting on the narrow way but by the ſtrait gate, John iii. 5. To climb up another way, is a vain and fruitleſs attempt. As is one's entrance, ſo will his progreſs be. The actions muſt needs be of the nature of the principle; and there will be no bringing forth of good fruit in the narrow way, till once the tree be made good by entering in at the ſtrait gate, Matth. vii. 17, 18.

2dly, The ſtrait gate being the entrance into the way leading to life, it is, in plain terms, an inward and thorough change, relative and real, made on a ſinner. For this is it without which there is no reaching the way of true holineſs, the way leading to life. I ſay,

1. It is a change made on the ſinner, whereby he is not what he was before, 2 Cor. v. 17. 'If any man be 'in Chriſt, he is a new creature: old things are paſt a'way, behold, all things are become new.' This cannot be refuſed by any, who acknowledge themſelves to be born ſinners. To continue and go on in ſin, in vanity and vileneſs, is inconſiſtent with entering on the narrow way to life, Rom. viii. 13. 'For if ye live after 'the fleſh, ye ſhall die; but if ye through the Spirit do 'mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live.' You muſt then undergo a change, from what you naturally are and incline to, if ever you mind for life.

2. It is an inward change, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. An outward change without that will not do. A new life and converſation pinned to the old corrupt heart and nature, will make but a painted ſepulchre, that can never be pleaſing to him, who *ſees not as man ſees, but looks to the heart*, 1 Sam. xvi. 7. Matth. xxiii. 27, 28. True holineſs lies inwardly, though it ſhines forth in the outward man, 1 Pet. iii. 4. and without an inward gracious principle, all is but hypocriſy, mere form and ſhew.

3. It is a real change, affecting one's nature, and making it new, 2 Pet. i. 4. There muſt be a new temper of ſpirit, with a new bent and ſet of heart; whereby one is made to incline to the way of holineſs he was averſe to before; and diſinclined to the vanity and vile-

neſs he was prone and bent to formerly. Therefore it is called a *being born again*, John iii. 3. a *putting on the new man*, Eph. iv. 24. And there is a neceſſity for ſuch a change, in order to holineſs of life; for there muſt be new gracious qualities in our nature, to be a principle of holy walking.

4. It is a relative change, affecting one's ſtate, 1 Cor. vi. 11. Children of wrath will always be children of diſobedience; and curſed trees will never bring forth bleſſed fruits. They muſt be in a ſtate of grace and favour with God, ſtanding in new relations, who ſhall walk to God, in the narrow way to life, Rom. viii. 1. To expect that thoſe who are not children of God, will obey him; that thoſe who are not at peace with him, ſhall ſerve him acceptably; that they who are under the curſe of the broken law, ſhall walk in the way of life, is vain. The firſt covenant may have children; but they will be bond-children, to be caſt out, not to be heirs, Gal. iv. 24. 30.

5. *laſtly*, It is a thorough change, 2 Cor. v. 17. It muſt go through the whole man: every part being ſanctified, though in this life no part be wholly ſanctified, 1 Theſſ. v. 23. Light let into the head, while there is no gracious change in the heart; a caſting away ſome ſins, while others are ſtill ſtuck to; a taking of ſome ſcrapes of the law, for the rule of our life, while another part of it is ſtaved off; is a plain evidence, that one is not entered by the gate.

Thus ye ſee the gate by which one enters the narrow way; thus ye have a general proſpect of it. To deſcribe it more particularly, there are theſe ſeven ſteps of it.

1. Conviction, conviction of ſin and miſery. This is the very firſt ſtep, the awakening of the ſinner, and coming to ſee himſelf all wrong. A new light ſhining from heaven, the man by it ſees his ſin as he never ſaw it before, John xvi. 8. His ſins are ſet in order before him, and ſtare him in the face like a ghoſt. He ſees his actual ſin, and his original ſin; the evil of them, and their contrariety to the holy nature and law of God. He ſees his miſery, he beholds himſelf loſt and undone, Luke xv. 17. Rom. vii. 9. under the wrath of God, the curſe of the broken law, and the bands of death.

2. Saving illumination in the knowledge of Chriſt, 2 Cor. iv. 6. This is the merchant man's finding the one pearl, Matth. xiii. 46. Hereby the ſinner ſees Chriſt a Saviour in the tranſcendent glory of his perſon and offices, able and willing to help him out of his ſtate of ſin and miſery; a Saviour ſuited to the divine perfections, and to his own caſe; on whom therefore he may freely venture his ſalvation. This is a higher ſtep of the gate, whereon the ſinner is brought in ſight of the narrow way.

3. Renewing of the will, whereby the ſinner is made pliable to the goſpel-call, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Pſal. cx. 3. The iron ſinew in the neck is hereby broken; the ſinner called by the goſpel, is hereby drawn with cords of love and bands of a man. Chriſt ſeen in his glory, captivates his heart, John xii. 32. By this ſaving work on the mind and will, the dead ſinner is quickened: there is a vital principle put in the ſoul, whereby the ſoul is both perſuaded and enabled to go up a ſtep.

4. Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, believing on his name, John i. 12. Thus the merchant-man buys the one pearl, Matth. xiii. 46. The ſoul being drawn, comes to Chriſt, and comes away to him freely, taking him for all, and inſtead of all, Pſal. lxxiii. 25. The ſoul bids an eternal farewell to the way of vanity and vileneſs, no more to go in queſt of happineſs there, Jer. xvi. 19. looks for the ſupply of all its wants in and from Chriſt alone: for by faith we are married to Chriſt, and ſo come to reſt in him.

5. New relations to heaven. This is a glorious ſtep which a ſinner gets up to by faith; and it lies here. The ſinner having believed in Chriſt, is united to him, Eph. iii. 17. being united to him, is juſtified, 1 Cor. vi. 11. being juſtified, is reconciled to God, Rom. v. 1. being reconciled, is adopted into the family of heaven, Eph. ii. 16. 19 being adopted, God is his God, John xx. 17. Whereas formerly being out of Chriſt, he was a condemned creature, an enemy to God, a child of the devil, without God in the world.

6. Habitual ſanctification, the ſanctification of our nature, Eph. i. 13. 1 Cor. vi. 11. Hereby the ſinner's nature is renewed, Eph. iv. 23, 24. his whole perſon, ſoul and body, is ſanctified, 1 Theſſ. v. 23. New qualities are infuſed into the mind, will, and affections; whereby he becomes a new creature, formed after the image of God, becauſe formed in a likeneſs to the man Chriſt, by receiving out of his fulneſs grace for grace, John i. 16. Thus the ſeeds of all graces are planted in him, new habits, habits of grace, the immediate principles of every gracious action.

7. *laſtly*, Repentance unto life, true goſpel-repentance, Jer. xxxi. 18, 19 Ezek. xxxvi. 31. This is the higheſt and laſt ſtep of the ſtrait gate, which immediately ſets the man on the narrow way leading to life. It is not that legal repentance, which being the effect of a work of conviction by the law, judging and condemning the ſinner, falls in with the firſt ſtep of the ſtrait gate. But it is that whereby a ſinner, not only convinced of his ſin and miſery. but illuminated in the knowledge of Chriſt, having his will renewed, believing, new related to heaven, and having his nature ſanctified, does turn from ſin unto God, out of love to God, and hatred of ſin, as contrary to his holy will and nature: which is the only repentance acceptable to God. And before a ſinner is thus furniſhed for it, it is impoſſible he can reach it.

But untill one is brought to this repentance, he can never ſet a foot on the narrow way of holineſs leading to life, Acts ii. 18. For before one can go right, he muſt needs turn right: and he can never turn right from ſin unto God, till he turn thus. The whole gate is a ſtrait gate, and this is a ſtrait ſtep; but no man, without making it firſt, ſhall ever go a ſtep in the narrow way, Luke xiii. 3.

II. We ſhall conſider *the narrow way leading away unto life.* And here we ſhall conſider, 1. The narrow way itſelf. 2. Its leading away unto life.

FIRST, The narrow way itſelf. That is the way into which a ſtrait gate ſets a perſon; the gate lands him on the way, ſo that having paſſed through the gate, he is on this way. Here conſider, 1. What this way is. 2. The parts of it. 3. The narrowneſs of it.

Firſt, What is this way? This way is the way of holineſs, Iſa. xxxv. 8. 'An high-way ſhall be there, and 'a way, and it ſhall be called the way of holineſs.' The broad way is the way of one's own heart; the narrow way is the way according to the heart of a holy God: the broad way is the way of vanity and vileneſs; the narrow way is the way of purity and holineſs, which is agreeable to God, Pſal. xxiv. 3, 4.

There is a twofold holineſs, habitual and actual. Habitual holineſs is holineſs of nature, in a holy new frame and diſpoſition of the ſoul, whereby the man is reconciled unto the holy law, which he was at war with before; the heart inclining unto thoſe things that the law commands, and diſinclining to, and having an averſion at the things that it forbids. Hence it is expreſſed by *the law written on the heart*; the renewed heart and the law lying both one way, and agreeing as an honeſt man's thoughts and written words whereby he expreſſeth his thoughts, Heb. viii. 10. *For this is the covenant that I will make with the houſe of Iſrael after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord: I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts*, &c. But this belongs to the ſtrait gate, being that which the entering in at the ſtrait gate iſſues in.

Actual holineſs is holineſs of life, in thoughts, words, and actions of a holy kind; whereby a man walks up in ſome meaſure to the holy principles and diſpoſitions of the new nature, and ſo adds a new life to his new nature, 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7.; that is, having gone through the ſtrait gate, he walks on the narrow way. So more particularly,

The narrow way is the way of holy obedience, 1 Pet. i. 14, 15. That is the way that leadeth to life; even as Jeſus Chriſt was, during his life in the world, obedient, even to the death of the croſs, and then was received up into glory: whom therefore we muſt follow in this way, if we mind to be with him in end, Heb. xii. 1, 2. Now, there are two things that go to the conſtitution of the way of holy obedience.

1. For the matter thereof, it is the way of God's commandments, Pſal. cxix. 32. It is the holy law that chalks out this way to us, in the ſeveral commands of God therein. Where there is no commandment, there can be no obedience. Whatever ſhew of holineſs there may be in things that God has not commanded, it is but ſuperſtition, not holy obedience, Matth. xv. 9. Where there is a tranſgreſſing of the commandment, by omiſſion or commiſſion, there is a going off the way of holy obedience, which is bounded on every ſide by the holy commandment. Thus the narrow way is diſtinguiſhed from the way,

(1.) Of profanity; wherein men walk after their own luſts, caſting God's commandments behind their backs. Theſe refuſe to be narrowed in their walk by the rule of life given in the word: they look upon it as a thing that would hamper them, and therefore practically ſay, as Pſal. ii. 3. 'Let us break their bands aſunder, and caſt 'away their cords from us.' Their own luſts, not the holy law, is their rule.

(2.) Of ſuperſtition; wherein men, without the commandment of God, pretend to ſerve and obey him, in a holy manner. This is a narrow way of men's own making, Matth. xv. 2. They themſelves deviſe commands of their own hearts, and make things duty or ſin, which God has not made ſo, Col. ii. 20, 21, 22.

In oppoſition to both theſe, the narrow way is the way of God's commandments; that, and that only, which is pointed out to us by the authority of God in the moral law of the ten commands. The which the profane man quite neglects, and the ſuperſtitious adds unto; but the true Chriſtian takes, as it ſtands, for the rule, and the only rule of his life, afraid either to neglect it, or add unto it.

2. For the form thereof, it is the way of walking in Chriſt, Col. ii. 6. Without this the walking in the way of the commandment, is no holy obedience; but a legal ſelfiſh courſe of life, which though it may be of uſe in ſociety among men, yet it is not acceptable to God, becauſe it ſavours not of Chriſt, John xv. 5. This makes it true goſpel-obedience, the only obedience that a ſinner can expect to have taken off his hand with acceptance in the court of heaven. It lies in theſe four things.

(1.) In taking the law as out of the hand, not of an abſolute God, but of a God in Chriſt, Matth. xvii. 5. Natural men, becauſe of their ſpiritual blindneſs, receive the law as innocent Adam did, from God, without eying the Mediator as the channel of its conveyance: hence they ſet themſelves to obey it as they can and think meet, that they may have life by their obedience to it. This mars their obedience, makes it ſervile, and unacceptable to God, Gal. iv. 24. 30. becauſe it is not perfect. But the true Chriſtian receives the law from a God Redeemer and Saviour in Chriſt, Exod. xx. 1, 2. Hence receiving life by faith in the free promiſe, they ſet themſelves to obey out of love to a reconciled God, in point of gratitude to the redeemer, and as the way in which he has appointed them to walk towards the perfection of that life he has purchaſed, and beſtows of free grace.

(2.) In depending on Chriſt for ſtrength for every ſtep of their way, as branches that muſt bring forth fruit by communication of ſap from the ſtock, John xv. 5. This the apoſtle exhorts to, 2 Tim. ii. 1. 'Be ſtrong in 'the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus.' Hence the Chriſtian goes out in the way of holy obedience, as David went out againſt Goliah, *in the name of the Lord of hoſts*, 1 Sam. xvii. 45. *in the name of the Lord Jeſus*, Col. iii. 17. Therefore in his obedience he is ſelf-denied, and humble, acknowledging himſelf an unprofitable ſervant when he has done all.

(3.) In depending on him for acceptance of all their obedience, not daring to truſt the acceptance thereof to the nature of the work itſelf, Gen. iv. 4. compared with Heb. xi. 4. This is a difficult ſtep in the narrow way, which none but true Chriſtians do make, Phil. iii. 3. To be denied to our obedience when it is done, to lay no ſtreſs of its acceptance on our diligence, ſincerity, and attainments in it, is not eaſy. However it is certain, that the acceptance is for Chriſt's ſake only, 1 Pet. ii. 5.

(4.) *laſtly*, In daily recourſe to Jeſus Chriſt for purging away the errors of our way, Zech. xiii. 1. There are none that walk ſo exactly, but they are ſtill making wrong ſteps, and contracting new defilement, which cannot be purged but by the application of the blood of ſprinkling; nay, there is not one ſtep the beſt make, but there is ſome defilement cleaves to them in it; ſo that ſtill they need to waſh their feet, John xiii. 10. This then is the daily exerciſe in the narrow way; and there is no walking in it but in Chriſt.

The ſum of what is ſaid, is, That the narrow way is the way of holy obedience, wherein one walks in Chriſt, in the way of God's commandments. And this way of holy obedience may be taken up in theſe two.

1. The way of doing or working, in obedience to the preceptive will of God, Eccleſ. ix. 10. God ſets every man the work he is to do, his ſalvation-work, and his generation-work; in every relation wherein we ſtand to God or man, our duty is ſet us by his commandment; he has appointed us what we are to do, for his honour and the good of ourſelves and others. And to the performance of every part thereof we are to ſet ourſelves, in obedience to his will; and that in Chriſt Jeſus.

2. The way of bearing or ſuffering, in obedience to his providential will, Matth. xvi. 24. God allots to every one their particular burden of croſſes and afflictions; and requires them to go on their way under them, for their trial. Here is exerciſe for the bearing graces, faith, ſelf-denial, patience, hope, *&c.* And we muſt ſet ourſelves to the Chriſtian bearing of theſe things, in obedience to his will; and that in Chriſt Jeſus.

Thus ſhall we walk in the narrow way, doing and bearing in Chriſt, taking our duty and our trial as out of his hand, and going on with both in a believing reliance on him.

And this way bears a twofold ſet of marks upon it, all along from the beginning to the end of it.

1. The footſteps of the flock, Chriſt's flock, Cant. i. 8. It is the way wherein the company of ſaints have travelled in all generations, ſo that thoſe who will ſee, may ſee the prints of the feet of Chriſt's flock on the narrow way, as thoſe of the devil's drove are to be ſeen on the broad way. On the former you will ſee the prints of the feet of the patriarchs, prophets, apoſtles, all the Old and New Teſtament ſaints: on the latter you will ſee the prints of the feet of Cain, Pharaoh, Judas, and all the wicked in all generations. The habitual practice of the ſaints is what makes theſe footſteps in the narrow way, conſiſting of two diſcernible parts.

(1.) The fore part, viz. faith, faith in Chriſt, and the promiſes through him. This is the fore part of their footſteps, that being it by which the ſaints from Abel, in all generations, did and ſuffered great things, Heb. xi. 1.——39. They believed and worked their good works; believed, and bore their trials and afflictions. The promiſe of Chriſt was given, Gen. iii. 15. to ſet them at firſt on the way, and the very firſt motion on it was Adam and Eve's believing it; and ſo it has been in every footſtep of the flock ſince, and will to the end, Gal. ii. 20.

(2.) The hind part, viz. ſincere obedience. This is the print of the heel, Heb. xi. 4, 5, 7. &c. Believing the truth, they conformed to it in their lives, being caſt into the mould of it: receiving the promiſe by faith, they ſincerely obeyed the command: embracing the goſpel, they took the law for the rule of their life, making no exception of any of its commands, as ſeeing them all ſtamped with the authority of their God, Creator, and Redeemer: having received Chriſt the Lord, they walked in him in all holy obedience.

Thus the footſteps of the flock are diſtinguiſhed from all other. Many a different footſtep is on the broad way, but none of them all are of this make. The footſteps of Atheiſts and Infidels are to be ſeen there, of profane ones, mere moraliſts, formaliſts, and hypocrites: but as the fore part of all their ſteps is unbelief; ſo the hind part is profanity, or mere external hypocritical obedience, unacceptable to God. Either they are legaliſts, pretenders to obedience, and neglecters of faith; or carnal goſpellers, pretenders to faith, making no conſcience of good works, or univerſal obedience; or they are profane contemners of both. But the footſteps of the flock conſiſt of both together, James ii. 18.

2. The footſteps of Chriſt himſelf, 1 Pet. ii 21. All mankind having gone off their way, and not knowing how to find it again, it pleaſed the Father to ſend his own Son in our nature into the world, that, by his walking in the world, men might ſee, in a bright example, the way of walking acceptable to God. Accordingly he came, and entering on the narrow way, he walked it all along, and left the prints of his feet thereon from the beginning to the end thereof, Phil. ii. 8. In the example of the beſt of the ſaints, there are ſome wrong, out-of-the-way ſteps; but his footſteps are perfectly regular, without the leaſt imperfection, or the leaſt part of a ſtep out of the way. And they alſo conſiſt of two parts.

(1.) Faith in God his Father, and the promiſes of the covenant made to him. Chriſt in his divine nature is the object of faith, John xiv. 1. compared with Jer. xvii 5.; but in his human nature he was a ſubject of faith. The man Chriſt believed in God his Father, truſted in him perfectly, and relied on him, upon the ground of his faithfulneſs, Pſal. xxii. 8, 9. Heb ii. 13. He had the promiſes of aſſiſtance, Iſa xlii. 6. acceptance, and a glorious reward, chap xlix 8. Heb. xii. 2. And accordingly he waited for the fulfilment of them, and was not diſappointed, Pſal. x. 1. and declares the divine faithfulneſs from his experience, ver. 10. Yea even now in his exaltation at the right hand of God, he continues his faith and aſſured hope of what of the promiſes remains to be accompliſhed: ſo that the man Chriſt in glory is a believing waiter ſtill, Heb. x. 12. 13.: which ſhould endear to us waiting on God, ſince the man Chriſt himſelf was, and ſtill is one of the company of believing waiters on God. And this ſhews us how Chriſt came to receive the ſeals of the covenant, the ſacraments, viz. to confirm his faith in God.

Here then we have the print of Chriſt's own footſteps in believing, which alſo makes the fore part of them; for the man Chriſt believed and ſo obeyed; which is lively ſet forth, Iſa. l. 5, 6, 7. ‘The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned I away my back. I gave my back to the ſmiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from ſhame and ſpitting. For the Lord God will help me, therefore ſhall I not be confounded; therefore have I ſet my face like a flint, and I know that I ſhall not be aſhamed. Hence when he came into the world, he was circumciſed on the eighth day; before he entered on his public miniſtry, he was baptized, had the voice from heaven, and then was carried to the wilderneſs, Mark i. 9.——12.: and before he entered on the hardeſt piece of all his work, he received the ſacrament of the paſſover, and of the ſupper.

(2.) Perfect obedience. As his faith was, ſo was his obedience perfect, every way complete and ſinleſs, 1 Pet. ii. 22. It was perfect in parts, Matth. iii. 15. *he fulfilled all righteouſneſs.* In the doing part, he accounted nothing too hard, loving his very enemies; in the ſuffering part, he went through the hardeſt pieces mildly and patiently, Phil. ii. 8. 1 Pet. ii. 23: perfect in the degrees of it, every thing carried to the utmoſt pitch, Iſa. xlii. 4.: in the principle of it, love to his Father's glory, and the ſalvation of ſinners; perfect love appearing in the greateſt poſſible inſtances, Pſal. xl. 6, 7, 8: and in continuance, from the cradle to the grave, Phil. ii. 8.

Thus Chriſt walked the narrow way; and, by the prints of his feet, put another ſet of marks on it, whereby it it is more fully and clearly diſtinguiſhed from all other ways. The imperfections that attend the ſaints walk, leave the matter of the way in ſome obſcurity; ſo that carnal men noticing them, from thence would make the narrow way very broad, ſince in many paths of deſtruction they can diſcern the footſteps of ſaints. The adulterer ſees David's footſteps in his way, the drunkard Noah's, the curſer and ſwearer, and apoſtate, Peter's: not conſidering that theſe were their out of the way footſteps, from which they turned back by bitter repentance, in which ſteps they neglect to follow them. But the footſteps of the Shepherd of the flock, puts the way beyond all doubt; that it is the way of purity and holineſs, the way of faith and obedience, that has nothing in common with the broad way, the way of ſin.

Secondly, What are the parts of this way, the narrow way? Many are the ſteps or pieces of the way, from the beginning of it at the point of converſion to God, unto the end of it at death: and it is longer to ſome than to others, partly becauſe of the various lengths of mens lives, partly becauſe ſome are ſo happy as to be more early converted than others; which two things make an unequal length of the way. But longer or ſhorter, it conſiſts of two parts.

1ſt, The way of mortification, Rom. viii. 13. *If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live.* This is part of the narrow way, which lies all along from the beginning to the end of it, in which therefore the ſaints going towards life muſt ſtill be making progreſs, ſince they will never come to the end of it till death. The ſtrait gate of converſion and regeneration ſets one upon it, becauſe theſe are not perfect; but ſtill there is a mixture of the old with the new nature; of ſin and corruption with holineſs. It lies in theſe two.

1. Mortification to the creature, in oppoſition to the way of vanity. This is begun in the ſoul's coming to Chriſt, Jer. xvi. 19. and is to be carried on all along the believer's life after, Cant. iv. 8. till he be without the reach of an enchanting deluding world, no more to be moved either with its ſmiles or frowns. Paul was on that way, when he ſaid, Gal. vi. 14. *God forbid that I ſhould glory, ſave in the croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.* The Lord carries on his people in it, by ordinances, giving them there lively views of creature vanity and emptineſs, in the glaſs of the word, ſacraments, prayer, meditation, &c. by providences laying gall and wormwood on the breaſts of the creature, till the believer be as a weaned child, Pſal. cxxxi.

2. Mortification to ſin, in oppoſition to the way of vileneſs that unregenerate ſinners walk in, Rom. vi. 6, 7. This is to get the mouth out of taſte to the pleaſures of ſin, to be dying to it, to be rooting up the weeds of ſin daily, that grow up in the ſoil of an evil heart. And it reaches to the whole body of the ſins of the fleſh, if it be genuine mortification, Col. ii. 11. If any one is known and ſpared, it is no true mortification; the man is in the way to death and deſtruction, as the ſhip to ſinking where one lake is neglected to be ſtopped, Pſal. cxix. 6. Particularly it reaches to,

(1.) Particular luſts and corruptions, the members of this body, Col. iii. 5. *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanneſs, inor-*

ordinate affection, evil concupiſcence, and covetouſneſs, which is idolatry. Theſe are many, and divers kinds, fleſhly luſts, and ſpiritual luſts; pleaſing luſts, and tormenting paſſions. All come under the name of *worldly luſts*, which the goſpel teaches to deny the cravings of, Tit. ii. 12. On every one of them, men in the way to life keep a watchful eye, to knock them down as they begin to ſet up their heads; to wreſtle againſt them, ſeeking their death and deſtruction.

In a ſpecial manner, that luſt which one is moſt addicted to, commonly called one's predominant; whether it be the ſin which one's conſtitution, calling, circumſtances, or any thing whatſoever, makes moſt eaſily to beſet them, Heb. xii. 1. that muſt be mortified, though it be as hard to compaſs as to pluck out a right eye, or cut off a right hand, Matth. v. 29, 30. And none can prove himſelf on the narrow way, without the mortification of that, Pſal. xviii. 23. And we may judge of our progreſs in the narrow way by our progreſs in that.

(2.) The ſin of our nature, the body itſelf whereof theſe particular luſts are the members, called the fleſh, Gal. v. 24. That ſinful diſpoſition that is born with us, making us prone to evil, and averſe to good; ready to comply with temptations to ſin, hard to be brought up to our duty; holding faſt ill impreſſions made, letting good ones eaſily ſlip. The ax of mortification muſt be laid at this root of the tree, if we would take the narrow way.

Now theſe are mortified by refuſing compliance with them, and acting the graces contrary to them, Gal. v. 16, 17. Hereby they are ſtarved and weakened, and grace is cheriſhed and ſtrengthened, Rom. xiii. 14. Heb. v. 14.

2dly, The way of vivification, or newneſs of life, Rom. vi. 4. in the practice of good works, Tit. iii. 8. that is, thoughts, words, or deeds agreeable to the will of God, and pleaſing in his ſight. This is another part of the narrow way, which lies all along from the ſtrait gate to the end of the way at death; which the grace implanted in the heart in regeneration exerts itſelf in: for the new nature muſt have its fruit in newneſs of life, whereby a man lives to the honour of God, his own good, and the good of mankind. It alſo lies in two things.

1. Living to God in oppoſition to the creature, Gal. ii. 19. The unregenerate man is dead to God, but alive to the creature: all the inward motions of his ſoul are towards the creature, not towards God. It is his portion; his joy is in the having of it, and his ſorrow in the want of it. He has no kindly motion towards God for himſelf, more than they that are in the grave. But entering the ſtrait gate of regeneration, one becomes alive to God, Rom. vi. 11. and dead to the creature, Col. iii. 3. And ſo he goes on the narrow way, as dying to the creature, ſo living to God; reſting in him as his portion, ſeeking him always as his chief good, loving him above all, joying and delighting in the enjoyment of him, ſorrowing for the want thereof, and for ſin that mars the light of his countenance, Col. iii. 1, 2, 3. All this the tenor of his life witneſſeth, Pſal. xxx. 5. and iv. 6, 7.

2. Living to righteouſneſs, in oppoſition to ſin, 1 Pet. ii. 24. The unregenerate are dead to righteouſneſs, but alive to ſin, Rom. vi. 23. as free from righteouſneſs as thoſe in the grave from what is done on the earth, they meddle not with it, Eph. ii. 1. But entering the ſtrait gate of regeneration, they are put in a ſtate of death to ſin, and of life to righteouſneſs, Rom. vi. 4. Col. iii. 1. they awake to it, 1 Cor. xv. 34. And ſo they go on in the narrow way, living to it as ſervants of it, Rom. vi. 18. And this their living to righteouſneſs extends to the whole will of God known to them, Acts xiii. 22. Col. iv. 12. and makes their obedience univerſal, Col. i. 10. It lies in theſe following things.

(1.) Living to righteouſneſs towards God; that is, living godly, Tit. ii. 12. There is a duty that in juſtice we owe to God immediately, as our Creator, Preſerver, and Redeemer, that is, the duty of piety, in all the inſtances thereof required in the firſt table. Who ſo walk on the narrow way, live to pay that duty, as owing in point of righteouſneſs and gratitude too. Therefore they are concerned to live to honour him in the world, taking that for their chief buſineſs in it, Phil. i. 21. and ſee no comfortable uſe they are for in the world, if they get him not honoured in their ſtation. So they look on their intereſt, as entwiſted with the intereſts of his glory.

(2.) Living to righteouſneſs towards ourſelves; that is, living ſoberly, Tit. ii. 12. We owe a duty to ourſelves, and it is bound on us with a bond of juſtice or righteouſneſs, in as much as we are not our own, but the Lord's. That duty is required of us in the ſecond table, obliging us to conſult the good, honour, and welfare of our own bodies, to treat them as the temples of God, and therefore to hold off from all things that may be hurtful or defiling to them; and to advance the good of our own ſouls, by aiming at and purſuing after their perfection in truth and holineſs, Pſal. iii. 14.; and to hold off from what may darken or pollute them. And this is a great part of the buſineſs of the life of thoſe on the narrow way.

(3.) Living to righteouſneſs towards our neighbour; that is, living righteouſly, ſtrictly ſo called, Tit. ii. 12. We are not born for ourſelves, but for others alſo; and we owe a duty to mankind our fellow-creatures, according to the ſeveral inſtances thereof required in the ſecond table. Since we are men, we muſt always keep on, never caſt off humanity, towards any of our kind, be they rich or poor, above us or below us. We ſhould breathe an univerſal good-will toward mankind, ſeeking the good of our kind, and diſpoſed to acts of beneficence towards them, as we have ability and opportunity. This humanity requireth, juſtice makes a debt, and Chriſtianity inſpires men with, who are on the narrow way, Gal. vi. 10. Luke vi. 36. Ah! how will we anſwer to our common Father, if we take no care to be uſeful to, and in our generation? What ſtock have we laid up for the other world, if we have not laid out ourſelves for the good of others in this? Luke xvi. 9. That temper of ſpirit, whereby one is ſelfiſh, concerned for none, but his ſweet ſelf, is a flaming evidence of being on the broad way; and much more that whereby one is diſpoſed to run down all about them, to ſpread their terror around them, to be a plague to ſociety, diſturbing all that are near them, Eccleſ. ix. 18. If thoſe in that temper ſee heaven, we muſt give up the Bible as a fable, and confound heaven and hell, Iſa. xi. 6. Tit. iii. 3. James ii. 13. Rev. xiii. 10.

Thus ye ſee that thoſe on the narrow way look upward, inward, and outward, labouring each of theſe ways to be uſeful, and to fill up their room in the world; ſo living to righteouſneſs.

And theſe two parts of the narrow way Chriſt hath chalked out to his followers by his death and reſurrection, which are the exemplary cauſes of their mortification and vivification.

Thirdly, Let us conſider the narrowneſs of the way to life. This narrowneſs of the way is not abſolute, but reſpective, in reſpect of the imperfection of our preſent ſtate: for the boundaries of it are eternal, it being for ſubſtance the very ſame the ſaints will walk in through eternity, when they will walk at greateſt liberty. But a way may be very narrow and preſſing to one, that will be perfectly eaſy and large to another, in regard of the very different ſizes the paſſengers may be of. So a ſhoe may be very ſtrait for a ſwelled foot, that will be large abundantly for the ſame foot, when it is hale and ſound. The glorified ſaints have the hale foot; ſo the way is large and broad enough to them in life: we have the ſwelled one; ſo the way, though for ſubſtance the ſame, is narrow to us going to life. Now, the narrowneſs of the way to life, riſes from a complication of theſe three.

1ſt, The exactneſs and purity of the law that bounds this way of holy obedience, Pſal. cxix. 4. No ſinful latitude is allowed here; every wrong ſtep is condemned by it. It hems in the traveller therein on every ſide; and that,

1. To the right matter of obedience; which is not to be meaſured by man's choice, but God's command, Matth. xv. 9. If it is deviſed by a man's own heart, whatever ſpecious pretext of ſanctity it has, it is rejected with a *Who hath required this at your hand?* Iſa. i. 12. and far more if it is forbidden of God, it is an abomination to him, though one ſhould be ſo blind as to think it good ſervice, John xvi. 2. There is no holy obedience, but in what is commanded of God.

2. To the right manner of obedience. Suppoſe it be a thing that in itſelf is duty, yet if it is not done in a right manner, it is no walking in the narrow way. Here the traveller is hemmed in to,

(1.) The love of God, as the principle of his obedience. His labour muſt be *a labour of love*, elſe it is loſt labour, Heb. vi. 10. Love to God himſelf muſt diſpoſe us to obey him, elſe he will not reckon we obey him at all; for he ſees the heart; and what is not with the heart, can never be acceptable, 2 Cor. viii. 12.

(2.) The will of God muſt be not only the rule, but the reaſon of our obedience, Eph. vi. 6, 7. It is no true faith, but where one believes becauſe God has ſaid it; nor holy obedience, but where the thing is done becauſe God has bid it. So one may do what God commands, and yet not obey him, if he does it not in obedience to his command.

(3.) To the glory of God, as the chief end of his obedience, 1 Cor. x. 31. If any thing elſe have that place, God will not reckon it obedience to him, Zech. vii. 6. So there is much loſt labour, where though the thing in itſelf be duty, yet it is marred by the low and ſelfiſh ends it is done for, Matth. vi. 1. Thus miniſters may loſe their preaching, people their prayers, any body whatſoever good they do, doing the ſame for ſelfiſh ends.

(4.) *laſtly*, Faith in God through Chriſt, as that which caſts their obedience into the mould of goſpel obedience, the only holy obedience of a ſinner, Col. iii. 17. The work of faith in the caſe is to fetch in ſtrength from Jeſus for holy obedience, 2 Tim. ii. 1. and ſo to perform it, Phil iv 13. and then to lay it over on Jeſus, for acceptance with God, Heb. xi 4. 6.

2dly, The bias of that lies away from and contrary to the holy law. This the apoſtle complains of as what made his walking in the way uneaſy, Rom. vii. 21. There are notable remains of the natural enmity in the beſt while they are here, a woful diſpoſition not liking to be bounded by the pure commandment. There are luſts of the heart, that bend forth on every ſide, and cannot be hedged in without pain. Hence the way appears narrow, and feels ſtrait and pinching: and the walking in it is indeed one continued ſtruggle to the end; the way of holy obedience lying quite croſs to the natural inclination, over the belly of which the traveller muſt go. Now there being nothing of this in heaven, the way of obedience will not be narrow to the ſaints there.

3dly, The many embaraſſments in this way from without. Our text (*Gr.*) calls it an *afflicted* or *compreſſed way*. Had the children of God no more ado but to make their way forward in the path of God's commandments, over the belly of their own corruptions, they might have enough ado with it. But that is not all: whatever impediments or entanglements Satan and an evil world can get laid in their way, will be ſure to be found there. Hence they have thickets of temptations, tribulations, diſcouragements, &c. to break through. Sometimes the ſmiles of the world are fair to flatter them off their way; ſometimes its frowns, to fright them from it: and ſometimes a ſpeat of ill example is like to carry them off their feet. Beſides all this there are trials from the hand of God to be met with in it. So that it is a way beſet with briars and thorns, Eph. vi. 12. John xvi. 33. Hence Heb. xii. 1, 2. *Let us lay aſide every weight, and the ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet us, and let us run with patience the race that is ſet before us, looking unto Jeſus, the author and finiſher of our faith; who for the joy that was ſet before him endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and is ſet down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

SECONDLY, We are to conſider this way its leading away to life. And here I ſhall ſhew, 1. What is that life it leads to. 2. How the narrow way leads to it.

Firſt, What is that life the narrow way leads to? That is in a word, a happy life in the other world, Mark x. 30. Entering the ſtrait gate, the dead ſinner gets life, elſe he could never go on the narrow way: and the life then received is eternal; for from the moment it is received, it ſhall never be extinguiſhed through the ages of eternity. But there is ſo great a difference, in degrees and attending circumſtances, betwixt the believers life here, and in heaven, that this laſt is called *life* by way of eminency. For,

1. Heaven is the region of life, where no death can enter; but whoſoever is there, lives, Rev. xxi. 4. This world at beſt is a mixture of the dead and the living, even above ground; and more than that, the dead always are the far greater part in the mixture, which makes this world an unſavoury, melancholy place to them in whom ſpiritual life is begun, Pſal. cxx. 5. But when they come there, they will find themſelves in the land of life, where there is no winter, but an eternal ſpring; no dead, but all living.

2. Their life will be perfected there, Heb. xii. 23. It is begun here indeed: but yet there is a great mixture of death with it, even in the livelieſt ſaints here; they have a whole body of death carrying about with them, Rom. vii. 24. But there will not be the leaſt member of it about them there. Even their life of comfort will be completed there, though they may have much ado to keep it from extinction here.

3. *laſtly*, No death can ever have acceſs there; but their life will be ſpun out in joy and comfort to all eternity, without any interruption. While they are here, they ſtill know that death is abiding them: but when they arrive there, they know, they are for ever beyond its reach any more. They are ſet down there by the fountain of life, and allowed a full participation of the waters of life, that they can die no more.

Secondly, How does the narrow way lead to life? And,

1ſt, *Negatively*, Not by way of merit, proper, or improper. Proper merit is what ariſes from the intrinſic worth of the thing done, fully proportioned to the reward. Such is the merit of Chriſt's obedience and death. But no ſuch merit can be in our works; for there is no proportion between our obedience and everlaſting life, whatever the papiſts pretend, Rom. viii. 18. 2 Cor. iv. 17; and whatever they be, they are due from us to God, Rom. viii. 12. Luke xvii. 10. Improper merit is what ariſes from paction enſuring ſuch a reward on ſuch a work as the condition thereof; ſo that the work being performed, the reward becomes a debt. So Adam's perfect obedience would have been meritorious, namely by paction. But no ſuch merit is in our works. Legal Proteſtants advance this, though they do not call it merit, while they pretend that God has promiſed eternal life on condition of our obedience; thinking it enough to free them from the doctrine of merit, that they do not pretend to intrinſic worth in the works, proportioned to the reward. But what more do they yield in this, than innocent Adam behoved to have yielded, had he perfected his obedience? Do they not hereby confound the two covenants? for all the difference remains only in degrees, which do not alter the kind. The ſcripture rejects this as well as the other, Rom. iv. 4. and vi. 23. Paul would not lippen to it, Phil. iii. 9.

2dly, *Poſitively*, The narrow way leads to life by way of order and connection. It leads thereto,

1. By way of order in the nature of things, whereby one thing neceſſarily goes before another. Thus the beginning of a thing goes before the end of it; and there is no reaching the end without beginning it. So the narrow way is the beginning of the Chriſtian courſe, eternal life in heaven the end of it, Rom. vi. 22. Thus the ſun riſing muſt go before its getting to the meridian, the ſeed-time before the harveſt, and the firſt fruits before the whole. So walking in the narrow way muſt go before life in heaven, Prov. iv. 18. Pſal. cxxvi. 5. Rom. viii. 23. This eſtabliſhes infallibly the neceſſity of holy obedience; it being as impoſſible for ſubjects capable of holy obedience to ſee life without it, as to reach the end without beginning the work, &c. Heb. xii. 14. But will any ſay, that the beginning, the ſun-riſing, &c. are the condition upon which the end is given, the ſun is ſet to the meridian, &c.?

2. By way of connection, whereby one thing is knit with another, whether in the nature of things, or by ſpecial appointment. Thus the means and the end, the way and the journey's end, are connected in the nature of things; that whoſo neglects the means, cannot reach the end; that takes not the way, cannot reach the journey's end. So the narrow way is the mean or mids to be gone through, the way to the journey's end, eternal life, Phil. iii. 13, 14. Thus the wreſtling and the prize, the Chriſtian fight and the crown, are connected by divine appointment: but the former does neither properly merit the latter, nor is it the condition thereof, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. compared with Rev. iv. 10. In the narrow way there muſt be fighting, becauſe there is oppoſition; but if ye go along that way, ye will get to life; even as if ye go by ſuch and ſuch places, ye will get to ſuch a city: yet is not the going that way the condition of admiſſion into the city.

The true ſtate of the matter lies here. Eternal life is freely given to the ſoul here in the firſt moment of believing; it is begun in them, John iii. 36. and v. 24. 1 John v. 12. It exerts itſelf, and hath its operation and progreſs in the walking in the narrow way: and death being the end of the way, where the body of death is dropt, the ſoul then comes to have that life completed; as one having perfected the journey enters the city. The which overthrows all merit and conditionality of works as to eternal life, and in the mean time infallibly eſtabliſhes the neceſſity of them to it, *viz.* conſidered in its perfection in heaven.

Practical *inferences* may be deduced from the whole.

Firſt, An eaſy entrance on religion is ſomewhat ſuſpicious like, and needs to be examined; becauſe it is a ſtrait gate that leads to life. I will not take on me to deny a ſovereign goſpel way of converſion, that ſwallows up any notable law work, though I have no experience of it. A ſovereign God muſt not be limited. But I muſt ſay this,

1. It is not the ordinary way. Ordinarily a law-work, greater in ſome, and leſſer in others, goes before, according to that, Gal. iii. 24. *Wherefore the law was our ſchoolmaſter to bring us unto Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by faith.* Thus the converts, Acts ii. Paul, the jailor, and others. And hereto I believe the experience of Chriſtians generally does agree. As for Lydia, ſhe was a convert before, a Jewiſh proſelyte, Acts xvi. 14.

2. The eaſy way of entering on religion is a flaw in the foundation, in the caſe of ſome, Matth. xiii. 20. *But he that received the ſeed into ſtony places, the ſame is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it.* Where obſerve, (1.) There is a receiving the word of the goſpel at firſt bruſh, *anon.* (2.) There is a mighty ſtir in the affections at that reception; the party is tranſported with joy. (3.) The flaw lies in the ſuperficialneſs of the work, its not going deep enough, ver. 5. *viz.* by the digging work of conviction and humiliation, Luke vi. 48. ſo that the party *hath no root,* Matth. xiii. 21. (4.) *laſtly,* As it came lightly, it goes lightly, *ibid.*

3. Whoever pretend to it, ought well to examine it, before they ſit down contented with it. And this may be done, to the ſufficient clearing the matter.

(1.) By conſidering what their entrance, whatever it was, ſet them into. If it ſet them into a ſound and thorough repentance for ſin, the matter needs no more diſpute; if not, their pretences are vain. If their repentance was ſound and thorough, whatever they had or had not before, they then got a piercing ſight and ſenſe of the ſins of their lives, and ſin of their nature too, and ſincerely repented of both, Gal. v. 24. and particularly of their predominant ſin, from which their hearts would then be looſed in a particular manner, Luke xix. 8.

(2.) By conſidering what way they are on. If their habitual track and courſe of life is a courſe of ſincere holy obedience, let them not diſquiet themſelves as to the manner of their entry; for it is not poſſible to get on that narrow way, but by the right gate, Pſal. cxix. 6. But as the ſtraiteſt law work iſſuing in a looſe courſe of life, will be found to have been but a foretaſte of hell; ſo an eaſy way of entering on religion, followed with a looſe and licentious courſe of life, will be found to be the wide gate and broad way to deſtruction. That was the religion of ſome, whom in our fathers days they juſtly called Antinomians and Ranters, who pretending to a ſovereign goſpel-way of converſion, gave the ſwing to their luſts, and led ſcandalous lives, a reproach to the goſpel. But if that be the gate to life, we may throw by our Bibles and regard them no more: But 2 Pet. ii. 17. *theſe are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempeſt, to whom the miſt of darkneſs is reſerved for ever.*

Secondly, Strictneſs in religion, nice, exact, and pointed walking therein, is not only juſtifiable, but neceſſary; for narrow is the way that leads unto life, and it will not allow wide ſteps. It is the way of the world to expoſe the entering by the ſtrait gate under the name of *melancholy, madneſs,* and *diſtraction;* and ſtrict walking on the narrow way, under the name of *fantaſtic ſingularity, preciſeneſs,* and *needleſs nicety.* But let the world cry it down as they will, the Bible, and particularly our text, cries it up, as not only juſtifiable, but neceſſary.

But before I come to juſtify it, and ſhew the neceſſity of it, I muſt firſt fix the true notion of it. For there is a ſpurious ſtrictneſs in religion, which is oft miſtaken for the genuine ſtrictneſs, eſpecially by the parties themſelves: whereas the former belongs to the broad way, the latter only to the narrow. That there is ſuch a ſpurious ſtrictneſs, is without controverſy, Acts xxvi. 5. *After the ſtraiteſt ſect of his religion, Paul lived a Phariſee;* and therefore the apoſtle's caution is very neceſſary, Gal. iv. 18. *It is good to be zealouſly affected always in a good thing.* Now,

1. This ſpurious ſtrictneſs in religion, which is to be rejected as a work of the fleſh, is a ſtrictneſs of men's own making. It is not God's commandment that girds them ſo ſtrait; but where God leaves them at liberty, they bind up themſelves; and ſo their ſtrictneſs is downright ſuperſtition in the ſenſe of the Bible, however they may pretend to be enemies to ſuperſtition, Matth. xv. 9. Col. ii. 20, 22. And ſo it is, though they may take themſelves to be bound to it, by God's commandment, while in reality there is no ſuch thing, John xvi. 2. For an erring conſcience taking that for God's command which is not ſo, Acts xxvi. 9. It may be diſcerned by,

(1.) Its diſproportionableneſs, making men more ſtrict in theſe things, than they are in the things unqueſtionably commanded of God, Matth. xxiii. 25. Nature is always fond of its own brats; and will treat them as one does his own children, while uncontroverted duties are treated like ſtep children; even as the earth gives its ſtrength to the weeds, while the flowers have much ado to fend.

(2.) Its juſtling out ſome ſubſtantial duties of religion, Matth. xv. 2.——6. So the apoſtle Paul teaches us the ſpurious ſtrictneſs of ſome claſhed with the ſixth command, Col. ii. 22, 23. No duty can be contrary to another. When therefore ſome point of ſtrictneſs claſhes with ſome moral duty of the ten commands, carrying one off from it, be ſure it is ſtrictneſs of the wrong ſort. Thus while men's ſtrictneſs bars them from the ordinary means of grace, in which Chriſt feeds his people, and from the duties of love and beneficence towards their neighbours, we may be ſure it is ſpurious.

(3.) *laſtly*, Its giving a ſet to mens ſpirits quite unlike the ſpirit of the goſpel. Spurious ſtrictneſs ariſeth from a legal diſpoſition, and gives the ſpirit a legal ſet and bias, reckoning highly on their ſtrictneſs, Phil. iii. 6, 7. It puffs up with pride and ſelf-conceit, Col. ii. 18. fills with bitterneſs of ſpirit, Tit. iii. 3. and gives a fiérineſs of ſpirit, inconſiſtent with the ſpirit of the goſpel which is a ſpirit of love and meekneſs, James iii. 17. This ſtrictneſs is to be avoided, as diſhonouring to God, injurious to one's own ſoul, and hurtful to our neighbours.

2. But there is a genuine ſtrictneſs for all that, the which is recommended in our text. And it is a ſtrict walking up to the revealed will of God, ſo far as we know it, in all things: not daring to come and go on theſe points, but ſticking cloſe to them, though to our own loſs in the world; being inflexible in them, over the belly of temptations, the world's contrary example, its faireſt ſmiles, and bittereſt frowns.

What girds the man here, and makes him inflexible, is, the authority of God on his conſcience, Acts iv. 19, 20. Wherefore, be the thing in itſelf never ſo ſmall, and the loſs or hazard in cleaving to it never ſo great; yet being commanded of God, he muſt ſtick to his point. It is enough to him, Pſal. cxix. 4. 'Thou haſt commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently.'

There is a twofold meaſure of this ſtrictneſs: and all that is in or over it, is condemnable as looſeneſs.

1. The law of God, the law of the ten commandments, James i. 25. Ezek. xviii. 5.——9. That is the eternal rule of righteouſneſs, which no circumſtances whatſoever can make to ceaſe to bind. What in our practice comes ſhort of that, whether with reſpect to our duty to God, ourſelves, or neighbour, is a defect of true ſtrictneſs; and what is over, is ſpurious ſtrictneſs unacceptable to God; for there is no wiſdom in being wiſe above what is written.

2. The example of Chriſt, 1 Pet. ii. 21. Herein we have the former ſet before our eyes, that we may the more clearly diſcern it, and find it the more powerfully inforced. Our Lord Jeſus was in his life the perfect pattern of true ſtrictneſs, 1 Pet. ii. 22. He was indeed by a ſpuriouſly ſtrict generation of legaliſts, accuſed as not ſtrict enough, becauſe he obſerved not the traditions of the elders, would not go to their heights to refuſe tribute to Cæſar, ſcrupled not the ſociety of publicans and ſinners, that he might do good to their ſouls, nor to make clay on the Sabbath-day to advance a moral duty of the ſixth command. But in all theſe things he was the ſtrict party, walking cloſely up to the law of God; they were the looſe party, as going aſide from it. And ſo will they be found, who, under the pretence of ſtrictneſs, bind up themſelves from thoſe things wherein they have his example to follow. The cloſer we are to Chriſt's example, the more truly ſtrict are we.

This ſtrictneſs may be diſcerned by,

1. The uniformity of it, Pſal. cxix. 6. Truly ſtrict in one, ſtrict in all, James ii. 11. For a man to pretend to be ſtrict in ſome opinions, and looſe in his practice; ſtrict in duty to God, but looſe in duty to man, is abominable. The truly ſtrict will be a ſtrict obſerver of his words and thoughts as well as his actions; of his relative duties to man, as a parent, child, maſter, ſervant, *&c.* as well as of religious duties to God, praying, reading, *&c.*; of truth between man and man, as well as of the truth of religious principles.

2. The due proportion kept in it, proportioning the concern to the weight of the matters. The neglect of this is taxed, Matth. xxiii. 23. *Wo unto you ſcribes and Phariſees, hypocrites; for ye pay tithe of mint, and aniſe, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: theſe ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.* As the leaſt filing of gold is gold; yet the greater the weight the more is the worth, and ought to be the concern for it. So though no revealed truth, nor commanded duty, is to be ſlighted; yet religion and reaſon ſay, that according to their weight and worth our concern for them ſhould be regulated. And it is as abſurd to let our zeal run out ſo on circumſtantial truths, as to ſwallow up our concern for fundamentals; to ſhew more concern about ceremonial duties, than the ſubſtantial duties of morality; as it is to guard the feet and legs, and to leave the heart open to the ſword of the enemy.

3. *laſtly*, The goſpel-ſpirit wherewith it is managed, Phil. iii. 3. True ſtrictneſs ariſeth from faith in Chriſt in the heart, 2 Cor. iv. 15. So the man walks ſtrictly, as if he were to win heaven by his ſtrictneſs; mean while he quits it all in point of confidence, as if God had not required it. Hence true ſtrictneſs is always attended with a goſpel ſet of ſpirit; whereby the man is jointly concerned for the honour of the holy law, and of the grace of the goſpel; is adorned with ſelf denial, humility, meekneſs, love to God, and love to mankind, good will and beneficence to his fellow-creatures.

Now, the true notion of ſtrictneſs is thus ſtated,

1*ſt*, It is altogether juſtifiable, however it is run down in the world, and looked on with an evil eye. To juſtify it, conſider,

1. The infinite majeſty of God, whoſe commands are here ſtrictly ſtuck to, Exod. xx. 2. Will any man come and go upon his prince's orders given him, whatever he do with what he is bid by others? The infinite diſtance betwixt God and us, fully juſtifies a preciſe regard to all his commands, an inflexible adhering thereto in every point, though the whole world ſhould countermand them. And were it duly conſidered, it would oblige to exactneſs of obedience without diſputing, without ſhifting, Acts iv. 19.

2. The riſk that is run by tampering in theſe matters, Matth. x. 21. Let the matter be weighed in an even balance: put the greateſt loſs and hazard in the world in the one ſcale, to bring off from ſtrictneſs; the diſpleaſure of God muſt be laid in the other: and is not that ſufficient to downweigh the former, and to determine a wiſe man to the ſide of the ſtrictneſs? So, as long as God's frowns are more terrible than the world's, religious ſtrictneſs will be juſtifiable.

3. The life of Chriſt in the world. Was it a ſtrict life or not? It certainly was; for he could ſay, *I do always thoſe things that pleaſe the Father*, John viii. 29. Was it juſtifiable or not? Was he to be condemned as too preciſe? If his life was juſtifiable, how can they be condemned for ſtrictneſs who make it their pattern? eſpecially conſidering, that he left us an example to follow, and that they do not fully come up to the ſtrictneſs of it. Truly the wounds the carnal world give to the ſtrictneſs of Chriſtians, go through their ſides to Chriſt himſelf, who was vaſtly ſtricter than they can reach: and they will reckon for them, Jude ver. 15.

4. Man's ſtate of perfection. Every being is allowed to aſpire towards its perfection: and ſhall it be a crime in men to aſpire towards his? Now man's perfection lies in the religious ſtrictneſs deſcribed before. This appears from, that the glory of God is the chief end of man, and man glorifies God by conforming to his law, the eternal rule of righteouſneſs; ſo that the more exact that conformity is, the more does he reach that end; and when he is arrived at a fully ſtrict conformity to it, then he is at his perfection. This was the road God ſet innocent Adam on, who fell by letting down his ſtrictneſs. This is the point the glorified ſaints in heaven are arrived at, where there is a perfect ſtrictneſs, without the leaſt deviation. How then comes ſtrictneſs to be ſo treated in the world? Are they an-

gry that ſome endeavour to get out of their ruins, going, though ſlowly, in the way towards their perfection?

2dly, It is not only juſtifiable, but neceſſary,

1. In reſpect of the command of God, Pſal. cxix. 4. *Thou haſt commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently*, Heb. *exceedingly*: q. d. to a degree, a pitch of exactneſs. And what that is, we ſee Mark xii. 30, 31. ‘Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy ſtrength: this is the firſt commandment. And the ſecond is like, namely this, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf.’ The apoſtle wills Chriſtians to *walk circumſpectly*, Eph. v. 15. Gr. *exactly, nicely, preciſely*: q. d. going up to the utmoſt of every thing. The pure law requires the utmoſt purity and exactneſs; and it is blaſphemy to think or ſay, that Chriſt has relaxed any thing of the purity required in every command. Therefore ſtrictneſs is as neceſſary as the authority of God can make it.

2. In reſpect of its being commanded on our utmoſt peril, Matth. v. 19, 20. ‘Whoſoever ſhall break one of theſe leaſt commandments, and ſhall teach men ſo, he ſhall be called the leaſt in the kingdom of heaven: but whoſoever ſhall do and teach them, the ſame ſhall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I ſay unto you, that except your righteouſneſs ſhall exceed the righteouſneſs of the ſcribes and Phariſees, ye ſhall in no caſe enter into the kingdom of heaven.’ Should we leave ourſelves looſe in any one point, we riſk our ſalvation, as the ſhip does ſinking, wherein one lake is left unſtopped, ver. 29. No length of time will excuſe our giving ourſelves the looſe, Matth. xxiv. 13. nor no hazard in the world whatſoever, Mark viii. 38.

3. In reſpect of our neceſſary conformation to Chriſt, 1 John ii. 6. *He that ſaith he abideth in him, ought himſelf alſo ſo to walk, even as he walked.* How neceſſary it is that we be conformed to Chriſt, the apoſtle teaches, Rom. viii. 29. *For whom he did foreknow he alſo did predeſtinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firſt born among many brethren.* Our baptiſm ſhews it; Gal. iii. 27. *For as many of you as have been baptized into Chriſt, have put on Chriſt.* And that we cannot be if we are not ſtrict in religion. By a looſe careleſs courſe, we carry the image of the firſt Adam; and by a ſtrict courſe of life, we muſt bear the image of the ſecond Adam.

4. *laſtly*, As an evidence and character of ſincerity, Pſal. cxix. 6. ‘Then ſhall I not be aſhamed, when I have reſpect unto all thy commandments.’ The reaſon hereof is manifeſt from James ii. 10, 11. ‘For whoſoever ſhall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that ſaid, Do not commit adultery; ſaid alſo, Do not kill. Now, if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a tranſgreſſor of the law.’ For if any command is reſpected as the command of God, all his commands will be ſo: ſince they all bear the impreſs of the ſame divine authority. And one's taking it on him to come and go on God's commands, is an evidence, that God's authority has no due weight with him. See the touchſtone of ſincerity, John xv. 14. *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatſoever I command you.*

I ſhall give you the following advices for true ſtrictneſs in religion.

1. Begin your ſtrictneſs at the right end, in entering the ſtrait gate by a ſound converſion, Luke xiii. 24. Unconverted ſtrict folk their caſe is moſt hopeleſs, Mat. xxi. 31, 32. Solomon gives the reaſon, Prov. xxvi. 12. *Seeſt thou a man wiſe in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.*

2. Set before your eyes the true rule of ſtrictneſs, namely, the law of God and the example of Chriſt. The conſtitutions of churches, opinions, practices, and examples of parties, getting the room of theſe, have in all ages bred much ſpurious ſtrictneſs. But ‘to the law and to the teſtimony: if they ſpeak not according to this word, it is becauſe there is no light in them,’ Iſa. viii. 20. If we be Chriſtians, let Chriſt's example be our rule.

3. Put on the bands of true ſtrictneſs, being impreſſed habitually with the authority of God on your conſciences, and the conſtraining love of Chriſt in your hearts. Theſe are the ſtraitening bands of God's making, Exod. xx. 2. *I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the houſe of bondage.*

4. Be well apprized of the matter of true ſtrictneſs. It lies only in things wherein God has bound us up, not in things wherein we bind up ourſelves without his authority. And ye may know it by theſe two marks.

(1.) It bears hard on the natural inclination and luſts of the heart. Theſe find themſelves ſtraitened by the band, Matth. v. 29. *If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out*, &c. Whereas ſpurious ſtrictneſs is agreeable to theſe, and feeds and nouriſhes them. So the former is difficult, the latter is eaſy to the natural man. What an eaſy thing is it to maintain a ſtrict opinion, to ſeparate from a church, when there is no hazard? But to maintain a ſtrict practice in the ſubſtantial duties of religion, to ſeparate from the unregenerate carnal world in one's ſtate and frame of life, is not eaſy.

(2.) It is a promoter of ſanctification of the ſoul, and makes one a better man, advancing the ſtrength of grace, and conformity to the image of God in the whole man, Rom. xiv. 17. What the better were the Phariſees that they would not eat with unwaſhen hands, nor go near publicans and ſinners? How much more may ſtrictneſs be known to be trifling and ſpurious, that has a native tendency to bring leanneſs on the ſoul?

5. *laſtly*, Be ſtrict in the faith and a holy life. And,

(1.) Let every truth be dear to you, ſticking to it on all hazards, without giving up with it, Prov. xxiii. 23. *Buy the truth, and ſell it not.* For none of the truths of God, but are more precious than all we have to loſe for them. But it is a weakneſs to think, that there is no keeping of the truth without breaking of the peace with them that differ, Rom. xiv. 14. compared with ver. 3. Phil. iii. 15, 16. while the foundation truths remain for the bond of it.

(2.) Be ſtrict in enquiring into ſin and duty in particular caſes, habitually, Prov. iii. 6. Ye profeſs to take Chriſt for your leader; then conſult him in all things, that ye may know what he calls you to by his word and providence. That is a ſtrict man that obſerves the motions of the pillar of cloud and fire, and its reſts, that he may move thereby or reſt.

(3.) Act in all things by a religious principle, Col. iii. 17. 1 Cor. x. 31. Since the law of God is a perfect rule, it cannot but reach all human actions; either by particular precepts, or general ones, ſuch as Phil. iv. 8. and theſe reaching temporal as well as ſpiritual matters. It is true ſtrictneſs then to act ſo.

(4.) Never conſider for your practice, whether a thing be but a little ſin or a great one. If it be but a ſin at all, avoid it, tamper not with it, 1 Theſſ. v. 22. *Abſtain from all appearance of evil*, Jude ver. 23. *Hating even the garment ſpotted by the fleſh.* Be it never ſo little, it will leave a great ſtain on the ſoul; which, if not purged by the blood of Chriſt, will drown it in perdition. And little ſins make way for greater.

(5.) In doubtful practices, wherein ye are not clear, chuſe always the ſide ſafeſt for the conſcience, whatever there be to draw you to the other. If there is a caſe where ye are not ſure, whether the doing of ſuch a thing is ſinful or not; are ye ſure there will be no ſin in forbearing it? Then let it alone, Rom. xiv. 5. 23.

(6.) Be ſtrict obſervers of your duty to God, in all the inſtances thereof required in the firſt table. Do not make light of dropping a duty now and then, as prayer in ſecret, or in your family, a ſermon, &c. The caſe and loſs of Thomas deſerves conſideration here, John xx. 24, 25. *But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didy-*

mus, was not with them when Jeſus came. The other diſciples therefore ſaid unto him, We have ſeen the Lord. But he ſaid unto them, Except I ſhall ſee in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thruſt my hand into his ſide, I will not believe. If providence bars you from it, it is not you that drop it, but God ceaſeth to require it.

(7.) Be pointed and nice in your duty to man, in all the inſtances thereof required in the ſecond table. Remember the flaw in the Phariſees ſtrictneſs, Matth. xxiii. 23. Walk preciſely by the rules of juſtice towards others; being readier to quit a halfpenny to them, than to keep two pennies off them, as ye would rather abide a ſtreſs by cold, than take a burning coal in your boſom. Be juſt and faithful in your buſineſs, whatever it is, as knowing, that whatever is gained by unfaithfully done buſineſs, is unjuſtly got, and ſtolen with you. Stick preciſely to truth, hate and deſpiſe lying. Looſe talkers, that have not a ſtrict regard to truth in common life, whatever regard they pretend to divine truths, are and ſhall have their part with the abominable, Rev. xxi. 8. More particularly,

(8.) Be conſcientiouſly ſtrict in the duties of your relations, as knowing your relational ſtations are thoſe wherein God has ſet you for the time, to take trial of you. If you are a parent or child, a huſband or wife, a maſter or ſervant, cloſely live up to the duty of your relation; and let your ſtrictneſs be of a piece, and let not a *But* fall in your relation: a very good man or woman, *but* a tyrannical huſband, &c. And where undutifulneſs of your relatives mar the exerciſe of ſofter principles, learn to act by a principle of juſtice and reaſon.

(9.) Have a ſtrict and awful regard to the character of ſuperiority that God has given to any over you; for that ſuperiority is a piece of the divine image. It is looſeneſs of conſcience, not true ſtrictneſs, that takes away all ſenſe of that, and allows no regard to them that bear it, unleſs their perſonal character be winning; that is in effect, they will regard them for their own ſake, but not for God's ſake, Jude verſe 8. 1 Pet. ii. 18.

(10.) Be the ſame in ſecret as in public. Let your ſtrictneſs take place where no eye ſees but God's, as well as where the world's eye is on you: for if it be of the right ſtamp, it will be ſo, Acts xxiv. 16. For the law and conſcience are the ſame, and God is the ſame in ſecret as before men; and if you are not the ſame, you are ſtrict only to be noticed by men.

(11.) *laſtly*, Be ſtrict obſervers of your own heart, as well as your life, Prov. iv. 23. 'Keep thy heart with all 'diligence: for out of it are the iſſues of life.' If ye be never ſo ſtrict in the outward man, it will be lothſome hypocriſy, if the inner man is not watched, Matth. xxiii. 27, 28. Rom. ii. 29.

Thus ordering your life, ye will be perſons of Chriſtian ſtrictneſs, whom Chriſt will own, and which he will approve at the laſt day, when the looſeneſs of the world, and their ſpurious ſtrictneſs, will both appear naught.

Doct. V. laſt. *Few of mankind find the ſtrait gate, and narrow way leading to life.*

In diſcourſing this ſubject, I ſhall,

I. Explain the doctrine.

II. Confirm it.

III. Give the reaſons of it.

IV. *laſtly*, Apply.

I. To explain this point, we ſhall, 1. Conſider few their finding the ſtrait gate and narrow way. 2. Shew in what reſpects they are few.

Firſt, We ſhall conſider *few their finding the ſtrait gate and narrow way.* And it may be taken up as importing theſe things following.

1. All are naturally off from it, Rom. iii. 23. Mankind was carried off from it in Adam, even all of them to a man, verſ. 12. And man's natural ſtate is a ſtate of wandering, wandering on the mountains of vanity, in the wilderneſs, like loſt ſheep, ſtraying paſſengers; and behold the end of that their courſe, Prov. xxi. 16. *The man that wandereth out of the way of underſtanding, ſhall remain in the congregation of the dead.*

2. It is not eaſily found out by any, 1 Pet. iv. 18. In all caſes the beſt things are hardeſt to reach; ſo while the wide gate and broad way are fallen on with all eaſe, the ſtrait gate and narrow way are a darned road that one cannot eaſily light on. We are ſo liable to paſſions, prejudices, and miſapprehenſions about it, it is ſo far above our natural capacities, that there is no finding it out without the Spirit of Chriſt point it out to us effectually.

3. It is but few that diſcover it, ſo as on good grounds to be able to ſay, *This is it.* There are ſo many falſe gates and ways, that ſeem to be it, but are not, that they are rare perſons who are not deceived by one or other of them.

4. Few enter by the ſtrait gate, and travel the narrow way, though there is no other paſſage for ſinners unto life. It is a gate and way but little frequented. It is not many that are brought within ſight of them; but of theſe many draw back, and but few enter and go on. There are but few regenerate perſons, ſound converts, truly holy ones, in the world. The moſt part go in the way of ſin, few in the way of holy obedience, walking in Chriſt, in the way of God's commandments.

5. *laſtly*, Howbeit there are ſome that do enter by that gate, and travel that way. In the worſt of times there are always ſome ſound converts, truly holy in the world, and will be to the end, Matth. xvi. 18. When their number is compleated, few as they are, the world will be at an end.

Secondly, In what reſpects are they few?

1. They are not few abſolutely, or conſidered in themſelves. If we conſider the general aſſembly of them, Heb. xii. 23. them that have, do, and ſhall find it, they are a goodly company. They are a great multitude, ſo great that they paſs all human numbering, Rev. vii. 9. They are ſo many, that they are like the ſtars, innumerable, Gen. xv. 5. compared with Gal. iii. 29. The ſhed blood of a Saviour ſprings up in an innumerable iſſue.

They are upon the way but by parcels; being like an army who began their march at the founding of the march, (Gen. iii. 15.) to the heavenly city, have continued it all along ſince that time to this day, and will continue it yet for a time, viz. to the end of the world. It is now four thouſand years and more, ſince the van, the firſt generation, ended their march, and were ſettled in the city, the righteous Abel being the firſt man that entered it; and ſince that time all along the following have been entering in their order. There is a part of that hoſt now upon the way advancing to the city; but the rear is not as yet begun to move. They that are upon the way at a time, are in different nations and parts of the earth; they in the ſame country are often but few of them together upon one ſpot. Hence ſpeaking what they ſee and feel, their mouths are filled with ſuch complaints of ſolitude as theſe, Pſal. xii. 1. *Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaſeth: for the faithful faileth from among the children of men.* Mic. vii. 1. *Wo is me, for I am as when they have gathered the ſummer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage.* But ſtay till the whole hoſt have finiſhed their march, and appear in one body in the heavenly city; they will be there ſuch a vaſt multitude as no man can number, but the man Chriſt their captain; whoſe *underſtanding is infinite*, becauſe he is God.

Let not the fewneſs of them that find it, fright any from it, becauſe they cannot think of being ſolitary, wanting much company. For it is but for a little by the way that they will be tried with ſolitarineſs. They that live godly in the lonelieſt ſhiel, ſhall ere long be for ever in a glorious throng, where they will have glorious company.

2. They are nevertheleſs few comparatively, in compariſon with thoſe that entering by the wide gate, go the broad way. Though conſidered by themſelves, they are a great multitude; yet compared with them in number, they fall ſhort of them. The regenerate are few in compariſon with the unregenerate, ſound converts with the unconverted, the truly holy with the unholy, ſaints with ſinners, thoſe that find the ſtrait gate with thoſe entering the wide gate.

II. To *confirm this heavy truth*, we ſhall take a twofold view, to clear it. 1. A view of the ſcripture-account of this matter. 2. A view of the world.

Firſt, We ſhall take a view of the ſcripture-account of this matter.

1. Our Lord expreſly tells us, that *of the many called, few are choſen*, Matth. xx. 16. and xxii. 14. Now, all thoſe that enter the ſtrait gate, and are on the narrow way, are *choſen*, Rev. xvii. 14. Faith is *the faith of God's elect*, Tit. i. 1. and they only are brought unto holy obedience, 1 Pet. i. 2. All the elect are *called*, Rom. viii. 30. But all the called externally by the goſpel, are not elect or choſen: on the contrary, many are called that way, and but a few choſen: ſo that of thoſe to whom the goſpel-call comes, there are but few choſen, and brought in by the ſtrait gate to the narrow way; the multitude of them ſtill wander. And then many are not even externally called.

2. Chriſt's flock is of thoſe, who, entering by the ſtrait gate, go the narrow way, following him, John x. 27. Cant. i. 8. But his flock is a very *little one*, *viz.* in compariſon with the devil's drove, Luke xii. 32. 'Fear 'not, little flock; for it is your father's good pleaſure 'to give you the kingdom.' In vain will one pretend to reſtrict that to the diſciples or believers then preſent; ſince it agrees to all his to the end of the world, verſ. 35. to 40. His children are comparatively ſo few in the world, that they are for *ſigns and wonders*, Iſa. viii. 18. *Behold, I and the children whom the Lord have given me, are for ſigns, and for wonders in Iſrael.* A certain evidence, that they are very rare. And that this is meant of Chriſt, is clear from Heb. ii. 13. *Behold, I, and the children which God hath given me.* Iſrael was a typical people, choſen out of the world, few in compariſon of the reſt of the world; and Chriſt's flock are his Iſrael.

3. The ſcripture repreſents them under ſuch terms as reſpect a greater multitude from whom they are diſtinguiſhed. They are the *firſt-born*, Heb. xii. 23. And how few the firſt-born are in compariſon of other children, every body knows, being but one of each family, even of the moſt numerous families: The *firſt fruits*, Rev. xiv. 4. James i. 18. But how ſmall are theſe in compariſon with the whole harveſt? So the ſcripture account ſtates them but few.

Secondly, Let us take a view of the world. In whatever period we caſt our eye on it, we will find that ſtill the broad way men were the multitude, the other the few.

1. The generation before the flood was ſuch. Good men were rare in it, but evil men abounded exceedingly. What a character have they? Gen. vi. 11, 12. 'The earth alſo was corrupt before God; and the earth 'was filled with violence. And God looked upon the 'earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all fleſh had 'corrupted his way upon the earth.' And the flood ſweeping all away but eight perſons, clears it demonſtratively, that there were very few, if any, godly among them. The apoſtle calls them *the world of the ungodly*, 2 Pet. ii. 5.

2. From the flood to the calling of Abraham, how few were good men! That mighty apoſtaſy headed by Nimrod, who with his followers built the tower of Babel, demonſtrates this, Gen. xi. they being ſuch a vaſt company, that they were divided into many nations with the confuſion of their languages: while the original holy tongue remained with the race of Shem, that had no hand in that rebellion againſt heaven; as it did alſo, I think, with the Canaanites that were engaged in it. But then even Shem's race was fearfully degenerate when Abraham was called, Joſh. xxiv. 2.

3. From Abraham to Moſes, what a doleful caſe was the world in, ſunk in idolatry and profanity! I will by no means ſay, that in theſe days there was no true religion or godlineſs, but in Abraham's family. Melchizedec, Iſhmael, &c. were good men: but certainly they were few in theſe days; ten could not be found in Sodom. In Jacob's family itſelf Rachel had ſtolen her father's images, Jacob had occaſion to purge his houſe of ſtrange gods. How low was religion ſunk even with them, while they were in Egypt? See Ezek. xx. 6, 7, 8. Rom. v. 13.

4. From Moſes to Chriſt, or from the erecting of the Jewiſh church, and all along under the law, till the ſetting up of the goſpel-kingdom among the Gentiles, by the apoſtles, making the New-Teſtament church, there was the ſame face of affairs in the world. The ceremonial law was the hedge of the church, ſeparating her from all other ſocieties, and encloſing her among the Jews, and the few proſelytes that came to her from among the nations. The reſt of the nations in the world at that time were ſunk in idolatry, ignorant of the true God, and the acceptable way of worſhipping him, Acts xiv. 15, 16. And what a figure made the Jewiſh church generally during that time, at every turn going off to idolatry, profanity ſpreading, formality prevailing, may be learned from their prophets, whom from time to time they murdered, till at length they murdered the Lord of glory, Matth. xxiii. 31, 32. Acts vii. 52. How few was the number of the truly godly even among them in all ages? What a heavy life had Moſes among them? David complains, Pſal. xii. 1. 'Help, Lord, for the 'godly man ceaſeth; for the faithful fail from among 'the children of men.' Iſa. i. 9. 'Except the Lord of 'hoſts had left unto us a very ſmall remnant, we ſhould 'have been as Sodom, and we ſhould have been like 'unto Gomorrah.' Jer. ix. 2. 'Oh that I had in the 'wilderneſs a lodging-place of wayfaring men, that I 'might leave my people, and go from them; for they 'be all adulterers, an aſſembly of treacherous men.' Mic. vii. 1. 'Wo is me, for I am as when they have 'gathered the ſummer fruits, as the grape-gleanings of 'the vintage: there is no cluſter to eat; my ſoul de'ſired the firſt ripe fruit.'

5. From the ſetting up of the New-Teſtament church till the grand apoſtaſy under Antichriſt, the narrow way was ſtill trode by few in compariſon; as is evident from the accounts we have in the New-Teſtament, the perſecutions every where raiſed againſt the apoſtles, and the ſtate of the churches quickly after their erection, as Corinth, Galatia, and the ſeven churches in Aſia. For the firſt three hundred years, Paganiſm continued the national eſtabliſhed religion in the empire, and Chriſtians were treated as ſlaughter-ſheep. When peace was reſtored, and *Chriſtianity* was eſtabliſhed by law, damnable hereſies broke in among them, and particularly Ariaiſm overſpread all; and the apoſtaſy went on, till it iſſued in the darkneſs and apoſtaſy under Antichriſt.

6. During the time of the reign of Antichriſt, until the reformation, a thick darkneſs overſpread the Chriſtian world. It ſo prevailed, that *all the world wondered after the beaſt*, Rev. xiii. 3. that is, the *Chriſtian*, and particularly the *European* world. Thoſe on the narrow way were ſo few, that they are repreſented by *two witneſſes propheſying in ſackcloth*, Rev. xi. 3.

7. *Laſtly*, From the reformation to this day, is the laſt period the world has yet ſeen, and that we account our own times; which, howſoever they have increaſed the number of the godly, beyond what they were before the reformation, yet afford but a melancholy view of the fewneſs of them on the narrow way. For,

1. There is not a third part of the world that profeſſes Chriſtianity at this day! ſo that were they all godly that are baptized, and profeſs the name of Chriſt, they would be but few. Nay, it is reckoned, that dividing the world into thirty parts, nineteen of theſe are inhabited by Pagans, who know not the true God; ſix by Jews and Mahometans, who reject Chriſt, not acknowledging him the Saviour of the world. So five only of thirty remain profeſſing *Chriſtianity*.

2. Of theſe five, two are reckoned of the communion of the Greek church, who have a very miſerable face of Chriſtianity among them; denying the ſouls of the faithful departed to be admitted to the beatific viſion till after the reſurrection; praying for the dead; admitting children at ſeven years of age to the ſacrament of the ſupper, thinking they then begin to ſin; adorning their churches with pictures; miniſters and people ſunk in groſs ignorance. The other remaining three parts are divided between the Popiſh and the Proteſtant churches, the former being idolaters and Antichriſtian.

3. *laſtly*, In the Proteſtant churches there are but few that appear to be on the narrow way, in compariſon with thoſe therein on the broad way. There are multitudes that are, according to the ſcripture, to be caſt out of that happy number; ſuch as,

1. Groſs heretics, ſunk in fundamental errors, denying the imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, his ſatisfaction, his Godhead, blaſpheming the Trinity. Of which ſort not a few are to be found in Proteſtant churches; not to mention the Deiſts, who regard neither Chriſt nor Antichriſt, rejecting the Bible and the goſpel by the lump. Theſe ſurely are none of the number, Gal. v. 19, 20, 21. 'Now the works of the fleſh are manifeſt, which are theſe; Adultery, fornication, uncleanneſs, laſciviouſneſs, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, ſtrife, ſeditions, hereſies, envyings, murders, drunkenneſs, revellings, and ſuch like; of the which I tell you before, as I have alſo told you in time paſt, that they which do ſuch things, ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God.' Jude ver. 4. 'For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of God unto laſciviouſneſs, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.'

2. The groſsly ignorant. What ſwarms of theſe are to be found in the churches, who have no tolerable meaſure of the fundamental principles? We may, by obſerving how many ſuch are among thoſe on whom pains are taken to inſtruct them, gueſs how they abound in countries and congregations where no tolerable care is taken of that matter. So that the bulk of people in many places are careleſs about and quite rude in theſe things. Now, *it is a people of no underſtanding: therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will ſhew them no favour*, Iſa. xxvii. 11.

3. The profane, who are openly vitious in their lives, walking in the broad way with a witneſs. Theſe every where abound, having nothing of Chriſtianity but the name, are a public nuiſance to ſociety, and therefore a ſcandal to the Chriſtian profeſſion; which has no doubt contributed to the bringing of Chriſtianity under contempt, Gal v. 19. 20. forecited.

4. Mere moraliſts, who lead a civil life in the world, as good neighbours in ſociety, but worſhip not God, if it is not in the public congregations, and have not ſo much as a form of godlineſs. Theſe alſo muſt be caſt out, Matth. v. 20. *Except your righteouſneſs ſhall exceed the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, ye ſhall in no caſe enter into the kingdom of heaven*.

5. *laſtly*, Naughty profeſſors of religion; ſuch as,

1. Thoſe who are a ſcandal to a profeſſion, by their habitual courſe of untenderneſs of life. They will talk of religion, but in their walk there is nothing of it to be ſeen. They will go about religious duties, but then their tongues, hands, and feet go at random all the reſt of their time, as if they did theſe to get leave to walk licentiouſly; as was the caſe with the whore, Prov. vii. 14, 15. 'I have peace offerings with me: this day have I paid my vows. Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to ſeek thy face, and I have found thee.'

2. They who, though they are regular in the bulk of their way, yet vent their naughtineſs in ſome one or other ſcandalous practice, hanging about them, ſuch as injuſtice, lying, evil-ſpeaking, intolerable pride and ſelf-conceit, deceitfulneſs, &c. This makes ſuch ſecret diſguſts among profeſſors, alienating their affections, Mat. v. 19.

3. Thoſe who are as blameleſs in the outward man, as human frailty permits; yet ſtill retain ſome idol or idols of jealouſy in the heart, and never come to a ſincere compliance with the whole will of God revealed to them, Pſal lxvi. 18. and cxix. 6.

4. *laſtly*, Unexperienced profeſſors, ſtrangers to the work of grace on the hearts, and the life of God on their ſouls; who have no experience of converting, regenerating grace; and no acquaintance with the life of faith, the ſpiritual combat, and communion with God in duties, John iii. 3. 2 Tim. iii. 5.

Caſt out theſe, how few do remain! So it is evident as the light, that few of mankind find the ſtrait gate and narrow way leading to life.

III. I ſhall give *the reaſons of the point*: or, *whence it is that few find the ſtrait gate and narrow way*. It ariſeth from,

1. The natural blindneſs of mens minds, Eph. iv. 17, 18. They cannot diſcern it in its heavenly excellency, beauty and glory, 1 Cor. ii. 14. They hear of it, and are pointed to it, but their eyes are held that they cannot ſee it nor find it, as the Sodomites about the walls of Lot's houſe. And till the eyes of one's underſtanding are opened by the Spirit, he will never take it up: and that is the privilege of few, Iſa. liii. 1. Human learning, wit, and ſenſe, avail not here.

2. The perverſeneſs of mens wills, John v. 40. Men naturally have a liſtleſſneſs for it: they care not for it, therefore they do not find it. Nay, they have an averſion to it, their hearts are ſet againſt it, Rom. viii. 7. And till the will be renewed, they will never come on the narrow way. A day of power, the mercy of few, is neceſſary to bring them to it, Pſal. cx. 3. And when the Spirit is at work with them for that end, they ſtruggle againſt it like a hooked fiſh in the water.

3. The natural bent, propenſity, and attachment to the broad way. That is the way of mens own hearts, as the way of water is to go down, not up the brae: ſo that let them alone, they would never chooſe, deſire, nor ſeek another, Iſa lvii. 17. and in the depth of ſovereign wiſdom the multitude is let alone; they get their will with a vengeance. They will have head, Job xxi. 14. and get it, Hoſ. iv. 17.

4. Satan is buſy to keep them off from it, 1 Pet. v. 8. He is the great ſeducer, who bewilders ſinners, leading them into by-ways, according to their different tempers and diſpoſitions. He repreſents the narrow way in frightful colours, the broad way as pleaſant and ſafe; ſo fills them with prejudices againſt the former, and in favour of the latter. And if at any time a ſinner is like to enter the ſtrait gate into the narrow way, he doubles his diligence, and plies him cloſely to keep him off from it.

5. *laſtly*, Ill example falling in with natural inclination, carries all headlong before it, Mat. xviii. 7. There is ſome good example too in the world; but then it goes againſt the ſtream of the natural inclination, and ſo proves ineffectual. But ill example going with the ſtream, eaſily prevails: men are apt to promiſe themſelves peace in an evil way, on which they ſee others going, and enjoying peace too.

Use 1. of *Information.* Hence learn,

1. Moſt of mankind then muſt periſh, ſince there is no getting to life but through the ſtrait gate and narrow way, which few find. Proud men, from a conceit of their own excellency, cannot admit this, that God will caſt away the moſt part; but the fallen angels were of greater excellency of nature than man; yet he caſts them all away, ſaves none of them. They ſee not the conſiſtency of it with his mercy; but mercy muſt be regulate with juſtice, otherwiſe it is a ſoftneſs unbecoming the Judge of all the earth; and mercy will have its triumph in ſaving ſome, even all that take the way for it conſiſtent with juſtice. They ſay, that then Adam will be more prevalent to ruin, than Chriſt to ſave; but it is more to ſave one ſinner, than to ruin thouſands, yea a world.

2. Saints then muſt needs be a ſingular kind of perſons in the world, having a way of their own different from that the multitude go in; for *they are few that find the narrow way*. This cannot miſs to make them look like an odd ſort of folk, fantaſtic and humorous in the eyes of the world, Iſ. viii. 18. 1 Pet. i. 4. And whoſo cannot digeſt that character from the world's hand, but muſt needs, for preſerving their reputation, conform to the world, and the way in vogue with the multitude, are not fit for heaven. They are *the fearful*, Rev. xxi. 8. *deniers of Chriſt*, Matth. x. 33. as *aſhamed of him*, Mark viii. 38.

3. No wonder the intereſts of religion be low in the world: it has few cordial followers. Truth falls in the ſtreets, and holineſs of heart and life is rare: both are unfaſhionable, the guiſe of the world lies contrary to both; for *few find the narrow way.* That religion is greatly run down, ſometimes perſecuted, always mocked and maligned, cannot miſs, while the ſtate of matters is ſuch, that few find the narrow way.

4. *laſtly*, Then certainly it is not eaſy to be a Chriſtian, to fall on the ſtrait gate and narrow way. The unconcernedneſs and careleſſneſs of men about religion, as if they could hardly go wrong in that matter, is unaccountable. Can it rationally be thought an eaſy thing to hit that mark which the moſt part miſs? to find that way which but few of mankind do find? But that fond conceit of the eaſineſs of finding it, is one great reaſon why ſo few find it.

Use 2. of *Exhortation.* And,

1*ſt*, Let all conſider well and examine what way it is they are on. Aſk yourſelves, Am I on the broad way, or on the narrow? and endeavour to be clear as to that concerning point.

Mot. 1. This is a point of the utmoſt concern to you; death and life hang upon it. If ye are on the broad way, you are on the road to deſtruction; if on the narrow way, on the road to life. And will ye be careleſs as to ſuch a weighty point? will ye not do your own ſouls the juſtice to conſider of it?

Mot. 2. It is certain ye were once on the broad way, Eph. ii. 3. The only queſtion competent here, is, Whether ye are brought off from it into the narrow way or not? If ye never ſaw yourſelves on it, it is a ſad token ye are on it ſtill, though ye perceive it not, Rev. iii. 17, 18. Though your eyes have been opened to ſee yourſelves on it, and your danger in it, it is a queſtion for all that, Whether ye are brought off it or not?

Mot. 3. The moſt part are on the broad way, few have found the narrow one. Ye have the more need to conſider which of them ye are on. If many had found, few miſſed the narrow way; yet ſince there are any who miſs it, the matter being of ſuch weight, might oblige you to put it to the trial as to yourſelves: much more ought ye to put it to the trial, when there are ſo few that find the narrow way, and ſo many miſs it.

Mot. 4. There are many ways taken for the narrow way, that is not it; and ſelf-deceiving is rife in the world, Prov. xxi. 2. and none more confident than the fool, chap. xii. 15. Therefore try your way, ere ye truſt it.

Mot. 5. *laſtly*, It will be a fearful diſappointment the careleſs ſinner will meet with at laſt, a frightful awakening the ſleepy thoughtleſs ſinner will get, falling into deſtruction at the end of his way, Matth. xxv. 11, 12. 'Afterward came alſo the other virgins, ſaying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he anſwered and ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, I know you not.' Iſa. l. 11. 'Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compaſs yourſelves about with ſparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the ſparks that ye have kindled: this ſhall ye have of mine hand; ye ſhall lie down in ſorrow.' Awaken therefore in time, and conſider your way ere it be too late.

After what has been ſaid on both the ways, I will only add two things.

1. If ye are on the narrow way, ye have entered by the ſtrait gate of converſion to God, Matth. xviii. 3: ye have felt the bitterneſs of ſin, and therein the bitterneſs of death; have been brought freely away out of yourſelves to Chriſt by faith, and through him unto God by a ſincere repentance.

2. If ye are on the narrow way, ye feel the narrowneſs of it, yet are reſolute not to leave it, but go through with it; and ſo your life is a continued ſtruggle, Phil. iii. 14. The commands of God are your rule, the example of Chriſt your pattern, the will of God the reaſon of your walk, the honouring of God the end and deſign of your life, and the Chriſt of God the fountain of your ſtrength for the way.

2*dly*, Ye who are not yet on the narrow way, ſet yourſelves to find it; uſe your utmoſt endeavours to get at it by the ſtrait gate, for otherwiſe there is no reaching it. And,

1. Be not eaſy without, but ſeek to experience a work of ſound converſion on your ſouls. Pray for it, hear the word for it, and muſe on your own caſe for it, admitting conviction and cheriſhing it; labouring to get ſuch a ſight of Chriſt in his glory and beauty, as may lead you to thorough repentaece.

2. Set yourſelves for a life of holy obedience, following the footſteps of Chriſt himſelf, and the footſteps of the flock. Apply yourſelves to the way of mortification, dying to the creature and to ſin daily; to the way of newneſs of life, living to God in oppoſition to the creature, to righteouſneſs in oppoſition to ſin.

3*dly*, *laſtly*, Ye who are on the narrow way,

1. Bleſs God for it, and be thankful, that while he reveals it to few, he has revealed it to you: that ye are among the few, and not among the many.

2. Walk circumſpectly. Satan will be laying ſnares for you, that ye may ſtumble and fall, and if poſſible, to get you off from it. The fewer are on it, the world notices them the more, ready to improve their wrong ſteps to the diſhonour of the way. The greater will your ſin be, if ye walk not worthy of ſuch a rare privilege.

3. Walk on reſolutely, however narrow and ſtraitning the way be to you; for it leads to life: and the broad way, however eaſy, to death and deſtruction.

The DUTY and ADVANTAGE of cleaving to the LORD and his WAY, in a declining Time.

A SERMON preached on a day of ſolemn faſting and humiliation, at Ettrick, June 14, 1722.

Gen. vi. 9.

Noah was a juſt man, and perfect in his generations.

IN the two preceding verſes we have the deſtruction of the old world determined, verſe 7. and the preſervation of Noah ſecured, verſe 8. When that generation for their ſins was to be ſwept away by a deluge, Noah is God's favourite, ſafety and protection from the common ſtroke is determined for him. Hereupon a queſtion natively ariſeth, O what ſort of a man was Noah, who was ſo highly favoured? It is anſwered in the words of the text, *Noah was a juſt man, and perfect in his generations.* Wherein we have,

1. Noah's character: he *was perfect*: not legally, but evangelically. He was a man of integrity, downright for God; not following the wiſdom and way of the world, but ſtudying in all things to approve himſelf to God. This character of his is raiſed, from the conſideration of the time wherein he lived, *He was perfect in his generations*; in the generation before the flood, and the generation after it. The former was a generation of general corruption, verſ. 12. wherein the ſpeat of wickedneſs and apoſtaſy ran ſo high, that it carried all before it; yet even in ſuch a time Noah kept his feet, and made his way againſt the ſtream, though he was very ſingular. This is the man that finds favour with God in a day of wrath againſt the generation, that is ſafe while others are ſwept away in the anger of God.

2. How Noah came to reach ſuch a character: *He was a juſt man.* It refers not to his life; for the perfection or integrity aſcribed to him comprehends all in that point; but to his ſtate: he was a juſtified man, juſtified before God by faith in the promiſe, Gen. iii. 15. For ſo runs the original, *Noah a juſt man was perfect*, &c. Noah held by the righteouſneſs of faith for himſelf, and preached it to others, as we learn from Heb. xi. 7. 'By faith Noah being warned of God of things 'not ſeen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to 'the ſaving of his houſe; by the which he condemned 'the world, and became heir of the righteouſneſs which 'is by faith,' 2 Pet. ii. 5. 'God ſpared not the old 'world, but ſaved Noah the eighth perſon, a preacher 'of righteouſneſs, bringing in the flood upon the world 'of the ungodly.' And not only ſo, but he taught and practiſed the righteouſneſs of a holy life, while that generation, ſlighting the faith of the promiſe, and going off from the doctrine of free grace therein held forth, to acceptance by works, after the example of Cain, Gen. iv. 5. ran into all immorality, and caſting off of good works, in their practice, till they were ſwept off the earth for their looſe lives: which is the native conſequent of legality. There were others, I doubt not, beſides Noah, juſtified perſons in that generation, and holy too; at leaſt Methuſelah, who died in the year of the deluge, and Shem, Noah's ſon; but this is added concerning Noah, that he *was a juſt man*, to ſhew that he could not have attained that excellency in his generation, but that he was juſtified by faith; the promiſe being the only channel of the conveyance of grace.

Two doctrines are deducible from the words.

DOCT. I. *In the moſt declining generation, wherein ſin and wickedneſs come to the greateſt height, God has ſtill ſome, though few, that retain their integrity, and cleave to him and his ways.*

In diſcourſing this doctrine, I ſhall,

I. Evince the truth of the point.

II. Shew how it is that the declining of a generation comes to be ſo very general, that ſo very few are left retaining their integrity.

III. Why ſome, though few, are ſtill left retaining their integrity in ſuch a generation.

IV. *laſtly*, Apply.

I. I ſhall evince the truth of this, *That in the moſt declining generation, wherein ſin and wickedneſs come to the greateſt height, God has ſtill ſome, though few, that retain their integrity, and cleave to him and his ways.* It has been found ſo in all ages of the church. In the old world there was a Noah; in Sodom a Lot; among the children of Iſrael in Egypt a Moſes, who all retained their integrity, and cleaved to the Lord and his ways. Of Moſes it is ſaid, Heb. xi. 24, 25, 26. that 'when he was come to years, he refuſed to be called the 'ſon of Pharaoh's daughter; chuſing rather to ſuffer 'affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the 'pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon; eſteeming the reproach 'of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures in Egypt: 'for he had reſpect unto the recompence of the reward.' There was a Caleb and Joſhua in the generation in the wilderneſs; in Elijah's days *ſeven thouſand*; in Iſaiah's days *a ſmall remnant*, Iſa. i. 9. and likewiſe *a remnant* in Jeremiah's days, Jer. xv. 11. In the Jewiſh apoſtaſy under Antiochus, there were ſome that were tortured for the cauſe of God, and refuſed to *accept of deliverance* on ſinful terms, Heb. xi. 35. When Chriſt came into the world, there were ſome *waiting for the conſolation of Iſrael*; and when the Jewiſh nation was ruined at the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, there was *a remnant according to the election of grace.* In the grand apoſtaſy under the New-Teſtament, there were ſtill *two witneſſes* left, Rev. xi.

II. *How is it that the declining of a generation comes to be ſo very general, that ſo very few are left retaining their integrity, that they may be for ſigns and wonders in the day wherein they live.*

1. The corruption of human nature is the ſpring-head of it, Gen. vi. 5. 'And God ſaw that the wickedneſs 'of man was great in the earth, and that every imagi'nation of the thoughts of his heart was only evil con'tinually.' In the moſt favourable times for religion, in the moſt advantageous circumſtances men can be poſted in, man's nature has ſtill a ſtrong bias to the wrong ſide: therefore no wonder, that whatever ſet a church or people get at ſometimes towards religion, they do through time decline and go all wrong, according to the natural bias.

2. No due care taken for the religious education of thoſe who are ſpringing up, doth notably advance it. When religion falls low among parents, and thoſe in the place of parents having the training up of youth among their hands; it can hardly miſs to ſink among the children and youth: ſo that if the one be bad, the other muſt needs be worſe, but where ſovereign grace interpoſes, and hinders the native effect of the neglect and ill example. And here is one of the manifeſt cauſes of

the declining of religion in our day, in families, in pariſhes and in the miniſtry, alas! too. The ſignal corrupting of youth was one of the cauſes of the apoſtaſy of the generation in Noah's days; Gen. vi. 2. 'The ſons of 'God ſaw the daughters of men, that they were fair; 'and they took them wives of all which they choſe.'

3. Corruption of manners thus prevailing, every one ſerves to corrupt another, till the leaven has well nigh gone through the whole lump, Gen. vi. 12. *And God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt: for all fleſh had corrupted his way.* In a time of declining, ſin and wickedneſs is like a ball of ſnow rolled among ſnow, that ſtill grows bigger, one piece of ſnow licking up another; or like the water, the farther from the head the greater it grows, by the brooks that join it in its courſe. And dreadful execution is thus made three ways.

(1.) In all times there are ſome of no principles, that have no tincture of religion; but in reſpect of religion are like a ſheet of white paper. Theſe readily take on the firſt bad impreſſions, and ly a ready prey to evil counſel, and pernicious example. By this means thouſands are ruined by their falling into ill hands, and in an evil time; who might have got another caſt, if the ſtream of wickedneſs had not run ſo high in their day.

(2.) There are others who have a very ſlender gripe of religion. They have good meanings and inclinations; but alas! the evil day comes upon them ere they are rooted; and ſo the wind of an apoſtatizing time blowing hard, their fruit and leaf is blown off, and at length they are blown up by the root with it, and go cleverly away with the ſtream.

(3.) Many that have the root of the matter in them, they fall aſleep, and let down their watch, and they are carried off their feet too: and ſo, though they get their ſouls for a prey, they loſe the honour and advantage of retaining their integrity in their generation. Thus it is ſaid of ſome of the Lord's people, Pſal. xcix. 8. 'Thou 'waſt a God that forgaveſt them, though thou tookeſt 'vengeance of their inventions.' So Moſes and Aaron, for their provocation at Meribah, died in the wilderneſs, with the generation that had been a ſnare to them; and good Eli, for the little care he had of the young prieſts, to train them up rightly for his Maſter's work, never ſaw the captive ark return into Iſrael.

4. When a generation is thus poſting on in the road of apoſtaſy from God unto ruin, the Lord uſually takes home many of his own out from among them, Iſa. lvii. 1, 2. 'The righteous periſheth, and no man layeth it 'to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none con'ſidering that the righteous is taken away from evil to 'come. He ſhall enter into peace: they ſhall reſt in 'their beds, each one walking in his uprightneſs.' The good Lamech, Noah's father, died five years before the flood; and his good grandfather Methuſelah died in the very year it came on. Joſiah was taken away a little before the Babyloniſh captivity; Luther a little before the wars in Germany began; holy Rutherford died the very day before the act reſciſſory was paſſed 1661; and a great man of God in this church was taken away from among us in May 1720. Matters being thus, the declining goes on the faſter, the pillars being removed.

5. The declining humour by theſe means at length ſo prevails, that it makes its way over all oppoſition, and gets the maſtery, ſo as it carries all before it, like a flood. And at this height of it three things are remarkable.

(1.) Iniquity comes to be eſtabliſhed by a law. Thus ſome are ſaid to 'decree unrighteous decrees, and write 'grievouſneſs which they have preſcribed,' Iſa. x. 1. The ſin of the generation which began privately to ſet up its head, ſpreads, and is by degrees brought into reputation, till at length it turns truth and holineſs out of their ſeat, and ſits down in their place: and *good is called evil, and evil good*, Iſa. v. 20. And then all are not only allured, but commanded to entertain it: and in ſuch circumſtances the apoſtaſy of the generation cannot miſs to make a mighty progreſs, like Ephraim, Hoſ. v. 11. 'Ephraim is oppreſſed and broken in judgment: be'cauſe he willingly walked after the commandment.'

(2.) Shame is caſt on the way of God. Thus our Lord ſays, that ſome are 'aſhamed of him and his words 'in an adulterous and ſinful generation,' Mark viii. 38. And that ſhame drives many into the net. Then men muſt riſk either their conſcience, or credit and reputation; and muſt either be falſe to God, or fools in the eyes of the generation. No doubt Noah, when he was building his ark, and the reſt were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, would even be a laughing-ſtock to them. This is a mighty engine for corrupting of men. Many whom blows would not drive from their religion, are ſhamed out of it by an apoſtate generation pouring contempt on it.

(3.) The ſtream of the generation's favour runs all on the ſide of the declining. True ſeriouſneſs and tenderneſs ſerves only to make men overlooked, oppoſed, contemned, and deſpiſed; while ſuch as can go with the multitude, are in honour and eſtimation, Pſal. xii. throughout. The Prophet Jeremiah takes notice, chap. xii. 1. that *the way of the wicked proſpers*, and that *they are all happy that deal very treacherouſly*.

6. *laſtly*, What puts the cape-ſtone on the courſe of a generation's defection from God, and readily fills the cup to the brim, is perſecution of the way of God, and of any that will dare to retain their integrity. This is the native end of a declining courſe, and is readily found alſo to be the full ſea-mark, which when they come to, God calls them to an account for their apoſtaſy. Lot was long vexed in Sodom, at length they made an attack upon his houſe; and then their ruin came on. The Jews had a long day of declining, at length they crucified Chriſt; and inſtead of embracing the goſpel, they perſecuted the apoſtles; and ſo wrath came on them to the uttermoſt.

III. *Why are ſome, though few, ſtill left retaining their integrity, in ſuch a generation?*

1. Becauſe of God's faithfulneſs in his promiſe, Mat. xvi. 18. 'Upon this rock will I build my church, and 'the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt it.' The gates of hell may attack the church, and carry on their victory very far, but cannot prevail over her entirely. The floods may overflow her even to the neck, but ſhall never go quite over her head, and ſo utterly carry her away. Chriſt is ever in the midſt of her; and, though his attendants that cleave to him may be very few, there will always be ſome.

2. Becauſe God will not leave himſelf without a witneſs in an apoſtatizing generation. While the Antichriſtian apoſtaſy was going on, God would have his witneſſes againſt them maintained, Rev. xi. 3. Such a witneſs for God was Noah againſt the old world, and by his practice as well as his preaching condemned them, Heb. xi. 7. And this is the character of all thoſe who in a declining day cleave to the Lord and his way, Iſa. xliii. 10. *Ye are my witneſſes, ſaith the Lord*, Prov. xxviii. 4. *They that forſake the law, praiſe the wicked: but ſuch as keep the law, contend with them.* Therefore he bears them up for their work.

3. Becauſe therein the power of his grace appears moſt illuſtriouſly. That the Lord preſerved a Noah in the old world deluged with wickedneſs, before it was overflown with water; and a Lot in Sodom, where all were ſo very vile, was a ſort of miracle of grace, as the keeping of a candle burning in an ocean, where the waters are round about to extinguiſh it. There is an emphaſis in that, Rev. iii. 4. 'Thou haſt a few names, 'even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments.' There are ſome times when in ſome places people can hardly miſs to ſeem good, if they be not really ſo: but ſome times there are again, wherein it is extremely hard to get the road kept in the practice of religion, the ſtream runs ſo againſt it.

4. *laſtly*, The Lord preſerves them for a ſeed to bet-

ter days. What ſhould have come of the new world, if Noah had not been perfect in his generation? But he ſerved to carry the principles, and practice of religion into the generation after the flood. And as long as God has a church in the world, be the times never ſo bad, there will ſtill be ſome to cauſe the name of Chriſt to be remembered in all generations, according to that promiſe, Iſ. vi. 13. *But yet in it ſhall be a tenth, and it ſhall return*, &c.

Uſe 1. Whatever encouragement ſuch have, that turn their back on the way of religion and ſeriouſneſs, and take a ſinful latitude to themſelves from the multitude going their way, there is a witneſs againſt them ſtill left, that will riſe up in judgment againſt them, and condemn them. This was the caſe in Noah's days, Heb. xi. 7. 'By faith Noah being warned of God of things not ſeen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the ſaving of his houſe; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteouſneſs which is by faith.' Though iniquity is become faſhionable, and the ſtream of it overflows all its banks in our days; there are ſtill ſome, who for ten thouſand worlds would not take the ſinful liberty to themſelves that others take. And their way and practice writes death on theirs.

2. However bad the days are, let none pretend it cannot be better with them, becauſe their lot is caſt in ſuch an evil day. The ſpeat of wickedneſs never ran ſo high yet, as to carry all before it without exception. But there are ſome, who, if religion will do eaſily for them, will follow it; but they have no heart to ſtrive againſt the ſtream. Such are not for heaven, eſpecially in a declining day.

3. Be exhorted not to conform yourſelves to the ways of the declining generation wherein our lot is caſt; but be among the few who cleave to him and keep his way. It is hard, yet it is poſſible. *Noah was perfect in his generation*: it will be our ſin and ruin, if we be not ſo in ours. Awaken, and beſtir yourſelves to ſee to your ſtate, that ye be righteous by faith; and ſee to your life and converſation, that ye walk with God, as Noah did. And for direction take this other doctrine.

Doct. II. *God takes ſpecial notice of them for good, who in a declining generation retain their integrity and keep right, cleaving to him and his way in the face of a generation departing faſt from him.*

In diſcourſing this doctrine, I ſhall ſhew,

I. What this rare attainment is, this perfection in ſuch a generation; or, How men keep right, like Noah in ſuch a generation.

II. What are the advantages of this courſe, in which the Lord takes ſpecial notice for good, of thoſe who follow it in a declining day.

III. *laſtly*, Apply.

I. The *firſt* thing is to ſhew *what this rare attainment, is, this perfection in ſuch a generation; or, How men keep right, like Noah, in ſuch a generation.* It is then to be,

1. Sincere, and not a hypocrite. Sincerity is goſpel-perfection; and where it is wanting, nothing is accepted, as is clear from the caſe of Amaziah, who *did that which was right in the ſight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart*, 2 Chron. xxv. 2. and where this ſincerity is, the man is accepted notwithſtanding of many imperfections, as is clear from the caſe of Aſa, who though *the high places were not taken away, yet his heart was perfect before the Lord*, chap. xv. 17. Noah was a ſincere ſoul, elſe he had not got ſuch a noble character. Hypocriſy will never carry out before the Lord; a form of godlineſs will be no ſufficient preſervative in ſuch a generation, wherein the maſk is taken off many faces, and the thoughts of many hearts made manifeſt.

2. Downright for God, without going aſide to the ways of carnal wiſdom. The apoſtle gives us an excellent notion of it from his own practice, 2 Cor. i. 12. 'For our rejoicing is this, the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our converſation in the world.' The man conſiders what is *the good and acceptable will of the Lord*: and that diſcovered he follows it in ſimplicity, without conſulting with fleſh and blood; reckoning it his greateſt wiſdom to cleave to the Lord's way, and that his greateſt wiſdom lies in diſcerning the ſteps of the great Leader before him. Other wiſdom will be a falſe light.

3. Tender in one's private walk and converſation, as under the eye of the all ſeeing God. This David could ſay from his own experience, Pſal. xviii. 23. 'I was upright before him, and I kept myſelf from mine iniquity.' Men will in vain pretend to be perfect in their generation, by keeping a fair outſide in public, while in the mean time they make no conſcience of the ſecret life of a Chriſtian, which the world cannot be witneſs to. Thoſe that truly keep right in ſuch a day, ſet themſelves above all to keep their own hearts, and to mortify their own luſts, and to keep up communion with God in duties; and do not ſatisfy themſelves with a parcel of outward performances.

4. Watchful againſt ſnares and temptations, that one be not led away with them. The perfect man has his eyes in his head to diſcern his hazard; and his ſoul cries within him, 'Lead us not unto temptation.' And he labours to ſtand at a diſtance from ſin: And, (1.) From the ſin with which he is moſt eaſily led aſide, Pſal. xviii. 23. Heb. xii. 1. (2.) From the ſnares and ſins of the time wherein he lives. He ſees the ſnares of that ſort many, as they always are in a declining time; and it is his buſineſs to *keep his garments clean*, Rev. iii. 4. Whatever his ſtation is in the world, he will never think himſelf out of hazard of being led aſide into ſinful courſes while all fleſh have corrupted their way.

5. Proof againſt ill example, which is the great engine of Satan for carrying on apoſtaſy in ſuch a day and generation. So was Noah in the old world, and Lot in Sodom. They who ſet God before them as they ought, while he bids them ſtand, though all the world ſhould be moving forward, will not dare to follow. Ill example is the ruin of many in ſuch a day. Hence ſaith our Lord, Matth. xxiv. 12. 'Becauſe iniquity ſhall abound, the love of many ſhall wax cold.'

6. A mourner for the ſins of others. Hence we read of ſome that *ſighed and cried for all the abominations that were done in the midſt of Jeruſalem*, Ezek. ix. 4. And righteous Lot, while *dwelling in Sodom, in ſeeing and hearing, vexed his righteous ſoul from day to day, with the unlawful deeds* of that people, 2 Pet. ii. 8. Such a one will not think himſelf unconcerned in the ſins of the generation wherein he lives. He ſees God is diſhonoured, his wrath is provoked, the ſouls of the ſinners are thereby put in the utmoſt hazard, and his own ſoul is in hazard of being held conſenting thereto. So love to God, to his neighbour and to himſelf, kindles in his ſoul a real grief and ſorrow for the ſins of the generation.

7. An oppoſer of the ſinful courſes of the day and generation, wherein he lives, as he hath acceſs. Hence is that exhortation, Eph. v. 11. 'Have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs, but rather reprove them.' It is not enough to ſtand off from them ourſelves; but we ought to witneſs againſt ſin in others, to reprove, admoniſh, and exhort ſinners to take heed of the God provoking courſes. The Lord in ſuch a time ſaith, *Who is on my ſide?* And we are to take part with God againſt a ſinful, backſliding, and whoriſh generation.

8. *laſtly*, In a word, It is to be rowing againſt the ſtream of iniquity, and endeavouring to draw the nearer God that others are going far from him; to be beſt

when others are at the worſt; to be the more earneſt, ſerious and active in real religion, the more low we ſee it falling in our day.

This may afford us matter of lamentation, ſhewing there are few perfect in our generation. (1.) Moſt part are under viſible blemiſhes in their outward converſation. (2.) They that are otherwiſe, are aſleep; they are not active for God: if they be not carried away with the ſtream, they do not oppoſe it neither.

II. The *ſecond* thing is, to ſhew, *What are the advantages of this courſe, in which the Lord takes ſpecial notice for good, of thoſe who follow it in a declining day.*

1. Sweet peace of conſcience in keeping of the Lord's way, while others are diſregarding it. Hence ſaith the apoſtle, 2 Cor. i. 12. 'Our rejoicing is this, the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our converſation in the world.' Though it is hard to row againſt the ſtream of an apoſtatizing generation, and may expoſe one to much trouble; yet there is a quietneſs within, a certain ſatisfaction that ariſeth from reflecting upon, that one is in the way of duty, and through grace gets it kept. And this will be of great value with thoſe who by experience have learned, that inward peace is preferable to peace with all the world, and is to be bought at any rate, ſold at none. Hence ſaith Job, chap. xxvii. 6. 'My righteouſneſs I hold faſt, and will not let it go; my heart ſhall not reproach me ſo long as I live.'

2. Communion with God, and acceſs to him in duties. Hence ſaith our Lord, John xiv. 21. 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me, ſhall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifeſt myſelf to him.' As the endeavour to keep right in ſuch a day, gives the upright ſoul many errands to God, and obliges him to be looking much to the Lord, whence muſt come his help; ſo the Lord even allows the ſoul acceſs to him in ſuch a caſe in a ſpecial manner, Rev. xi. 4. and though no works of theirs, but the blood of Jeſus only is the ground of their confidence before the Lord, yet uprightneſs for God removes the impediments which hinder the ſoul's confidence. Hence ſaith the apoſtle, 1 John iii. 21. 'Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.' If any have communion with God in ſuch a day, it ſhall be they. Hence ſaith the prophet, Micah ii. 7. 'O thou that art named the houſe of Jacob, is the Spirit of the Lord ſtraitned? are theſe his doings? do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?'

3. A ſweet allowance of furniture, ſtrength, and ſupport, for the duty called for, Prov. x. 29. 'The way of the Lord is ſtrength to the upright.' Sometimes the Lord calls his people to the field of battle; and unbelief ſays, it will not do, for they are naked and unarmed; but the call being clear, they that would keep right in an evil day, muſt venture forward at their Lord's back, though naked, leaving it on him by faith to provide them weapons when and where he will, 1 Sam. ii. 4. And then they are provided in the field of battle, if not before. Hence ſaith our Lord, Matth. x. 19. 'When they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye ſhall ſpeak, for it ſhall be given you in that ſame hour what ye ſhall ſpeak.' And whoever uprightly venture thus to ſwim againſt the ſtream, they may aſſure themſelves the Lord will be the lifter up of their head.

4. Seaſonable providential appearances for them. God has a watchful eye for good over them who keep his way, and he will protect them in it, while he has uſe for them that way, Pſal. cxxi. 2, 3. 'My help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth. He will not ſuffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee, will not ſlumber.' They that would carry uprightly in a declining time, muſt lay their account to run a riſk; but it ever remains a truth, Prov. x. 9. *He that walketh uprightly, walketh ſurely.* And whoever do uprightly appear for God in an evil day, ſooner or later God will appear for them, with a favourable caſt of his hand, Prov. xvi. 7. 'When a man's ways pleaſe the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.' Lot was a witneſs againſt Sodom's wickedneſs; and at length they make a furious attack on him and his houſe, but God ſeaſonably interpoſeth for his reſcue, Gen. xix. 9, 10, 11. Jeremiah in the road of duty was in hazard of death, but the princes reſcue him, eſpecially Ahikam, Jer. xxvi. Samuel witneſſeth againſt Iſrael their bent for a king; but there was no diverting them; the ſpeat ran ſo high, that he could not ſtem it: bnt God joined his teſtimony from heaven againſt the people's courſe by thunder and rain, which left a conviction in their breaſts, ſo that 'they greatly feared the Lord and Samuel,' 1 Sam. xii. 18.

5. *laſtly*, Special favour in a ſuffering time, when the Lord ariſeth to plead his controverſy with the ſinful generation. Hence ſaith the prophet Habakkuk, chap. iii. 16. *When I heard, my belly trembled: my lips quivered at the voice: rottenneſs entered into my bones, and I trembled in myſelf, that I might reſt in the day of trouble.* The beſt ſecurity againſt a time of ſuffering, is uprightneſs for God in a ſinning declining time.

(1.) Sometimes they are ſo ſeen to in a time of common calamity, that they are freed from trouble, as if they dwelt alone, or had a Goſhen to live in, while darkneſs is over all the land. Hence ſaith the Lord, Ezek. ix. 4. Go through the midſt of the city, through 'the midſt of Jeruſalem, and ſet a mark upon the foreheads of the men that ſigh, and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midſt thereof:' an alluſion to the Iſraelites in Egypt. Noah had an ark when the old world was deſtroyed; Lot was ſaved when Sodom was burnt up. God can hide whom he will, when the world is in the greateſt confuſion.

(2.) A mitigation of trouble, when they meet with it in a ſuffering time. Though they may drink of the cup of common calamity, it ſhall be of the brim, not of the bottom; there ſhall be much ſweet mixture in it, Jer. xv. 11. *The Lord ſaid, Verily it ſhall be well with thy remnant, verily I will cauſe the enemy to intreat thee well in the time of evil, and in the time of affliction.* The rod ſhall be to them but the rod of a man, a weak man, that lays on but a ſlender ſtroke.

3. They ſhall be ſafe from the ſting of trouble: they will have eaſe within, though trouble without, Hab. iii. 10. forecited. Their ſtanding at a diſtance from the provocations that brought on the ſtroke, will afford much ſweet peace, while others find themſelves taken in the ſnares their own hands have made.

(4.) They lie faireſt to be preſerved from the temptations of a ſuffering time, and to be carried cleanly through. Hence is that promiſe, Rev. iii. 10. 'Becauſe thou haſt kept the word of my patience, I alſo will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which ſhall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth.' The Lord in his juſt judgment, for the ſins of a backſliding generation, often brings ſuch a trial as does not only expoſe men to ſuffering, but to ſinning, and renouncing the religion that is left them. And it is too likely that may come to be the trial of this generation: but they that now retain their integrity, are faireſt to be preſerved in ſuch a day.

(5.) *laſtly*, Let the worſt come to the worſt in the matter of trouble, it ſhall be well with them. Joſiah had a promiſe of dying in peace, 2 Kings xxii. 20, yet he died in battle: but the promiſe ſtood firm; for die as they will, they die in peace who die within the covenant of peace. The grave is one of God's hiding-places for his people.

Uſe. I exhort you to be perfect in this generation, to be perſons of integrity, downright for God, rowing againſt the ſtream of this ſinful generation. And in order to that,

1. Purge your converſation from the groſs pollutions of the outward man. It is the character of ‘the man who ſhall aſcend into the hill of the Lord,’ that ‘he hath clean hands, and a pure heart; hath not lift up his ſoul unto vanity, nor ſworn deceitfully,’ Pſal. xxiv. 3, 4. Be blameleſs in your walk before the world, ſtanding at a diſtance from the profanity of the generation. It is true, that is not enough; but, alas! wickedneſs is at ſuch a height in the generation, that there are few whoſe outward converſation is not ſtained with curſing, ſwearing, banning, drunkenneſs, deceitfulneſs in their dealings, lying, profanation of the Sabbath, *&c.* Sure, whoever they be that are perfect in this generation, it is not the like of theſe.

2. Be Chriſtians indeed, in the inner man. Such an one is deſcribed, Rom. ii. 28, 29. ‘For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumciſion, which is outward in the fleſh. But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly: and circumciſion is that of the heart, in the ſpirit, and not in the letter, whoſe praiſe is not of men but of God.’ For real religion is under a deep decay: and as profanity is devouring the ſouls of ſome, woful formality is preying on the ſouls of others. The virgins are generally ſlumbering and ſleeping, and the life of religion is much gone. O ſtrive to be among the *few names which have not defiled their garments,* Rev. iii. 4. And here I would recommend three things to you.

(1.) Study to be experimental Chriſtians, Pſal. xxxiv. 8. ‘O taſte and ſee that the Lord is good: bleſſed is the man that truſteth in him.’ Experimental religion is much worn out in our day. Men ſatisfy themſelves with dry ſapleſs notions of religion in their heads, while they labour not to find the power of truth on their ſouls: and hence it comes to paſs, that truth itſelf is a-going ſo faſt. See the promiſe, John viii. 32. *And ye ſhall know the truth, and the truth ſhall make you free.*

(2.) Be exerciſed Chriſtians, like Paul, Acts xxiv. 16. *Herein do I exerciſe myſelf* (*ſays he*) *to have always a conſcience void of offence toward God, and toward men:* exerciſed about your ſoul's caſe, carefully obſerving whether ye be going back, or coming forward; looking to the ills of your hearts, your pride, paſſion, untenderneſs, *&c.* and ſetting yourſelves to mortify theſe; exerciſed to know what is ſin and duty in particular caſes; to notice the Lord's comings or goings with reſpect to your ſouls.

(3.) Lively and active Chriſtians. The prophet complains, that it was otherwiſe in his time, Iſa. lxiv. 7. ‘There is none that calleth upon thy name, that ſtirreth up himſelf to take hold of thee: for thou haſt hide thy face from us, and haſt conſumed us, becauſe of our iniquities.’ In public, and in private and ſecret duties, ſtir up yourſelves to get near God; to get the ſavour of religion on your ſpirits; and ſtrive againſt deadneſs, formality, and ſpiritual numbneſs, that has ſeized on moſt of the generation.

3. Be of a public ſpirit. That is a ſpirit ſunk ſore in this generation; in place of which is come a deteſtable neutrality, indifferency, ſelfiſhneſs, and worldlineſs, Phil. ii. 21. *For all ſeek their own, not the things which are Jeſus Chriſt's.* Be ye concerned for the public honour of God, for the ark of God, for Zion in all her diſtreſſes. Let your hearts ſay as Pſal. cxxxvii. 5, 6. ‘If I forget thee, O Jeruſalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jeruſalem above my chief joy.’ They that are not with Chriſt in ſuch a caſe are againſt him.

4. Be of a goſpel ſpirit, having high thoughts of the free grace of God, and deep impreſſions of the nothingneſs of man, and all that he can do, Gal. vi. 14. *God forbid* (ſays the apoſtle) *that I ſhould glory, ſave in the croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.* Learn and hold faſt goſpel principles in your heads; keep up a goſpel-frame in your hearts; and have a goſpel-practice in your walk. Learn the art of living by faith, believing the promiſe, and on the credit of the promiſe going out in duty. Let love conſtrain you to obedience, and be ſtrict and tender in the whole of your walk, and ſo adorn the profeſſion of the goſpel.

5. Be accurate obſervers of your duty to God, whom the generation we live in has much caſt behind their back. Be conſcientious in the duties of godlineſs, frequent and fervent. Keep your hearts for him; worſhip him reverently, converſe much with his word; give yourſelves to prayer; let him have the morning as well as the evening ſacrifice in ſecret and in your families; name his dreadful and holy name as little as you can in common converſation, and never mention it but with awe on your ſpirits; ſanctify his day, and let alone diſcourſing of your worldly buſineſs before and betwixt ſermons, at home or at the kirk.

6. Be nice obſervers of juſtice and truth in your dealings with men; for both theſe are rare to a marvel in this generation, as they were of old. See Iſa. lix. 13, 14, 15. Micah vii. 1. &c. O Sirs, do not go with the ſtream of the generation. Know, that God is a God of juſtice and truth, and his ſoul lothes the unjuſt and deceitful man. A little gained or kept back by injuſtice, may bring a blaſting curſe on all you have, and may make it melt yet like ſnow before the ſun. Make not the way of the multitude the ſtandard of juſtice in your dealings: but ‘to the law and to the teſtimony: if they ſpeak not according to this word, it is becauſe there is no light in them.’ Eſpecially I recommend to you, and, as the meſſenger of God, do bind it this day on your conſciences, ‘All things whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to them: for this is the law and the prophets,’ Matth. vii. 12. Lie not; but be ye tender of ſpeaking truth, as ye would be tender of your ſouls. That is the character of the Lord's people, Iſa. lxiii. 8. *Children that will not lie.* Be ſlaves to your word; if it ſhould be to your loſs, do not break your promiſes. This is the character of a citizen of Zion, Pſal. xv. 4. *He ſweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.* And in a ſpecial manner do not venture to break your promiſes, and alter your bargains with the pooreſt ſort to their loſs: Prov. xxii. 22. ‘Rob not the poor becauſe he is poor: neither oppreſs the afflicted in the gate.’

7. Oppoſe and ſet yourſelves againſt ſin and wickedneſs in others, as ye have acceſs; and ſo endeavour to ſtem the tide of the apoſtaſy of the generation: Eph. v. 11. *Have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs, but rather reprove them.* Appear on the Lord's ſide, as witneſſes for him, and his ways of truth and holineſs: and diſcountenance and bear teſtimony againſt the diſhonour you ſee done to his bleſſed name. Strengthen the weak in hazard to be led away; admoniſh and warn thoſe before whom temptations are laid; and ſhew yourſelves adverſaries to all ſinful courſes. Hence are thoſe exhortations, 1 Theſſ. v. 14. ‘We exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble minded, ſupport the weak, be patient towards all men.’ Jude verſ. 22, 23. ‘Of ſome have compaſſion, making a difference: and others ſave with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment ſpotted by the fleſh.’ If ye be Chriſt's diſciples, ye are *the ſalt of the earth,* Matth. v. 13. to reſiſt putrefaction.

8. Do your endeavour to get a right ſet in the young generation, who are in great hazard at this day. It ſhould be the work of all that fear God, to be concerned for poſterity, after the example of David, Pſal. xlv. 17. ‘I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore ſhall the people praiſe thee for ever and ever;’ and therefore to give good example and precept in their families, as did Abraham, Gen. xviii. 19. ‘For I know him, that he will command his children, and his houſehold after him, and they ſhall

'keep the way of the Lord, to do juſtice and judgment:' and to be uſeful to all others of the younger ſort, as they have opportunity, to recommend the way of the Lord to them, and to ſet them at odds with the ſinful courſes of the day. The hope of future times lies in them; and what will become of the land, and of the work of God, his cauſe and intereſt in it, if they be bred up in the ways of the preſent apoſtaſy of the generation?

When we look to the riſing generation at this day, they are viſibly declining, generally corrupt in their manners, and worſe than their fathers; however, in a few years, church, and ſtate, and country will be in their hands. This is a weighty conſideration for all who are concerned for religion. I would therefore drop a few words to thoſe of the younger ſort of both ſexes.

1. While you are entering on the ſtage of the world at this time, you muſt either act the part of witneſſes for God againſt the ſinful courſes of the day, or enter into the conſpiracy of the generation againſt God. Ye cannot be neutral, however ye may think to be ſo, Matth. xii. 30. 'He that is not with me, (ſaith Chriſt,) is againſt 'me: and he that gathereth not with me, ſcattereth 'abroad.' Therefore conſider well which to chuſe, and reſolve to ſiſt yourſelves forthwith on Chriſt's ſide. Say as Joſhua, chap. xxiv. 15. 'And if it ſeem evil unto 'you to ſerve the Lord, chuſe you this day whom you 'will ſerve, whether the gods which your fathers ſerved, 'that were on the other ſide of the flood, or the gods of 'the Amorites, in whoſe land ye dwell: but as for me 'and my houſe, we will ſerve the Lord.'

2. Know that this land is married to the Lord in ſolemn covenants to reform what is amiſs, and to preſerve the reformation in doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline, and government, and to oppoſe whatſoever is contrary to ſound godlineſs. And ſince that time there have been ſpeats of defection and apoſtaſy from God. But among our fathers were found witneſſes for God, who, at the expence of all that was dear to them in the world, and even of their own lives, tranſmitted the teſtimony for truth and holineſs unto us. It lies upon your own conſciences to take it up, and maintain it; for ye muſt be anſwerable to God for it in your ſtations: and wo, wo will be to that generation in whoſe hand it falls. This was expreſsly enjoined to, and ſtrongly inculcated upon the Jewiſh church, as ye may ſee from Pſal. lxxviii. 5, 6, 7. 'For he eſtabliſhed a teſtimony in Jacob, and appoint'ed a law in Iſrael, when he commanded our fathers 'that they ſhould make them known to their children. 'That the generation to come might know them, even 'the children which ſhould be born: who ſhould a'riſe, and declare them to their children. That they 'might ſet their hope in God, and not forget the works 'of God; but keep his commandments.'

3. The ſpeat of irreligion, neglect and contempt of ſeriouſneſs, runs ſo high among the young generation of this day, that ye are in great hazard of being carried away with it; and can hardly miſs to be ſo, if ye do not look well to yourſelves. Therefore take theſe advices.

(1.) Begin the world as ye would deſire to end it, Eccleſ. xii. 1. *Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not nor the years draw nigh, when thou ſhalt ſay, I have no pleaſure in them.* Though ye be young now, ye muſt be old, and go the way of all fleſh then, if not before. It is pity to ſtand at a diſtance from religion and ſeriouſneſs while ye are young, ſince ye know the day will come when ye will need it, and ye know not how ſoon.

(2.) Give an obedient ear to good advice for your ſouls. Nature is corrupt, youth is headſtrong, raw, and unexperienced; there is much need for to be pliable to the counſels of thoſe concerned for your ſpiritual welfare, Prov. v. 11, 12. *leſt thou mourn at the laſt, when thy fleſh and thy body are conſumed; and ſay, How have I hated inſtruction, and my heart deſpiſed reproof?* A few years may come to let you ſee the folly of the way of wilfulneſs.

(3.) Take heed to your company, 1 Cor. xv. 33. 'Be 'not deceived; Evil communications corrupt good 'manners.' Ill company has been the ruin of many, and is ſo at this day. And many have fallen into ſuch company in their youth, as has given them an ill ſet, that has ſtuck to them all their days; or led them into ſuch courſes, as have ſoon ruined them.

(4.) Obſerve carefully and improve what ye ſee befalling young people as well as others. You ſee there are of that ſort carried off to eternity in the middle of their days; and is it not reaſonable you ſhould timely ſee to your own ſtate, in caſe it be your lot too? You ſee what wretched ſnares the folly of youth betrays many into; and be ye therefore on your guard. Take heed of ſad examples ſet before you, leſt ye become examples to others.

(5.) Study to learn the leſſon of the vanity of the world, Eccleſ. i. 2. What is youth, ſtrength, beauty, wealth, *&c.* but fair fading flowers, that laſt not, but are quickly gone? Ceaſe your towering imaginations, your flouriſhing hopes of worldly contents, your big promiſes to yourſelves of what fine things you may reach; theſe will but make your diſappointments the more cutting.

(6.) Conſecrate yourſelves to the Lord; and let Chriſt Jeſus, *the plant of renown, the chief among ten thouſands*, have your hearts and affections while ye are young, Prov. xxiii. 26. 'My ſon, (ſays the Lord,) give 'me thine heart, and let thine eyes obſerve my ways.' Lay hold of him in the covenant of grace, and knit unto him by faith, and ſo lay your meaſures for your welfare in time and eternity.

(7.) Carry yourſelves tenderly and religiouſly, being holy in the whole of your converſation: Heb. xii. 14. 'Follow peace with all men, and holineſs, without which 'no man ſhall ſee the Lord.' Whatever be your ſtation in the world, be conſcientious in the duties of it, looking on the all-ſeeing God as the party with whom ye have chiefly to do. And particularly be modeſt in your garb, ſpeech, and behaviour; that Satan may not carry on his triumph at the rate he has often done in this place, to the diſhonour of God, reproach of religion, and the ruin of ſouls.

(8.) *laſtly*, Eye God ſeriouſly, and walk by his counſel, in your ſettlement in the world, Prov. iii. 6. 'In 'all thy ways acknowledge him, and he ſhall direct thy 'paths.' Lay your matters before the Lord in prayer, and, in dependance on him for light, weigh them in the balance of ſanctified reaſon, according to the general directions of the word; and walk as the Lord is pleaſed to diſcover his mind. Eſpecially in your marriages acknowledge God, and walk by his direction. The neglect of this in the old world, was one of the ſprings of that wickedneſs that brought on the flood: and that ſpring is faſt running at this day, carrying on the apoſtaſy of the generation.

I ſhall give you the following *Motives* to preſs you to be perfect in this generation, as you have been exhorted. Conſider,

1. It will be a great diſcovery of your ſincerity, and unfeigned love to the Lord and the way of holineſs. 'Noah was a juſt man, and perfect in his generations.' A declining time is a trying time, and the naughtineſs of many is thereby diſcovered; it is a ſifting time, and there is much refuſe appears. In times wherein religion and ſeriouſneſs are in vogue, as ſometimes they have been, many put on the maſk of religion that have nothing of it in reality: and then the time turns, and wickedneſs goes with open mouth; ſo men caſt off their maſk, and appear in their own colours, and then appears who have it in reality, 1 Cor. xi. 19. 'For there muſt 'be hereſies among you, that they which are approved, 'may be made manifeſt among you.'

2. It is a noble, heaven like diſpoſition, to be perfect in ſuch a generation; to cleave to Chriſt, when the generation is ſo generally turning their back on him, John vi. 66, 67, 68. It ſpeaks a man to have a rooted prin-

ciple in him for God and his way, and not to be carried by the mean motives of the world's applauſe, eaſe, &c. towards religion, but out of conſcience towards God.

3. It will glorify God very much; and that is the great buſineſs we have to do in the world, agreeable to what is ſaid, 1 Cor. x. 31. ‘Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatſoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.’ compare Matth. v. 6. ‘Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.’ This will be a teſtimony for God againſt a ſinful generation, the keeping up of a ſtandard for him, while ſo many ſtandards are diſplayed againſt him: Prov. xxviii. 4. ‘They that forſake the law, praiſe the wicked; but ſuch as keep the law, contend with them.’ Alas! what ſhould come of his declarative glory, if there be none to ſhew a reſpect to his commands?

4. It is the beſt ſervice ye can do for the generation, like David, who ‘ſerved his own generation by the will of God,’ Acts xiii. 36. No man is born for himſelf: every man is obliged to ſeek the good of mankind, and particularly to lay himſelf out for the good of the generation wherein he lives. Now, there is a twofold good to be done the generation this way. (1.) It is a proper mean to keep them back from the way of ſin, and to gain them to the way of the Lord. Example has a powerful influence. Hence is that exhortation, 1 Pet. iii. 1. ‘Ye wives, be in ſubjection to your own huſbands, that if any obey not the word, they alſo may without the word be won by the converſation of the wives.’ And if one ſoul can be gained that way, from the way of ſin, how deſirable is it? (2.) It is a proper mean to keep off wrath; it is the *bearing up of the pillars of a land*, Pſal. lxxv. 3. If there had been but ten righteous men in Sodom, the Lord would have ſpared it for their ſakes.

5. Suppoſe it ſhould not be effectual to ſtop the career of any in their ſin, yet it would leave a conviction of ſin in their conſciences. Hence the apoſtle exhorts the Philippians, chap. ii. 15, 16. to ‘be blameleſs and harmleſs, the ſons of God, without rebuke, in the mids of a crooked and perverſe nation; among whom (ſays he) ye ſhine as lights in the world: holding forth the word of life: that I may rejoice in the day of Chriſt, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.’ A holy tender converſation, though wicked mens corruptions riſe againſt it, yet their conſciences approve of it: and while they are running down the godly man for it, yet in their conſciences they have a ſecret honour for him.

6. It is a debt ye owe to poſterity. Hence ſays the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. xlv. 17. *I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore ſhall the people praiſe thee for ever and ever.* The keeping of the way of God in a declining generation, is a tranſmitting of the teſtimony for God to theſe yet uuborn: and the going the way of the multitude, is a betraying of them, as it were a conſpiring to take the light out of the room they are coming into, that they may have nothing elſe but darkneſs.

7. It is an honourable thing. It is to be a witneſs for God; and this is one of the characters of his people, Iſ. xliii. 10. ‘Ye are my witneſſes, ſaith the Lord.’ Behold the honourer of God ſhall be honoured, when thoſe that deſpiſe him ſhall be lightly eſteemed,’ 1 Sam. ii. 30. Prov. x. 7. ‘The memory of the juſt is bleſſed, but the name of the wicked ſhall rot.’ How ſavoury is the name of Noah, Lot, Caleb, and Joſhua, at this day, while the name of the old world, Sodom, &c. is held in diſgrace?

8. It is the beſt courſe ye can take to be ſafe in the evil day, when the Lord calls the generation to an account. A ſinning time will be followed with a ſuffering time; and it is good to prepare for it in time. They quite miſtake their meaſures, who go off the Lord's way for ſafety, Prov. x. 9. *He that walketh uprightly, walketh ſurely: but he that perverteth his ways, ſhall be known.*

9. *laſtly*, It will be moſt comfortable in a dying hour: as it was to the good king Hezekiah, when he ſaid, ‘Remember now, O Lord, I beſeech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy ſight,’ Iſa. xxxviii. 3. Sinful going with a multitude, coming in remembrance on a death bed, makes bitter reflections: whereas that is ſweet, which is mentioned, 2 Cor. i. 12. ‘Our rejoicing is this, the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God we have had our converſation in the world.’

I ſhall conclude all with the following *directions.*

Direct. 1. See in the firſt place, to be juſt by faith in Jeſus Chriſt. Where the ſoul has not the imputed righteouſneſs of Chriſt, there can be no righteouſneſs of a holy life. For the unjuſtified man is under the curſe; he wants the root of good works, viz. faith. But the ſoul furniſhed with faith, is furniſhed for holy walking.

2. Make the word of God your rule, and not mens. *All men are liars*, Rom. iii. 4. It is dangerous for one to be ſatisfied with a thing, juſt becauſe men are ſo. Moſt men, good men, will not be a ſafe ſtandard in a declining time.

3. Labour for holy courage in the Lord's way; men are in hazard of being aſhamed of Chriſt in a ſinful time. There is need of a brow to face the daring wickedneſs of ſuch a generation.

4. Labour to be reſolute for God, and a good conſcience, Eph. vi. 15. They that would row againſt the ſtream, muſt be reſolute, like Joſhua, chap. xxiv. 15. who, whatever others ſhould do, reſolved, with his houſe, *to ſerve the Lord.*

5. Let not the world's account of ſingularity have weight with you. They will be apt to ‘think it ſtrange that you run not with them to the ſame exceſs of riot, ſpeaking evil of you,’ 1 Pet. iv. 4. But do not regard their opinions or cenſures. Many comply with ſinful courſes, becauſe they cannot away with being ſingular. But better be alone in God's way, than out of it with all the world. God's people can hardly miſs to be a world's wonder ſometimes, as was the caſe with Joſhua, and his fellows, Zech. iii. 8. ‘Hear now, O Joſhua the high prieſt, thou and thy fellows that ſit before thee: for they are men wondered at.’

6. *laſtly*, Keep eternity much in view: 2 Cor. iv. 18. ‘Look not at the things which are ſeen, but at the things which are not ſeen; for the things which are ſeen, are temporal; but the things which are not ſeen, are eternal.’ This is an excellent help to get right through an evil world. He that conſiders, he knows not how ſoon he may ſtep out of the world into eternity, will take heed to his ſteps, that he ſtep not wrong in a declining day.

Therefore let the example of Noah, who *was a juſt man, and perfect in his generations, and walked with God*, have a due influence upon you to move you to follow his ſteps.

Perilous Times in the Last Days.

A SERMON preached at Etterick, November 14, 1731. a Faſt-day appointed by the Synod of Merſe and Teviotdale.

2 Tim. iii. 1.

This know alſo that in the laſt days perilous times ſhall come.

IN theſe words we have three things.

1. The notification of an event as future; *perilous times ſhall come.* Not that there are any times in themſelves perilous, or unlucky days, as the ſuperſtitious imagine: but they are perilous in reſpect of the evil that is a-going in them among men, verſe 2. *&c.* The word properly ſignifies *difficult:* times wherein it will be hard for people to keep their feet, to know how to carry themſelves, to keep out of danger, and keep a good conſcience: and theſe are perilous times.

Of theſe it is ſaid, they *ſhall come*, Gr. *ſhall be on.* They will be on men in the courſe of providence, to try what metal they are of; as darkneſs comes on after light, and adverſity after proſperity, in their turn.

2. The time of that event; *in the laſt days.* Theſe are, in ſcripture-ſtyle, the days of the Meſſias, the days of the goſpel, even that whole period, according to Acts ii. 17. 'And it ſhall come paſs in the laſt days, (ſaith God,) 'I will pour out of my Spirit upon all fleſh: and your 'ſons and your daughters ſhall propheſy, and your young 'men ſhall ſee viſions, and your old men ſhall dream 'dreams.' Heb. i. 1, 2. 'God who at ſundry times, 'and in divers manners, ſpake in time paſt unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken 'unto us by his Son.' It is an Old-Teſtament expreſſion, which ſounds *the laſt of the days;* and *days* being uſed abſolutely, theſe days are the days of the world, running from the creation to the end. Now, the days of the goſpel are the laſt part of theſe days, the concluding period of time. In theſe laſt days are ſeveral particular periods; the firſt of which was the laſt time of the Jewiſh ſtate, beginning from the time of our Saviour, to the deſtruction of Jeruſalem; and more periods followed, and ſome are yet to come; but from the time of our Saviour to the end of the world, is *the laſt days.*

3. The notice to be taken of that event: *This know alſo;* or rather *Now know this*, be informed of this, conſider it duly, and lay it to heart, that being forewarned, ye may be armed againſt the *perilous times.*

Doct. *As the days of the goſpel are the laſt days, ſo men ſhould know there are in the courſe of providence difficult and perilous times that come on in theſe days.*

In diſcourſing this doctrine we ſhall conſider,

I. The days of the goſpel as the laſt days.

II. The difficult and perilous times that come on in goſpel-days.

III. *laſtly*, Apply.

I. We ſhall conſider *the days of the goſpel as the laſt days.* And ſo we may take them up in a threefold view.

1. As the laſt days of the world, the latter end of time. With relation to them that oath is made, Rev. x. 6. 'That there ſhould be time no longer.' The world has laſted long now, it muſt have an end: and the laſt part of its time is begun, and far on. The morning and forenoon of the world are over: it is afternoon with it now, and drawing towards the evening.

2. As the days of the laſt diſpenſation of grace towards the world, with which God's dealing with ſinners for reconciliation ſhall be cloſed; according to Rev. x. 7. 'In the days of the voice of the ſeventh angel, the 'myſtery of God ſhall be finiſhed.' There have been three diſpenſations of grace in the world; the Patriarchal diſpenſation in the firſt days; the Moſaical diſpenſation in the middle days; and now the Chriſtian diſpenſation in the laſt days. The firſt two are now off the ſtage, and ſhall never come on again: and the third now is; and after it there ſhall never be another.

3. As the beſt days of the world in reſpect of the greateſt advantages attending them. The laſt works of God are always the greateſt, as ye may ſee in the account of the creation, Gen. i.: ſo the circumſtances of the world to come, are greater than thoſe of this. The goſpel-diſpenſation far excells the other two, in clearneſs, extenſiveneſs, and efficacy, through a larger meaſure of the Spirit. One may ſay, Have there not been perilous times in all the days? Noah's times in the firſt; the Egyptian bondage, Babyloniſh captivity, Antiochus's perſecution, &c. in the middle days: what wonder there be ſo in the laſt days? So indeed we ſay now: but conſider the Old Teſtament prophecies of the laſt days, and the big expectations that behoved to be raiſed thereupon; and ye will ſee need for this caution, frequent among the apoſtles, that even in *the laſt days*, for as great days as they were to be, there were *perilous times to be on.*

Uſe of this point.

1. Take heed how ye improve the goſpel. Delay not to comply with the call thereof; for ere long an account will be required of it. The days of it are the laſt days of the world, wherein time comes to an end, and the world muſt make their account for the entertainment they have given it. Behold he cometh from heaven, 'with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey 'not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.' 2 Theſſ. i. 7, 8.

2. Ye muſt be ſaved by falling in with the goſpel call and method of ſalvation, or periſh; for it is the laſt diſpenſation of grace. It is God's laſt method with a ſinful loſt world; after which they are not to expect a new one. It is the laſt ſhip going off for Immanuel's land; if ye ſlight it, ye ſhall have no more opportunity for ever: Heb. x. 26. 'For if we ſin wilfully after that 'we have received the knowledge of the truth, there 'remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſins.'

3. The contempt of the goſpel is the moſt dangerous adventure ever the world made, and will have the moſt terrible iſſue; goſpel-days being the laſt and beſt; and the better are the days, the contempt will be the more dangerous. The contempt of the Patriarchal diſpenſation was puniſhed by the flood: of the Moſaical, by the Babyloniſh captivity, and other heavy plagues, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21. How terrible muſt the puniſhment be of the contempt of the goſpel-diſpenſation? The deſtruction of Jeruſalem was the firſt ſwatch of it, the conflagration of the world will be the iſſue.

4. *laſtly*, Th[illegible] may be great and good things in days which yet are dangerous days: *in the laſt days ſhall be*

perilous times. The beſt days that ever Judea ſaw, were in the days that went before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem: the Spirit was poured out in ſuch a meaſure as never took place before nor ſince, Acts ii. 17. but there came afterwards a pouring out of *wrath to the uttermoſt*, 1 Theſſ. ii. 16. In theſe days of ours there are great things not to be overlooked. Learning, and the art of civil management in improving of ground and manufactures, are carried to a pitch they were not at before; which ſometimes brings in mind the caſe of the Cainites, among whom arts flouriſhed while piety went to wreck, as we may read, Gen. iv. 20, 21, 22. Nay there are good things done in theſe our days, great good things, the like to which were never done before in our nation; particularly the erecting of ſchools for propagating Chriſtian knowledge in the highlands and iſlands, the erecting of the infirmary in Edinburgh. Nay, ſome glorious goſpel truths have been in our days ſet in an uncommon light. And yet for all that they are certainly moſt perilous days. Which brings me to conſider,

II. *The difficult and perilous times that come on in goſpel days.* Even in the days of the goſpel, in which ſometimes there are ſweet and glorious times, yet at other times there come difficult and perilous times.

We muſt enquire what makes theſe perilous times.

1ſt, An old controverſy lying over untaken up. They that are in debt, are always in danger. The Jews were a bloody generation, from generation to generation they were murderers of their prophets; that was an old debt on the head of the generation in our Saviour's time. Matth. xxiii. 31. and made their time a perilous time. for it was like a train lying within their bowels, which at laſt came to blow them up, verſe 35. So good Joſiah's days were perilous times, by reaſon of an old controverſy laid in the days of Manaſſeh his grandfather, 2 Kings xxiii. 26.

Our times are ſo, by reaſon of the iniquity of the late times, which is like that of Baal-peor, that brought *a plague on the congregation of the Lord*, Joſh. xxii. 17. The avowed breach of covenants made with God for reformation; the blood of the Lord's people ſhed in fields and ſcaffolds, for adhering to the oath of God; the fining, confining, impriſoning, baniſhing of them, and other barbarous uſages of them, whereby for many years theſe nations carried on a war with heaven: theſe, I ſay, are an old debt lying on the head of Scotland, England, and Ireland, for which God will purſue them, and purſue ſo as it will appear to be both for principal and intereſt during the time it has lain over. Theſe things are forgotten, or laughed at now as what we have no concern in: a ſtone is rolled to the mouth of that ſepulchre. But God will readily ariſe, if the ſtone were ſealed, and they forgot quite and clean: 1 Theſſ. v. 3. 'For 'when they ſhall ſay, Peace and ſafety; then ſudden 'deſtruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a wo'man with child; and they ſhall not eſcape.'

2dly, Error or corruption of principles ſpreading. This was foretold to happen in the latter days, 1 Tim. iv. 1. *Now the Spirit ſpeaketh expreſsly, that in the latter times ſome ſhall depart from the faith, giving heed to ſeducing ſpirits, and doctrines of devils.* Then the fountains men drink at, are poiſoned; the faith once delivered to the ſaints, is exchanged for ſtrong deluſions, to believe lyes; and many are in hazard of following their pernicious ways.

There are three dangerous engines of this kind that the gates of hell are directing this day againſt the foundation of the church built on the rock.

1. *Legaliſm:* an attempt againſt the grace of Chriſt, bringing in a ſcheme of religion that has no relation to Jeſus Chriſt and his Spirit, putting a virtuous life in the room of Chriſt's righteouſneſs for acceptance with God, and the exerting of natural powers in the room of the influences of his Spirit. By which means the corruption of nature, and the neceſſity of regeneration, are buried in deep ſilence; and living by faith, attending the Spirit's influences, and communion with God, are branded as Enthuſiaſm; and deſertion is accounted the production of a crazy imagination. Thus a refined Heatheniſm is palmed on us for Chriſtianity.

2. *Arianiſm:* an attempt againſt the perſon of Chriſt, bringing a Chriſt that is not the Father's equal, not the moſt high God, independent, and ſelf-exiſtent: but an inferior god, an arbitrary, dependent being: thus ſtriking at the foundation of our ſalvation, taking away the infinite dignity of his perſon, which gives the ſufficient value to his ſacrifice. And it is to be feared, that when Chriſt ariſeth to vindicate his own glory, it will be found that the church of Scotland has not given ſufficient teſtimony of their indignation againſt this blaſphemy.

3. *Deiſm:* an attempt againſt all revealed religion, caſting off the whole goſpel and Bible by the lump, with the whole way of ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt; leaving us nothing, but that there is a God, and that this God is to be ſerved as our reaſon directs. Such a ſtroke was not given againſt Chriſtianity in the time of Prelacy, no not in the times of Popery. Scotland may, and ſhall ſay, Alas! for the union with England; we were going to ruin before, but we have run to ruin ſince that fatal time, as to our moſt valuable concerns.

3dly, Immoralities abounding. That this is the caſe in the laſt days, ye may conſult the text and context, 'This alſo know, that in the laſt days perilous times 'ſhall come. For men ſhall be lovers of their ownſelves, 'covetous, boaſters, proud, blaſphemers, diſobedient to 'parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affec'tion, truce-breakers, falſe accuſers, incontinent, fierce, 'deſpiſers of thoſe that are good, traitors, heady, high'minded, lovers of pleaſures more than lovers of God; 'having a form of godlineſs, but denying the power 'thereof.' The opening of the ſluice of impiety and wickedneſs, and the ſpreading and prevailing of ſcandalous practices, make perilous times.

If theſe make perilous times, ours are very perilous. I doubt if ever contempt of God, his goſpel, and all that is ſacred, was ever at a greater height. The firſt table and ſecond table are trampled on with a witneſs; ſo that we may ſay, Hoſ. iv. 1, 2, 3. 'Hear the word of the 'Lord, ye children of Iſrael: for the Lord hath a con'troverſy with the inhabitants of the land, becauſe there 'is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the 'land. By ſwearing, and lying, and killing, and ſteal'ing, and committing adultery, they break out, and 'blood toucheth blood. Therefore ſhall the land mourn, 'and every one that dwelleth therein ſhall languiſh, 'with the beaſts of the field, and with the fowls of hea'ven, yea, the fiſhes of the ſea alſo ſhall be taken away.' God's worſhip is contemned and ſlighted, his name abuſed and blaſphemed, and his Sabbaths profaned. Unfaithfulneſs prevails in all relations; murders, uncleanneſs, marriage-vows never more lightly treated, injuſtice and fraud in dealing, lying covetouſneſs, &c. What can be found among a people profeſſing the name of Chriſt, to bring on wrath, that is not to be found in our land at this day?

Here let us view the ſcandalous outbreakings among us. Many ſuch we ſee, opening the mouths of enemies to blaſpheme the way of God. But how few do we ſee truly humbled, but almoſt always more concerned for their own blaſted honour and reputation, than for the honour of God? And unleſs it be in thoſe things which by uſe require public ſatisfaction, people cannot endure to be touched or checked with their faults told them.

Many other things there are that make perilous times, and which make ours ſo; ſuch as, the hiding of the Lord's face, threatnings and ſymptoms of wrath; among which may be reckoned the terrible thunders by which ſo many were killed on the laſt day of July this year: the ſhock which the fruits of the earth endured in the harveſt, though providence ſeaſonably interpoſed, yet in a way that gives occaſion to ſing of mercy and judgment, and the murrain that in ſome places has appeared among the cattle.

But one thing deſerves particular notice, as rendering our time perilous, viz. the church joining with the ſtate in robbing the people of God of their juſt right to chuſe their own miniſters; and thruſting in miniſters on congregations violently and over their bellies. This is a ready way to fill the church with naughty men, to ruin religion, and quite mar the intereſt and ſucceſs of the goſpel, which are already very low.

I might here ſhew in what reſpects ſuch times are perilous, that they are perilous to the preſent and ſucceeding generations, to their ſouls and to their bodies.

And how they come in the courſe of providence to fall out by its permiſſion, viz. for proving and trying men, 1 Cor. xi. 19. 'For there muſt be alſo hereſies among you, that they which are approved, may be made manifeſt among you.'

But I will conclude, exhorting you therefore to know and lay it to heart, that our times are perilous times, and therefore to beſtir yourſelves for your own ſafety, and be on your guard. Let the peril of the times cauſe you to join yourſelf to God in Chriſt, and keep near him; beware of worldly-mindedneſs, inſtability and wavering, pride and ſelf conceit, Rev. vii. 3. Strive againſt the ſtream, if ye would not be carried away with it.

The End of Time, and the Myſtery of God finiſhed with it.

Several SERMONS, preached at Etterick, in the Year 1732.

Rev. x. 6, 7.

And ſware—— that there ſhould be time no longer: but---the myſtery of God ſhould be finiſhed.

THE going out of an old year, and the coming in of a new, doth ſo natively lead to conſider the the paſſing nature of time, that they muſt be very carnal, light, and inconſiderate, to whom ſuch an event occaſions not ſerious thoughts. For while one ſees time on ſuch a run, how can one miſs the thought of its running out, or that there *ſhall be time no longer?* as ſaith the text.

In which we have a depoſition, or a matter declared upon oath, made by a mighty angel, Chriſt the Angel of the covenant, whoſe glory and majeſty is inconceivable, as clothed with a cloud; darkening all created glory, as the ſun doth the ſtars; and whoſe diſpenſations of providence are ſteady and pure, as pillars of fire, verſ. 1. The geſture uſed by him in ſwearing, is not laying his hand upon the book, though he had one in his hand; that is Antichriſt's way of ſwearing, but it is lifting up the hand to heaven, verſ. 5. the natural and approved geſture of an oath, as being a ſolemn invocating of God who dwelleth there. The ſcope of the depoſition is, to comfort the church againſt the heavineſs of the reign of Antichriſt brought in by the fifth trumpet, as the Turks were by the ſixth. The parts of the depoſition are two:

1. The negative part, *that time ſhould be no longer;* Gr. *that time ſhall not be any more.* Moſt interpreters underſtand this reſtrictedly, of the time of the Roman empire, or the Antichriſtian tyranny; others, abſolutely, of the world's ending, times removal for good and all, and eternity ſucceeding in its room; no more days, months, or years. This I take to be the true ſenſe. For, (1.) It is agreeable to the ſcope, being a general including the particular of the time of the reign of Antichriſt, who is not totally deſtroyed till under the ſeventh vial, that brings in the end of the world, chap. xvi. 17---21. (2.) Moſt agreeable to the word, which is preciſely *time,* not *the time.* (3.) To the circumſtances of the action noted in the context: the little book, pointing at the ſmall number of events remaining to be fulfilled; the right foot on the ſea, the left on the earth, noting his univerſal dominion, how he could make the ſea move no more, and tread away this earth, verſ. 2. then the ſeven thunders, noting ſeven other things to take place under the ſeventh trumpet, *viz.* the ſeven vials, which bring the world to an end. And in relation to theſe, it is ſaid *time ſhould not be any more,* or longer than theſe are running, verſ. 3, 4. Finally, the deſcription of the party ſworn by, *viz.* God, that is, Chriſt himſelf, who ſwears by himſelf; deſcribed here as living for ever, moſt appoſitely to the mentioning of the ending of time, as Creator of the world and all therein, and therefore able to bring it to an end.

Object. But to what purpoſe ſhould that be confirmed by an oath, which John knew well enough, and nobody is ignorant of? Anſw. John knew before, and ſo did others, that time and the world would have an end ſome time or other; but he knew not that it would end under the ſeventh trumpet, that it would not laſte a moment longer than that trumpet; which is the thing here aſſerted. The which leads to,

2. The poſitive part of the oath, that *in the days of the voice of the ſeventh angel the myſtery of God ſhould be finiſhed.* Some underſtand this myſtery in a reſtrained ſenſe; ſome of the end of the world, the reſurrection and general judgment: ſome of the calling of the Jews, and overthrow of Antichriſt. And theſe indeed are called *myſteries,* 1 Cor. xv. 51. 'Behold, I ſhew you a myſtery; We ſhall not all ſleep, but we ſhall all be changed,' Rom. xi. 25. 'I would not, brethren, that ye ſhould be ignorant of this myſtery,—that blindneſs in part is happened to Iſrael, until the fulneſs of the Gentiles be come in,' 2 Theſſ. ii. 7. 'The myſtery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth, will let, until he be taken out of the way.' But no where, that I have obſerved, is any of them called *the myſtery of God.* Beſides, *the finiſhing of the myſtery,* here mentioned, plainly ſuppoſeth, that *myſtery,* whatever it was, to be begun, and well far on before the ſeventh trumpet, or days of the ſeventh angel; which agrees to none of theſe. Wherefore I underſtand it with others more generally, and take it to be meant of the whole of the divine management in the world, in purſuance of and according to the goſpel ſcheme and contrivance, called *the myſtery of God,* Col. ii. 2. This is a myſtery of many parts; therefore called *the myſteries of the kingdom of God,* Luke viii. 10. all which parts being myſterious, the kingdom itſelf is a myſtery, known only to believers, truly, though yet imperfectly; as ſaith our Lord, Mark iv. 11. 'Unto you it is given to know the myſtery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all theſe things are done in parables.' *The myſtery of the kingdom of God.* There have been many kingdoms in the world, eſpecially the four monarchies, all which are now gone; the kingdom of Antichriſt, a myſtery of iniquity, has long made a great

figure, and is not yet come wholly to an end: but in the time of all theſe God had, and yet has a kingdom, which is *the myſtery of God*, which has long been, and yet is going on. But it will be finiſhed in bringing the work to perfection, in completing the happineſs of his people, and ruin of his enemies, at the end of time. Then Chriſt ſhall have *delivered up the kingdom* finiſhed, 1 Cor. xv. 24. The time of the finiſhing it is in the days of the voice of the ſeventh angel, which days take in all the ſeven vials. When it ſhall begin to ſound, then the finiſhing of the myſtery of God begins, the laſt period of that myſterious kingdom of God comes in: the which finiſhing is carried on by degrees, in the ſeven vials, till it is perfectly finiſhed by the laſt of them. And then time, and the myſtery of God in his kingdom in this world, end both together. Now we are within the finiſhing period.

Two doctrines may be deduced from the words.

DOCT. I. *It is a matter of greateſt weight and concern to mankind, that there is a certain period ſet, and in the general revealed, at which time comes to an end, and never ſhall be any more.* This is a ſworn point, and a good man will not ſwear but what is of weight: it is ſworn by the Lord himſelf, therefore it is of the greateſt weight.

In diſcourſing this doctrine, I ſhall conſider,

I. This truth itſelf, That there is a period ſet at which time ſhall be no more.

II. The weight of it, and its concern to mankind.

III. *laſtly*, Apply.

I. We ſhall conſider this truth itſelf, *That there is a period ſet at which time ſhall be no more.* This implies,

1. That time had a beginning. Time is the meaſure of the creature's duration by its ſeveral parts: ſo it could be of no ancienter date than the creation. It began with the world, Gen. i. 1. There was a day, a year, that was the firſt, before which there was not another. But eternity was before, and will be after time, which therefore appears at preſent like a ſmall iſland lifting up its head in the midſt of the ocean.

2. Time has run from the beginning, and is running on in an uninterrupted courſe of addition of moments, hours, days, months and years. About four thouſand years of it paſſed before the birth of Chriſt, and now is begun the one thouſand ſeven hundred and thirty ſecond year from that happy period. So there want not three hundred years now to complete the world's week of ſix thouſand years, after which many have thought the eternal Sabbath would come. But as yet time is, and the myſtery of God is not yet finiſhed, nor the treaty with ſinners broken off.

3. Time will come to an end. It has rung long, but it will run out at length. The laſt ſand in the glaſs of this world will paſs, and then its glaſs is run out, and not to be turned again. The period is ſet in the divine decree, the laſt day and hour, though no man knows them.

Now time coming to an end, the things of time go too, being ſwept away with it. So, *that time ſhall be no longer*, nor *be any more*, ſpeaks theſe following weighty things; *viz.* That there is a ſet period at which,

1. This preſent world ſhall be no more; theſe heavens and earth ſhall paſs away by the general conflagration, 2 Pet. iii. 10. 'The day of the Lord will come 'as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens ſhall 'paſs away with a great noiſe, and the elements ſhall 'melt with fervent heat; the earth alſo, and the works 'that are therein ſhall be burnt up.' Time and they began together, and they will end together. Men are buſy now, who to get moſt of this earth: and a mighty pother is made about it, like ants in a hillock; and could they get the heavens marched too, they would no doubt incloſe ſo much of them for themſelves alſo. But then the hillocks will be ſcattered, the ſtage taken down, not a bit of earth left for their foot.

2. New years ſhall be no more. The year will come, the month, the day, hour, and minute, after which there ſhall never be another. All theſe are parts of time: ſo time being at an end, there will be no more of them. The annual motion of the ſun, and its diurnal motion about the earth, make years and days; but where are they when the heavens paſs away with a great noiſe, and the earth is burnt up? So the ſcripture frequently mentions *the laſt days*, as John vi. 40. Let us improve our years then for eternity, and count our days ſo as to apply our hearts to wiſdom.

3. The different ſeaſons will be no more. There will be no more ſummer and winter, ſeed-time and harveſt. They were once intermitted for a while, during the deluge: then it was ſecured there ſhould not be another intermitting of them, but withal that they ſhould end for good and all, with time, Gen. viii. 22. 'While 'the earth remaineth, ſeed time and harveſt, and cold 'and heat, and ſummer and winter, and day and night, 'ſhall not ceaſe.' There will be an eternal ſpring in heaven; but an eternal winter as it were in hell, where is gnaſhing of teeth. Now theſe ſeaſons roll about; but time ending, that revolution of ſeaſons is no more.

4. The buſineſs of this life ſhall be no more. There ſhall be no more tilling of the ground, tending of flocks, merchandizing, nor trades. All theſe belong to *the faſhion of this world* which *paſſeth away.* There are none of them without toil: but then the righteous reſt from their labours; and the wicked will have their toil of another ſort, under the burden of divine wrath. How unhappy muſt they be who have no pleaſure nor ſatisfaction in any thing elſe, ſince theſe are not to laſte!

5. The means of ſuſtaining this life ſhall be no more. There ſhall be no more eating, drinking, nor ſleeping. Theſe take up a great part of our time now, in the doing of them: and in providing for back and belly the whole time of many goes. But time being gone, the ſaints ſhall be ſupported and ſatisfied without meat or drink, and refreſhed without ſleep; and the wicked will not get a drop of water to cool their tongue, nor reſt night nor day.

6. Relations ſhall be no more. Time going diſſolves them all, as fellow travellers part when come to their journey's end. There ſhall be no more magiſtrates and ſubjects, miniſters and people, huſbands and wives, parents and children, maſters and ſervants: Job iii. 19. *The ſmall and great are there, and the ſervant is free from his maſter.* Only the relation betwixt Chriſt and his people as head and members, which is not of this world, ſhall remain; and ſo the relation to God as his children, Luke xx. 35, 36. who are the children of God, being the children of the reſurrection. Among Adam's children, the children are ſubject to their parents, and inferiors to ſuperiors; but at the reſurrection, all the ſaints will be immediately ſubject to God, one as well as another: all the wicked being then ſubjected under him as his enemies.

7. Space for repentance ſhall be no more. Now ſinners have time to repent and turn to God, aſſured of welcome on their returning. But time once gone, as the tree is fallen, it muſt lie for ever. There ſhall be no means of grace, offers of Chriſt, nor place of repentance, Matth. xxv. 10. The time of trial is over; and they who have miſimproven it, can never be taken on a ſecond trial.

8. Tribulation and adverſity of the godly ſhall be no more. They muſt have it, cannot miſs it: but then it is in the *world only*, as ſaith our Lord, John xvi. 33. 'In the world ye ſhall have tribulation: but be of good 'cheer, I have overcome the world.' When time is at an end, their trials are at an end, and they ſhall have an eternal recompence, the days of their mourning are ended. They ſhall look back on their ſorrows as waters

that fail; their griefs ran long, but the brook dries up, being but a winter-brook.

9. *laſtly*, The proſperity and comfort of the wicked (Luke xvi. 25.) ſhall be no more. Now the ſun of proſperity often ſhines on them, and the godly are ſometimes ſtumbled at it, as you will find in Pſal. lxxiii.; and they themſelves hardened by it, as appears from Eccl. viii. 11. ‘Becauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is not executed ſpeedily; therefore the heart of the ſons of men is fully ſet in them to do evil.’ But ſtay till the end of time, that the web of providence be cut out, it will appear there was no cauſe for either of theſe. Whatever comforts they enjoy in time, there will be a total eclipſe of their comfort at the end of time.

II. The *ſecond* thing is, *The weight of this truth, and its concern to mankind.* That it is of weight and concern to them, appears in its being ſworn to them; which implies theſe *three* things.

1. That men are very heedleſs about it, and ſlow to believe it, and be impreſſed with it. The virgins would fain ſlumber and ſleep, and therefore care not for looking for the coming of the Bridegroom. Moſt men are ſo in love with the things of time, that they deſire no other ſtate of affairs. And becauſe they have no will time ſhould end, they work up themſelves to a belief, that there is little hazard of its ending; and confirm themſelves therein, from that there is no appearance of its ending; like thoſe ſcoffers who ſaid, ‘Where is the promiſe of his coming? for ſince the fathers fell aſleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation,’ 2 Pet. iii. 4.

2. A legal intimation made to them of its ending. Whether it is believed or not, it is duly intimated, in the moſt ſolemn manner, unto all to whom the Bible comes. So they are fairly warned, and cannot pretend ignorance: and this intimation will have its weight certainly, when the thing is ſeen fulfilled.

3. That the period of time is unalterably fixed, the bounds of it ſet, beyond which it cannot go; for it is ſet by an oath. Often did the Iſraelites provoke the Lord, yet he bore with them; but at length he ſware, that they ſhould not enter into his reſt. And there was no reverſing of that. Now he has ſet the bounds of time, and confirmed it by an oath, no prayers or entreaties can prevail to carry it a ſingle hour beyond the ſet period.

The weight of the thing lies in theſe *three*.

1. That then that which concerns mankind's happineſs or miſery, is completed; the ſtate of probation is over, and the ſtate of recompence takes place in perfection, both as to their bodies and ſouls. Here at this turning point, the end of time, every one is brought to his utmoſt pitch, the godly of happineſs, the wicked of miſery. And what can be of greater weight?

2. That then eternity ſucceeds, the ſtate of all for ever unalterable, no end to be expected more. Whatever caſe we are now in, we know it will have an end, there will be an alteration, and we may meaſure the time of its continuance; but eternity fixes unalterably, and there is no more to meaſure by. Therefore this matter is of greateſt weight.

3. *laſtly*, That now or never muſt be done what is to be done for eternity. Hence our Lord ſaid, John ix. 4. *I muſt work the works of him that ſent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.* Time ending, no more can be done of that nature. It is not to be expected it will begin again, that men may do what they did not while it laſted.

USE. Then be exhorted ſuitably to improve this intimation of time's ending. And,

1. Look beyond time, this world, and the ſtate of things in it; carry your views into the other world, to eternity: 2 Cor. iv. 18. ‘Look not at the things which are ſeen, but at the things which are not ſeen: for the things which are ſeen, are temporal; but the things which are not ſeen are eternal.’ O why ſhould we confine our view to time, which muſt end and be no more, and neglect the ſucceeding eternity, which affords a boundleſs proſpect? It would be profitably ſpent time that were ſpent in meditating on eternity, what we ſhall be there, what ſhall be our eternal lot.

2. Lift your hearts from off the things of time, and ſet them on thoſe that are eternal, Col. iii. 2. *Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.* It is impoſſible the former ſhould be a ſuitable portion for a rational creature, that muſt be for ever; ſince they muſt end with time. It is but a ſmall portion of the things of time we can get, however eagerly we purſue. But ſuppoſe we could have them all, there is yet a period ſet, at which even in that caſe we would have nothing. How much more wiſely would we act, to ſet our hearts on things that are eternal?

3. Uſe this world paſſingly, as pilgrims and ſtrangers in it; *for the faſhion of it paſſeth*, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31. ‘The time is ſhort. It remaineth, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they poſſeſſed not; and they that uſe this world, as not abuſing it: for the faſhion of this world paſſeth away.’ There is no wiſdom in dipping deep therein, loading ourſelves with its thick clay. That will but retard us in our way to the better world, and occaſion ſuch a throng, as to keep us from our main work till the time for it is over and gone.

4. Let not the frowns of this world, the troubles and trials of the preſent life, make deep impreſſion on us: let us guard ourſelves againſt that, by conſidering they will not laſte. They are but clouds, that be they never ſo thick and black, will vaniſh away ere long. And if we are Chriſt's, we will ſoon have an eternal ſun-ſhine; if not, the thickeſt clouds that are here, are nothing comparable to *the blackneſs and darkneſs for ever.*

5. Be not lifted up with the world's ſmiles, nor value yourſelves on worldly proſperity; for time will put an end to this alſo. Time honours, wealth, and eaſe, are but like bubbles of water, that in a moment will come to nothing. Whatever differences be now among men, occaſioned by theſe outward things, they are confined within the boundaries of a few years; which being run out, the ſervant is as good as the maſter, and the poor as the rich.

6. *laſtly*, Improve time while it laſtes, for the ends it is given you for. And that is for,

1. Laying a good foundation for eternity, getting out of your natural ſtate into the ſtate of grace, believing on Chriſt, and repenting of ſin.

2. Living to the honour of God, endeavouring to act in your ſphere for propagating the name and kingdom of Chriſt. Hence ſaid the good king Hezekiah, Iſ. xxxviii. 19. ‘The living, the living he ſhall praiſe thee, as I do this day; the father to the children ſhall make known thy truth.’

3. *laſtly*, Serving your generation in uſefulneſs to mankind, ſeeking to forward the ſpiritual and temporal good of others; as David did, Acts xiii. 36. who *ſerved his own generation by the will of God.*

DOCT. II. *As time is continued for carrying on the myſtery of God in his kingdom among men, ſo there is a period ſet, at which that myſtery will be finiſhed, and time end with it.*

In diſcourſing this doctrine, we ſhall conſider,

I. The myſtery of God in his kingdom among men, generally and particularly.

II. The relation there is between the myſtery of God and time.

III. *laſtly*, Apply.

I. We ſhall conſider *the myſtery of God in his kingdom among men.* And in the general we ſhall ſhew,

1ſt, What the myſtery of God is:

2dly, In what reſpects the kingdom of God is a myſtery.

Firſt, We ſhall conſider what that myſtery of God is. A myſtery is a ſecret and hidden thing, hid under ſome vail or other from the eyes of beholders; which vail muſt be drawn by, ere one can ſee it. The ſcripture mentions two myſteries.

1. *The myſtery of iniquity,* 2 Theſſ. ii. 7. ‘The myſtery of iniquity doth already work.’ And that is the kingdom of Antichriſt, Rev. xvii. 5. ‘And upon her forehead was a name written, Myſtery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth.’ That is a myſtery, hiding the greateſt iniquity under a vail of ſanctity, carrying on the deſigns of hell under pretences of Heaven's countenance, 2 Theſſ. ii. 9, 10. ‘Even him whoſe coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and ſigns, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs, in them that periſh; becauſe they received not the love of the truth, that they might be ſaved.’ Hence, for many hundreds of years, the world wondered after the beaſt, taking Antichriſt, the great enemy of Chriſt, for his vicar and chief ſervant: though ſome now and then ſaw through this myſtery, and at the reformation the vail was taken off to ſeveral nations.

2. *The myſtery of God,* as in the text. And as the former is a myſtery of iniquity, this is a *myſtery of godlineſs,* 1 Tim. iii. 6. ‘Without controverſy, great is the myſtery of godlineſs.’ Godly in its nature and tendency. As the former is the kingdom of Antichriſt, this is the kingdom of Chriſt, the kingdom God carries on among men by Chriſt, as the devil carries on the other among them by Antichriſt. So the ſcripture manifeſtly refers this myſtery to Chriſt, 1 Tim. iii. 16. ‘Without controverſy, great is the myſtery of godlineſs; God was manifeſt in the fleſh,’ &c. Col. ii. 2.—‘To the acknowledgement of the myſtery of God, and of the Father, and of Chriſt.’ There are myſteries of God in nature: but the great myſtery of God is in Chriſt; in whom there lies hid more of God than in a thouſand worlds, and by whom God carries on a myſterious kingdom among men, the kingdom of Chriſt, called *the myſtery of the kingdom of God,* Mark iv. 11. For the better underſtanding whereof,

1. Conſider, God from eternity choſe to himſelf, out of fallen mankind, a church, in the ſalvation of whom he ſhould be glorified for ever. Theſe are ‘the general aſſembly, and church of the firſt born, which are written in heaven,’ Heb. xii. 23. They were to come into the world in different ages, one generation of them after another, and to tarry an appointed time in the world, ere they ſhould be tranſported into heaven. And many of them are not yet born, nor will be in a haſte.

2. There behoved to be a divine conduct about them, for fulfilling of this purpoſe of God anent them. There were many things ſtood in the way of it. They are naturally enemies to God, and would not come to him: without ſtrength, and unable to come; but there is a bar of juſtice in their way, as ſinners, that mars their acceſs, though they were both willing and able: there are enemies to keep them back altogether, and when they do come to him, to draw them away from him again. Therefore it is God himſelf muſt take the conduct of them for that purpoſe, otherwiſe it will never be fulfilled: John vi. 44. *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath ſent me, draw him.* Phil. ii. 13. *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleaſure.*

3. The Father has devolved this conduct of them on his Son Jeſus Chriſt, given him the kingdom among men for fulfilling this eternal purpoſe of love: Iſa. lv. 4. ‘Behold, I have given him for a witneſs to the people, a leader and commander to the people.’ God had a people in Egypt whom he minded for Canaan: he gave Moſes and Aaron the charge to bring them out, to lead them through the wilderneſs forty years, and then Joſhua to bring them in to, and ſeat them in the promiſed land. Theſe all were types of Chriſt, on whom is devolved the charge of bringing the church of the elect out of the ſtate of their ſpiritual bondage, through this world into heaven. Thus the whole power is lodged in the hand of Chriſt the Son of God, John v. 22. ‘For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:’ and he being veſted with it by the Father, is thereby his king; i. e. ſet up by him, adminiſtering the kingdom in his name: Pſal. ii. 6. ‘Yet have I ſet my king upon my holy hill of Zion.’

4. Chriſt having received this truſt from his Father, has been under the Old-Teſtament, all along, and now is, executing it, and will continue ſo to the end of time till he has fulfilled the divine purpoſe, and finiſhed the conduct, and ſo deliver up the elect perfected. This is the kingdom of Chriſt, which alſo is the kingdom of God, becauſe given him of God, and adminiſtered for the fulfilling of the purpoſe of God. And this adminiſtration being perfected, the kingdom is delivered up finiſhed, the eternal purpoſe being fulfilled: 1 Cor. xv. 24. ‘Then cometh the end, when he ſhall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he ſhall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power.’

5. *laſtly,* Our Lord's management of this truſt, and his conduct in the matter, is very myſterious, but exactly according to the plan laid in the eternal decree, and given him of his father, Eph. i. 11. ‘In whom alſo we have obtained an inheritance, being predeſtinated according to the purpoſe of him who worketh all things after the counſel of his own will.’ There is a myſtery of the Father's will, verſe 9. *Having made known unto us the myſtery of his will, according to his good pleaſure, which he hath purpoſed in himſelf.* This is the rule of his kingdom and conduct, which therefore muſt be myſterious. Therefore it is called *the myſtery of God,* as being a myſterious management, wherein the purpoſe of God is carried on.

Thus ye ſee, that the myſtery of God is the kingdom of Chriſt, or the conduct and managing of matters by Jeſus Chriſt, to the fulfilling of the purpoſes of God, for the complete ſalvation of the church.

Secondly, I will ſhew in what reſpects it is a myſtery, the myſtery of God; or that the kingdom of Chriſt, and his management, is a myſtery, the myſtery of God.

1. In itſelf, it is a hidden and abſtruſe thing, Rom. xi. 33. ‘O the depth of the riches both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God! how unſearchable are his judgments, and his ways paſt finding out!’ Job xi. 7, 8, 9. ‘Canſt thou by ſearching find out God? Canſt thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? it is as high as heaven, what canſt thou do? deeper than hell, what canſt thou know? the meaſure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the ſea.’ It conſiſts of *the deep things of God,* 1 Cor. ii. 10. which the creature may ſtand and admire, but cannot dive into the bottom of. It appears among men indeed, but ſtill as an unfathomble deep, requiring our humble attention to it, and an entire reſignation, but not to be ſounded. God ſhewed his infinite wiſdom in the works of creation; but the work of redemption and ſalvation of a loſt world, was the maſter-piece of that wiſdom. If the former is a myſtery, how much more the latter?

2. To natural men it is an abſolute myſtery, 1 Cor. 14. For ‘the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are fooliſhneſs unto him: neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.’ They do not at all ſee into it, their eyes cannot pierce it, nor can they break the ſhell of it. They ſee its outward appearance in the world, which is very mean; and they judge of it accordingly, ſo fall into fatal miſtakes about it; preferring the vanities of the world unto the riches of that kingdom, the ſlavery of

their own luſts to the ſervice of Chriſt; ſo that Chriſt is a ſtumbling-ſtone and rock of offence to them. It is true, they may think they know this myſtery of God; for they may be able to talk of it, yea to preach it. But,

(1.) Though they know the words in which the myſtery of God is revealed, they know not the thing itſelf. As one hearing a parable in his mother tongue, underſtands the grammatical ſenſe of the words, yet perceives not the hidden meaning wrapt up in them: ſo they know the words, but perceive not the heavenly things propoſed in them; Mark iv. 11.

(2.) They know not the myſtery by the Spirit's teaching: all they have of it is by human teaching: ſo their knowledge of it cannot reach into the heart of it, Jude 19. They are deſtitute of ſaving illumination; and the higheſt ſpring of their knowledge of it is fleſh and blood, improven by external objective revelation; which is not ſufficient. Internal revelation alone is ſo, Matth. xvi. 17.

(3.) They know it not by experience, which is neceſſary to give the true knowledge of it. Hence is that exhortation, 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3. *As new born babes, deſire the ſincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if ſo be that ye have taſted that the Lord is gracious.* They know the myſtery by hearſay, but never felt the power of it on their ſpirits: ſo they know no more of it, than one may know of honey or vinegar, who never taſted how ſweet the one is, and how ſour the other.

3. It is a myſtery to the godly themſelves, the real members of the kingdom of Chriſt. None in the world have ſuch knowledge of it as they, and none have ſuch a ſenſe of the myſteriouſneſs of it. Whatever they reach of it, it is ſtill a myſtery in their eyes. See how Paul ſpeaks of it, 1 Tim. iii. 16. 'Without controverſy, great is the myſtery of godlineſs,' *&c.* Col. iv. 3, 4. 'Withal, praying alſo for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to ſpeak the myſtery of Chriſt; that I may make it manifeſt, as I ought to ſpeak.' Hence, after all their progreſs made in it, they are ſtill to learn; they ſee many difficulties in it which they are not able to comprehend. Conſider here,

(1.) They are but initiated into this myſtery while they are here, and cannot expect a full inſight into it, till they come to glory, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. *Now we ſee through a glaſs, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then ſhall I know even as alſo I am known.* They get as much inſight into the myſtery of Chriſt's kingdom and management as keeps them from ſtumbling at him; and all the wiſdom of the world and learning cannot give ſo much, 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. 'we preach Chriſt crucified, unto the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and to the Greeks, fooliſhneſs: but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Chriſt the power of God, and the wiſdom of God.'

(2.) What inſight into it they have, is not owing to their own penetration, but is the gift of God to them. Hence ſays our Lord, Mark iv. 11. 'Unto you it is given to know the myſtery of the kingdom of God,' *&c.* It is the Spirit's teaching, who draws by the vail, and opens the myſtery. Hence ſaith the apoſtle, 1 Cor. ii. 10. *But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit ſearcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.* And when the Spirit withdraws, they are apt to be offended at ſome pieces of his management, being ſo puzzled with them that they know not what to make of them, Pſal. lxxiii.

4. It is a myſtery even to the angels. None was able but Chriſt himſelf to open the ſealed book, or look thereon, Rev. v. 3. The angels in heaven are perfect in knowledge: but their knowledge was, and is capable of increaſe, and did receive increaſe by the more open ſetting up of the kingdom of Chriſt in the world by the goſpel, whereby many folds of the wiſdom of God in this myſtery were opened to them which they ſaw not before. Hence ſaith the apoſtle, Eph. iii. 9, 10. 'And to make all men ſee, what is the fellowſhip of the myſtery, which from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jeſus Chriſt: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wiſdom of God.' And ſtill they regard it as a myſtery to be dived into, 1 Pet. i. 12.——*which things the angels deſire to look into.* And yet they know not the time of its finiſhing, Mark xiii. 32. 'But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven.'

5. *laſtly*, It will continue a myſtery to the end, as is implied in the text. There have been things in the world dark myſteries for a time, which yet have at length been fully diſcovered and underſtood. But as the divine conduct by Chriſt has been a myſtery in all generations paſt, it will be ſo in all generations to come. It will never be fully underſtood till it is completed, the web fully wrought, cut out, and laid before our eyes altogether. Then will there be a ſurpriſing beauty and harmony ſeen through the whole.

More particularly, for opening of this myſtery of God, we ſhall conſider it under a threefold view.

1ſt, As it was laid before time.

2dly, As begun and carried on in time.

3dly, As finiſhed with time.

FIRST, We ſhall conſider this myſtery as it was laid before time. It is not a device of yeſterday, a late or new contrivance; but older than men or angels, even from eternity: Eph. i. 9. 'Having made known unto us the myſtery of his will, according to his good pleaſure, which he hath purpoſed in himſelf,' compare chap. iii. 11. 'According to the eternal purpoſe which he purpoſed in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.' If we would ſee the foundation and plan of this myſtery, we muſt look back before all ages unto the depths of the eternal counſels in the breaſt of God, before the world was, now revealed to us by the goſpel. And here we may conſider,

1ſt, The ground upon which it was raiſed.

2dly, The myſtery itſelf.

Firſt, We ſhall conſider the ground upon which it was raiſed. And that was the eternal foreſight of man's fall from a ſtate of holineſs and happineſs, into a ſtate of ſin and miſery, Rom. ix. 21. This preſuppoſes a twofold purpoſe.

1. A purpoſe of creating man; Rev. iv. 11. *Thou haſt created all things, and for thy pleaſure they are, and were created.* God from eternity happy in himſelf, while yet there was nothing in being but himſelf, purpoſed, for his own glory, to make a world, with a variety of creatures therein; and among them man, the chief of the inferior creation, capable to love, ſerve, and obey him, and to enjoy him as the reward of his obedience; liable to puniſhment in caſe of diſobedience.

2. A purpoſe of permitting man to fall, to leave him to the freedom of his own will, and not to hinder his falling away. God was not the cauſe of man's fall: for ſaith the apoſtle, James i. 13. *Let no man ſay when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.* But had he not permitted, nor willed not to hinder his fall, it could not have happened; Rev. iii. 7. 'Theſe things ſaith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man ſhutteth; and ſhutteth, and no man openeth.' This permiſſion taking place in time was then decreed from eternity, Eph. i. 11. 'Being predeſtinated according to the purpoſe of him who worketh all things after the counſel of his own will.'

Hereupon God foreſaw the fall of man, how all mankind would be ruined in Adam by the breach of the covenant of works. And nothing being future, but all preſent, he ſaw and conſidered the whole race of mankind as loſt, ſunk as ſinners into a gulph of miſery, irremediable by any created hand whatſoever. This was the ground on which the myſtery of God was raiſed; this gave occaſion to the myſtery and plan thereof in the eternal counſel.

Secondly, The myſtery itſelf laid, in the eternal purpoſe, upon this ground. Wherein is to be obſerved,

1. The ſubject of the myſtery, the reſtoration or recovery of fallen man. This was the great buſineſs aimed to be carried on and finiſhed in the completing of it: this was the grand affair that the thoughts of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, were from eternity ſet upon: Pſal. lxxxix. 19. *Thou ſpakeſt in viſion to thy holy One, and ſaidſt, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one choſen out of the people.* Prov. viii. 31. *Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights were with the ſons of men.* 1 Pet. i. 2. *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through ſanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt.* A myſterious point:

(1.) Conſidering there was no ſuch deſign ſet on foot in favour of the fallen angels, though creatures of a ſuperior dignity to man. Hence ſays the apoſtle, Heb. ii. 16. 'Verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the ſeed of Abraham.' Theſe veſſels of gold in the great houſe of God, fell down from their high ſtation, and were ſo cruſhed, that they became uſeleſs unleſs they were caſt anew. But God left them, and looked after them no more for ever. However, the veſſel of earth, man, falling and breaking to pieces, God purpoſed to gather up the broken ſherds, put them together again, and reſtore the earthen veſſel. Who can fathom this myſtery of his will? It is called, Tit. iii. 4. 'The kindneſs and love of God our Saviour toward man.' It will be the eternal admiration of elect men and angels.

(2.) The impediments that lay in the way of this reſtoration, from the holy and juſt nature of God, and the corrupt nature of man, unſurmountable by all created power. Had the project been communicated to men and angels, how to remove theſe impediments, all would have ſtood mute, as in a matter beyond their comprehenſion. Hence ſays our Lord, Iſa. lxiii. 5. 'I looked, and there was none to help: and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought ſalvation unto me, and my fury it upheld me.'

(3.) The reſtoration was deſigned into a more excellent and honourable ſtate than he fell from. Man fell in the *firſt Adam*, is reſtored in the *ſecond Adam*: but the latter is infinitely preferable to the former, 1 Cor. xv. 47. 'The firſt man is of the earth, earthy; the ſecond man is the Lord from heaven:' which neceſſarily infers the excellency and preference of men as his members, to what they were in the *firſt Adam*.

(4.) That there was nothing in the creature to move him to all this. No beauty remained in the fallen creature, nothing to be ſeen there but perverſeneſs and enmity againſt God, which put him out of temper for ſeeking help of God. God had no need of man, neither could he profit him. But he loved man, Tit. iii. 4. forecited. He ſo 'loved him, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life,' John iii. 16. 'When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.' Rom. v. 10. A myſterious point, to be reſolved only into ſovereign will and pleaſure: Matth. xi. 26. 'Even ſo, Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight.'

2. The particular objects of the myſtery, namely, the election, a ſelect company of mankind: in which are,

(1.) The head elect, the man Chriſt. He was the Father's elect one. Hence ſays JEHOVAH, Iſa. xlii. 1. 'Behold my ſervant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my ſoul delighteth;' his firſt choice, in whom the reſt were choſen. Hence ſaith the apoſtle, Eph. i. 4. 'According as he hath choſen us in him, before the foundation of the world;' he to be the head, they to be the body, verſe 22, 23. 'And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulneſs of him that filleth all in all.' That election fell on Chriſt both as the Son of God, Matth. xvii. 5. 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed, hear ye him;' and as the ſon of man, Pſal. lxxxix. 19. 'I have laid help upon one that is mighty, I have exalted one choſen out of the people;' as a member of Adam's family, as well as of the heavenly family, Luke iii. And here is a myſterious point, a clean thing to be brought out of an unclean, a holy thing made of a woman, a daughter of fallen Adam. Hence ſaith the apoſtle, Gal. iv. 4. *God ſent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law.* Which the angel accounts for thus, Luke i. 35. *The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee, and the power of the higheſt ſhall overſhadow thee: therefore alſo that holy thing which ſhall be born of thee, ſhall be called the Son of God.*

(2.) The body elect; that is, a ſelect number of mankind choſen out from among the reſt, and given to Chriſt for the body to be by him headed: Eph. i. 4. 'According as he hath choſen us in him, before the foundation of the world.' Theſe were of the ſame corrupt maſs with the reſt of mankind, and might have been paſſed by as well as others: but God choſe them to everlaſting life, and gave them to Chriſt in the eternal decree for his: John xvii. 6. 'I have manifeſted thy name unto the men which thou gaveſt me out of the world, thine they were, and thou gaveſt them me;' while he reprobated, rejected, or paſſed by the reſt. Here is a myſtery, an awful myſtery, which the apoſtle reſolves into the ſovereign dominion of God, Rom. ix. 21. 'Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the ſame lump, to make one veſſel unto honour, and another unto diſhonour?' Who the perſons are, is kept ſecret, and will be all along till the end of the world, at which time that matter will be laid wide open. Now it is our buſineſs to obey the goſpel; and none can know their election, till they have believed; then it may be concluded from the fruits of it. But no man's reprobation can be known, whether by himſelf or others, in this world, except in the caſe of ſinning the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, which many doubt can now be fallen into: ſo whoever pretend to give marks of it, do but diſcover their dangerous raſhneſs and inconſideration, and ſerve the intereſt of hell. Sure in this caſe 'the ſecret things belong unto the Lord our God: but thoſe things which are revealed, belong unto us, and to our children for ever.' Deut. xxix. 29.

3. The hand into which the management of the myſtery was committed. That was Chriſt the Son of God, the ſecond perſon of the glorious Trinity: John v. 22. 'For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.' Him the Father appointed king in Zion, Leader and Commander to the people, the Captain of ſalvation, to bring the deſigned ſons unto glory. He was choſen for that end, and his commiſſion deſigned him from eternity; in view of which he rejoiced before the world was, Prov. viii. 31. forecited.

A wonderful myſtery, that the King's own Son was appointed repairer of the breach betwixt God and man, the Shepherd of Iſrael to gather together the ſtray ſheep, and feed them. But leſs would not do; John iii. 16. For 'God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.' The ſlighting of Chriſt then is the ſlighting of the myſtery of God as it was laid.

4. The method of carrying on the myſtery. It was appointed to be carried on in a way ſurprizing to men and angels, *viz.* That the Son of God was to be incarnate, come down into our world in our nature; was to be inveſted with the office of a prieſt, and die a ſacrifice for ſin, and then enter heaven again as the interceſſor, bringing his blood within the vail; with the office of a Prophet, to reveal the eternal counſels of peace,

and by force of light to reſcue the elect from the power of their ſpiritual darkneſs; and with the office of a King, to reſcue them by ſtrength of hand from the power of their enemies, and complete the happineſs of the whole body elect.

A myſterious method, which makes the apoſtle cry out, 1 Tim. iii. 16. ‘Without controverſy great is the myſtery of godlineſs; God was manifeſt in the fleſh, juſtified in the Spirit, ſeen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory:’ and which no man nor angel could have propoſed. It is only to be reſolved into the infinite wiſdom and free love of God. Which aggravates the guilt of the world's contempt of Chriſt.

5. The foundation of the myſtery, on and according to which it was to proceed. That was the covenant of grace from eternity concluded betwixt the Father and the Son, as *ſecond Adam*; Pſal. lxxxix. 3. ‘I have made a covenant with my choſen, I have ſworn unto David my ſervant;’ ‘the counſel of peace that was between them both,’ Zech. vi. 13. A myſterious contract, wherein the Son bound himſelf to fulfill all righteouſneſs the broken law could demand of the body elect, Matth. iii. 15. And the Father, on the other hand, promiſed thereupon a glorious reward to Chriſt himſelf, and eternal life to them, Phil. ii 9. Tit. i. 2. It is the fulfilling of this covenant, in the performing of the condition, and in adminiſtering of it, that makes the myſtery. And it is our perſonal entering into it in Chriſt, that brings us into the fellowſhip of the myſtery; while thoſe without the covenant are far from it.

6. *laſtly*, The great deſign and end of the myſtery. It is the moſt glorious contrivance that ever was: and the deſign of it muſt be of proportionable worth and excellency. It is twofold.

1. The ſubordinate and neareſt end. That is the ſalvation of the church of the elect, Luke xix. 10. *For the Son of man is come to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt*; to ſave them from ſin and wrath, and to make them completely happy for ever. This is the point that the whole of the myſtery terminates in; the deſign unto which every ſtep of the divine conduct and management in the world is levelled. Vain and fooliſh men on whom the world ſmiles, are apt to think that the world is, and is managed for them; and they deſpiſe the godly, if they are mean and low, as for the moſt part they are; the church is the object of their contempt. But it is the buſineſs of the deſpiſed church that is the chief deſign of providence in the world. Other things are managed with relation to it, ſo as beſt to carry on their ſalvation. It is for their cauſe that crowns and ſceptres are taken away and beſtowed, Iſa. xliii, 14. ‘Thus ſaith the Lord your Redeemer, the holy One of Iſrael, For your ſake I have ſent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whoſe cry is in the ſhips;’ and for their ſakes the world is kept up, the corn grows, graſs ſprings, ſun and moon are kept circling about, and time ſpun out, 2 Cor. iv. 15. ‘For all things are for your ſakes, that the abundant grace might, through the thankſgiving of many, redound to the glory of God.’ And when there is no more uſe for them on their behalf, they ſhall be no more. That is a myſterious deſign, which the world cannot comprehend, will not believe.

2. The chief and higheſt end. That is the glory of God; Rom. xi. 36. ‘For of him, and through him, and to him are all things; to whom be glory for ever, Amen;’ the diſplay of his glorious perfections in the eyes of his creatures. God made the world for this end; and therein he diſplayed his infinite wiſdom, goodneſs, and power. But in this myſtery there is a far more ample diſplay of manifold wiſdom, rich goodneſs, and greateſt power, with exact juſtice, and riches of mercy and grace. More particularly,

1. It is the glory of God in his Son. He made the world through his Son, by his Spirit: but that glaſs repreſented only the glory of God in his firſt works. He deſigned to diſplay his glory in his Son; and for that cauſe to prepare him a body, a human nature; his latter work a more ſtupenduous work than the firſt; that the conſtellation of the divine perfections might together ſhine forth in him: Iſa. xlix. 3. ‘Thou art my ſervant, O Iſrael, in whom I will be glorified,’ 2 Cor. iv. 6. ‘God who commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, hath ſhined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt.’ This is the end of the myſtery of the divine conduct by Chriſt, John xiv. 13. ‘That the Father may be glorified in the Son,’ even in his deepeſt ſufferings, chap. xiii. 31. ‘Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.’ And it is ſo far the deſign of God in the myſtery, that God reckons not himſelf honoured at all but in his Son, chap. v. 22, 23. *For the Father judgeth no man: but hath committed all judgement unto the Son: that all men ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath ſent him.* Whence appears the fatal miſtake of blinded men diſhonouring Chriſt, under pretence of honouring his Father: whereby they run quite counter to the chief deſign of the myſtery of God, and fight againſt it, namely, the glory of God in his Son, the centre in which all the parts of the myſtery were to meet.

SECONDLY, We ſhall conſider the myſtery of God as begun and carried on in time. Here we may view in the general,

1ſt, The firſt opening of the myſtery,

2dly, The gradual opening of it.

3dly, The progreſs of it.

Firſt, We ſhall conſider the firſt opening of the myſtery. It lay hid from eternity in God, till Adam fell, and all the world was become guilty before God. Then upon that occaſion the ſealed book was opened, the myſtery revealed, and begun to be executed in paradiſe. It was opened,

1. In the promulgation of the promiſe of the goſpel, Gen. iii. 15. ‘I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy ſeed and her ſeed: it ſhall bruiſe thy head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel.’ A ſurpriſing myſtery to our guilty firſt parents, which they neither had nor could have had any hopes of; that the Son of God becoming man, the ſeed of the woman, ſhould be bruiſed in the heel by the ſerpent; and bruiſe his head on the other hand, and ſo deſtroy the works of the devil.

2. In the offering of the firſt ſacrifices, with the ſkins whereof our naked firſt parents were clothed, Gen. iii. 21. Thus was Chriſt held forth as the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world. Thus the ſinner's acceptance with God through an imputed righteouſneſs, Rom. iii. 22.

Now Chriſt firſt entered on the execution of his office in the management of the myſtery of God committed to him, Gen. iii. 8. He began the work, he has been all along ſince carrying it on, and has not yet finiſhed it. He acted as a Prophet, revealing the counſel of God touching man's ſalvation; as a King, in emitting his royal proclamations, offering his indemnity to rebel-man, and declaring war againſt the devil; and as a Prieſt, in the ſacrifices offered.

Secondly, We ſhall conſider the gradual opening of the myſtery. Of this we have an account, Heb. i. 1. *God at ſundry times, and in divers manners, ſpake in time paſt unto the fathers by the prophets.* It was opened by degrees, now a piece and then a piece, till it was fully opened in the apoſtolic times. The patriarchal church had the morning of the opening of the myſtery; Adam and Eve got the dawning of it in the revelation of Chriſt to them as the ſeed of the woman; and it ſtill grew lighter by degrees. He was revealed afterwards as the ſeed of Abraham; thereafter as the ſeed of Iſaac; and then the tribe was revealed, that he was to come of, Judah: Gen. xlix. 10. ‘The ſceptre ſhall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him ſhall the gathering of the people be.’

The Jewiſh church had the forenoon of it. To them the family he was to come of was determined, namely, the houſe of David, the place of his birth, Bethlehem. He was lively pointed out in the Levitical ordinances; and to him all the prophets bare witneſs. Moſes witneſſed his prophetical office, David ſpeaks of his kingdom and prieſthood. David, Iſaiah, and others, ſpoke of his ſufferings, his reſurrection, victory, and triumph. At length the Baptiſt pointed him out to their eyes, he being bodily preſent with them: but there was a miſt before their eyes, that they knew him not, but fulfilled the ſcriptures in crucifying him.

The Chriſtian church got the noon-day light of it, after Chriſt was aſcended into heaven. Then the Spirit was poured out, the Gentiles were called, and made partakers of the myſtery. Then was the myſtery opened at the rate it had never been before, that the angels themſelves ſaw more of it than ever they had ſeen. Hence ſaith the apoſtle, Eph. iii. 8, 9, 10. ‘Unto me, who am leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints, is this grace given, that I ſhould preach among the Gentiles the unſearchable riches of Chriſt; and to make all men ſee, what is the fellowſhip of the myſtery, which from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jeſus Chriſt: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wiſdom of God.’ But yet it continued a myſtery ſtill.

Thirdly, We ſhall conſider the progreſs of the myſtery. Concerning which in the general we may notice *three* things.

1. It has never been interrupted ſince it began in paradiſe; the ſalvation of the church has all along been carried on, and matters managed for that end. Still the church has been continued in the world, ſometimes more ſometimes leſs viſible, Pſal. xxix. 10. Heb. *The Lord ſat at the flood: and he hath ſat king for ever.*

2. It has made ſuch progreſs, that by this time it is drawing towards the period of finiſhing it. The ſeveral generations of the patriarchal church of the elect, of the Jewiſh church, and ſeventeen generations of the Chriſtian, are now waſted over to the promiſed land; the great Manager having made the ſeveral diſpenſations they lived under, though ſome clearer, others darker, effectual for their ſalvation. The knowledge of the myſtery is now ſpread far and wide, in compariſon of what ſometime it was. The prophecies are moſtly fulfilled already; the prophecies of the flood, of the Egyptian bondage, the conqueſt of Canaan, the captivity of the ten tribes, the Babyloniſh captivity, the four monarchies, are all punctually fulfilled long ago. The prophecy of the coming of Chriſt, his death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion, put off about four thouſand years, is near ſeventeen hundred years ſince accompliſhed. So is that of the rejection of the Jews, and the coming of Antichriſt, fulfilled in our ſight. And there are but a few that remain.

3. *laſtly*, It is going on in our day, in the ſame powerful hand that has managed it all along. Our Lord, who has picked out his own out of all former generations, and brought them to their happineſs, is ſtill drawing forth his own of this generation, out of the world lying in wickedneſs, taking them under his conduct, and guiding them towards Immanuel's land. And they are ſurely a vaſt company that are got there already, through the progreſs made in the myſtery.

But for a more full view of the myſtery as executed in time, we ſhall conſider the eight following particulars of this myſterious kingdom; in every part of which there is a myſtery.

1ſt, The head of this kingdom.

2dly, The ſubjects of it.

3dly, The erection and conſervation of it.

4thly, The ſeat of it.

5thly, The extent of it.

6thly, The privileges of it.

7thly, The life and practice of it.

8thly, The manner of the conduct and management of it.

1ſt, The head of it, Jeſus Chriſt, is myſtery. And he is a myſtery, a myſterious head.

1. In the conſtitution of his perſon, being God and man in one perſon. He was the eternal Son of God, and in the fulneſs of time he became man, John i. 14. Gal. iv. 4. This is a myſtery which dazzles the eyes of human reaſon, that cannot comprehend it; and becauſe men have neither reach of reaſon enough to comprehend it, nor humility enough to take it on God's teſtimony, therefore there are ſo many infidels this day. But indeed it is a myſtery that may attract and fix on it the wondering eyes of angels: the ſame perſon, the eternal God, and a man of ſeventeen hundred and thirty-two years; filling heaven and earth, and yet ſhut up nine months in a woman's dark womb; nouriſhing and feeding the whole creation, yet hanging at and ſucking the breaſts of Mary; upholding all by the word of his power, yet an infant that could not go, but behoved to be carried in her arms: infinite in perfections, not capable of addition, yet increaſing in wiſdom and ſtature: Lord of all, yet having nothing but what was given him for houſe or hold: the expreſs image of the Father's perſon, yet accounted the reproach of men, and deſpiſed of the people: Lord of life, yet dying ignominiouſly on a croſs!

2. In his offices. His prophetical office is a myſtery. On earth he appeared a mean man, but revealing the ſecrets of the eternal counſels, as he that was in the Father's boſom: taught with the greateſt ſimplicity of words and phraſes, but with the greateſt power, reaching the innermoſt parts of the ſoul: now in heaven, yet teaching on earth by his word and Spirit, to the reſcuing of ſinners from the power of their ſpiritual darkneſs. His prieſthood is a myſtery; dying on a croſs as a malefactor, yet mean while offering himſelf a ſacrifice for ſin; now entered into heaven, preſenting the blood of his ſacrifice, and interceeding for his people. His kingdom is a myſtery, in the ſetting it up, and whole management thereof in carrying it on.

3. In all circumſtances about him. His birth was myſterious, as born of a virgin; his life was myſterious, the greateſt power and dignity hid in it under the vail of a mean outward appearance; his death was myſterious, Acts iii. 15. ‘They killed the Prince of life.’ His reſurrection, his aſcenſion, and ſitting at the Father's right hand, were myſterious.

2dly, The ſubjects of it, believers, are a myſtery too. They are in the world indeed, but unknown to the world, 1 John iii. 1. They are mixed with them in ſociety, yet are a *people that dwell alone*, Numb. xxiii. 9. There are ſeveral myſterious things to be obſerved about them.

1. Though it is the moſt honourable of all kingdoms, yet thoſe dignified to be the ſubjects of it, are for the moſt part perſons of a mean figure, having the leaſt outward advantages to recommend them. O what a myſtery is that, 1 Cor. i. 26, 27, 28. Ye ſee your calling, brethren, how that not many wiſe men after the fleſh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath choſen the fooliſh things of the world, to confound the wiſe; and God hath choſen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty: and baſe things of the world, and things which are deſpiſed, hath God choſen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are!’ If the Son of God was to have a kingdom on earth, one would have thought he would have pitched out for the ſubjects of it, thoſe deſcended of noble and ancient families, the wiſe and learned, the potent, rich, and wealthy. But he hath done juſt the contrary: for he receives not honour from men.

2. There is a glory in them, hid under a thick vail of human infirmities, bodily and ſpiritual: Pſal. xlv. 13. *The king's daughter is all glorious within, her cloathing is of wrought gold.* There is this difference betwixt them and others, that they wear their worſt ſide outmoſt, others theirs inmoſt. They appear outwardly to the world for the moſt part very deſpicable; but in the inner man, each one reſembles the children of a king. They are all fair in the eyes of God, even whom thoſe worldly men that ſwell in pride, would ſcorn to ſet with the dogs in their flock.

3. They are a myſtery in their conſtitution as Chriſtians in this world. There is in them an old man, derived from the *firſt Adam*; and a new man, derived from the *ſecond Adam*. Hence there is myſtery, two contrary parties, grace and corruption, ſtruggling within them. The man has a will for, and a will againſt the ſame thing, at oneand the ſame time. Hence ſaith the apoſtle, Rom. vii. 20. 'Now if I do that I would 'not, it is no more I that do it, but ſin that dwelleth in 'me.' The Chriſtian has a being in himſelf, and a being out of himſelf. Hence he is ſo weak, that he can do nothing; yet ſo ſtrong that he can do all: Phil iv. 13. 'I can do all things (ſays the apoſtle) through Chriſt 'which ſtrengtheneth me.' He has nothing, yet poſſeſſes all things, 2 Cor. vi. 10. and loaded with wants and imperfections, yet complete. Hence ſaith the apoſtle, Col. ii. 10. *Ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.*

3dly, The erection and conſervation of it is a myſtery, Luke xvii. 20. 'And when he was demanded of 'the Phariſees, when the kingdom of God ſhould come; 'he anſwered them, and ſaid, The kingdom of God 'cometh not with obſervation,' *i. e.* with outward ſhew. Earthly kingdoms are ſet up, and kept up with a great deal of noiſe, buſtle, and parade. But it is not ſo here. Conſider,

1. The beginnings of it were very ſmall, how vaſtly ſoever it has ſpread. The firſt beginning of it was in paradiſe after the fall, where the King gained two ſubjects to begin his kingdom with under the Old Teſtament diſpenſation. The beginning of it under the New Teſtament diſpenſation, was very ſmall, Acts i. 15. being about an hundred and twenty perſons, compared to *a handful of corn upon the top of the mountains*, Pſal. lxxii. 16. yet has it ſpread far and wide over the earth.

2. The means of erecting and ſetting it up, were very unlikely and unuſual, viz. the deſpiſed preaching of the goſpel: Pſal. cx. 2. 'The Lord ſhall ſend the rod of 'thy ſtrength out of Zion: rule thou in the midſt of 'thine enemies.' Iſa. ii. 3. 'Many people ſhall go and 'ſay, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of 'the Lord, to the houſe of the God of Jacob, and he 'will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his 'paths; for out of Zion ſhall go forth the law, and the 'word of the Lord from Jeruſalem.' Firſt of all Chriſt preached it himſelf, to our firſt parents under the Old Teſtament, and then under the New, to the Jews; and then he ſent out his apoſtles. What a myſtery was this, being to erect a kingdom, he ſends not out an army to fight, to get him ſubjects by the power of the ſword; but a few men to preach the goſpel of the kingdom! For them he goes not to the ſchools, thence to fetch men of learning and breeding whom he might ſo employ; but to the ſea-coaſts, where he takes fiſhermen from their boats and nets, to ſend them out on this errand!

3. The oppoſition to it from the beginning has been very great; yet it has made its way, and continued all along without interruption, over the belly of all the oppoſition. The powers of earth and hell have ſtill been engaged againſt it, yet could never prevail to raze it. All the four monarchies were one after another heavy on it, yet has it outlived them all; the ſtone cut out of the mountain without hands, has broken in pieces the iron, braſs, clay, ſilver, and gold.

4. The means of keeping it up, even ſuch as it was ſet up by. Not the power of the ſword; they make the kingdom of Chriſt no myſtery, that breathe nothing but fire and ſword, war and blood, to maintain and propagate it; but the preaching and teaching of the word of the goſpel, and ſetting that home on mens conſciences; prayers, and tears, patient ſuffering, even unto death, Rev. xii. 11. 'And they overcame him by the blood of 'the Lamb, and by the word of their teſtimony; and 'they loved not their lives unto the death.' Theſe and the like are the appointed, proper means for maintaining the kingdom of Chriſt, which make it a myſterious kingdom; though I do not think that Chriſtianity obliges men to throw up their civil privileges, or takes away their natural right of neceſſary ſelf-defence.

4thly, The ſeat of it is a myſtery too. The ſeats of kingdoms and empires of this world are moſt conſpicuous, being the capital cities of them; there they keep their courts, thence they iſſue out their royal commands. But the ſeat of this myſterious kingdom is hid from the eyes of all men on earth; for it is in the higheſt heavens, at the Father's right hand, Pſal. cx. 1. There he keeps his court, there he grants petitions, thence he iſſues out his royal commands. This is a myſtery: but what makes it more ſo,

1. The meaneſt of his ſubjects, in whatever part of his dominions on earth, has immediate acceſs to the throne, with their complaints, petitions, &c. and that though they be not able to ſtir a foot, but are fixed to a bed or ſeat. It is hard for the moſt part to travel with their ſuits to their earthly princes; and when they are got to the court, they muſt be introduced by ſome courtier. But to this king the ſubjects may have acceſs without moving their bodies at all, and go ſtraight forward without noticing ſaint or angel; though the Papiſts think that preſumption, making Chriſt's kingdom like a worldly one, ſo deſtroying the myſtery. The proto-martyr Stephen, when he died, addreſſed Chriſt directly, ſaying, *Lord Jeſus receive my Spirit.* But faith does it.

2. He ſees all that is in his kingdom with his own eyes, good or bad, perſon or thing: Prov. v. 21. 'For 'the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and 'he pondereth all his goings.' Kings of the earth muſt needs ſee with other mens eyes, and hear with other mens ears: but Zion's king is himſelf witneſs to all, needs no information, and is liable to no miſtakes. There is never a good thing one of his ſubjects do, how ſecretly ſoever, but he ſees it; never a groan they give, but he hears it; he knows all the circumſtances of their caſe. And there is never an ill thing his enemies do, but he is witneſs to it.

3. As far off as his throne is where he ſits, he is ever preſent with his people for all that, and will be; Matth. xxviii. 20. 'Lo, I am with you always (ſays he) even 'unto the end of the world.' He is not only a help, but *a preſent help in* time of *trouble*, Pſal. xlvi. 1. A great myſtery; but faith can unriddle it, believing him to be God as well as man, and therefore every where preſent; though the heavens muſt contain him till the day of the reſtitution of all things.

5thly, The extent of it is a myſtery, whether it is conſidered.

1. In reſpect of the kinds of juriſdiction he has in it,

(1.) The kingdom of grace is in his hand. He is a deſpiſed Chriſt in the world, he was crucified as a blaſphemer and ſeditious perſon in it: yet all the grace and favours of heaven, to the ſalvation of mortals, relative or real, are in his hand to diſpenſe; and they can come at them by no way, but only through him; Eph. i. 22. For God 'hath put all things under his feet, 'and gave him to be the head over all things to the 'church.

(2.) The kingdom of glory is in his hand too, Hence he ſaid to his diſciples, Luke xxii. 29, 30. 'I appoint 'unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto 'me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my ‘kingdom, and ſit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Iſrael.’

(3.) The kingdom of providence is in his hand likewiſe. Zion's King is King of the world; the government of the world is lodged by the Father in the ſame hand the government of the church is, John v. 22. ‘For the Father judgeth no man: but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.’ compare Iſa. xliii. 14, 15. ‘Thus ſaith the Lord your Redeemer, the holy One of Iſrael, For your ſake have I ſent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whoſe cry is in the ſhips. I am the Lord your holy one, the creator of Iſrael, your king.’ This is a great myſtery: his kingdom is a deſpiſed one, yet a non-ſuch kingdom: he is higher than the kings of the earth, who are all his vaſſals, though they pay him little regard.

2. In reſpect of the bounds of it. It extends itſelf over both worlds. Hence ſays Chriſt, Matth. xxviii. 18. *All power is given unto me in heaven and earth.* Rev. i. 18. *I have the keys of hell and of death.* The myſtery is a carrying on through this world; there he is gathering his elect out of the kingdom of the devil, by the goſpel, ruling and defending them againſt their enemies. In the other world, he has the eternal reſt for his kindly ſubjects, and the priſon for his enemies. And in the paſſage betwixt the two worlds, *viz.* death, it is carried on in perfecting the happineſs of the ſaints, and the miſery of the wicked. So it is a great myſtery, whereof we ſee little as it is in this world, and nothing as it is in the other, but by faith.

6thly, The privileges of it are a myſtery. What a myſtery was the man Chriſt going up and down in a mean outward condition in the world, yet the only begotten of the Father! John i. 14. Such a myſtery are believers in their meaſure, privileged above the greateſt on earth who wear the crowns; though going in rags, privileged above thoſe going in ſhining apparel. They have myſterious privileges.

1. Their union with Chriſt is a myſtery, Eph. v. 32. Even the meaneſt believer is truly united to Chriſt, John xv. 5. *I am the vine ye are the branches.* A wonderful myſtery; the head in heaven in fulneſs of glory, yet the members on earth in a low afflicted condition; beſet with wants, yet complete in him; crucified with him, and ſo dead, yet living; groaning under the remains of corrupt nature, yet in him partakers of the divine nature, as being one ſpirit, or of one ſpiritual nature with him, 1 Cor. vi. 17. *He that is joined to the Lord, is one ſpirit.*

2. Their juſtification is a myſtery. They are pardoned, and accepted as righteous in the ſight of God, yet all ‘their righteouſneſs as filthy rags,’ Iſ. lxiv. 6. How can that be? Why, the myſtery lies here, in that there is an imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs to them, what he was, did, and ſuffered. Hence we read, Rom. iii. 22. of ‘the righteouſneſs of God which is by faith of Jeſus Chriſt’ being ‘unto all, and upon all them that believe.’ The diſputers of this world laugh at this as a putative way of juſtification, as if one ſhould pretend to be warm by the cloaths on another's back, or full with the meat in anothers belly. They think juſtification by our obedience to the new goſpel-law is a rational way: thus they think it no myſtery.

3. Their ſanctification is a myſtery. Vain men conceive the ſanctification of a ſinner to be by a vigorous exerciſe of their rational faculties, to correct their vicious habits, and practiſe virtue. But ſanctification by union with Chriſt through faith, the only way of the ſanctification of a ſinner, 1 Cor. i. 2. Acts xxvi. 18. is ſuch a myſtery as was unknown to the Jewiſh Rabbies and Greek philoſophers, and an imaginary ſanctification in the eyes of all legaliſts: but the truth is, the ſanctification of a guilty ſinner is no leſs a myſtery than his juſtification.

4. Their perſeverance in grace is a myſtery; grace keeping ſtill its ground in the heart, amidſt all the ſtrength of corruption within and temptation without, till at length overcoming all, it iſſueth certainly in glory. That is no leſs a myſtery than would be a candle burning ſtill in the wind, and laying the wind at length, a ſpark of fire keeping alive in the ocean, yea drying up the ocean at length; a worm threſhing the mountains, yea at length beating them ſmall as duſt, Iſa. xli. 14, 15. But the myſtery of it lies, in that the covenant is everlaſting, they have the perpetual interceſſion of Chriſt and indwelling of his Spirit.

7thly, The life and practice of it is a myſtery. The life of every believer or ſubject of this kingdom is a myſtery. They are God's hidden ones, and their life is a hidden life. Col. iii. 3. ‘Your life (ſays the apoſtle) is hid with Chriſt in God;’ which the world neither ſees nor can underſtand. Hence ſays Solomon, Prov. xiv. 10. ‘The heart knoweth his own bitterneſs; and a ſtranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.’ They may ſee the outward appearance of it; but it is ‘the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit, which is in the ſight of God of great price,’ 1 Pet. iii. 4.

This myſterious life is the life of faith, oppoſite to the life of ſenſe and ſelf, whereby the man lives out of himſelf, on things not ſeen; as the apoſtle deſcribes it, Gal. ii. 20. ‘I am crucified with Chriſt; Nevertheleſs I live; yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.’ The man living this life, ſtands on borrowed legs; ſees with borrowed eyes; does every duty, and bears every burden, in and with borrowed ſtrength; and when he has done all, counts all his doings and ſufferings droſs and dung: Chriſt being all to him, and himſelf nothing. Hence ſaith Paul, Phil. iii. 8, 9. ‘Yea, doubtleſs, and I count all things but loſs, for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord: for whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things: and do count them but dung, that I may win Chriſt, and be found in him, not having mine own righteouſneſs, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Chriſt, the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith.’ Hence there is no duty ſo eaſy, nor burden ſo light, but he owns, he is not man enough for it; yet none ſo difficult, nor heavy, but he will venture on it at the Lord's call. A myſterious life and practice. *But our ſufficiency is of God,* 2 Cor. iii. 5.

8thly, The manner of the conduct and management of it is a myſtery. Kings of the earth have their ſecrets of government; but they are but trifles in compariſon of the myſteries of God's government by Chriſt in the world. The maxims of government in the kingdom of Chriſt, and the manner of his management and conduct, are vaſtly different from thoſe of the powers on earth, Iſ. lv. 8, 9. ‘For my thoughts (ſaith the Lord) are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, ſo are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.’ Some of theſe myſterious pieces of management follow. It is the manner of this kingdom,

1. To prefer the moſt unlikely, baulking them that ſtand faireſt for the preference in all human appearance: Matth. xx. 16. ‘The laſt ſhall be firſt, and the firſt laſt: for many be called, but few choſen.’ There is a thread of this method going through the whole oeconomy of grace. Abel the youngeſt is preferred to Cain, Shem to Japheth his elder brother, Jacob to Eſau, Ephraim to Manaſſeh, Moſes to Aaron, three years older than he, Exodus vii. 7. David to ſeven brethren elder than he. He calls the fooliſh and the baſe things of the world, paſſing by the wiſe, mighty and noble, 1 Cor. i. 26, 27, 28. forecited. The myſteries of the kingdom are *hid from the wiſe and prudent,* but *reveal-*

ed unto babes, Matth. xi, 25. When the goſpel is to be preached, the Jews muſt have the firſt offer, they muſt begin at Jeruſalem, where Chriſt was crucified: for the deſign is to exalt the riches of grace.

2. To let things go to an extremity, to the utmoſt point of hopeleſſneſs, before a hand be put to help them, and ſet them right again. Hence ſaid Moſes, Deut. xxxii. 36. 'The Lord ſhall judge his people, and repent himſelf for his ſervants; when he ſeeth that their power is gone, and there is none ſhut up, or left.' Pharaoh ſhall not only inſlave the Iſraelites, but proceed to drown their males, before Moſes their deliverer is born: their bondage ſhall be harder than ever, ere they are brought out of Egypt. When they are out, they are beſet on all hands, and he ſeems to have them in a hoſe-net, ere he and they are freely parted. Haman carried his plot ſo far againſt the Jews, that the decree was paſſed, the letters of execution writ, and the poſts diſpatched with them, before there was a turn. It is a maxim with men, to cruſh things in their beginnings, becauſe they may prove too ſtrong for them afterwards: but our Lord takes the contrary method, to glorify the power of his hand.

3. To give the ſharpeſt treatment to the greateſt favourites. This is not the manner of men, but it is the manner of God. Hence ſaid the pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxxiii. 5. 14. 'They [the wicked] are not in trouble as other men: neither are they plagued like other men. For all the day long have I [Aſaph, a ſaint] been plagued, and chaſtened every morning.' Never was one treated ſo hardly as the Son of the Father's boſom. And it is the ordinary method that the favourites of heaven are caſt down to duſt, while his enemies are lifted up on high; the former ſigh while the latter ſing. John Baptiſt is in the priſon, while the inceſtuous Herodias is at a ball; her daughter danceth, and John Baptiſt's head is cut off, and brought in a charger to the inceſtuous woman to triumph over it. They have little ſkill of the myſtery of God, that from their outward eaſe and proſperity gather the ſpecial love of God to them. On the contrary, 'whom the Lord loveth, he chaſteneth, and ſcourgeth every ſon whom he receiveth,' Heb. xii. 6. As little ſkill have they that conclude the greateſt ſufferers are certainly the greateſt ſinners. If it be ſo, the apoſtles were the worſt of men; 'For I think (ſays Paul) that God hath ſet forth us the apoſtles laſt, as it were appointed to death. For we are made a ſpectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men,' 1 Cor. iv. 9.

4. To meet men with aſtoniſhing ſtrokes going in the way that God bade them, while they have a fair ſun-ſhine that are going in the way of their own hearts. Hence ſaid Solomon, Eccleſ. viii. 14. 'There is a vanity which is done upon the earth, that there be juſt men unto whom it happeneth according to the works of the wicked: again, there be wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous.' Jacob was bidden return to his own country; but what ſtorms roſe on him by the way, one after another! Moſes was bid go to Egypt on God's errand, yet he was in hazard of his life: but Jonah flying to Tarſhiſh, got a ſhip as ready to take him in as he could have wiſhed. People are ready to judge of other mens actions, according to the outward aſpect of providence on them; a moſt uncertain and dangerous rule, which cannot miſs of making them condemn the generation of the righteous, and bleſs them whom the Lord abhorreth.

5. To lay by accepted petitions, and let them long ly by, time after time, while yet unacceptable requeſts are quickly granted. The people luſted after fleſh, and they ſoon got their deſire; they were bent for a king, and they ſoon got their deſire in that too. But how many cries to heaven were there among the Old Teſtament ſaints for the coming of the Meſſias, a promiſed mercy, which yet were not anſwered till ſome thouſands of years were run! God, while he flings a mercy to a carnal man uneaſy for it, will let his elect cry to him night and day for their mercies ere they get them, Luke xviii. 7. And many a long proceſs they may have before the throne, depending many a year, ere they get their anſwer; as is evident in the caſe of Abraham for a ſeed; yea they may be carried off the ſtage ere they be anſwered, as in the caſe of the cloud of witneſſes, Heb. xi. 13. who 'all died in faith, not having received the promiſes.' And yet after all they are accepted, and the gracious anſwer is determined for them.

6. To anſwer accepted prayers quickly with ſome one terrible thing or other, which yet are to be graciouſly and bountifully anſwered in due time. Hence ſaid the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxv. 5. *By terrible things in righteouſneſs, wilt thou anſwer us, O God of our ſalvation.* The woman of Canaan got repeated trials of this, Matth. xv. 22—28. Moſes and Aaron go in at God's command to Pharaoh to demand his letting Iſrael go; and no doubt they prayed for ſucceſs ere they went: but inſtead of that, immediately Iſrael's caſe is made far worſe than ever, Exod. v. Immediately providence takes a run directly contrary to what they had been praying for; this made Moſes himſelf ſtagger, as ye ſee verſ. 22, 23. 'And Moſes returned unto the Lord, and ſaid, Lord, wherefore haſt thou ſo evil intreated this people? why is it that thou haſt ſent me? For ſince I came to Pharaoh to ſpeak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither haſt thou delivered the people at all.' If at any time ye have been praying for a mercy with particular concern and ſeriouſneſs, and quickly after providence ſeems to fly in the face of your prayers, be not ſo weak and ſo ill ſeen in the myſtery of God, as to think, Now that is heaven's final anſwer; no: it is but a trial, very uſual in the myſtery of God; which if ye learn not by hearing, you will be fair to get it taught you by experience.

7. To muſter up various impediments, make many embarraſſments, and ſet up iron gates in the way of ſome great good thing that is to be done for a perſon, a favourite of heaven. This was taught by the apoſtles, Acts xiv. 22. who were employed in confirming the 'ſouls of the diſciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we muſt through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.' Some get their mercies with a great deal of eaſe, they drop into their lap like ripe fruit off the tree of common providence. But the children of the covenant come not ſo eaſily by theirs: and the greater the mercy is, readily the more and greater are the difficulties in the way thereof. Eſau and his poſterity were ſoon and eaſily ſettled in Edom, the land appointed for them: but it was many a year after ere Jacob's poſterity were ſettled in Canaan, the land appointed for them; and they fought many bloody battles before it. Abraham had the promiſe of a ſon, but behold the barrenneſs of his wife is rolled in the way of the promiſe: and, as if that had not been enough, he and ſhe both grew ſo old, that it ceaſed to be with her after the manner of women. Much a like was it with Zacharias and Elizabeth, Luke i. 18. But this is for the honour of God, in making the iron gates open of their own accord, and bringing the promiſed mercy over the belly of the impediments.

8. To ſet things on a run to bring in a mercy promiſed; and then when it comes to the point, that one is juſt expecting to receive it, ſuddenly to cauſe a ſtop, and make a turn that makes it quite hopeleſs like. When the Meſſias appeared, there were great hopes among the believing Jews of a glorious time for Iſrael; and theſe hopes were not vain; but they ſuddenly met with a ſhock; the Meſſias was crucified, dead, and buried; that made ſome of them like to loſe all their hopes. Hence ſaid the two diſciples that were going to Emmaus, Luke xxiv. 21. *We truſted that it had been he which ſhould have redeemed Iſrael.* This is a very ordinary piece of the divine conduct, the myſtery of God, firſt as it were to paſs the ſentence of death on a promiſed mercy, to bury and lay the grave ſtone on it, and then to raiſe it

up and bring it in. David had the promiſe of the kingdom; he is ſent for to court, has Saul's favour, is made general by him, gains the hearts of the people, 1 Sam. xviii. Now things were on a run towards the accompliſhing of the promiſe. But behold, this run is ſuddenly ſtopt; Saul ſeeks his life, he is for many years hunted like a partridge on the mountains, thinks one day he will fall by the hands of Saul; and ſays in his haſte, Pſal. cxvi. 11. *All men are lyars.* So Moſes being bred up in the court of Pharaoh, had a ſecret intimation, that he would be the man who would deliver Iſrael. Accordingly when he was forty years old, he ſets himſelf to the work, Exod. ii. 11. *&c.* but it miſgives in his hand, and he is in hazard of his life, and is forced to flee the country: and for forty years after that he lives retired in Midian, Acts vii. 23. *&c.* by which time it would ſeem he had loſt all hope of the matter. Yet was the work done in its due time. Such ſeems to have been the caſe with Zacharias, as ye will ſee, Luke i. 13. compared with verſe 18.

9. When a promiſed mercy is to be brought about, to lay by the moſt likely and promiſing inſtruments, from whence one has his expectation. It is a piece of the myſtery of God, in that caſe, to looſe their grips one after another, till in end they have nothing left to grip to but God himſelf in his word. Hence ſaid the apoſtle, 2 Cor. i. 9. ‘We had the ſentence of death in ourſelves, that we ſhould not truſt in ourſelves, but in God which raiſeth the dead.’ Before Iſrael ſhould conquer Canaan, all the men of war among them behoved to be conſumed and dead, Deut. ii. 16. Joſeph had a fair proſpect of deliverance, when he ſo ſignally obliged a courtier, Pharaoh's chief butler: but the ungrateful man never minded him, Gen. xl. 23. But the Lord doth this, that his own hand in the mercy may appear the more eminent: and he loves to employ unlooked-for means, and unexpected inſtruments. So our Lord Jeſus let the boats go away: but came walking on the ſea, to the relief of his diſtreſſed diſciples. He ſays ſometimes to inſtruments of a good work, Hitherto ſhall you go, but no further. The great and good Moſes, that ſingular inſtrument for good to Iſrael, muſt be laid by, before they enter Canaan.

10. To make uſe of hindrances of good things for furtherances thereof. Hence ſaid Paul to the Philippians, chap. i. 12. ‘I would ye ſhould underſtand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me, have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the goſpel.’ It was meet that Paul the apoſtle of the Gentiles ſhould be at Rome, then the chief city of the world, to preach the goſpel there. He often purpoſed it, but was diſappointed. Hence he ſaid, Rom. i. 13. ‘Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purpoſed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have ſome fruit among you alſo, even as among other Gentiles.’ How got he thither? Why, there was a mob raiſed on him by the Jews, he was taken priſoner by the Romans, toſſed from hand to hand, till he was obliged to appeal to Cæſar, and then the Romans carried him to Rome. Jacob was brought into heavy caſe, by what befel his ſon Joſeph: but behold, that was the means of the ſupport of him and his family. Hence ſaid he on his death bed, Gen. xlix. 24. ‘His bow [Joſeph's] abode in ſtrength, and the arms of his hands were made ſtrong, by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob: from thence is the Shepherd, the ſtone of Iſrael.’ In the myſtery of God there is frequent working by contraries; providence driving ſtraight forward to the deſigned point, while it ſeems to us to be going quite againſt it. Chriſt cures the blind man putting clay on his eyes; Haman goes unto the king to get Mordecai hanged, and by that very means is brought to lead him through the city on horſeback, in the greateſt pomp and ſplendor. Had not Joſeph been put in priſon, he had not come to the court.

11. *laſtly,* To give weak backs heavy burdens to bear. Hence ſaith the apoſtle, 1 Cor. i. 27. ‘But God hath choſen the fooliſh things of the world, to confound the wiſe; and God hath choſen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty.’ Thus he chuſed his apoſtles fiſhermen, to ſet up his kingdom in the world, combat the learning of the ſchools, and the force of them who had the power of the ſword. The apoſtle unriddles this myſtery, 2 Cor. iv. 7. *But we have this treaſure in earthen veſſels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.* While he makes a worm threſh the mountains, to beat them ſmall, the greater is the glory of the mighty hand that does it with ſuch a flail, Iſa. xli. 14, 15. When Peter was a young man, able to bear hardſhips, he was at eaſe; but when old and leſs able, he got ſore ones. Hence ſaid our Lord to him, John xxi. 18. ‘Verily, verily I ſay unto thee, When thou waſt young, thou girdedſt thyſelf, and walkedſt whither thou wouldeſt: but when thou ſhalt be old, thou ſhalt ſtretch forth thy hands, and another ſhall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldeſt not.’ If as the back grows weaker, the burdens to bear are increaſed, it is but an ordinary piece of management in the myſtery of God; which accounts for that order, Iſa. xl. 31. ‘They that wait upon the Lord ſhall renew their ſtrength; they ſhall mount up with wings as eagles, they ſhall run and not be weary, and they ſhall walk and not faint.’

Many ſuch things are in the myſtery of God: but theſe condeſcended on ſhall ſerve for a ſwatch.

THIRDLY, We are to conſider the myſtery of God as finiſhed with time. And here I ſhall ſhew,

1ſt, When it ſhall be finiſhed.

2dly, Wherein the finiſhing of it lies.

3dly, The import and conſequence of this finiſhing.

Firſt, Let us conſider when this myſtery of God ſhall be finiſhed.

1. It will be in the days of the voice of the ſeventh angel. Now it is plain, the days of the ſeventh angel are come already: but then under it are comprehended the ſeven vials; and we are come the length of the third or fourth vial. So that the finiſhing period of the myſtery of God is now running, and is well far on. The morning and midday of the myſtery is paſt, the afternoon of it well far ſpent, and we are in the time drawing near to the evening of it.

2. It will get the finiſhing ſtroke with the end of time; and time and it will end together. It will not be carried on beyond time, and time will not end till it be done. Hence ſaith the apoſtle, 1 Cor. xv. 24. ‘Then cometh the end, when he ſhall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he ſhall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power.’ At one and the ſame period, the world will end, and time with it, and the myſtery of God finiſhed withal.

3. But the preciſe time of this event is kept a ſecret from all men; which none of them are able to diſcover, nor ſhould they inquire into. Hence ſaid our Lord, Matth. xxiv. 36. *But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but the Father only.* And ſaith Paul, 1 Theſſ. v. 2. ‘For yourſelves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord ſo cometh as a thief in the night.’ It is ſo ordered on deſign to guard men againſt ſecurity, and to oblige them to watch. Hence ſaith the exalted Redeemer, Rev. xvi. 15. ‘Behold, I come as a thief. Bleſſed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, leſt he walk naked, and they ſee his ſhame.’

Secondly, Wherein does the finiſhing of this myſtery ly? It lies in theſe *three* things following.

1. The accompliſhment of the remaining prophecies. Theſe are but few; the principle whereof are, the calling of the Jews, and the total deſtruction of Antichriſt. That the Jews are to be called, is evident from Rom. xi. 25, 26. ‘I would, not brethren, that ye ſhould be ignorant of this myſtery, that blindneſs in part has happened to Iſrael, until the fulneſs of the Gentiles be come

'in. And ſo all Iſrael ſhall be ſaved: as it is written, 'There ſhall come out of Sion the deliverer, and ſhall 'turn away ungodlineſs from Jacob.' And who can conſider, that though this people have been rooted out of their own land, and ſcattered among the nations more than ſixteen hundred years, and yet remain a diſtinct people ſtill, not incorporated with nor ſunk in other nations, but they are reſerved by ſpecial providence for this notable event? And ſo much of the prophecies of the downfal of the Antichriſtian kingdom is already accompliſhed, as inſures the total deſtruction thereof, according to the remaining part anent it.

2. The gathering in of all the elect. There is a certain number choſen to life: thoſe that remain of them yet unborn, muſt be born in this world, till the laſt perſon of that bleſſed roll is come forth. And they muſt alſo be born again, and brought by faith into the kingdom of Chriſt. And then when the laſt elect man or woman is born, and withal brought to Chriſt, the myſtery is on the very point of finiſhing.

3. The completing of the ſalvation of the church of the elect. That was the end for which the myſtery was laid before time in the eternal counſel; and being obtained it is finiſhed, 1 Cor. xv. 24. forecited. Hereto belongs the reſurrection of their bodies, the deſtroying of death the laſt enemy, and the preſenting of the whole company of the elect, from the firſt to the laſt man, ſpotleſs before the throne. Hence ſaith Paul, Eph. v. 25. 27. 'Chriſt loved the church, and gave himſelf for it, that 'he might preſent it to himſelf a glorious church, not 'having ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing; but that it 'ſhould be holy, and without blemiſh.' And ſaith Jude, ver. 24. 'Now unto him that is able to keep you from 'falling, and to preſent you faultleſs before the preſence 'of his glory with exceeding joy,' &c. This is the delivering up of the kingdom to the Father, mentioned, 1 Cor. xv. 24.

Thirdly, It remains to ſhew the import and conſequence of this finiſhing the myſtery of God. It is of greateſt importance to the honour of God, and to the children of men. For then,

1. The eternal purpoſe of God concerning mankind is fulfilled; the contrivance laid from eternity in the depth of wiſdom about them, is executed. From eternity the ſcheme was formed, the draught was made, and then the building is reared up actually in conformity thereto, the head-ſtone is laid upon it.

2. The covenant betwixt the Father and Chriſt the *ſecond Adam* is then fulfilled on both hands. In it there was a condition to be fulfilled by Chriſt. This he did complete near ſeventeen hundred years ago, paying the debt of the whole elect world. And there were promiſes on the Father's part to be fulfilled on the performing of that condition. A great part of theſe yet remain to be fulfilled: but then it will be done completely; and the promiſes be made good in every point to the head and to the members.

3. Then the whole frame of the ordinances, now or ſince Adam's fall, in uſe in the world, for bringing in of ſinners, and edifying of ſaints, is laid by. No more church aſſemblies, word and ſacraments, church government nor diſcipline, nor church officers: theſe are as the ſcaffolding all to be taken down, now that the houſe is built, Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13. 'And he gave ſome 'apoſtles: and ſome prophets; and ſome, evangeliſts; 'and ſome, paſtors and teachers; for the perfecting of 'the ſaints, for the work of the miniſtry, for the edifying of the body of Chriſt: till we all come in the 'unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son 'of God, unto a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the 'ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt.' In theſe it was that the myſtery of God was carried on; but the myſtery being finiſhed, there is no more need of them: but they will not be miſſed by them, who have through them been brought into the fellowſhip of the myſtery. Hence ſaith John of the new Jeruſalem, Rev. xxi. 22. *I ſaw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb, are the temple of it.*

4. Then the manner of the divine conduct towards mankind is altered ſo, that it is quite new: Rev. xxi. 5. 'He that ſat upon the throne, ſaid, Behold, I make 'all things new.' There will be no more trials and afflictions of the godly, and no more proſperity of the wicked, as now. Now is the mixed diſpenſation; then comes the unmixed one, that where it is well, it is perfectly well; where ill, it is abſolutely ill. An eternal ſun ſhine then chears the godly, without the leaſt intercepting cloud; and an eternal gloom ſits down on the wicked, without the leaſt gleam of light.

5. Then Chriſt's conqueſt is complete, his enemies made his footſtool, which he is this day in expectation of. Hence ſaith the apoſtle, Heb. x. 12, 13. 'But 'this man, after he had offered one ſacrifice for ſins, 'for ever ſat down on the right hand of God; from 'henceforth expecting till all his enemies be made 'his footſtool.' Then ſhame covers the faces of all that oppoſed and ſlighted him; their profane tongues that they uſed in contempt of him, his holy religion, are ſilent in darkneſs; the ſerpent's head is quite bruiſed away, and his works utterly deſtroyed; and he, and ſinners that believed him to their ruin, are together ſhut up in the pit. Then Chriſt and his followers have a total victory over ſin, Satan, death, and the preſent evil world.

6. Then begins the eternal marriage feaſt to be held in the kingdom of God, when Jeſus Chriſt, the glorious Bridegroom, has brought home his bride, believers now eſpouſed to him, Matth. xxiv. 10. The plenty, the glory, and the pleaſure of that feaſt mortals cannot comprehend: for *in his preſence is fulneſs of joy, and at his right hand are pleaſures for evermore*, Pſal. xvi. 11. Some ſips and drops his people get now and then, more reliſhing than any of the dreggy pleaſures of this world; but ſtill there is a vail betwixt us and it, ſo that we cannot know it.

7. Then the door is ſhut, Matth. xxv. 10. No acceſs more, knock who will. No refuſer of Chriſt will then, though he may now, have liberty to take his word again; the myſtery is finiſhed, of which God's bearing ſo long with ſinners makes a great part: but as God's ſhutting in Noah, was the barring out of thoſe that were out; ſo the eſpouſed to Chriſt being ſet down, there is no acceſs for new gueſts.

8. Then the world ends, 1 Cor. xv. 24. forecited. The world is kept up for the ſake of the carrying on the myſtery of God in it; and had it not been for that cauſe, it had been overthrown at Adam's fall: but then the myſtery being finiſhed, there is no more uſe for it; ſo fire is ſet to it as the ſtage of wickedneſs, a curſed world, wherein God has been ſo long diſhonoured.

9. Then the myſtery is opened, and appears in a full light; though before vailed, the vail is then taken off. The ſaints were often puzzled with the difficulties of it; but then they ſhall all be unfolded and laid open to them, to the clearing of them, in a ſuitableneſs to the divine perfections, and becomingneſs to the divine wiſdom, juſtice, and goodneſs, to their eternal joy and conſolation. Hence ſaith the apoſtle, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. 'For 'now we ſee through a glaſs darkly; but then face to 'face: now I know in part; but then ſhall I know even 'as alſo I am known.' The wicked deſpiſed the myſtery, drew concluſions from it as it appeared to them, to their own ruin; but then it will be ſo far opened to them, as they will ſee it worthy of God to their eternal ſhame and confuſion. Hence ſaith the prophet, Mic. vii. 16. 'The nations ſhall ſee and be confounded at 'all their might: they ſhall lay their hand upon their 'mouth, their ears ſhall be deaf.'

10. *laſtly*, There will be no more myſtery of God: then it is finiſhed. It is for the exerciſe and trial of faith, that matters are carried on in that myſterious manner now: but then faith gives place to ſight and ſenſe. Not that ever men will be able fully to comprehend the my-

ſtery; but as far as the ſaints capacity reacheth, it is cleared unto them; and the wicked will be no more liable to miſtake as to the way of the Lord's dealing with them.

II. We ſhall conſider *the relation betwixt the myſtery of God and time.* We take it up in theſe two particulars.

1. Time is the ſpace appointed for the myſtery of God its being executed. It was in all the parts of it laid indeed in the eternal counſels before time: the effects of it, or the ſtate it will bring mankind into, and keep them in, will be to everlaſting, when time is no more: but the execution of it, the beginning, carrying on, and finiſhing it, is in time: time bounds that before and behind. The myſtery is a building of God, wherein many hands are employed: the pattern of it was drawn from eternity; it will be inhabited through eternity; but the building of it belongs entirely to time; in it the foundation was laid, and in it the cape ſtone will be laid on.

2. The ſubſiſtence or continuation of time depends on the myſtery. Hence are the words of the text, The angel ‘ſware by him that liveth for ever and ever, that there ſhould be time no longer, but the myſtery of God ſhould be finiſhed.’ The myſtery muſt be carried on and finiſhed, take what time it will; therefore time muſt wait on it, till it be done. Being done, there is no more uſe for time, and ſo it ends. So it is for the ſake of the myſtery of God, not for the trifling concerns of men, that time is lengthened out. Had there been no myſtery of God, to have been carried on, time once polluted with ſin, had ended very ſoon after it began.

USE I. of *Information.* Hence we may learn,

1. Whence it comes to paſs, that there is ſo much ſtumbling of wicked men at the divine conduct by Chriſt in the world. They can ſee no beauty in it, they cannot receive it, they are offended at it, they improve it to ruining purpoſes againſt themſelves. This obtains ſo univerſally, that our Saviour pronounces ‘Bleſſed is he whoſoever ſhall not be offended in me,’ Matth. xi. 6. The matter is; it is a myſtery, and their natural blindneſs hinders them to ſee it, ſo that they know it not: 1 Cor. ii. 14. ‘The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are fooliſhneſs unto him; neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.’ They ſtumble at the doctrinal part of the myſtery; for there is in it what their reaſon cannot comprehend; and becauſe it is ſo, many of them profeſſedly reject it, 1 Tim. iii. 16. They ſtumble at the providential part of it, Mal. iii. 15. ‘And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedneſs, are ſet up; yea, they that tempt God, are even delivered.’ That is a myſtery too, which one needs the light of the ſanctuary to let him into. Hence ſaith the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxxiii. 16, 17. ‘When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me. Until I went into the ſanctuary of God; then underſtood I their end.’

2. How the godly come to have other thoughts of it; and true Chriſtians admire the beauty and glory of it, which carnal men deſpiſe. It is the myſtery of God, which he reveals to his friends and fearers of his name, Pſal. xxv. 14. ‘The ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will ſhew them his covenant. John xv. 15. ‘Henceforth ſaith Chriſt) I call you not ſervants; for the ſervant knoweth not what his lord doth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.’ They are let into the ſecret which others are not, and they get eyes to ſee what the ſharpeſt eye of unſanctified reaſon cannot perceive: Mark iv. 11. ‘Unto you (ſaith our Lord to his diſciples) it is given to know the myſtery of the kingdom of God; but unto them that are without, all theſe things are done in parables.’ Therefore they ought to be thankful and humble, poſing themſelves with that queſtion, *Who maketh thee to differ?* The babes ſee what the wiſe and prudent cannot diſcern; becauſe the Father has revealed the ſame to the one, and hid them from the other, Matth. xi. 25.

3. No reaſon to deſpiſe religion, becauſe the world generally do ſo. Religion is a myſtery; the world is a blind world, and the blind cannot judge of colours. No body deſpiſes it, but thoſe who know it not; and it is raſhneſs with a witneſs to condemn what one knows not, Pſal. ix. 10. John iv. 10. It is true, carnal men have an underſtanding as well as others, and in many inſtances of deeper reach than others! but ſtill it is but a natural underſtanding, that is not competent for the myſtery of God, which cannot be taken up but with a new underſtanding. Hence ſaith the apoſtle, 1 John v. 20. ‘And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an underſtanding, that we may know him that is true.’ It is the king's favourites that are let into the ſecrets of the government, but not every body.

4. Time is not continued as a ſleep without a deſign. The ſecure ſleeping world look on time as a thing that runs on by a neceſſity of nature; and becauſe they ſee now a new day ſtill ſuceeding the foregoing one, they think in effect it will always be ſo. They conſider not the deſign of God in continuing it, wherefore the ſun and the moon make ſo many rounds, why one day as yet ſtill comes after another; but are apt to ſay, as 2 Pet. iii. 4. ‘Where is the promiſe of his coming? for ſince the fathers fell aſleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.’ O that men would conſider, that it is lengthened out on a particular deſign; which being compaſſed, it ſhall end for good and all:

5. It is not this world's buſineſs, but heaven's buſineſs, that is the great deſign of the continuing of time. Ye are miſtaken, if ye think, that the ſun riſes again, the new ſeed time comes, &c. juſt that ye may go to your work, and till and ſow, &c. Nay it is that the myſtery of God may be carried on: and theſe things have no place but as appendages of the myſtery of God; and true Chriſtians will manage them ſo. Hence is that exhortation, Col. iii. 17. ‘And whatſoever ye do in word and deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jeſus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.’ Much leſs is it that men may carry on their myſteries of iniquity, which is almoſt the only thing that ſome profligate ſinners uſe their time for. But dreadful will their reckoning be, that ſpend in carrying on their myſteries of iniquity, that time that is deſigned for carrying on the myſtery of God.

6. The myſtery of God muſt be a matter of ſingular excellency, and of the laſt importance, that for it time is continued. It is ſo indeed, for the honour of God. Hereby there is a revenue of glory raiſed to him in this world, wherever that myſtery is declared: and as to thoſe places wherein it is not heard of, true believers honour him in entertaining awful thoughts of his ſovereignty, and the unſearchableneſs of his judgments, in keeping it wholly up from thoſe places, reverently waiting the opening of that part of the myſtery. But all theſe are but gleanings; the full harveſt of glory to God from the myſtery comes at the finiſhing of it. It is ſo likewiſe to mankind; for upon that myſtery depends their eternal ſtate of well or woe, according as they receive or ſlight it.

7. The myſtery of God, has, in the execution of it, been of long continuance; but it is drawing to a cloſe. It was begun in paradiſe, in the promulgation of the firſt goſpel that ever was heard in the world, Gen. iii. 15. Several thouſands of years have paſt ſince in carrying it on. Many a time the world has been heartily weary of it, wiſhing to have it at an end; not conſidering that time muſt end with it: ſo that could they have effectu-

ate it, they would have but drawn down the houſe on their own heads. And perhaps the Chriſtian world was never more weary of it than at this day. But it is drawing to a cloſe now; and at the period God has fixed for its end, it will be finiſhed.

8. *laſtly*, When there is no more time requiſite for the myſtery of God, there will be no more time for other things neither; time will end with it; for it is for the ſake of it that time is continued.

Uſe 2. of *Reproof*; and that to thoſe,

1. Who will have no myſteries in religion, but all within the reach of human reaſon. However, according to the ſcripture, it is a bundle of myſteries, Matth. xiii. 11. hid from the wiſe, chap. xi. 25. The foundation of practical religion is a myſtery, Eph. v. 32. The practice of it is a myſtery, Col. iii. 3. 'Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Chriſt in God.' Gal. ii. 20. 'I am crucified with Chriſt: Nevertheleſs I live; yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the fleſh, I live by faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.' See 1 Tim. iii. 16. 'Without controverſy, great is the myſtery of godlineſs: God was manifeſt in the fleſh, juſtified in the Spirit, ſeen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.' What reaſon can be aſſigned, why our God may not take trial of man, in believing him on his bare word, as well as obeying him on the mere intimation of his will?

2. Thoſe who deſpiſe the goſpel, as a weak and mean thing, looking on it with diſdain as fooliſhneſs, as it was to the Jews and Greeks, 1 Cor. i. 23. A dangerous adventure; a deſpiſing of the myſtery of God, the myſtery of his wiſdom, ver. 24. They will be confounded at the finiſhing of the myſtery.

3. Thoſe who improve it not, to the proper end of revealing it to them; i. e. the ſalvation of the ſoul; like thoſe invited to the marriage of the king's ſon, who 'made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandize,' Matth. xxii. 5. This is a neglect inſuring ruin; Heb. ii. 3. 'How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great ſalvation?'

Uſe 3. *laſt*, of *Exhortation*. And,

1. Be not raſh in paſſing judgment on the ſtate of affairs in the world, while you ſee the ſeeming confuſions in your own caſe, of others, or of the church. Wait the finiſhing of the myſtery. Then you will ſee ſurpriſing ſights; particularly,

(1.) An admirable harmony betwixt jarring providences and promiſes. They will meet in cloſe agreement; and it will appear that there never was any real diſcord between them; but that providence took the beſt way towards the accompliſhing of the promiſes: Deut. xxxii. 4. 'God is the rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment; a God of truth, and without iniquity, juſt and right is he.'

(2.) A beautiful agreeableneſs of ſmiling providences in the caſe of the wicked, to the divine perfections. By theſe will appear the goodneſs, patience, *&c.* of God, without any the leaſt marring of the divine faithfulneſs in the threatening. Hence ſaid Abraham to the rich man, Luke xvi. 25. 'Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedſt thy good things, and likewiſe Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.' And ſaith the prophet, Iſa. iii. 11. 'Wo unto the wicked, it ſhall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands ſhall be given him.'

(3.) The baſe believers who took the myſtery on truſt fully ſatisfied; the wiſe and prudent who would believe no further than they ſaw, confounded, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. 'For now we ſee through a glaſs, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then ſhall I know even as alſo I am known.' Matth. xxii. 12. 'And he ſaith unto him, Friend, how cameſt thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment? and he was ſpeechleſs.'

2. Improve the myſtery while you have it, before it be finiſhed; for if once it be finiſhed, there will be no more method of grace and ſalvation for ſinners. The goſpel is the laſt ſhip for Immanuel's land. It will be finiſhed in itſelf with time; but to you with the end of your time.

(1.) Earneſtly ſeek of God by his Spirit the revelation of the myſtery to you, the ſaving knowledge of it, Matth. xiii. 11. forecited. For no man can have it without the Spirit, 1 Cor. ii. 14. forecited.

(2.) Reſt not till ye be brought into the fellowſhip of the myſtery, Eph. iii. 9. By the goſpel ye are called unto it, 1 Cor. i. 9. and by faith brought into it, 1 John i. 3.

(3.) *laſtly*, Carry always with you in remembrance the finiſhing of the myſtery, and time with it; that you may be inured to look on the preſent ſtate of affairs as paſſing, and to look for all things new.

Walking by Faith, not by Sight.

The Subſtance of three SERMONS, Preached at Maxton Communion, June 29. and 30. and at Ettrick, July 7. 1728.

2 Cor. v. 7.

For we walk by faith, not by ſight.

The firſt Sermon on this Text.

IN the preceeding words we find a notable myſtery of the Chriſtian life, *viz.* it is a groaning life, ver. 2. 4. and yet a life of confidence, wherein one is of good cheer, as ſafe and comfortable, ver. 6. But if Chriſtians are ſo confident, and of ſo good cheer, why do they they groan? They are burdened, under a body of ſin and death, a load of trials and afflictions. And burdened folk muſt groan; ay they may groan, and yet not grudge; for Chriſt himſelf was a groaner, but not a grudger, as we find John xi. 33. *He groaned in the ſpirit, and was troubled.* But then if they groan ſo heavily, how are they confident and of good cheer? how can theſe conſiſt? Very well, ſays the apoſtle, *For we walk by faith, not by ſight.* Faith's proſpect keeps up the heart, while ſight and ſenſe of the hardſhips of the way makes us groan; and we ſteer our courſe by the former, not by the latter. In the words we have,

1. The preſent ſtate and condition of the ſaints in this world: they are in the way as travellers; *We walk.* The ſaints in heaven, and the damned in hell, are come to their journey's end; they are, as to their bodies, in their long home; as to their ſouls, in their eternal

home. We here are on the way: the wicked, ſome running, ſome ſtealing, on the way to deſtruction; the ſaints on their way to heaven, groaning and preſſing forward. The company before them is triumphant, the company with them militant; they are not yet got home, but they are on the way.

2. How they direct their courſe while in the way, for ſafety and comfort; for their road through this world is dangerous and gloomy, as in a wilderneſs. And poſitively,

1. *By faith.* They that are before them in heaven, manage themſelves by ſight: for their ſight cannot deceive; every thing appears there in its true colours, and there ſight diſcerns every thing as it is. The reſt of the travellers through the world, walk by ſight: but ſight and ſenſe in the world are deceitful things: for there are many falſe appearances there, which whoſo follow fall headlong into the dark dungeon of deſtruction. But their Father has given them faith's proſpect to walk by: and that diſcovers things worldly ſight cannot reach, and corrects the miſtakes of it in things it does reach: and in ſome meaſure it ſupplies the want of heavenly ſight, giving a view of things not ſeen; Heb. xi. 1. ‘ Now ‘ faith is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, the evidence ‘ of things not ſeen.’

2. Negatively, *Not by ſight.* The word does not formally denote the ſight ſeeing, but the ſight ſeen; that is, the outward ſhape of things, the appearance they make to our ſight, ſenſe, and carnal reaſon. Hence it is rendered *ſhape,* John v. 37. ‘ And the Father himſelf which hath ſent me, hath borne witneſs of me. ‘ Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor ſeen ‘ his ſhape;’ and *appearance,* 1 Theſſ. v. 22. ‘ Abſtain ‘ from all appearance of evil.’ Now, that appearance of things is the guide in the way to carnal men; by it they take their marks, and are led to ruin. The ſaints forgetting themſelves, ſometimes take their mark by it too, and they ſmart for it; but their habitual deliberate courſe is not directed by it.

DOCT. *They that would ſafely and comfortably travel on their way through this world, muſt direct their courſe by faith, and not by ſight, or the appearance things make to their ſight, ſenſe, and carnal reaſon.*

In diſcourſing this doctrine, I ſhall,

I. Conſider the journey we are all on.

II. Shew how we muſt, while we are on our way, direct our courſe by faith, and not by ſight, as ever we would get ſafely and comfortably through.

III. *laſtly,* Apply.

I. I ſhall conſider *the journey we all are on.* Saints and ſinners are both travellers. The difference between them lies not in that the one are on their journey, and the other arrived at their home; nay, they are both by the way; and ſinners are walking as faſt to their home, as ſaints to theirs. But it lies here; the one *walk by faith,* the other *walk by ſight.* Therefore here a few words of our common journey.

1. The point where we began our journey, was from the womb: the moment we received life there, we ſet off in our way. Then we commenced ſinful creatures, as ſaith the pſalmiſt, Pſal. li. 5. ‘ Behold, I was ſhapen ‘ in iniquity; and in ſin did my mother conceive me:’ and therefore dying creatures. So we are on our way, ere we could point a foot to the ground, ere we knew where we were.

2. The point where we will end it, is another world, the unſeen world, the place and ſtate of the dead. The travellers will never halt till they be there, whether they ſleep or wake: for ſays Job, chap. xxx. 23. ‘ I know ‘ that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the houſe appointed for all living.’ The baiting-places by the way may be very different: but the lodging place is one; we will lie down alike in the duſt.

3. Our journeying, or travelling, or walking itſelf, is our motion between theſe two points: and that is our living here. Our life in this world is not a reſt, but a travelling motion; a travelling from the womb to the grave; a coming from the womb of our mother woman, and going in again to the womb of our mother earth, as ſaith Job, chap. i. 21. ‘ Naked came I out of ‘ my mother's womb, and naked ſhall I return thither.’

4. The place our way lies through, is this preſent world; where the riſing and ſetting ſun makes ſo many days and nights; where are ſo many ſummers and winters, while the travellers are on their road; where God ſends out his meſſengers to direct us to the right road. Carnal men count it their dwelling-place; hence ſaith the pſalmiſt, Pſal. xlix. 11. ‘ Their inward thought is, ‘ that their houſes ſhall continue for ever, and their ‘ dwelling-places to all generations; they call their lands ‘ after their own names.’ Again, they call it their reſting place: hence ſaid the rich man, Luke xii. 19. ‘ And ‘ I will ſay to my ſoul, Soul, thou haſt much goods laid ‘ up for many years; take thine eaſe, eat, drink, and be ‘ merry.’ But it is but our journeying place we travel through; like a town on the road, where the traveller comes in at the one end of it, and goes out at the other: Eccleſ. i. 4. ‘ One generation paſſeth away, and another generation cometh.’

5. The way we make in our journey, is our time. How much of our time, ſo much of our way is over; and one ſtep of our way, right or wrong, we will never go back. Time flies away; and we cut our way more quickly than a poſt: and therefore will ſoon be at our journey's end.

6. *laſtly,* Every breathing we make, every pulſe is a ſtep in the way. God hath determined how often every one ſhall breathe in and out the air, how many rounds the blood ſhall go in our bodies, what number of pulſes it ſhall make. Theſe are the ſteps by which this journey is made. At length the laſt pulſe beats, the laſt breathing is made; and we are at our journey's end.

II. The next thing is to ſhew, *How we muſt, while we are on our way, direct our courſe by faith, and not by ſight, as ever we would get ſafely and comfortably through.*

1. As we are by nature poſſeſſed of ſight and ſenſe, we muſt be by grace poſſeſſed of faith too. We are men endowed with ſenſe and reaſon, but we muſt be Chriſtians too, having received Jeſus Chriſt by faith, as ſaith the apoſtle, Col. iii. 6. ‘ As ye have received Chriſt Jeſus ‘ the Lord, ſo walk ye in him.’ Mere ſenſual or natural men, without a gracious principle, a principle of faith, cannot walk but by ſenſe. Faith muſt firſt fetch a new life, or new nature from Chriſt, in habitual ſanctification, before one can walk by faith in actual holineſs, 2 Cor. v. 17. ‘ Therefore (ſaith the apoſtle) if any man ‘ be in Chriſt, he is a new creature: old things are paſt ‘ away, behold, all things are become new.’ Eph. ii. 10. ‘ For we are his workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus ‘ unto good works, which God hath before ordained ‘ that we ſhould walk in them.’

2. We muſt no more make the preſent world our mark and chief aim, but the unſeen world of eternal bliſs. Senſe diſcovers the ſeen world as a beautiful thing in the profits and pleaſures thereof, and it terminates the view of the travellers by ſight. But faith's travellers look beyond it, and diſcover the better country, Immanuel's land; and being firmly perſuaded it is a better country, ſteer their courſe directly for it, Cant. viii. 5. ‘ Who is ‘ this that cometh up from the wilderneſs, leaning upon her beloved.’ Heb. xi. 13. ‘ Theſe all died in faith, ‘ not having received the promiſes, but having ſeen them ‘ afar off, and were perſuaded of them, and embraced ‘ them, and confeſſed that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth.’ Phil. iii. 14. ‘ I preſs toward the ‘ mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt ‘ Jeſus.’

3. We muſt take our way-marks to that land by faith, and not by ſight. The travellers that walk by ſenſe, they ſee the multitude on their way, and they ſee it is approven by the general vote; and ſo they go on in their looſe and eaſy way of religion, where the law as a law does not gird them ſtrait; and in their legal way of religion, where they hang by the bit of the law as a covenant. For that is a ſightly, rational way, not fanciful they think.

But the travellers by faith look to the word, and by faith diſcover only Chriſt to be the perſonal way, and univerſal holineſs the real way, John xiv. 6. 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.' Pſal. cxix. 6. 'Then (ſays the Pſalmiſt) ſhall I not be aſhamed, when I have reſpect unto all thy commandments.' And therefore they work as if they were to win heaven by working: and renounce all confidence before the Lord in their works, as if they had never done a good work: hence is that character given of them, Phil. iii. 3. 'We are the circumciſion which worſhip God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the fleſh.'

4. We muſt go on our way, not in felt ſtrength, but believed ſtrength. Sight and ſenſe are bold, according to what the man finds within himſelf; as ſaid Peter, 'Though all ſhould deny thee, yet will not I.' Faith is bold in what it ſees in Chriſt: hence is that exhortation, 2 Tim. ii. 1. 'Thou therefore my ſon, be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus.' And hence the Chriſtian's experience is, 2 Cor. xii. 10. 'When I am weak, then am I ſtrong.' For he ſays, Pſal. lxxi. 16. 'I will go in the ſtrength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteouſneſs, even of thine only.'

5. We muſt not wait the comforts of ſight and ſenſe, under the hardſhips of the way, but take the comfort of faith, Pſal. cviii. 7. 'God hath ſpoken in his holineſs, I will rejoice.' They may wait long the other way ere they get it: but faith is help at hand; for faith's cordial water is always ready, *viz.* the ſpring of the word that is always clear, even while the diſpenſations of providence are drumbly; hence ſaith David, Pſal lvi. 10. 'In God will I praiſe his word: in the Lord will I praiſe his word.'

6. We muſt not take the teſtimony of our ſight and ſenſe, but believe the report of faith, concerning all we meet with in our way; and walk accordingly. Worldly eaſe, wealth, and proſperity, are excellent good things, tribulations and trials very ill things, by the teſtimony of ſenſe; but faith reports quite otherwiſe of them; that the former is dangerous, and the latter the more ſafe. Senſe ſays, he hates, and therefore he rebukes; faith corrects the miſtake by the word, and ſays he loves; and therefore *as many as I love, I rebuke and chaſten,* Rev. iii. 19. We muſt believe.

7. *laſtly*, When ſight and ſenſe fails, we muſt hold faith's gripe, and preſs forward: hence ſaith the pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxxiii. 26. 'My fleſh and my heart faileth; but God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever.' In particular temptations, trials, *&c.* when the foot is ready to ſlip, we muſt hold faſt the promiſe; for there is our ſafety and comfort too: Pſal. xxvii. 13. 'I had fainted, unleſs I had believed to ſee the goodneſs of the Lord in the land of the living.' When all ſtreams of conſolation ariſing from this world are running dry, we muſt fetch in conſolation from another world: hence ſaith the prophet, Hab. iii. 17, 18. 'Although the fig-tree ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive ſhall fail, and the fields ſhall yield no meat, the flock ſhall be cut off from the fold, and there ſhall be no herd in the ſtalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my ſalvation.'

USE 1. Sinners, be no longer deceived with vain appearances, ceaſe your purſuit of the objects of ſenſe as your great mark and aim, and cloſe with Chriſt the object of faith, looking for your portion in the unſeen world of happineſs. Conſider,

1. Sight and ſenſe have deceived you, and will do ſo to the end, Eccleſ. i. 2. It is impoſſible for what you ſee in this world, if it were all youre, to ſatisfy your heart in its cravings. You labour in vain; Eccleſ. i. 8. 'All things are full of labour, man cannot utter it; the eye is not ſatisfied with ſeeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.'

2. Faith will bring in full ſatisfaction to you; hence is that exhortation, Pſal. lxxxi. 2d. 'Open thy mouth mouth wide, and I will fill it.' It brings in a full ſatisfying object; for ſuch will be *Chriſt in you the hope of glory:* and according to the meaſure of your faith, ſo will your actual ſatisfaction and ſoul's reſt be: and if it were perfect, the ſatisfaction would be ſo too.

And if ye would take this courſe,

1. Secure your belief of a better world, of a full and eternal happineſs beyond the boundaries of time. Believe it on the teſtimony of God in his word. Alas! with moſt men, it is rather a may-be than a certainty; a probable opinion, than a matter of firm perſuaſion. If it were not ſo, men could not be ſo indifferent about it.

2. Believe that Chriſt is held forth to you in the goſpel-promiſe to be truſted to, and ſo to be embraced by you, that you may by that truſt on him as your Saviour be united to him: John iii. 16. 'For God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.' Eph. iii. 17. *That Chriſt may dwell in your hearts by faith,* &c. And in and with him is held forth all the grace and glory of the unſeen world: Rom. viii. 32. 'He that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things?' So receiving him, ye will be heirs of the eternal inheritance diſcovered and embraced in the promiſe by faith.

USE. 2. Let ſuch as are under ſpiritual deſertion, going mourning without the ſun, from whom the ſpiritual ſight and comfortable ſenſe they ſometimes had is gone, know that believing is a proper courſe for them. Though your way unto God ſeems to be built up round about you with hewen ſtone; there is an open place left, whereat ye may walk out by faith; Iſa. l. 10. 'Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his ſervant, that walketh in darkneſs, and hath no light? let him truſt in the name of the Lord, and ſtay upon his God.'

1. Though former ſpiritual ſight and feeling is gone, that ye are left as a ſtone; the promiſe of the goſpel is where it was ſtill. Your miſmanagement cannot make the faithfulneſs of God of none effect: 2 Tim. ii. 13. *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himſelf.* The breaſts of the promiſe are as full and free as before.

2. Try to believe and apply the promiſe. Ye find ye have not the power of your ſpiritual limbs: but God calls you to ariſe, and walk by faith. Show good-will and the obedience of faith upon Chriſt's call, as the man with the withered hand. There may be great mercy in the womb of the heavy diſpenſation ye are ſhut up under: Rom. xi. 32. 'For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.' Strong appears that power, that ſuddenly looſes the waters bound up with an intenſe froſt.

3. Wait not for ſenſe and feeling, that ye may believe; but believe, that ye may recover ſpiritual ſenſe and feeling again: Pſal. lxv. 3. 'Iniquities prevail againſt me: as for our tranſgreſſions, thou ſhalt purge them away.' Rom. xv. 13. 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghoſt.'

USE 3. *laſt.* Remember that, particularly at the Lord's table, ye *walk by faith not by ſight.* Labour by faith to diſcern the Lord's body, exhibited to you in the ſacramental ſigns, and feed thereupon by a believing application of Chriſt to yourſelves.

2 Cor. v. 7.

For we walk by faith, not by ſight.

The Second Sermon on this Text.

YE have been at your ſpiritual meal, which our Lord allows for the refreſhment of travellers by the way; now ye muſt ariſe, and walk on your way to Zion; and if ye would walk aright, ye muſt *walk by faith, not by ſight.*

The doctrine obſerved from the words, was,

Doct. *They that would ſafely and comfortably travel on their way through this world, muſt direct their courſe by faith, and not by ſight, or the appearance things make to their ſight, ſenſe, and carnal reaſon.*

All I ſhall further do in diſcourſing from this doctrine, ſhall be,

I. To offer a ſhort view of walking by faith, not by ſight.

II. To ſhew wherein lies the difference betwixt faith and ſight in this matter.

III. Give the reaſons of this doctrine.

IV. *laſtly,* Apply.

I. I ſhall offer *a ſhort view of walking by faith, and not by ſight.* It lies in theſe four,

1. In taking our aim by faith, and not by ſight. The aim taken by ſight is low; that by faith is high, out of the reach of ſight: hence ſaith the apoſtle, Phil. iii. 14. 'I preſs toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.' While the great aim of them that walk by ſight and ſenſe, is to win the world, the eaſe and comforts of it; let yours be to win Chriſt; as was Paul's, Phil. iii. 8. 'Yea doubtleſs, and I count all things but loſs, for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord: for whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Chriſt.' Let it be to be with Chriſt, as was the ſame apoſtle's, chap. i. 23. 'For I am in a ſtrait betwixt two, having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt; which is far better.' Follow that aim, and ye walk by faith.

2. In taking your guide for your way by faith, not by ſight. Give over walking according to the courſe of this world; but take Chriſt for your guide, whom the Father has given for that end: Iſ. lv. 4. 'Behold, I have given him for a witneſs to the people, a leader and commander to the people.' Your own ſight and wiſdom are not to be truſted for guiding you; ye will never get through, if he be not eyes to you in the wilderneſs.

3. In taking your directions in the way by faith, not by ſight. Sight takes up things by their outward appearance, faith views them in the glaſs of the word. And the word is the rule of the walk that is by faith; Iſ. viii. 20. 'To the law and to the teſtimony; if they ſpeak not according to this word, it is becauſe there is no light in them.' And to that word the traveller is to turn his eyes in all difficulties.

4. In fetching in your ſupport and proviſion in the way by faith, not by ſight. Faith goes to the promiſe for that end; hence ſaid Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 12. 'And thou ſaidſt, I will ſurely do thee good, and make thy ſeed as the ſand of the ſea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.' It is the ſtaff in his hand to help him forward, the well of conſolation to drink at for refreſhment, the cordial to keep him from fainting.

II. *Where lies the difference betwixt faith and ſight in this matter?* There is a ſight and ſenſe of ſpiritual things, as well as of worldly things. But whatever kind ſight and ſenſe be of, while we are in the way, there is a great difference betwixt faith and it: ſo that we are to direct our courſe by the former, and not by the latter.

2. Sight looks into ourſelves, and out to the world; but faith looks up to Chriſt. Hence many heavy things preſent themſelves to the travellers ſight, partly without and partly within him, which are apt to cauſe him faint in his way. But faith looking to Chriſt, diſcerns in him what is more than balance for all theſe, 1 Pet. i. 6. 8. and makes him go chearfully on. If at any time joyful and refreſhing things preſent themſelves to his ſight; yet theſe are but ſome ſhallow ſtreams from that fulneſs in Chriſt which faith ſits down at, Col. ii. 10. 'And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.'

2. Sight proceeds upon the outward appearance of things; and becauſe theſe are often falſe, the traveller is led out of his way thereby into pits and ſnares: as was the caſe with Samuel, 1 Sam. xvi. 6. 'And it came to paſs when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and ſaid, ſurely the Lord's anointed is before him. But the Lord ſaid Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his ſtature; becauſe I have refuſed him; for the Lord ſeeth not as man ſeeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.' And this is the very way how many are led off into the mire of profanity, following the ſight of their eyes; others into damnable hereſies, following the dictates of their corrupt reaſon in divine myſteries. But faith proceeds on the teſtimony of God, believing becauſe God has ſaid it; receiving the kingdom of God as a little child, to whom the Father's ſaying is enough for his believing, and his bidding for his doing. So walking by faith is ſure walking, becauſe on the teſtimony of God that cannot lie, Tit. i. 2.

3. The object of ſight is very variable, ſometimes waxing, ſometimes waneing, and ſometimes diſappearing for good and all; hence they that walk by it, are like men walking by the help of the moon in a cloudy night, that often leaves them in darkneſs. This was the pſalmiſt's caſe, Pſal. xxx. 7. 'Lord, by thy favour thou haſt made my mountain to ſtand ſtrong: thou didſt hide thy face, and I was troubled.' Hence ſuch unevenlineſs in the way of many. But the object of faith is unchangeable, Heb. xiii. 8. 'Jeſus Chriſt the ſame yeſterday, and to-day, and for ever.' 2 Pet. i. 19. 'We have alſo a more ſure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that ſhineth in a dark place, untill the day dawn, and the day-ſtar ariſe in your hearts.' And hence walking by faith is ſure walking; the man holds on his way, though comforts fail without and within. Chriſt is to the fore, the promiſe is ſure anchor ground.

4. Sight reaches only to things preſent, but faith reaches to future things, Heb. xi. 1. 'Faith is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not ſeen.' Sight and ſenſe looking to the preſent diſpenſation of providence, tells the traveller, what is; but faith looking to the promiſe, tells what will be. Sight ſays, There is a beautiful world for a reſting place; and the traveller liſtening to its tale, begins to ſeek reſt there. But faith tells there is a train in the bowels of it, that will blow it up, and it will be in flames ſhortly; and ſo he haſteth forward; and, There is a better world to come. Sight ſays oft-times, There is a hard way, and a dark night, no appearance of day: but faith ſays,

on the credit of the promiſe, But the end will be peace, and the morning cometh.

5. *laſtly*, Sight reaches no further even into things preſent, than the outſide: but faith looks in to what is wrapt up within them. It diſcovers the lions and leopards dens in Lebanon, hid from ſight by the pleaſant growth there; the poiſon covered up in the world's golden diſh, that deceived ſenſe would otherwiſe receive. And it will diſcover a paradiſe, where nothing lies open to ſight but a hedge of thorns, 2 Cor. xii. 10. 'Therefore I take pleaſure in infirmities, in reproaches, in neceſſities, in perſecutions, in diſtreſſes for Chriſt's ſake: for when I am weak, then am I ſtrong.' It will make ſurpriſing diſcoveries in a ſore affliction. Weighing an affliction that to ſenſe is the weight of a talent, it will diſcover it to be really light: meaſuring one of long continuance to ſenſe, it will diſcover it to be *but for a moment*; trying the nature and operation of one that appears deadly and deſtructive to ſenſe, it will diſcover it to 'work a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are ſeen, but at the things which are not ſeen; for the things which are ſeen, are temporal; but the things which are not ſeen, are eternal,' 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.

III. The next thing is, to give *the reaſons of the point*. Conſider,

1. It was walking by ſight that firſt ruined the world; as we find, Gen. iii. 6. 'And when the woman ſaw that the tree was good for food, and it was pleaſant to the eyes, and a tree to be deſired to make one wiſe; ſhe took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave alſo unto her huſband with her; and he did eat.' And by the ſame method the ruin is a carrying on ſtill. If it was ſo dangerons to walk by ſight in paradiſe, how is it poſſible it can be ſafe now, when ſnares are multiplied in the world, and our faculty of diſcerning is ſo notably impaired?

2. The life preſent is appointed for faith, the life to come for ſight and ſenſe. Now is the time of trial, and the trial of faith in particular; walk by it now; the trial will ſhortly be over, and faith will be turned into ſight; and the ſaints ſhall be happy in ſeeing and feeling to their hearts wiſh for ever. Two ſummers are not to be expected in one year: and they that will have their ſummer of ſenſe now, will have a long winter of it through eternity.

3. Faith and ſight in the matter of comfort, differ as duty and privilege. Faith is our duty at all times, foul or fair: hence is that exhortation: Pſal. lxii. 8. 'Truſt in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us.' Spiritual ſight and ſenſe is a privilege that God gives or with-holds from his people according to ſovereign pleaſure. The duty of believing is preſcribed us for our work; ſight and ſenſe allowed us now and then for our encouragement in it; as we ſee in the caſe of Thomas, John xx. 27, 28, 29. 'Then ſaith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thruſt it into my ſide: and be not faithleſs, but believing. And Thomas anſwered and ſaid unto him, My Lord and my God. Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thomas, becauſe thou haſt ſeen me, thou haſt believed; bleſſed are they that have not ſeen, and yet have believed.' And therefore we are to walk by faith.

4. *laſtly*, Our happineſs for time and eternity lies in unſeen things, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. forecited. It is an unſeen Chriſt from whom we have all our hope of happineſs, *Chriſt in you the hope of glory*. It is an unſeen world where we can be completely happy. Therefore we walk to deſtruction, if we walk not by faith.

Uſe. 1*ſt*, As ever ye would walk ſafely through the world, and not be inſnared for the preſent, and ruined in the end, walk by faith, and not by ſight. And for this end conſider,

1. Ye are in an enſnaring world. Ye have a fair-faced deceitful world to deal with, a ſubtle devil ready to outwit you, and ye are but weak-ſighted for diſcerning of ſnares. If ye truſt to ſight and ſenſe, and walk not by faith, ye will be inſnared and circumveened to your eternal ruin. Therefore hear our Lord's direction, Cant. iv. 8. 'Come with me from Lebanon, my ſpouſe, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions dens, from the mountains of the leopards.'

2. Sight, and ſenſe, and corrupt reaſon, are making fearful ſhipwreck of ſouls at this day; and ſpiritual plagues are a-dealing plentifully, in delivering up the generation to them, that have refuſed to walk by faith. The plague began in untender and looſe practices; theſe have ate out the life of ſpirituality in religion; and it has proceeded to the caſting off of the principles at length, rejecting firſt the grace of Chriſt, and then attacking the doctrine of the perſon of Chriſt, his ſupreme Godhead, neceſſary and ſelf-exiſtence and independency. So that our poſterity are like to have tranſmitted to them a mere rational kind of religion, under the name of Chriſtianity, that has no dependence on nor relation to the glorious perſon, grace, and Spirit of Chriſt the Father's equal; which differs not from Heatheniſm, but in ſome accidentals. And the ſpring of all is, walking by ſight, not by faith; the pleaſing of ſenſe in practice, and corrupt reaſon in principles. Therefore take heed, and learn the humility of faith in practice and principles, to echo your ſoul's conſent to *Thus ſaith the Lord* in his word. And,

(1.) Walk by faith in duty. Your call to it being clear, go about it in the faith of the promiſe of through-bearing; and not of your own gifts, abilities, and home furniture for it, Phil. iv. 13. 'I can do all things (ſays the apoſtle) through Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth me.'

(2.) Walk by faith againſt ſin, and your ſeveral corrupt luſts that are to be mortified. Look to the croſs of Chriſt, thence to bring deſtruction on them, applying the virtue of Chriſt's death to yourſelves by faith, Rom. vi. 6. 'Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of ſin might be deſtroyed, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve ſin;' truſting to him for the efficacy of his Spirit in the appointed means of mortification, Rom. viii. 13. 'For if ye live after the fleſh, ye ſhall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live.'

(3.) Walk by faith through temptations; being ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus, believing his grace ſhall be ſufficient for you, for that the battle is the Lord's. The faſt hold of the promiſe of his grace will be your ſecurity.

2*dly*, As ever ye would walk comfortably through the world, walk by faith, not by ſight. The comfort of ſight and ſenſe is very uncertain and ſhort-lived; the mountain may be ſtanding ſure this day, that may be overturned to morrow. And whatever comfort ye have that way now, ye will certainly come to the time, when, if ye cannot walk comfortably by faith, ye will have no comfort at all.

(1.) Walk by faith in deſertion. Sometimes the candle of ſpiritual ſenſe is blown out to God's people, but the ſun of the promiſe is as firm as the ſun in the heavens. And they are brought to that caſe for the trial of faith, which muſt then act on the bare word of promiſe: Iſa. l. 10. 'Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his ſervant, that walketh in darkneſs, and hath no light? let him truſt in the name of the Lord, and ſtay upon his God.'

(2.) Walk by faith in affliction, believing it is God's ordinance for humbling and purifying; that there is no needleſs affliction ye meet with; that he will be with you in it, and will deliver you in the time that will be beſt for deliverance.

(3.) *laſtly*, Walk by faith through death. So they walked through the Red Sea, and were ſafe, though the waters were as hanging heaps on every hand of them; confident on the ground of God's faithfulneſs in the word of free grace, Heb. xi. 29. 'By faith they paſſed 'through the Red Sea, as by dry land: which the E'gyptians eſſaying to do, were drowned.'

2 Cor. v. 7.

For we walk by faith, not by ſight.

The third Sermon on this Text.

HAving had occaſion to diſcourſe from theſe words at a late ſacramental occaſion, I obſerved the following point of doctrine from them, viz. *They that would ſafely and comfortably travel on their way through this world, muſt direct their courſe by faith, and not by ſight, or the appearance things make to their ſight, ſenſe, and carnal reaſon*: which I endeavoured to open up and apply; and without repeating what was then delivered, I ſhall, as the ſubject of farther diſcourſe from this text, gather up the ſubſtance of the words in the two following doctrines.

Doct. I. *The Chriſtian walk is not by ſight, or the outward appearance of things.*

Doct. II. *The Chriſtian walk is a walking by faith.*

In handling the firſt of theſe doctrines, I ſhall,

I. Shew that there is ſuch a walk in uſe in the world.

II. Open up the nature of this walking by ſight, and ſhew wherein it lies.

III. Confirm the doctrine.

IV. *laſtly*, Make ſome practical improvement.

I. *I ſhall ſhew that there is ſuch a walk in uſe in the world.*

1. There are many whoſe main care and concern is for the body, and the things of a preſent life; neglecting their ſouls and their eternal intereſt: hence ſaith David, Pſal. iv. 6. 'There be many that ſay, Who will 'ſhew us any good?' (but there are few that ſay,) 'Lord, 'lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.' This ſad truth is obvious to diſcerning perſons, who cannot but ſee the world thronged with ſuch egregious fools, who are penny wiſe and pound fooliſh. But let ſuch conſider that word, Matth. xvi. 26. 'What is a man 'profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his 'own ſoul? or what ſhall a man give in exchange for 'his ſoul?'

2. The life of moſt men is paſſed in a dream, being one continued cheat impoſed on them by the grand deceiver. Pſal. iv. 2. 'O ye ſons of men, how long will 'ye love vanity, and ſeek after leaſing?' They never open their eyes, to ſee matters in their true colours, till all is paſt remedy. This was the caſe of the rich man, Luke xvi. 23. who 'in hell lift up his eyes, being in 'torments, and ſaw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in 'his boſom.' The fooliſh virgins dreamed on till *the door was ſhut*. See the ſpring of this, Iſa. xliv. 20. 'He feedeth of aſhes: a deceived heart hath turned him 'aſide, that he cannot deliver his ſoul, nor ſay, Is there 'not a lie in my right hand?'

3. Few are at pains to examine matters by the word, which gives Heaven's teſtimony of them, Iſa. viii. 20.; but they take them according to their outward appearance. Hence the bait is ſwallowed greedily, without diſcerning the hook, till it ſtick in their throat.

4. Oft times things that are good and profitable, are neglected and ſhunned, becauſe they are not pleaſant to ſenſe; and things pleaſing to ſenſe, though poiſonous and deſtructive in their own nature, are greedily embraced. Hence is that wo, Iſ. v. 20. 'Wo unto them 'that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkneſs 'for light, and light for darkneſs; and put bitter for 'ſweet, and ſweet for bitter.' A plain evidence that ſenſe is the leading principle, and not faith.

II. *I will open the nature of this walking by ſight, and ſhew wherein it lies.* Walking by ſight lies,

1. In taking your aim by ſight, and not by faith, contrary to that, 2 Cor. iv. 18. 'While we look not 'at the things which are ſeen, but at the things which 'are not ſeen: for the things which are ſeen are tem'poral; but the things which are not ſeen are eternal.' Every man has ſome aim, which is the main thing he drives at; but moſt men take their aim by ſight and ſenſe, ſetting themſelves to purſue that for their portion which ſight and ſenſe recommend to them. Hence in walking by ſight,

(1.) The ſeen world is preferred to the unſeen; Pſal. iv. 6. 'There be many that ſay, who will ſhew us any 'good?' In the word of the goſpel we hear of an unſeen world, where glory dwells, where there is an eternal enjoyment of all good: but with our eyes we ſee the beauty of a preſent world. So ſight having more influence than faith, this world is choſen for a portion which we ſee: the other is neglected as a thing unſeen, and therefore unſure,

(2.) Preſent things to thoſe that are to come. Hence ſaid Paul of Demas, 2 Tim. iv. 10. 'Demas hath for'ſaken me, having loved this preſent world.' Senſe ſays, A bird in hand, is worth two in the buſh. Senſe being the leading principle, the man muſt have his portion preſently, he cannot wait; for ſenſe cannot be gratified with any thing but what is preſent, Pſal. xvii. 14.

(3.) Temporal things to ſpiritual, 2 Cor. iv. 18. forecited. Gold is preferred to grace, the fellowſhip of the world to the favour of God, and all the privileges of the everlaſting covenant. For the one are objects of ſight and ſenſe, the other objects of faith: and if men walk by ſight, they can never prefer ſpiritual things which they ſee not, to temporal things which they do ſee.

2. In directing your courſe by ſight, and not by faith, through this world. Hence is that exhortation, Numb. xv. 39. 'Seek not after your own heart, and your own 'eyes after which ye uſe to go a-whoring.' We have much need to be airted aright to the way we ſhould take, through the world, wherein there are ſo many croſs-ways, by-ways, dangerous ways. Men ſenſible of their own weakneſs ſtrive to direct their courſe by faith; but moſt men, proud and preſumptuous, direct theirs by their ſight and ſenſe. Hence,

(1.) The courſe of this world is followed inſtead of the way of God's commands. Hence ſaid the apoſtle of the Epheſians, Eph. ii. 2. 'In time paſt ye walked 'according to the courſe of this world, according to the 'prince of the power of the air, the ſpirit that now 'worketh in the children of diſobedience.' Men think themſelves ſafe enough, if there be a multitude before them; they are ſhameleſs in ſin, becauſe they have many neighbours; nay they would think ſhame not to go in a way that is generally gone into; for it is a piece of the wiſdom and good humour of the fleſh, to be conformed to the world. But 'be ye not conformed to 'this world; but be ye transformed by the renew'ing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good 'and acceptable, and perfect will of God,' Rom. xii. 2.

(2.) The moſt eaſy way is followed inſtead of the moſt ſafe: Matth. vii. 13. ‘Enter in at the ſtrait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to deſtruction, and many there be which go in thereat.’ For ſenſe ſees only what is preſent, ſees not the end untill it be come: ſo the broad, green, and eaſy way, though the pit of deſtruction is at the end, is preferred to the rugged way to life, by thoſe walking by ſenſe.

(3.) The ſofteſt ſteps are taken, though they be not cleanly. What will gratify the ſenſe, is ſwallowed down, though it choke the conſcience. When the eyes are fixed on beholding vanity, the ſoul runs headlong into the ſnare. Hence the world is filled with covetouſneſs, ſenſuality, uncleanneſs, *&c.* being drawn into ruin with the ſilken cords of ſenſe.

(4.) Steps dangerous to ſenſe are ſhunned, to the wounding of the conſcience, Prov. xxix. 25. ‘The fear of man bringeth a ſnare: but whoſo putteth his truſt in the Lord ſhall be ſafe.’ Hence walking by ſenſe in time of danger for religion, makes many apoſtates; and in time of the greateſt peace, it brings a fearful ſnare, ſo that ſhunning to offend men, we often run ourſelves on offending and grieving the Spirit of God.

3. In taking your encouragement in the way from ſenſe, not by faith; ſo venturing out on ſtrength ſeen and felt, not in the ſtrength of Chriſt ſecured in the promiſe, Jer. xvii. 5. *Thus ſaith the Lord, Curſed be the man that truſteth in man, and maketh fleſh his arm, and whoſe heart departeth from the Lord.* Moſt men know nothing of going in any ſtrength, but what is in themſelves. And hence in walking by ſenſe.

(1.) Oft-times there is a bold venturing on where there is a foul come-off; as in Peter's caſe. Men preſumptuouſly venture on ſuch and ſuch duties, where they ſink and cannot get through, their own ſtock of ability failing them; they ruſh on temptations fearleſsly, and they loſe their feet and fall into the mire. Their bow bent is broken, and they cannot find their hands in the day of battle.

(2.) Oft-times there is a cowardly ſhifting of duty which God calls for, Prov. xxvi. 13. *The ſlothful man ſaith, There is a lion in the way, a lion is in the ſtreets.* The man is called to duty, but he ſees he is not able for it: every call to duty bears a promiſe of ſtrength: but he walks by ſenſe, not by faith, therefore can venture on no more than what he feels and ſees. And many duties are caſt off this way, and much guilt fixed on the conſcience.

4. In riſing and falling juſt according to ſight and ſenſe, and the outward appearance of providence. Moſt men know no other ſpring of trouble and ſorrow, of peace and comfort, but that; and according as that ſpring runs clear or muddy, ſo do they find or loſe their comfort. Hence,

(1.) When the outward diſpenſations of providence are ſmiling and favourable to them, they are very eaſy, though perhaps matters are all wrong betwixt God and their ſouls; as was the caſe with the rich man, Luke xii. 19. ‘And I will ſay to my ſoul, Soul, thou haſt much goods laid up for many years; take thine eaſe, eat, drink and be merry.’ The concerns of this world proſpering, they are well, they reign as kings; for they have no due concern about the matters of another world.

(2.) When theſe outward diſpenſations are all againſt them, they have no comfort; for the things of ſenſe, the only ſpring of their comfort, is dried up. It was not ſo with Job walking by faith, Job vi. 13. ‘Is not my help in me? and is wiſdom driven quite from me?’ nor with Habakkuk, chap. iii 17, 18. ‘Although the fig-tree ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive ſhall fail, and the fields ſhall yield no meat, the flock ſhall be cut off from the fold, and there ſhall be no herd in the ſtalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my ſalvation.’

III. To *confirm the doctrine,* conſider,

1. Walking by ſight and ſenſe is not the way that Chriſt himſelf walked: and ſure it is the duty of believers to walk after his example, 1 John ii. 6. ‘He that ſaith he abideth in him, ought himſelf alſo ſo to walk, even as he walked.’ Now it is ſaid of him expreſsly, Iſa. xi. 3. ‘He ſhall not judge after the ſight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears.’ We have a notable inſtance of it in the hiſtory of his temptations, Matth. iv. 8, 9, 10. ‘Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and ſheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them: and ſaith unto him, All theſe things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down, and worſhip me. Then ſaith Jeſus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God; and him only ſhalt thou ſerve.’ So they cannot be followers of Chriſt that walk by ſight.

2. It is not the way wherein the ſaints have got to the kingdom, 2 Cor. iv. 18. ‘They looked not at the things which are ſeen, but at the things which are not ſeen: for the things which are ſeen, are temporal; but the things which are not ſeen, are eternal.’ Had that been the way of walking every one took, where would men have been found, who would have digeſted ſeen and felt hardſhips, for unſeen comforts and happineſs? Walking by ſight would have been very unfit to make martyrs.

3. It is the high way of unregenerate men, *ſenſual, not having the Spirit,* Jude ver. 19. The evil ſpies, and the murmuring generation that liſtened to them, were an awful emblem of ſuch walkers, whoſe carcaſes ſhall fall in the wilderneſs, and they never ſee the promiſed land. Thoſe only ſhall ſee it, who like Caleb and Joſhua, have another ſpirit.

USE. 1. This informs us,

1. That thoſe are not true Chriſtians, who habitually walk by ſight and ſenſe, who make their ſenſe and feeling, and outward appearances of things, the mark they walk by. If your courſe of life be not influenced by your belief of things that are not ſeen, ye will never ſee the land afar off.

2. Let not Chriſtians think ſtrange, that things are generally ordered harſh to them in the world as to their ſight and ſenſe; for it is not by things ſoft and eaſy to theſe, that the Lord's children make their way home: nor yet that ſight and ſenſe in ſpirituals is but very ſeldom allowed them; for though ſome ſips and drops of that kind may now and then be let fall to them, their meal of that kind is reſerved for another world.

3. So far as a child of God walks by ſight and ſenſe, he is off his road; and he will find himſelf bemiſted in it at length, and be fain to return.

Uſe 2. Walk not by ſight and appearance of things.

Mot. 1. It is a wavering unſettled way of walking, James i. 8. ‘A double minded man is unſtable in all his ways.’ The objects of ſenſe are very uncertain; they may be with one to-day, away to-morrow; wo to them that are building their peace and comfort on them; they are like one that would ſleep on the top of a maſt.

2. It is a deceitful way of walking. Things that have the faireſt appearance to ſight, are oft-times the moſt hurtful and ruining, Cant. iv. 8. ‘Come with me from Lebanon, my ſpouſe, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions dens, from the mountains of the leopards.’ And Satan deceives men a thouſand times by their ſight and ſenſe.

3. *laſtly,* It is a dangerous way of walking. All mankind felt it in Eve's truſting to her eyes, and the conſequences thereof, Gen. iii. 6. ‘And when the woman ſaw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleaſant to the eyes, and a tree to be deſired to make one wiſe; ſhe took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave alſo unto her huſband with her, and he did

' eat.' And fearful havock is ſtill making by the ſame doors of deſtruction.

Doct. II. *The Chriſtian walk is a walking by faith.*

In diſcourſing this doctrine I ſhall,

I. Give you a view of walking by faith, ſhewing wherein it lies.

II. Shew how they walk that walk by faith.

III. Confirm the doctrine.

IV. *laſtly*, Apply.

I. I ſhall give you a *view of walking by faith, ſhewing wherein it lies.* [*Here the author repeated what was ſaid upon the ſame ſubject in the beginning of the ſecond ſermon on this text, above, p.* 546.]

II. I ſhall ſhew *how they walk that walk by faith.*

1ſt, They walk heavenly, Phil. iii. 20. ' For our converſation is in heaven.' They that walk by ſenſe, have a carnal, ſenſual, worldly walk, like the reſt of the men of this world: but they that walk by faith, walk as Chriſt walked, they walk heavenly; which we take up in four things.

1. Heaven and glory is the place and ſtate they have in view to reach, 2 Cor. iv. 18. They ' look not at the ' things which are ſeen, but at the things which are not ' ſeen: for the things which are ſeen, are temporal; ' but the things which are not ſeen, are eternal.' They are ſet off in their journey, and there they deſign to be. There only they expect their reſt, and there they deſire to be; as was the caſe with the Old-Teſtament ſaints, Heb. xi. 16. ' But now they deſire a better country, ' that is, an heavenly; wherefore God is not aſhamed ' to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them ' a city.' Thoſe who are led by ſenſe, like the Reubenites, *&c.* deſire their portion on this ſide Jordan, and on that condition would quit their part of Canaan: but the ſaints are for the heavenly Canaan.

2. They look on this world only as the place of their pilgrimage, and themſelves as ſtrangers in it, who are not at home; as did the Old-Teſtament ſaints, who ' confeſſed that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims on the ' earth,' Heb. xi. 13. Others carry themſelves as the natives of it, they as ſojourners in it, and travellers, who muſt take it in their way home to their Father's houſe. And they entertain a holy comparative contempt of it; as did the apoſtle, Gal. vi. 14. ' But God forbid that I ' ſhould glory ſave in the croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ' by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto ' the world.'

3. They are moving heavenward, Cant. viii. 5. ' Who ' is this that cometh up from the wilderneſs, leaning ' upon her beloved?' They are not only moving thither, by the courſe of nature haſtening to another world; but in heart and affection. Their treaſure is there, and therefore their heart is there. They are preſſing towards it; as did Paul, Phil. iii. 14. ' I preſs toward the ' mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt ' Jeſus:' ſo running as they may obtain it at length. And at the root of all their ſtruggles and endeavours againſt ſin, is a deſire to be with Chriſt.

4. They walk like men of another world; Phil. iii. 20. *For our converſation is in heaven.* So the church in the exerciſe of grace is deſcribed, Cant. iii. 6. ' Who ' is this that cometh out of the wilderneſs like pillars of ' ſmoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincenſe, with ' all powders of the merchant?' Our Lord Jeſus after his reſurrection from the dead, though he continued in the world, yet did not familiarly converſe in it as before: ſo they who by faith have received a new life, alter their courſe, conforming not to the world, but to the heavenly country.

Now faith makes them walk thus, as,

1. It views Chriſt in his tranſcendent glory and excellency, in the glaſs of the word of the goſpel: 1 Pet. ii. 7. ' Unto you which believe he is precious.' 2 Cor. iii. 18. ' We all with open face, beholding as in a glaſs ' the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the ' Lord.' Chriſt ſeen in his glory, is an attracting object, and will make the ſoul follow, though it ſhould ſwim through a ſea of blood. So the martyrs made their way to him. See Heb. xi. 27. *By faith Moſes forſook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as ſeeing him who is inviſible.*

2. As it takes up this world, and the heavenly country, in their true colours, as deſcribed in the word. In the Bible we have illuminated maps of both worlds; but they cannot be rightly diſcerned by ſenſe, but by faith. And the eye of faith diſcerns,

(1.) The reality of the heavenly country; that cannot be perceived by ſenſe, and therefore is treated by ſenſual men as a creature of imagination, and at beſt uncertain. Faith fixes on the teſtimony of God anent it, and therefore is perſuaded of the reality thereof; believing it, though they cannot ſee it, Heb xi. 1. 13. ' Now faith is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, the ' evidence of things not ſeen. Theſe all died in faith, ' not having received the promiſes, but having ſeen them ' afar off, and were perſuaded of them, and embraced ' them.'

(2.) The preferableneſs of the heavenly country to this world, Pſal. iv. 6. ' There be many that ſay, Who ' will ſhew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light ' of thy countenance upon us.' Heb. xi. 13. forecited. Faith ſees a weight of glory there, that downweighs the ſmiles and frowns of the world here as light things. It ſees a ſuitableneſs in theſe to the ſatisfaction of the ſoul, and an unſuitableneſs in the things of the world. It ſees the one to be eternal, the other but temporary. Hence the one is followed eagerly, the other not ſo.

2dly, They walk ſafely, Prov. i. 33. ' Whoſo hearkeneth unto me, ſhall dwell ſafely, and ſhall be quiet ' from fear of evil.' This world is Satan's walk, a wilderneſs where like a wild beaſt he ranges to and fro for his prey; and they that walk by ſenſe, fall a prey to him, ſome caught in one trap, ſome in another. Only walking by faith we can be ſafe. For,

1. Faith keeps the eye on Chriſt as the great leader: Prov. iii. 5, 6. ' Truſt in the Lord with all thine heart; ' and lean not unto thine own underſtanding. In all ' thy ways acknowledge him, and he ſhall direct thy ' paths.' And following him we will be ſafe; for he is the leader appointed by the Father: hence he ſaid of himſelf, John viii. 12. ' I am the light of the world: ' he that followeth me, ſhall not walk in darkneſs, but ' ſhall have the light of life.' The believer cloſeth his own eye of ſenſe, and takes Chriſt to be eyes to him in the wilderneſs by his word and Spirit. And hence diſtruſting himſelf, and truſting Chriſt for conduct, he is led on ſafely, where others ſtick and are mired.

2. Faith keeps the eye on the word of command from heaven, Pſal. xvii. 4. diſcerning the authority of God ſtamped upon it, which makes the ſoul obey without diſputing, Pſal. cxix. 4. ' Thou haſt commanded ' us to keep thy precepts diligently.' Faith's view of the authority of God ſtamped upon a duty, will counterbalance all the reaſonings of ſenſe againſt it, taken from the hardſhip of it, danger about it, &c. And *Thus ſaith the Lord*, will be ſufficient to the ſoul in the caſe, though the whole world ſhould ſay the contrary. And that is ſure walking: Prov. x. 9. ' He that walk' eth uprightly, walketh ſurely: but he that perverteth ' his ways, ſhall be known.'

3. Faith truſts to the divine protection in the way of duty: Pſal. xci. 2. ' I will ſay of the Lord, he is my ' refuge, and my fortreſs: my God, in him will I ' truſt.' Preſumption is for truſting to the divine protection, in a way that God calls not the ſinner to. See Matth. iv. 6, 7. In ſuch a caſe there is not a promiſe, and ſo there is no foundation for that truſt. But faith

has a promiſe of protection for the ſoul in the way of duty, however dangerous: Iſ. xliii. 2. ‘ When thou paſſeſt through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee; when thou walkeſt through the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt; neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee.’ And this promiſe being believed, will be made good, Rom. ix. 33. ‘ Whoſoever believeth on him, ſhall not be aſhamed.’ Pſal. ii. 12. ‘ Bleſſed are all they that put their truſt in him.’

4. *laſtly*, Faith brings always ſafe to their journey's end, whatever ſtorms blow, or dangers are encountered by the way: Mark xvi. 16. ‘ He that believeth, ſhall be ſaved: but he that believeth not, ſhall be damned.’ Heb. x. 39. ‘ But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the ſaving of the ſoul.’ Walking by ſenſe will land people in deſtruction, but walking by faith will bring to the heavenly country at length. This leſſon is taught for all ages, in the carcaſes of the unbelieving Iſraelites, falling in the wilderneſs; and in Caleb and Joſhua, who believed the promiſe, their inheriting Canaan.

3*dly*, They walk comfortably, as well as ſafely: hence we read, Acts ix. 31. of ‘ the churches walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghoſt.’ Worldly men may walk comfortably, but not ſafely; for there is a worm at the root of their comfort, as in Babylon's caſe, Rev. xviii. 7. ‘ How much ſhe hath glorified herſelf, and lived deliciouſly, ſo much torment and ſorrow give her: for ſhe ſaith in her heart, I ſit a queen, and am no widow, and ſhall ſee no ſorrow.’ Saints may walk mournfully and yet comfortably: 2 Cor. v. 4. 6. ‘ For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be ſwallowed up of life. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilſt we are at home in the body, we are abſent from the Lord.’ It is certain, they have much grief and ſorrow that others want: yet they want not comfort, if they live by faith: hence ſaid our Lord to his drooping diſciples, John xiv. 18. ‘ I will not leave you comfortleſs; I will come to you.’ As the running brook may make more noiſe than the deep river, ſo the comfort of the ungodly may be more noiſy than that of the ſaints; and yet the former is but like the crackling of thorns under a pot, no ways comparable to the ſolid comfort of faith.

1. Faith brings in freſh ſprings of comfort, when the world's ciſterns are all run dry: Pſal. cxix. 49, 50. ‘ Remember the word unto thy ſervant, upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.’ The Bible will comfort, when worldly comfort fails. There faith looking to the promiſe, *I will be their God*, will comfort under the greateſt preſſures of affliction: hence ſaid the prophet, Hab. iii. 17, 18. ‘ Although the fig-tree ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive ſhall fail, and the fields ſhall yield no meat, the flock ſhall be cut off from the fold, and there ſhall be no herd in the ſtalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my ſalvation.’ Senſe can only run from one creature to another for comfort; but faith runs from the creatures to God.

2. Faith will diſcover love in the heart of an angry God, ſmiting, and forſaking, and purſuing a quarrel againſt one; Pſal. xxii. 1. ‘ My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? why art thou ſo far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?’ Pſal. xlii. 7, 8. ‘ Deep calleth unto deep at the noiſe of thy water-ſpouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me. Yet the Lord will command his loving-kindneſs in the day-time, and in the night his ſong ſhall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.’ When God hides his face, and ſhoots his arrows againſt the believer; faith will let him ſee ſome glimmerings of love in his face; hence ſaid Job, chap. xiii. 15. ‘ Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him.’

3. Faith aſſures the believer of the truth of God, when his diſpenſations of providence ſeem to run croſs to his promiſes; this we have exemplified in Abraham's caſe, Rom. iv. 18, 19, 20. ‘ Who againſt hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was ſpoken, So ſhall thy ſeed be. And being not weak in faith, he conſidered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadneſs of Sarah's womb.’ He ſtaggered not at the promiſe of God through unbelief; but was ſtrong in faith, giving glory to God.’ Heb. xi. 17, 18, 19. ‘ By faith Abraham when he was tried, offered up Iſaac; and he that had received the promiſes, offered up his only begotten ſon; of whom it was ſaid, That in Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed by called. Accounting that God was able to raiſe him up, even from the dead: from whence alſo he received him in a figure.’

4. Faith eaſes the ſoul of many burdens that make uncomfortable walking. It eaſes it of a burden of guilt, Rom. v. 1. ‘ Therefore being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.’ It eaſes it of a ſtrong corruption, Acts xv. 9. ‘ Purifying their hearts by faith.’ It eaſes it of a burden of care and anxiety, 1 Pet. v. 7. ‘ Caſting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.’ And it eaſes it of the burdenſomeneſs of duty, Phil. iv. 13. ‘ I can do all things through Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth me.’

5. *laſtly*, Faith gives a fair proſpect of ſafe landing in Immanuel's land, amidſt all the ſtorms that happen in the voyage: Pſal. xxiii. 4. 6. ‘ Yea, though I walk through the valley and ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy ſtaff they comfort me. Surely goodneſs and mercy ſhall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the houſe of the Lord for ever.’

III. To confirm this doctrine, conſider,

1. The Chriſtian's life is by faith, Gal. ii. 20. ‘ I am crucified with Chriſt; Nevertheleſs I live, yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.’ And his walk muſt be alſo by faith, Col. ii. 6. ‘ As ye have therefore received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, ſo walk ye in him.’

2. Thus the Chriſtian's life is diſtinguiſhed from that of the ſaints in heaven, and that of the wicked, as he is in a middle ſtate betwixt the two.

3. Thus Chriſt himſelf, and all the ſaints have walked; and thus alſo muſt all walk that intend to get to the heavenly Canaan.

Uſe. 1. Then they who do not direct men to a life of faith, and walking by faith, teach not true Chriſtianity. Of which unhappy number are many of the teachers of this day, whoſe continual theme is morality and virtue, and preſſing men to the obſervation of theſe as the conditions of their ſalvation, and the road to happineſs; without any notice of Chriſt, and faith in him, as the ſpring of all holy walking.

Uſe. 2. Know ye, ye walk not as Chriſtians indeed, if ye walk not by faith. If ye walk by ſight, ſenſe, appearance of things, and your own carnal reaſon, ye have but the name of Chriſtians. Walk looking to unſeen things; fixing your eyes on God and Chriſt, and the things of the other world. And thus evidence yourſelves to be Chriſtians indeed, by having your converſation in heaven, and your eyes turned away from all the objects of ſenſe.

The Nature and Neceſſity of REPENTANCE.

Several SERMONS preached at Ettrick, in the Year 1717.

LUKE xiii. 5.

I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.

WHEN we conſider the abounding ſin and hardneſs of heart prevailing under a preached goſpel, it muſt needs let us ſee, that the doctrine of repentance is both neceſſary and ſeaſonable, to pluck the brands out of the burning; or if that will not do, to leave men without excuſe. Sinners ſtave off repentance, as if they were reſolved to perſiſt in ſin come what will, or at leaſt as halting betwixt two opinions; but here is a peremptory deciſion of the caſe in this text, *I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.*

In theſe words we have two things.

1. An abuſe of a diſpenſation of providence corrected: *I tell you, Nay.* Some had told our Lord the news of Pilate the Roman governor's falling on ſome Galileans, with his ſoldiers, and killing them, while they were ſacrificing. It ſeems the tellers of this news, or others in the company, were apt to think, that theſe were ſinners beyond others, becauſe an unordinary judgment had fallen on them. Our Lord tells them, that it would not bear ſuch a concluſion. He puts them in mind of another remarkable providence, *viz.* the tower of Siloam in Jeruſalem its falling on and killing eighteen perſons: but here he ſhews, that this did not befal them, becauſe they were greater ſinners than all the reſt in Jeruſalem; nay there were as great ſinners as thoſe, which miſſed that ſtroke, and others like it too.

2. The right uſe of the diſpenſation inſtructed: *But except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.* The right uſe is to learn repentance from the ruin of others; if others give us an example at their own coſt, that we take heed to it, and improve it to our repentance and reformation. This is the import of the particle *but.* Theſe words are a peremptory certification given to ſinners by our Lord. And the propoſition in its own nature includes a twofold certification.

1ſt, A certification of ruin upon impenitence. Sinners go on in their courſe, yet hope that all may be well for all that. No, ſays our Lord, deceive not yourſelves; for if you do not repent, there is no ſaving of you. There is here,

(1.) The matter on which the certification is given, *Except ye repent; i. e.* If ye do not repent, if ye be not duly humbled for your ſins, and ſincerely turn from them. If ye harden your hearts under your guilt, keep ſtill your ſinful courſes, and refuſe to let them go, they will ruin you.

(2.) The thing certified, which is *periſhing likewiſe;* not periſhing in that very manner, but ye ſhall periſh as ſurely they did. The judgments of God ſhall purſue you, and ye ſhall periſh for ever.

(3.) The extent of the certification, *All——periſh.* This clears the periſhing to be meant of everlaſting death. *Q. d.* Though ſignal temporal judgments do not purſue all that are impenitent, yet eternal puniſhment will; no impenitent ſinner ſhall eſcape that, however they may eſcape temporal ſtrokes of ſignal vengeance.

(4.) The peremptorineſs of it. This appears in two things. 1. That ſolemn aſſertion, *I tell you,* ſuppoſed to be repeated in the laſt clauſe. Take it out of the mouth of the Lord himſelf, that ye ſhall periſh except ye repent. *Q. d.* This has been told you by many, but ye would not believe: but now I tell it you out of my own mouth. And to hear this out of the mouth of the Saviour, may ſtrike a ſinner with concern, and let him ſee, that Chriſt's blood will never be laid out on a perſon continuing impenitent, to ſave him from death. 2. In the relation intimate to be between the puniſhment of thoſe ſo ſignally ſmitten by the hand of God, and the future puniſhment of all impenitent ſinners: the former is a pledge of the latter. This is intimated by the particle *likewiſe.*

2dly, A certification of life upon repentance. This is implied here, as Gen. ii. 17. God has made as ſure a connection betwixt repentance and life, as betwixt impenitence and death. Be your ſins never ſo great, if you repent of them, and turn from them, they ſhall never be your ruin.

Before I come to the main point I deſign, I ſhall lay before you ſome obſervations from the words.

Obſ. 1. *That thoſe who meet with more ſignal ſtrokes than others, are not therefore, nor are to be accounted greater ſinners than others.* The Lord ſpares ſome as great ſinners, as he ſignally puniſheth. *I tell you, Nay.*

Reaſons of this diſpenſation of providence.

1. Becauſe of God's ſovereign power and abſolute dominion, which he will have the world to underſtand: Matth. xx. 15. 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I 'will with mine own?' Thus our Lord accounts for the diſpenſation of the man's being born blind, John ix. 3. All men have that in them and about them, which may make them liable to the heavieſt ſtrokes that any of the children of men meet with; and therefore whatever any ſuffer, the Lord does them no wrong, ſince he puniſhes them leſs than their iniquity deſerves; but amongſt many whom juſtice may ſtrike, ſovereignty picks out ſome, and cauſes them to ſmart. And who may ſay, *What doſt thou?*

2. Becauſe we are now under the mixed diſpenſation of providence; not the unmixed, reſerved to another world, when all men ſhall be put into their unalterable ſtate. Now, hereunto this is very agreeable, that God ſignally puniſh ſome of a ſociety, while others as guilty do eſcape, that the whole may, with David, Pſal. ci. 1. 'ſing of mercy, and judgment,' too. And thus the diſpenſation of divers colours is held up in the world, as a diſplay of the manifold wiſdom of God.

3. Becauſe the mercy of God to ſome is magnified by his ſeverity on others. As black ſet by white makes the white appear the better; ſo God's ſeverity againſt ſome, may be a looking glaſs to others, wherein they may ſee how much they ſtand obliged to free grace and mercy, Rom. xi. 22. Men are never fairer to prize health in themſelves, than when they ſee others toſſed on ſick-beds; nor to prize the exerciſe of ſenſe and reaſon, and other mercies, than when they ſee what miſerable and pitiful ſights they are that are deprived of theſe. And this ſhould make folk patient and thankful under the ſtrokes of the Lord's hand, becauſe if he take away a mercy, health for inſtance, or perhaps a member or limb of their body, being taken away, it may be more ſerviceable

for him than when they had it, in ſo far as it ſhall ſerve to magnify the mercy of God to others, that ſee and notice the hand of the Lord. See Matth. xxi. 3.

4. Becauſe in very ſignal ſtrokes very ſignal mercies may be wrapped up. So it was in Joſeph's caſe; there was a very ſingular bleſſing on the head of him that was ſeparated from his brethren. Job's troubles were but a dark hour before a very glorious day. The halt Jacob got in his thigh, was more excellent, as a badge of his wreſtling with the angel, than Eſau's retinue of four hundred men.

5. *laſtly*, Becauſe this diſpenſation is in ſome ſort neceſſary to confirm us in the belief of the judgment of the great day. God puniſhes ſome remarkably, that the world may ſee that there is a God that judgeth on the earth; he does not ſo puniſh all, that man may be aſſured that there is a judgment to come. If none were puniſhed here, the world would improve that for Atheiſm; if all were puniſhed it would be improved to Sadduciſm.

Uſe 1. Then learn that unordinary ſtrokes may befal thoſe that are not unordinary ſinners; and therefore be not raſh in your judgment concerning the ſtrokes that others meet with. It is true, whatever we or others meet with, it is deſerved at the Lord's hand; and when God follows an unordinary ſeen ſin with an unordinary judgment, as in the caſe of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, it is no breach of charity to judge, that that ſtroke comes for that ſin. But when people, in whoſe converſation ye ſee no ſignal ſin, meet with ſignal ſtrokes, beware of harſh judging. For in the way of the Lord's diſpenſation, ſome will meet with a ſignal ſtroke for ſome ſin, ſuch as the world would think little or nothing of, if they knew it.

2. Then adore the mercy of God to you, and wonder at his ſparing of you, when ye ſee others ſmart under the hand of God, which ye do not feel. Acknowledge, that whatever others meet with, the ſame might have been your lot, if the Lord had dealt with you as ye deſerve; as the church did, Lam. iii. 22. 'It is of the 'Lord's mercies that we are not conſumed, becauſe his 'compaſſions fail not.'

Obſ. 2. *That the ſtrokes which any meet with, are pledges of ruin to impenitent ſinners. But except ye repent, ye ſhall all* likewiſe *periſh.*

Reaſons of this are,

1. Becauſe they ſhew how hateful to God ſin is, in whomſoever it is, Iſa. xliii. 24. 'Who gave Jacob for a 'ſpoil, and Iſrael to the robbers? did not the Lord, he 'againſt whom we have ſinned? for they would not 'walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his 'law.' God has no delight in the miſery of his own creatures, Ezek. xviii. 23. He muſt therefore have a mighty hatred againſt ſin, in that he is ſo heavy oftentimes on the work of his own hands for it. Not only his enemies ſmart for ſin, but his dear friends; yea, his dear Son ſmarted for it, when it lay on him but by imputation. And therefore how can impenitent ſinners think to eſcape? Luke xxiii. 31. 'For if they do theſe things 'in a green tree, what ſhall be done in the dry?'

2. Becauſe they ſhew how juſt God is. He is *the Judge of all the earth*, and cannot but *do right*, Gen. xviii. 25. Now, though juſtice may delay the puniſhment of one longer than another, yet it will not allow to puniſh ſome, and for ever to ſpare others, in the ſame ſtate. For that would be manifeſt partiality, which God hateth, Ezek. xviii. 20. And therefore the apoſtle tells us, 2 Theſſ. i. 6. that 'it is a righteous thing with God 'to recompence tribulation to them that trouble' the ſaints.

3. Becauſe whatever any meet with in the way of ſin, is really deſigned for warning to others, as is clear from the text. See 1 Cor. x. 11, 12. And they that will not be taught by the example of others, may expect to be made examples to teach others, as Lot's wife was. But the wiſe will have their eyes in their head, while impenitent ſinners paſs on and periſh, as thoſe that will not take warning. Hence it comes to paſs, that the ſtroke afar off not prevailing, is oftentimes brought nearer home.

4. *laſtly*, Becauſe all thoſe ſtrokes which ſinners meet with in this life, are the ſpittings of the ſhower of wrath that abides the impenitent world, after which the full ſhower may certainly be looked for. As the joys in believing are the pledges of eternal joy, flowing from one fountain with it; the firſt fruits of Canaan's land, which will be followed with the full harveſt: ſo all the outlettings of God's wrath on ſinners here, are the pledges of eternal wrath, and firſt fruits of hell, which will be followed with the harveſt of miſery, being the ſame in kind, Rev. xx. 14.

Uſe 1. Be not unconcerned ſpectators of all the effects of God's anger for ſin going abroad in the world; for your part and mine is deep in them. There is none of them but ſays to us, as in the ſame condemnation, *Except you repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.* O how unconcernedly do many look on the miſeries of others, how far are they from taking a leſſon to themſelves therefrom! But a hard heart and ſeared conſcience, which cannot be awakened by the diſpenſations of providence far off from them, do but invite the heavy ſtroke to fall on themſelves.

2. Conſider, O impenitent ſinners, how can ye eſcape, when your ruin is inſured by ſo many pledges thereof from the Lord's hand, while ye go on in ſin? When a ſinner goes out of God's way, he leaves his ſoul in pawn for his return by repentance; but the impenitent ſinner never returns to looſe his pawn, and ſo loſes it. When God lets out any of his wrath in any meaſure on the children of men, that is God's pawn for his bringing eternal wrath on the impenitent; and we may be ſure, that however careleſs we be of our pawns, God will not loſe his. Therefore conſider your ways, and repent.

Obſ. 3. *The ſtrokes that others meet with are loud calls to us to repent.* That is the language of all the afflicting providences which we ſee going in the world. To confirm this, conſider,

1. God does not ſtrike one for ſin with a viſible ſtroke, but with an eye to all. The reaſon which God gives in his law for puniſhing of ſome tranſgreſſors ſeverely, is, that *all Iſrael might hear, and fear, and do no ſuch thing.* In the infancy of the Jewiſh church, he conſumed Nadab and Abihu with fire, Lev. x. 2. compared with verſ. 9. In the infancy of the Chriſtian church, Ananias and Sapphira were ſtruck dead for a lye. Why all this, but to be a warning to all that ſhould come after?

2. Thereby we may ſee how dangerous a thing ſin is to be harboured; and if we will look inward, we may ever ſee, that there is ſin in us alſo againſt the God of Iſrael. If we ſaw one ſtung by a ſerpent which he had taken up, would not we quickly throw away one which we had taken up too, leſt we ſhould fare no better? How can we think to proſper in that way, where we ſee it goes ſo very ill with others?

Uſe. 1. We may ſee that none go on impenitently in a ſinful courſe, but over the belly of thouſands of calls from providence to repent, beſides all thoſe they have from the word. Look abroad into the world, O ſinner, and conſider how many have fallen into ruin, and are ſtill falling by their iniquity. As many as there are of theſe, ſo many mouths are there calling thee to repent, and turn from thy ſin. 'Who did ever harden 'himſelf againſt God, and proſper?' And doſt thou think, that thy caſe will ever be an exception to the general rule? No; ſo many witneſſes give their teſtimony to thee, That *except thou repent, thou ſhalt likewiſe periſh.*

2. Impenitency under the goſpel cannot have the leaſt ſhadow of excuſe. The calls of providence common to the whole world, are ſufficient to leave the very Heathens without excuſe, Rom. i. 20.; how much more ſhall the calls of the word and providence too make us

inexcuſable, if we do not repent? Sinners make many ſhifts for themſelves, to preſerve the life of their luſts, and to keep themſelves from this unpleaſant exerciſe: but they will be but fig-leaf covers before the Lord.

3. How much more do ſtrokes from the hand of the Lord on ourſelves call us to repent? Hoſ. ii. 6, 7. 'Therefore behold, I will hedge up her way with thorns, 'and make a wall, that ſhe ſhall not find her paths. 'And ſhe ſhall follow after her lovers, but ſhe ſhall not 'overtake them; and ſhe ſhall ſeek them, but ſhall not 'find them: then ſhall ſhe ſay, I will go and return to 'my firſt huſband, for then was it better with me than 'now.' What Abſalom's deſign was in burning Joab's corn-field, is the deſign of afflicting providences. And therefore impenitency and hardneſs of heart under the ſtrokes of the Lord's hand, is highly aggravated, Jer. v. 3. Every croſs that we meet with, is a charge from Heaven to turn from our ſinful courſe, and from the particular ills of our way.

I come now to the principal doctrine of the text.

Doct. *Sinners except they repent ſhall periſh.* This is an except without any exception. Be who they will, if they be ſinners, they muſt repent or periſh. All are ſinners, and by ſin depart from God; and they muſt come back again to him by repentance, elſe they are for ever ruined. Be they ſinners of a greater or leſſer ſize, they muſt be penitent ſinners, or it had been better for them they had never been born.

In diſcourſing this doctrine, I ſhall,

I. Explain the nature of repentance.

II. Apply.

I. *I ſhall explain the nature of repentance.* And here we may conſider,

1. What it is in its general nature.
2. How it is wrought in the ſoul.
3. The ſubject of true repentance.
4. The parts of repentance.

Firſt, We may conſider *what repentance is in its general nature.* It is a ſaving grace: 2 Tim. ii. 25. 'In 'meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves: if 'God peradventure will give them repentance to the 'acknowledging of the truth.' It is a grace given us of God freely, enabling and diſpoſing a ſoul to all the acts of turning from ſin unto God; and it is ſaving, as in its own nature diſtinguiſhing a man from a hypocrite, and having a ſure connection with eternal ſalvation. To unfold this more particularly, conſider,

1. It is not a tranſient action, as Papiſts and ſome ignorant creatures imagine, as if a ſigh for ſin, an act of ſorrow for it, a confeſſion of it with a *God be merciful to me a ſinner*, were repentance. No, no; theſe may be acts of repentance while they proceed from a truly penitent heart. But repentance itſelf is not a paſſing act, but an abiding grace, Zech. xii. 10.; a continuing frame and diſpoſition of the ſoul; a principle lying deep in the heart, diſpoſing a man to mourn for and turn from ſin on all occaſions.

2. It is not a paſſing work of the firſt days of one's religion, as ſome profeſſors take it to be: but a grace in the heart, ſetting one to an anſwerable working all the days of their life. It is a ſpring of waters of ſorrow in the heart for ſin, which will ſpring up there while ſin is there, though ſometimes through hardneſs of heart it may be ſtopped for a while. They that look on repentance as the firſt ſtage in the way to heaven, and looking back to the ſorrowful hours which they had when the Lord firſt began to deal with them, reckon that they have paſſed the firſt ſtage, and are in a dangerous condition. And whoſo endeavour not to carry on their repentance, I doubt if they ever at all repented yet. As when Moſes had ſmote the rock in the wilderneſs, and the waters began to guſh out, thoſe waters ran (it is thought, 1 Cor. x. 4.) and followed them while in the wilderneſs: ſo the heart firſt ſmitten with repentance for ſin at the ſoul's firſt converſion to God, the wound ſtill bleeds, and is never bound up to bleed no more, till the band of glory be put about it in heaven, Rev. xxi. 4.

Hence initial and progreſſive repentance, though the former be the repentance of a ſinner, the latter of a ſaint, are no more different kinds of repentance, than the ſoul's virgin-love to Chriſt, and their love to him through the courſe of their ſpiritual marriage with him; or than faith in its firſt and after actings. But as the mid-day and evening ſun are the ſame with the morning-ſun, ſo are theſe; though the morning-ſun may be moſt noticed by the traveller, who having travelled in the night, was thereby brought from darkneſs to light.

3. It is not a common grace, but a ſpecial ſaving one. Men may have a repentance for their ſin, gnawing their conſciences, and tormenting their hearts, which they will carry on in hell through eternity; being only the firſt movings of the worm in the ſoul that never dieth: as Judas's repentance ſeems to have been, Simon Magus's, and Pharaoh's. They may bitterly rue their ſin, as Eſau, Gen. xxvii. 34. who never truly repent of it, Heb. xii. 17.; and the ſtony heart may be broken in a thouſand pieces, while yet every piece remains a ſtone. They may have a ſuperficial ſorrow for ſin, and a light joy ſucceeding it, whoſe hearts were never pierced to the quick; and therefore the joy goes, as the effects of a ſcud of rain on the parched ground, Matth. xiii. 20, 21. But true repentance is a repentance never repented of, kindly working in the ſoul.

Secondly, We may conſider *how repentance is wrought in the ſoul.* And here two queſtions muſt be anſwered, and two points cleared, namely.

1. Who works repentance, or is the author of it? And that is the ſanctifying Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt: Zech. xii. 10. 'And I will pour upon the houſe of 'David, and upon the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, the 'ſpirit of grace and of ſupplications, and they ſhall look 'upon me whom they have pierced, and they ſhall 'mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only ſon, and 'ſhall be in bitterneſs for him, as one that is in bitterneſs for his firſt-born.' Sometimes notorious prodigals become true penitents; as a perſecuting Saul turned to be a preaching Paul: ſo that the world is amazed with the change, and are ready to ſay as in Saul's caſe, 1 Sam. x. 11. 'What is this that is come unto 'the ſon of Kiſh? Is Saul alſo among the prophets?' But that query, ver. 12. 'But who is their father?' gives a rational account of the matter. All ſort of timber to divine grace is alike eaſy to hew. And foraſmuch as the houſe of God is ordinarily built of the knottieſt wood, publicans and harlots entering into the kingdom of God before Scribes and Phariſees, it may plainly appear, that repentance is not the work of nature, but of grace; not of mens own ſpirit, but the Spirit of Chriſt.

This is evident from the word, Jer. xiii. 23. 'Can 'the Ethiopian change his ſkin, or the leopard his 'ſpots? then may ye alſo do good, that are accuſtomed 'to do evil.' It is the Lord's own work to 'take away 'the ſtony heart, and give an heart of fleſh,' Ezek. xxxvi. 26. It is the office of the exalted Mediator to *give repentance*, in whoſe hand it is to ſend the Spirit. Acts v. 31. Miniſters may preach repentance, but cannot work it in themſelves, and far leſs in others. They may ſow the ſeed, but cannot make it grow, 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7. It is but a *peradventure if God give repentance*, when they have done their utmoſt, 2 Tim. ii. 25. But if at all their weapons be *mighty*, it is *through God*, 2 Cor. x. 4.

2. By what means does the Spirit work repentance? That is by the word, whether read or preached. The word is the channel wherein the influences of the Spirit flow; and from theſe it has its piercing, melting, and heart ſoftening virtue, as the pool of Betheſda had its healing virtue from the angel's troubling of the wa-

ter; Acts xi. 20, 21. ‘ And ſome of them were men ‘ of Cyprus and Cyrene, which when they were come ‘ to Antioch, ſpake unto the Grecians, preaching the ‘ Lord Jeſus. And the hand of the Lord was with ‘ them: and a great number believed, and turned to ‘ the Lord.’ Junius, who was deeply plunged in atheiſm, was brought to repentance, by reading John i. in a New Teſtament which his father had purpoſely laid down in his chamber, if perhaps he might take it up and read it. Auguſtine was converted by reading, Rom. xiii. 13, 14. ‘ Let us walk honeſtly as in the ‘ day; not in rioting and drunkenneſs, not in cham‘ bering and wantonneſs, not in ſtrife and envying. ‘ But put ye on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and make no ‘ proviſion for the fleſh, to fulfil the luſts thereof.’ Three thouſand we find were wrought on by one ſermon, Acts ii.

Many and various are the occaſions of repentance, which the Lord bleſſeth for bringing home the word to the ſoul, and the ſoul by it unto God. Perſonal afflictions have been ſo in the caſe of many, Hoſ. ii. 7. The ſight of ſtrokes on others has been bleſſed to ſome. The firſt occaſion of Luther's turning ſerious, was a fright by the violent death of a dear companion of his. Nay, God has made falls into groſs ſins occaſions of repentance unto many, whereof there are ſeveral inſtances, as Achan, the thief on the croſs, &c. Flavel gives an account of one in the caſe of an attempt of ſelf murder. Auguſtine heard a voice, ſaying, ‘ Take up and read.’ Nay, God can make a dream in the night ſuch an occaſion, Job xxxiii. 15, 16. But theſe are not properly the means, but the occaſions which bring men to conſider of the word, which is the true and proper means. And here the Spirit of the Lord makes uſe of both parts of the word.

1*ſt*, The law to break the hard heart; Jer. xxiii. 29. ‘ Is not my word like a hammer that breaketh the rock ‘ in pieces? ſaith the Lord.’ It goes before like John Baptiſt to prepare the way of the Lord into the heart. And the Spirit of the Lord making uſe of it in a ſoul, is called the Spirit of bondage, Rom. viii. 15. And here each part of the law has its proper uſe.

(1.) The commands of it to convince the ſoul of ſin: Rom. vii. 7. ‘ I had not known ſin, (ſays the apoſtle) ‘ but by the law: for I had not known luſt, except the ‘ law had ſaid, Thou ſhalt not covet.’ The commands of the law, held forth to the ſoul in their ſpirituality and vaſt extent, are the looking glaſs wherein the ſinner is made to ſee his black face, the ſins and ſinfulneſs of his nature, heart and life, which he muſt repent of.

(2.) The threatnings of it, to convince the ſoul of judgment: Gal. iii. 10. ‘ As many as are of the ‘ works of the law, are under the curſe: for it is writ‘ ten, Curſed is every one that continueth not in all ‘ things which are written in the book of the law to do ‘ them.’ Theſe carried home on the ſoul, diſturb its reſt in ſin, and let the man ſee that he has been ſleeping within the ſea mark of divine vengeance, and ſo give him a frightful wakening. Theſe diſcover the danger of ſin for time and eternity, and tell him that he muſt turn over a new leaf, elſe he is ruined.

2*dly*, The goſpel, to melt the hard heart, like a fire, Jer. xxiii. 29. ‘ Is not my word like as a fire? ſaith the ‘ Lord:’ and ſo to bow and bend it from ſin towards God, Zech. xii. 10. ‘ And I will pour upon the houſe ‘ of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, the ‘ ſpirit of grace and of ſupplications, and they ſhall look ‘ upon me whom they have pierced, and they ſhall ‘ mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only ſon, and ‘ ſhall be in bitterneſs for him, as one that is in bitter‘ neſs for his firſt-born.’ Thus the ſoul that was driven by the law, is kindly led and drawn by the goſpel to repentance. The law ſerves to make a terrible reel in the conſcience and affections; but the goſpel is Chriſt's key to open the heart, and to turn about the will, that he may come in, Gal. iii. 2. The ſtormy wind, and earthquake, may go before in the law; but the ſtill ſmall voice of the goſpel is that which the Lord is in. This is evident if ye conſider,

(1.) That repentance is the doctrine of the goſpel. I do indeed think, that it cannot be denied but that the law requires repentance as a duty, in ſo far as it binds the apoſtate ſinner to return to God: but in the mean time it gives no hope of mercy to the penitent, ſeeing its conſtant voice is, “ Curſed is every one that continueth “ not in all things which are written in the book of the “ law to do them.” But the goſpel brings the glad tidings of place for repentance, and ſhews how the apoſtate creature returning will be accepted. And there can be no true returning to God, where there is no hope of acceptance.

(2.) Repentance is a promiſe of the covenant of grace: Ezek. xxxvi. 31. *Then ſhall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and ſhall lothe yourſelves in your own ſight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations.* It is not only the duty of God's elect, but their privilege, made over to them in Jeſus Chriſt, purchaſed by his death, and beſtowed on them by virtue of his exaltation, Acts v. 31. And hence, as one of the benefits of that covenant, it is ſealed in baptiſm, Mark i. 4.

The ſum of what is ſaid on this ſecond head, is, That repentance is an evangelical ſoftneſs of heart, and bent of ſpirit to turn away from ſin, and to turn to God, wrought in a ſoul by the Spirit of Chriſt. The Spirit of holineſs being given to Chriſt without meaſure, he puts the ſame Spirit in his elect in the day of his power; who by his grace melts the heart for ſin, and bends it away from ſin to holineſs.

Uſe. 1. Repentance is not a man's taking up himſelf, in the point of his outward converſation. It is one thing to reform the life, another to reform the heart by changing the will. The former is within the reach of mere nature, the other is not to be effected but by a ſupernatural hand, Jer. xxxi. 18. The former may make one a painted ſepulchre, the latter makes him a new creature.

2. Legal repentance is no true repentance: and therefore though one have it, he may periſh; as Pharaoh, Judas, *&c.* It makes a fretful reſtleſs conſcience under the terror of God's wrath, but mean while it leaves a hard heart, glewed to ſin. The law and its terrors coming into a ſinful ſoul, may raiſe the duſt ready to choke the ſinner, as in a houſe when a ſweeping; but will never be made clean, unleſs the goſpel have its efficacy on the heart, as the water which lays that duſt. Hence it comes to paſs, that ſinners ſometimes have ſharp convictions, but mean while their luſts grow as rampant as ever after.

3. See the folly of delaying repentance, and not ſtriking in with the motions of the Spirit, when one has them. How do people put off repentance from time to time, as if it were wholly in their power to do it at any time; But they that cannot command wind and tide, have need to fall in with them, while they ſerve, leſt if they go, they be left hopeleſs. O delay not, leſt the Spirit of the Lord be provoked to depart.

4. *laſtly*, Learn whom ye are to look to for repentance. It is the work of the Lord's Spirit; and unto him ye are to look for his grace to looſe the bands of wickedneſs, to ſoften the hard heart, and to turn you to himſelf, Jer. xxxi. 18.

Thirdly, We may conſider *the ſubject of true repentance, what it is.* It is a convinced believing ſoul. An unconvinced ſinner cannot be a true penitent! for what the eye ſees not, the heart rues not. Neither can an unbelieving ſinner be ſo; for without faith the heart may be rent for ſin, but not from it.

Firſt, The ſoul wherein true repentance is wrought is a *convinced* ſoul: Job xxxvi. 9, 10. ‘ He ſheweth ‘ them their work, and their tranſgreſſions that they ‘ have exceeded. He openeth alſo their ear to diſci‘ pline; and commandeth that they return from iniquity.' Acts ii. 37, 38. 'Now, when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and ſaid unto Peter, and to the reſt of the apoſtles, Men and brethren, what ſhall we do? Then Peter ſaid unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, for the remiſſion of ſins, and ye ſhall receive the gift of the Holy Ghoſt.' The firſt particular work in the creation was making light; and the letting in a new light by conviction, is the firſt work in the new creation. God begins his work, where Satan ends his; who having got the ſoul aſleep in the arms of its luſts, ſhuts the windows, and draws the curtains, that it may ſleep ſound, till it awaken in hell. But the Spirit of the Lord by conviction opens them, and awakens the ſinner ordinarily, if not always, in a fright. Here conſider,

1. How this conviction is wrought. It is done by the erecting of a criminal court within the ſinner's own breaſt, which the man cannot abſent himſelf from, more than he can go out of himſelf. He muſt ſtay and anſwer, unleſs he prevail with the judge to let fall the proceſs; as, alas! many do by ſilencing their conſciences one way or other to their own ruin. And in this court,

1ſt, The Spirit of the Lord, awakening the ſleepy conſcience, ſets it upon the bench, ſo that the man becomes his own judge: John xvi. 8. 'And when he [the Comforter] is come, he will reprove the world of ſin, and of righteouſneſs, and of judgment.' The man ſearches and tries his heart and life, which was before neglected as the ſluggard's garden. But now every corner thereof is ranſacked, and ſecret things ſet in the light.

2dly, The man is convicted as a ſinner by the law. His nature, heart, and life brought to the holy law and compared with it, he is found evidently to be guilty and a tranſgreſſor. Hence ſays the apoſtle, Rom. vii. 9. 'I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, ſin revived, and I died.' The law as a looking glaſs is held before his eyes, and he ſees his ſpots. His own conſcience is as a thouſand witneſſes againſt him, and he cannot deny the charge. So his mouth is ſtopped, and his ſin at length has found him out, Rom. iii. 19.

3dly, The man is ſentenced and condemned by his own conſcience according to the law, adjudging him liable to death, eternal death, for his ſins: Gal. iii. 10. 'Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.' He is therefore a condemned malefactor in his own eyes, by the ſentence of the law pronounced againſt him. Conſider,

2. The effects of this conviction which are theſe.

1ſt, A painful ſenſe of ſin, an affecting ſight of it, Rom. vii. 9. forecited. For now the ſore is lanced; and they ſee thoſe ſins, and that in ſin, which they ſaw not before; and their eyes affect their hearts. As when the ſun ſhines into a houſe, the motes are diſcovered which did not appear before; ſo is it here. And the ſin which ſat light on them before, becomes a burden too heavy to them to bear; for now they are rouſed out of their lethargy, and feel their ſores. It is a burden on their ſpirits which ſinks them; on their backs that bows them down; on their heads, which they are not able to diſcharge themſelves of. Therefore the ſoul coming to Chriſt, is repreſented as a man with a burden on him, Pſal. lv. 22. 'Caſt thy burden upon the Lord, and he ſhall ſuſtain thee.' Hoſ. xiv. 2. 'Take with you words, and turn to the Lord, ſay unto him, Take away all iniquity;' Heb. *Lift off iniquity as a burden.*

2dly, Terror on their hearts, Pſal. ix. 20. 'Put them in fear, O Lord; that the nations may know themſelves to be but men.' The convinced jailor, a man who wore a ſword, falls a-trembling, Acts xvi. 29. for the terror of God is too high for the ſtouteſt heart, that know not what it is to fear the face of man. The ſoul that was fearleſs before, becauſe blind to its own hazard, now that his eyes are opened, is *magor miſſabib*. For, what heart can be ſtrong before an angry God, brandiſhing the ſword of a fiery law over the conſcience, which, awakened, is the tendereſt part of the man?

3dly, Legal ſorrow for ſin, Acts ii. 37. 'Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart.' There are ſtounds of grief that go through their hearts like arrows, Pſal. xlv. 5. and theſe are very piercing, Prov. xviii. 14. 'The ſpirit of a man will ſuſtain his infirmity; but a wounded ſpirit who can bear?' The man ſees now that he has been murdering his own ſoul, and he grones out an elegy over his dead ſelf; which is raiſed the higher, that he thought his ſoul was alive, when really it was dead. He calls himſelf fool and beaſt for doing as he did. But what is very ſad, though his heart be rent in pieces for his ſin, yet it is not rent from it. What grieves him thus, is purely ſelfiſh; his ſeparation from God, without whom he ſees he cannot be happy; and his liableneſs to his wrath and curſe, which he ſees will ruin him for ever to lie under.

4thly, A racking anxiety how to be delivered out of this ſtate, Acts ii. 37. 'Now when they heard this, they——ſaid,——What ſhall we do?' And here many times fear and hope take their ſeveral turns in his anxious ſoul; ſometimes hoping, ſometimes deſponding, like Jonah in the whale's belly, Jon. ii. 4. 'Then I ſaid, I am caſt out of thy ſight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.' Conviction of ſin will make way for care into the moſt careleſs head, and will make folk beſtow many thoughts on the neglected ſalvation, that uſed not to beſtow one ſerious thought upon the buſineſs. And this care will ſwallow up all others, as that of a drowning man to ſave his life.

Uſe 1. The unconvinced ſinner is an impenitent ſinner. Hearken ye young ones, and old, that have lived at eaſe, and with a hale heart, in reſpect of your ſouls ſtate, all your days. They may ſleep ſound indeed, whom the devil is rocking in the cradle of a natural impenitent ſtate. But ye will get awakening yet, either in time to bring you to repentance, or when time is gone, and there is no place for repentance, Jer. xlviii. 11, 12. *For except ye repent, ye ſhall——periſh.* Ah poor ſinner, thou waſt never yet in the next ſtep to repentance. Thy ſore has not been lanced yet, therefore ſurely the filthy matter is never yet caſt out by repentance.

2. Convictions and legal qualms of conſcience are not repentance; for they do but qualify the ſubject for it, and that in part only. Theſe are very neceſſary things I have ſpoke of under this head; but they are but like the unripe fruit, which muſt be ripened by the work of the goſpel on the heart, and brought to a perfection by the warm ſun of goſpel-influences, ere he that has them can be accounted a penitent indeed. Or rather, they are like the bloſſoms which go before, and differ in kind from the fruit, which often fall off, and no fruit follows at all. Folk may have had theſe many days and years ſince, that never repented to this day, Hoſ. vi. 4. The firſt-fruits of the ſecond death may be miſtaken by many for the pangs of the new birth. And therefore ye that have had them, conſider well what iſſue they have had; for it is not enough to have been in them, but to have got right out of them. Wrong curing of ſome diſeaſes, breeds others, that prove mortal to many.

The right iſſue out of them lies in three things.

1. It lies in ſelf denial, or unſelfing of the ſoul, when the ſoul is ſhaken out of itſelf for juſtification and ſanctification too, Jer. xxxi. 18. 'I have ſurely heard Ephraim bemoaning himſelf thus, Thou haſt chaſtiſed me, and I was chaſtiſed, as a bullock unaccuſtomed to the yoke; turn thou me, and I ſhall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God.' Compared with verſe 19. 'Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was inſtructed, I ſmote upon my thigh; I was aſhamed, yea, even confounded, becauſe I did bear the reproach of my youth.' They ſee the heinouſneſs

of ſin, and the corruption of their nature too, ſo as they conclude themſelves utterly unable to help themſelves in either of theſe points, and ſo come off from themſelves.

2. It lies in faith, or believing; in coming to Jeſus Chriſt for all, in point of juſtification and ſanctification too: Iſa. xlv. 24. ‘ Surely, ſhall one ſay, in the Lord ‘ have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength.’ The ſoul being turned off its own bottom, comes and builds on him for what it wants, and looks to him for his blood and Spirit. Thus ‘ the law is a ſchool-maſter to bring us unto Chriſt, ‘ that we might be juſtified by faith,’ Gal. iii. 24. See Jer. iii. 22, 23.

3. It lies in repentance, or a kindly melting of the heart for ſin, Jer. xxxi. 18. Zech. xii. 10. as done againſt a gracious God, whom the heart is knit to in love. The ſoul comes from before the throne of juſtice, where it ſtood weeping for itſelf and its own miſery, before the throne of grace, where it ſtands weeping for having offended ſuch a gracious Father.

They land at this threefold ſhore, who come rightly out of theſe depths. But many plunge up and down in them a while, and land again juſt in the ſame ſide they went in at. Some land at the ſhore,

1. Of formality, or a legal walk, 2 Tim. iii. 5. ‘ having a form of godlineſs, but denying the power there‘ of.’ They change their former way, but retain their old heart. They go indeed to religious duties, but they never go out of them to Chriſt. They act not as they did; but ſtill they have the old principle of action, acting from ſelf, and to ſelf; ſo that though they change their work, they ſtill work to the old maſter. And thus many continue in a profeſſion of religion, living on their duties, never coming to Chriſt. Others land at the ſhore,

2. Of their former ſecurity. They are neither better inwardly nor outwardly; but they come from out of their qualms of conſcience, as one out of a fever, returning juſt to their old way of living; as was the caſe with Felix, Acts xxiv. 25. who ſaid to Paul, ‘ Go thy way ‘ for this time; when I have a convenient ſeaſon, I will ‘ call for thee.’ Others land at the ſhore,

3. Of profanity; turning worſe than before: Matth. xii. 43, 44, 45. ‘ When the unclean ſpirit is gone out ‘ of a man, he walketh through dry places, ſeeking reſt, ‘ and findeth none. Then he ſaith, I will return into ‘ my houſe from whence I came out; and when he is ‘ come, he findeth it empty, ſwept, and garniſhed. Then ‘ goeth he, and taketh with himſelf ſeven other ſpirits ‘ more wicked than himſelf, and they enter in and dwell ‘ there: and the laſt ſtate of that man is worſe than the ‘ the firſt.’ Their luſts dammed up for a while, run with more vigour than ever thereafter.

Secondly, The ſoul wherein repentance is wrought, is a *believing* ſoul. Faith is the ſpring and ſource of repentance; ſo that though the grace of faith and repentance are given together and at once in reſpect of time, yet, in the order of nature, faith goes before repentance, and the acting of faith goes before the exerciſe of repentance. And he that would repent, muſt firſt believe in Chriſt that he may repent. I know that ſome teach otherwiſe. But this is the doctrine of the ſcriptures and our catechiſm. To confirm it, conſider,

1. That faith is abſolutely the leading grace, and the firſt breathing of a quickened ſoul: Heb. xi. 6. *Without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God;* therefore it is impoſſible to repent, for that is very pleaſing to him, Jer. xxxi. 20. So John xv. 5. *Without me, i. e.* ſeparate from me, and there is no union with him but by the Spirit of faith, *ye can do nothing* acceptable to God, therefore ye cannot repent.

2. It is particularly the leading grace to repentance; Zech. xii. 10.——‘ They ſhall look upon me whom ‘ they have pierced, and they ſhall mourn for him, as ‘ one that mourneth for his only ſon.’ Thus it is repreſented in fact, Acts xi. 21.——‘ And a great num‘ ber believed, and turned unto the Lord.’ If repentance be the emptying of the ſoul by the dropping of the tears of godly ſorrow, it is faith that generates them in the heart. It is faith that melts the heart, which droppeth in repentance. The eye of faith fixes on God in Chriſt, and then the ſoul turns to him by repentance, Jer. iii. 22.

3. The ſcripture uſually propoſeth the objects of faith, and promiſes of grace, for motives to repentance; thereby diſcovering, that it muſt be by a believing application of theſe, that a ſoul is brought to repentance: Jer. iii. 14. ‘ Turn, O backſliding children, ‘ ſaith the Lord, for I am married unto you.’ ver. 22. ‘ Return, ye backſliding children, and I will heal your ‘ backſlidings: behold, we come unto thee, for thou art ‘ the Lord our God.’ Joel ii. 12, 13. ‘ Therefore alſo ‘ now, ſaith the Lord, Turn ye even to me with all ‘ your heart, and with faſting, and with weeping, and ‘ with mourning. And rent your heart and not your ‘ garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he ‘ is gracious and merciful, ſlow to anger, and of great ‘ kindneſs, and repenteth him of the evil.’ Hoſ. vi. 1. ‘ Come and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath ‘ torn, and he will heal us; he hath ſmitten, and he will ‘ bind us up.’ chap. xiv. 1. ‘ O Iſrael, return unto the ‘ Lord thy God, for thou haſt fallen by thine iniquity.’ Nay the very law proclaimed on mount Sinai with ſo much terror, is graciouſly prefaced with goſpel grace for faith to work on in the firſt place; ‘ I am the Lord thy ‘ God,’ *&c.* And thus the doctrine of the New Teſtament concerning repentance is propoſed to ſinners, Mat. iii. 2. and iv. 17. ‘ Repent ye: for the kingdom of hea‘ ven is at hand.’

4. *laſtly*, The nature of repentance plainly teacheth this. It is a cordial turning from ſin unto God: but is it poſſible to turn to God, but through Chriſt? John xiv. 6. ‘ I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no ‘ man cometh unto the Father, but by me.’ And is there any way of coming to Chriſt, but by faith? The ſoul then that would turn and go to God again by repentance, muſt needs take Chriſt (by faith) by the way. The people indeed wept; but did they put away the ſtrange wives, or ſet to it, till Shechaniah cried, Ezra x. 2. ‘ We have treſpaſſed againſt our God, and have ta‘ ken ſtrange wives, of the people of the land: yet now ‘ there is hope in Iſrael concerning this thing?’ They muſt not only be priſoners of fear, but of hope, that will turn, Zech. ix. 12. ‘ Turn ye to the ſtrong hold, ye priſo‘ ners of hope.’ Repentance is a kindly humiliation and mourning for ſin; but the faithleſs heart may roar under law horror, will never kindly mourn but under goſpel-influences.

Object. Repentance is placed before faith, Mark i. 15.; and ſometimes repentance only is mentioned to natural men as the way to ſalvation, as in our text, and Acts ii. 38. and iii. 19. *Anſw.* (1.) Repentance no doubt is abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation; and no man needs pretend to faith, that does not repent, for they are inſeparable. But that will no more infer the precedency of repentance to faith, than that Heb. xii. 14. will infer the precedency of holineſs to it. Now, this is all our text aims at. (3.) Repentance being the end, and faith the means to that end, no wonder they be ſo placed; for the end is firſt in one's intention, yet the means are firſt in practice. So Mark i. 15. Chriſt commands ſinners to *repent;* but then in order to repenting, he commands them to *believe.* So Acts ii. 38. *believing* is implied in the command to be *baptized.* And therefore, ſpeaking of the reſult of this work, ver. 44. it is ſaid, ‘ And ‘ all that believed,’ *&c.* So Acts iii. 19. it is implied in being *converted;* compared with Heb. iii. 12. ‘ Take ‘ heed, brethren, leſt there be in any of you an evil ‘ heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.’ And that this is the true reaſon of this way of ſpeaking, namely, that repentance is the end, and faith the means, is clear from Acts xx. 21. ‘ Teſtifying——repen‘ tance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jeſus ‘ Chriſt:’ for that ſcripture can bear no other meaning, without deſtroying that fundamental truth, That Chriſt is the way to the Father. John preached repentance, Mark i. 4.; but how did he direct to it? Acts xix. 4. 'John verily baptized with the baptiſm of repentance, ſaying unto the people, That they ſhould believe on him which ſhould come after him, that is, on Chriſt Jeſus.'

Uſe 1. Then it is not goſpel-doctrine, That Chriſt will receive none but true penitents, or that none but ſuch have a warrant to embrace Chriſt by faith; Rev. xxii. 17. 'And the Spirit and the bride ſay, Come. And let him that heareth, ſay, Come. And let him that is athirſt, come; And whoſoever will, let him take the water of life freely.' The evil of this doctrine is, that it ſets ſinners to ſpin repentance out of their own bowels, and to fetch it with them to Chriſt, inſtead of coming to him by faith to get it. And it hinders ſenſible ſinners from coming to Chriſt, as keeping them back till they be perſuaded that they have true repentance. I ſay, perſuaded; for how can a ſinner come to Chriſt till he be perſuaded he has a warrant ſo to do? If Chriſt will receive none but ſuch as have true repentance, then none other are invited to come; for ſurely thoſe that are invited, will be welcome upon their coming: if none other be invited, then impenitent ſinners are not bound to come to Chriſt; for none are bound to come, but thoſe that are invited; 'for where there is no law, there is no tranſgreſſion.' However, none are have in Chriſt by faith, but thereupon they become true penitents; and none but true penitents will ſee heaven.

2. Then for ſenſible ſinners to think that they dare not and ought not to believe, and embrace Chriſt, till they be more deeply humbled, and do more thoroughly repent of their ſins, and, in a word, be more fit to receive him, is but a gilded deceit, and a trick of the falſe heart, to make the ſoul ſtay long in the place of the breaking forth of children, and die there at length. The ſcripture holdeth forth quite other doctrine, Rev. iii. 20. 'Behold, I ſtand at the door, and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will ſup with him, and he with me.' Iſa. lv. 1. 'Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.' It is one thing what a ſinner will do; another, what he may and ought to do. It is very true, there are many who will never come to Chriſt, if they be not made more ſenſible of their need of him than they are. But all that hear the goſpel may and ought to come, be their caſe what it will; and thoſe that come not, will be condemned for their not coming, John iii. 19. Therefore let every ſenſible ſinner under that temptation think, that he is in the caſe of a drowning man, who if he ſtand diſputing whether he may catch hold of the rope reached to him to hale him to land, a wave may come and ſweep him away: and therefore without diſputing he muſt take hold of it.

3. This ſhews the true way to deal with a hard heart, to ſoften it, and bring it to hearty repentance. It is to believe. Ye muſt do like thoſe fowls, that firſt fly up, and then come down on their prey; firſt ſoar aloft in the way of believing, and then come down in true humiliation: Zech. xii. 10.——'They ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they ſhall mourn for him.' One may otherwiſe toil long in vain, with a hard heart. Unbelief will lock up the heart, as the waters are with a hard froſt; for hard thoughts of God ſet the ſoul at a diſtance more and more from him, when the believing of the proclaimed pardon touches the rebels hearts, and makes them come in.

4. *laſtly*. The more faith the more repentance; as the fuller the ſpring is, the ſtreams run with the more vigorous current. 'According to your faith be it unto you,' is the rule of the diſpenſation of grace. For faith is the proviſor for all other graces, as being the conduit pipe by which grace comes from the fountain of grace to the ſoul; ſo that it failing, all fails; and it moving vigorouſly, the reſt do ſo too.

Queſt. How are we to act faith in order to repentance?

Anſw. 1. Firmly believe that whatever your guilt be, God is reconcileable to you in Chriſt Jeſus; that there is hope of your caſe, if ye can attain to the way laid out for bettering it. You have God's word for this: Iſa. i. 18. 'Come now, and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord: though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be white as ſnow; though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wool.' Ezek. xviii. 23. 'Have I any pleaſure at all that the wicked ſhould die? ſaith the Lord God: and not that he ſhould return from his ways and live?' This will quicken your endeavours after the happineſs of your ſouls. Satan ſtrikes at this foundation, to keep the ſoul from repentance, many ways. He will tell you, it cannot be thought, that God can ever love the like of you. But the Lord ſaith the contrary: Hoſ. xiv. 4. 'I will heal their backſliding, I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from him.' Again, Satan will tell you, that you were not elected, but made for deſtruction; though God never ſet him nor you on the ſecrets of his decrees: Deut xxix. 29. 'The ſecret things belong unto the Lord our God: but thoſe things which are revealed belong unto us.' But why does he tell you all this, but to make you careleſs? which being done, he knows you cannot repent.

2. Believe that Jeſus Chriſt is both able and willing to ſave you from ſin and from wrath. You have ground to believe his ability, 1 John i. 7. 'The blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son cleanſeth us from all ſin.' Heb. vii. 25. 'He is able to ſave them to the uttermoſt, that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them.' And you have alſo ground to believe his willingneſs, Iſa. lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17. both forecited. This will ſet you a ſtep farther on; and truly this believed by a ſenſible ſinner, the bargain is almoſt cloſed. Therefore Satan works againſt the toſſed ſoul's believing of this, to the end he may not come to an anchor or reſt, but may plunge up and down in the depths, knowing no landing place. Hence theſe helliſh ſuggeſtions, What have you to do with the promiſes of grace? they will be made out to others, but not to you. But ſee Acts ii. 39. compared with verſ. 36. Hence alſo the ſuggeſtion of having ſinned the unpardonable ſin. But why is that ſin unpardonable? not that the Phyſician cannot or will not cure it, Heb. vii 25. John vi. 37. but becauſe the ſinner will never after deſire to come to him, but wilfully and maliciouſly rejects him. Hence alſo that ſuggeſtion, that Chriſt died not for him. But ſurely Satan never ſaw the roll of thoſe whom Chriſt died for, and knows it no more than we, Deut xxix. 29. We ought not to call that in queſtion, but leave that matter to the Lord. It is plain, that we are *commanded to believe*, 1 John iii. 23. Let us do ſo, and we ſhall have evidences that Chriſt died for us.

3. Chriſt has given his conſent to be yours in his word; believe it; and do you conſent to be his, accepting of the covenant, and of Chriſt therein to be your head and huſband. Take him in all his offices as offered; and ſolemnly lay the whole weight of your ſoul, for juſtification and ſanctification, on him. Lay over the burden of your guilt on his blood, of your raging luſts on his blood and Spirit; confidently truſting in him for ſalvation from ſin and wrath. You have good ground to do this: Matth. xxii. 4. 'All things are ready: come unto the marriage.' Iſ. xxvi. 3, 4. 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whoſe mind is ſtaid on thee: becauſe he truſteth in thee. Truſt ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlaſting ſtrength.' Chap. xliv. 5. 'One ſhall ſay, I am the Lord's: and another ſhall call himſelf by the name of Jacob; and another ſhall ſubſcribe with his hand unto the Lord, and ſirname himſelf by the name of Iſrael.' Chap. xlv. 24. 'Surely ſhall one ſay, in the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength.' This

being done, the bargain is cloſed for time and eternity; Chriſt is yours, and ye are his, and God is your God in him. Satan ſtrives againſt the ſoul here: for he knows, that if this be done, the perſon is no more his. Hence are theſe ſuggeſtions, Chriſt is a hard maſter there is no living with; though Chriſt ſays the contrary, Matth. xi. 28, 29, 30. Again, it is over ſoon for that ſerious work, Pſal. xcv. If none of theſe nor the like will do, then he will tell the perſon, that it is preſumption for him to offer at any ſuch thing. But that is but the devil's doctrine, that it is preſumption to do it, ſince God has commanded it, 1 John iii. 23. ‘This is his commandment, that we ſhould believe on the name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt.’ And do what you will, ye cannot pleaſe God unleſs you do it, John vi. 29. ‘This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath ſent.’ Heb. xi. 6. ‘Without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God.’ Well, if the ſoul will venture, he is ready to tell him, he had as good let it alone as try it in vain, for Chriſt will never receive him, nor give his conſent to the bargain. But Satan is a liar; for he has given it already: Matth. xxii. 4. ‘All things are ready: come unto the marriage.’ Hoſ. ii. 19. ‘I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteouſneſs, and in judgment, and in loving-kindneſs, and in mercies.’ The ſoul is like a traveller come to a deep water-ſide, over which lies a bridge appearing very thin and narrow; it is pouring on rain on this ſide, it is fair weather on the far ſide; he would fain be over; and while he is minting to take the bridge, a falſe friend tells him, that he will never get over, that the bridge will break with him, or that his foot will ſlip, *&c.* And thus the poor man ſtands, ſometimes putting on his foot, ſometimes drawing it back again, till the flood riſing behind him, he ſees he muſt venture or periſh. So he ventures with a trembling heart, and gets ſafe over, and ſees that it was an enemy that made him ſo diſtruſtful of the paſſage.

4. This being done, believe that Chriſt is yours, Cant. ii. 16.; that God is reconciled to you in him; that your ſins are pardoned for Chriſt's ſake, and you are no more under condemnation for them, Rom. viii. 1; that you are now in a ſtate of peace with God, and ſafe under the covert of blood. This will effectually melt your hearts into ſincere repentance. And the ſtronger your confidence be in this point, the fire will be the more keen to melt the ſoul. Satan will oppoſe you in this alſo, that raiſing the duſt of doubts and fears, your hands may be feeble that ſhould fight againſt your luſts, the legs weak and trembling wherewith you ſhould turn from ſin unto God. But the more he weakens that, the more he ſerves his own purpoſe againſt you.

5. Stand upon this ſhore, and look to your ſins, and Saviour, Zech. xii. 10. When a ſoul has, by a believing application of the blood of Chriſt, paſſed the gulf of condemnation, and ſees itſelf ſafe on the other ſide, it ſtands faireſt for a hearty melting for ſin, and a free and cordial turning from it unto God, Luke vii. 37, 38. compared with ver. 47. Slaviſh fear may be greater before, but it is filial relenting that will be greateſt then. The waters of ſorrow may make greater noiſe before, but they will come ſweeping down with a more full flood then, as when a hearty thaw comes after a long froſt.

6. *laſtly*, Believing the promiſe of his grace, uſe the means. There are means of God's appointment to ſtir up a ſoul to repentance; namely, ſerious meditations on the ſins of our nature, heart, lip, and life; the evil of it with reſpect to God and to ourſelves, &c. Rev. ii. 5. ‘Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent.’ Pſal. cxix. 59. ‘I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy teſtimonies.’ There are promiſes of repentance, Ezek. xxxvi. 31. ‘Then ſhall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and ſhall lothe yourſelves in your own ſight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations.’ Acts v. 31. ‘Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Iſrael, and forgiveneſs of ſins.’ To believe the promiſe without uſe of the means, is preſumption; to uſe the means without believing the promiſe, is a ſelfiſh unſanctified work. What God has joined, either of theſe puts aſunder, and ſo muſt be fruitleſs. God ſays to us in this caſe, as unto Moſes, Exod. xvii. 5, 6. ‘Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Iſrael: and thy rod wherewith thou ſmoteſt the river, take in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will ſtand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou ſhalt ſmite the rock, and there ſhall come water out of it, that the people may drink.’ The means are as the rock, the faith of the promiſe the rod of God; the way to get the water was by ſmiting the rock with the rod.

Fourthly, Let us conſider *the parts of repentance*. Theſe are two, namely, humiliation for ſin, and turning from ſin unto God. Theſe two put together, make up true repentance. Accordingly, the ſcripture ſpeaks of repenting of ſin, 2 Cor. xii. 21. ‘which have not repented of the uncleanneſs,’ &c.; and likewiſe repenting from ſin, Heb. vi. 1. ‘not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works,’ *&c.* So in the Old-Teſtament repentance is expreſſed by two words; the one denoting remorſe and ſorrow: Job xlii. 6. ‘Wherefore I abhor myſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes.’ Jer. viii. 6. ‘No man repented him of his wickedneſs, ſaying, what have I done?’ the other denoting the turning of the ſoul, *viz.* from ſin unto God, Ezek. xviii. 30. ‘Repent, and turn yourſelves from all your tranſgreſſions.’

But however theſe may be diſtinguiſhed, they cannot be divided in true repentance. The true humiliation iſſues always in turning; and turning always begins at humiliation. Hence very often the whole of repentance is expreſſed by *returning*, and ſometimes by *humiliation*, as Lev. xxvi. 41. ‘If then their uncircumciſed hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the puniſhment of their iniquity.’ 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12. ‘And when he was in affliction, he beſought the Lord his God, and humbled himſelf greatly before the God of his fathers.’ We have both together, Joel ii. 12, 13. ‘Therefore alſo now, ſaith the Lord, Turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with faſting, and with weeping, and with mourning. And rent your heart and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, ſlow to anger, and of great kindneſs, and repenteth him of the evil.’

1ſt, To begin with humiliation. This leads the van in the ſinner's return to God by repentance. There is never a ſoul comes back to God, but it comes the low way of humiliation. The ſinner gone from God, is ſet up againſt him, but grace pulls down the ſinner from that ſeat, and lays him down at the Lord's footſtool, where the Lord takes him up, 1 Pet. v. 6. ‘Humble yourſelves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.’ As it was with Benhadad's ſervants, 1 Kings xx. 31, 32. ſo it is with the convinced ſinner: faith teaches them, that the king of Iſrael is a merciful king; repentance girds ſackloth on their loins, and ropes on their heads, and in that poſture brings them to him. Now, in this humiliation of the ſoul there are theſe five things.

Firſt, A kindly ſenſe of ſin, whereby the ſoul ſees and is deeply affected with its ſins againſt a holy, gracious God. I call it ſo, to diſtinguiſh it from the legal convictions ſpoken of before, which make a terrible reel in the conſcience and affections: whereas this kindly ſoaks into the heart. The former is at the bottom involuntary, comes in, and is kept on againſt the ſinner's will; becauſe the natural enmity of the heart againſt God is not broken; and makes the man like one under great pain, who would fain ſleep, but ſtill the new ſtounds awake him and keep him awake. The latter is voluntary, it is welcome in, and welcome to ſtay; becauſe the heart is brought low, and would fain be lower before a holy God.

When the light appears at a chink, they would fain draw the curtains and open the windows, that they may get a better ſight of their black face and foul hands, Jer. lii. 18, 19. This ſenſe of ſin,

1. For the matter of it, is,

1ſt, A ſenſe of the plague of the heart, or ſin of the nature, 1 Kings viii. 38. Rom. vii. 7, 8. The man that is humbled, ſees the corruption of his nature, himſelf to be a maſs of corruption and confuſion. He diſcerns the bias of his heart to the wrong ſide, the averſion to good, the proneneſs to evil, that is interwoven with his very nature. The light of the Lord ſhining into his ſoul, gives him the affecting ſight of the diſtortion and pravity that is in all the faculties of his ſoul, the blindneſs in his mind, rebellion in his will, and carnality in his affections. The want of this is a flaw in the repentance of many, of whom we may ſay, as Lev. xiii. 44. 'He 'is a leprous man, he is unclean: the prieſt ſhall pro'nounce him utterly unclean, his plague is in his head.' They never ſee the corruption of their nature, and ſo repent not of it.

2dly, A ſenſe of actual ſins, Job xxxvi. 9. 'Then he 'ſheweth them their work, and their tranſgreſſions that 'they have exceeded.' Theſe are the poiſonous ſtreams flowing from the impoiſoned fountain; Mark vii. 21, 22. 'For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed 'evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, 'covetouſneſs, wickedneſs, deceit, laſciviouſneſs, an e'vil eye, blaſphemy, pride, fooliſhneſs.' Sin now lies at the door; for thoſe things that were buried out of ſight, have a reſurrection, and ſtand before him as an exceeding great army which he has muſtered againſt heaven. Sins committed many years before, will appear more freſh and green than that day they were committed. What he juſtified before as no faults, he will be now aſhamed of; and what were reckoned tolerable follies, will be accounted monſtrous impieties.

3dly, A ſenſe of the particular idol of jealouſy, which the man has been moſt apt to be led away with. The ſoul is never truly humbled, till deeply ſenſible of its weak ſide, Hoſ. xiv. 3. 'Aſhur ſhall not ſave us, we 'will not ride upon horſes, neither will we ſay any more 'to the work of our hands, Ye are gods.' For the penitent will be particularly ſet againſt that, as what is particularly offenſive to God, Pſal. xviii. 22. This right eye ſmarts and pains him ſo exceedingly, that now he would gladly have it plucked out. And as it does eſpecially grieve the Lord's Spirit, it eſpecially grieves his, as what has been the great make-bate betwixt God and him.

4thly, A ſenſe of the numerouſneſs and multitude of their ſins, Job xiii. 23. 'How many are mine iniquities 'and ſins? make me to know my tranſgreſſion and my 'ſin.' A true ſenſe of ſin will open mens eyes to ſee innumerable evils compaſſing them about, countable only by him who telleth the ſtars, Pſal. xix. 12. Hence the humbled ſoul is ſenſible of a cloud of guilt that it has been wrapt up in; and will ſee it muſt plead guilty to every line of the ſpiritual law; ſees itſelf a maſs of iniquity; 'from the crown of the head to the ſole of the 'foot, there is no ſoundneſs, but wounds, and bruiſes, 'and putrifying ſores, Iſ. lxiv. 6. 'We are all as an un'clean thing, and all our righteouſneſſes are as filthy 'rags,' *&c.*

5thly, A ſenſe of the heinouſneſs of their ſins, the aggravating circumſtances, wherewith they have been attended, Luke xv. 18. 'I will ariſe, and go to my father, 'and will ſay unto him, Father, I have ſinned againſt 'heaven, and before thee.' Each ſin pierces the heart of the penitent. And ſo it is wonderful to ſee what a dexterity a repenting ſinner has in aggravating of his ſins, in his prayers, and complaints. Time, place, perſon, and each circumſtance, ſhoots as it were a dart through the liver.

Laſtly, A ſenſe of the evil of ſin. Men may ſee ſin, that ſee not the evil of it. Hence profeſſing of ſin, inſtead of confeſſing it; turning to it, inſtead of turning from it. But if one ſaw the ſerpent's ſting, he would not take it into his boſom, Luke xxiii. 34. But the Lord's language to the ſoul whom he is drawing to repentance, is that, Jer. ii. 19. 'Thine own wickedneſs ſhall correct 'thee, and thy backſliding ſhall reprove thee; know 'therefore and ſee, that it is an evil thing and bitter, 'that thou haſt forſaken the Lord thy God, and that my 'fear is not in thee, ſaith the Lord God of hoſts.' And there is a twofold evil in ſin, which the ſoul is now ſenſible of.

(1.) The evil of it with reſpect to themſelves. They are ſenſible of the bitter fruits of ſin, Rom. vi. 21. 'What fruit had ye then in thoſe things, whereof ye 'are now aſhamed? for the end of thoſe things is death.' They ſee now 'the vine is the vine of Sodom, the grapes 'are grapes of gall, the cluſters bitter, and their teeth 'are ſet on edge.' They cry out, as the ſons of the prophets in another caſe, 2 Kings iv. 40. 'O thou man of 'God, there is death in the pot.' This is the danger of ſin, that they are made ſenſible of. They ſee the guilt of it, laying the ſoul open to temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal ſtrokes, Jer. xiv. 7. 'O Lord, though our 'iniquities teſtify againſt us, do thou it for thy name's 'ſake, for our backſlidings are many, we have ſinned 'againſt thee.' Hence 'horror takes hold on them, 'becauſe of God's righteous judgments.' They are made to wonder that they are not in hell, drinking the cup of the wrath of God. Their hearts tremble to look back on the ruin that was hanging over their heads in their natural ſtate; that the poiſonous cup which they drank, has not diſpatched them. Hence they fear to meddle with ſin again, as one would do to take a ſerpent into his boſom.

(2.) The evil of it with reſpect to God and Chriſt; and that in a threefold reſpect. [1.] As contrary to the holy law of God: 1 John iii. 4. 'Whoſoever com'mitteth ſin, tranſgreſſeth alſo the law; for ſin is the 'tranſgreſſion of the law.' By ſin one breaks over the hedge, yea breaks it down, and ſo ſteps into the devil's ground; what wonder then a ſerpent do bite him! Now the ſinner ſees the equity of God's law, and ſo plainly perceives the evil of tranſgreſſion: Rom. vii. 12. 'The law is holy; and the commandment holy, and 'juſt and good.' And the breaking over this ſo glorious a hedge, galls the penitent heart, the ingenuous ſpirit of an evangelical penitent.

[2.] As contrary to the holy nature of God: Hab. i. 13. 'Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and 'canſt not look on iniquity.' Sin is the worſt of evils in itſelf, and in the eyes of the penitent. There is nothing ſo contrary to the chief good, and therefore it is the chief evil. Now, the true penitent loves God, his holy nature and perfections; and therefore his ſin is heavy to him, becauſe by it he has walked contrary to him: Lam. v. 16. 'Wo unto us that we have ſinned.'

[3.] As the procuring cauſe of the ſufferings of Chriſt, Zech. xii. 10. 'They ſhall look upon me whom 'they have pierced, and they ſhall mourn for him,' &c. Mount Calvary is the Bochim to the true penitent: the ſufferings of Chriſt are the commentaries on ſin, which the true penitent reads; the groans of a dying Saviour rend their hearts; and by the wounds of a Redeemer they ſee the ill of ſin.

This is the loathſomeneſs of ſin, Iſa. xxx. 22.; whereby it is not only hated for what attends it, but is abhorred for itſelf, as a thing which on no terms the ſoul could any longer digeſt.

2. For the qualities of it. It is,

1ſt, A particular and diſtinct ſenſe of ſin, not a general and confuſed one. No man that hears the goſpel, having common underſtanding, but he confeſſes himſelf a ſinner; but many nevertheleſs are blind as to particulars. But this puts one in a capacity to lay his hands on his ſores, ſaying, as Pſal. li. 4. 'Againſt thee, thee on'ly have I ſinned, and done this evil in thy ſight.' It ſhews him his particular tranſgreſſions wherein he has exceeded, and the particular ills by which he has exceeded and offended in theſe. As the vermin appear crawling, when the ſtone is lifted up, which before lay hid; ſo the ills of the heart and life appear to the penitent: Rom. vii. 9. ‘I was alive without the law once: but when the ‘commandment came, ſin revived, and I died.’

2*dly*, It is real, not imaginary. The Spirit of the Lord realizeth the evil of ſin to the ſoul. And ſo it goes beyond a merely rational knowledge of ſin, as far as the ſenſe of the bitterneſs of gall got by taſting it, exceeds that got by the bare hearing of it: Jer. ii. 19. ‘Thine ‘own wickedneſs ſhall correct thee, and thy backſlidings ſhall reprove thee: know therefore and ſee, that ‘it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou haſt forſaken ‘the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, ‘ſaith the Lord God of hoſts.’ There is a ſpiritual ſenſation of ſpiritual things, ariſing from the new nature, as well as a natural feeling of what is grievous to us another way, 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15. ‘The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they ‘are fooliſhneſs unto him: neither can he know them, ‘becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned. But he that is ‘ſpiritual, judgeth all things.’

3*dly*, It is operative, not dead and idle. The eye of the penitent affects his heart; and the heart being touched, ſets all the powers of the ſoul on work. It is the ſpiritual phyſic, that ceaſeth not to work till the whole ſoul be purged; as in the caſe of Peter's hearers, Acts ii. 37. who ‘were pricked in their heart, and ſaid unto ‘Peter, and to the reſt of the apoſtles, Men and brethren, what ſhall we do?’ There is a ſenſe of ſin which vents itſelf in nothing but in ſighing and going backward, or in dry and fruitleſs complaints. It is like the diſturbance which the ſluggard meets with on his bed, which never thoroughly awakes him. But this ſenſe of ſin is thorough work.

Laſtly, It is an abiding ſenſe of ſin, not a tranſient one in a fit, and ſo away, Lam. iii. 49, 50. ‘Mine eye ‘trickleth down, and ceaſeth not, without any intermiſſion: till the Lord look down, and behold from ‘heaven.’ The humbled ſoul carries it about with him, as long as he carries the body of ſin and death about with him, ſaying with the apoſtle, Rom. vii. 24. ‘O ‘wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from ‘the body of this death!’ For it is not a ſlight touch, which goes as it comes, very eaſily. The removal of the ſtroke carried off Pharaoh's ſenſe of ſin; but here the wound is deeper, and ſo more abiding.

Uſe 1. An unſenſible ſinner is an unhumbled impenitent ſinner; as was the caſe of the church of Laodicea, who ‘ſaid, ſhe was rich, and increaſed with goods, and ‘had need of nothing; and knew not that ſhe was ‘wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and ‘naked,’ Rev. iii. 17. They that never digged deep, are not built on the rock. They that never got a broad ſight of themſelves in the ſinfulneſs of their hearts and lives, have never yet got a believing ſight of Chriſt. Conſider this, ye that have ſtill lived at eaſe, ſtrangers to any thorough exerciſe about your ſouls caſe; though the door is ſhut, the thief is in the houſe.

2. This ſhews how it comes, that the pride of people's hearts ſtill remains, though under crying guilt of ſin. Though they know their ſin, they have no due ſenſe of it. If they had, it would be ſuch a burden on their backs as would ſoon make them ſtoop, as Peter's hearers did, Acts [illegible] 37. Unſenſible ſinners may ſit high in the ſeat of the ſcornful, while they ſee not what a God they have to do with; but when the Spirit of the Lord opens their eyes, and touches their hearts, to let them ſee and feel the evil of ſin, they will lie low in the duſt. They will, with the afflicted man, ‘put their mouth in ‘the duſt, if ſo be there may be hope,’ Lam. iii. 29.

3. See here a difference betwixt the ſaints humiliation, and that of the hypocrites. An Ahab may humble himſelf from a ſenſe of the danger of ſin; but a true penitent is humbled from a ſenſe of the loathſomeneſs of ſin, 1 Kings xxi. 27. 29. Job xlii. 5, 6. A ſlave may bow himſelf for fear of the whip; but the diſpoſition of a ſon is to be affected with the offence done to a kind father. Many will ſeem very low under the rod of God, and the apprehenſions of his wrath, who are never touched with his love. They will be caſt down under the ſenſe of the evil their ſin does to themſelves, while the diſhonour done to God by it lies far from their hearts.

4. *laſtly*, Let me exhort you to get and entertain a deep ſenſe of ſin on your ſpirits. See your ſins, and be duly affected with them, and be humbled for them. O how ſad is it, that amongſt our many thoughts, ſin gets ſo few of them!

For motives to preſs this exhortation, conſider,

1*ſt*, That the Lord is anew calling the land by his providence to be ſenſible of their ſins, and to be humbled for them. The Lord took us not long ago as a brand out of the burning; but he is threatening to caſt us into the fire again, by a foreign invaſion. For though we were delivered, yet the controverſy remains ſtill. We have not been thankful for our deliverance; Atheiſm, profanity, formality, contempt of the goſpel, and a ſpirit of apoſtaſy and declining from the Lord, and his work and way, wofully abound. How can we miſs to fall at length!

2*dly*, Conſider the preſent diſpenſation of providence towards this congregation, threatening to leave our houſe deſolate. It fills the mouths of many with what is little worth; would to God it might fill your hearts and mine with a ſerious inquiry into the cauſes of it before the Lord. It ſpeaks aloud, O that we were taking up the language of the threatening rod. The melancholy ſtate of this congregation, in the time of the laſt deſolation, needs not be forgot. It would become us all very well on this occaſion, to conſider what a jealous God we have to do with, and what entertainment has been given to the preached goſpel; to lay our hands every one on our own mouths, and conſider well what we have contributed to the bringing of the matter to this paſs. By taking with our ſin, and humbling ourſelves before the Lord, way might be made for the acceptance of prayer through Jeſus Chriſt; and them that humble themſelves, God will exalt.

3*dly*, Conſider, that however light your ſins may ſit on your ſpirits, they are a burden to the holy Spirit of God: Amos ii. 13. ‘Behold, (ſays the Lord,) I am preſſed under you, as a cart is preſſed that is full of ſheaves.’ And we may be ſure the Lord will eaſe himſelf of that burden ſooner or later. And if it be not by our repentance and humiliation, it will be by accompliſhing his wrath on us: Iſa. i. 24. ‘Ah, I will eaſe me of mine ‘adverſaries, and avenge me of mine enemies.’ Therefore conſider your ways, in order to a returning to the Lord. The lighter that ſin ſits on us, it is the more grieving to the Spirit of the Lord.

Laſtly, Conſider, that without ſenſe of ſin there is no humiliation; that without humiliation there can be no repentance; and that without repentance there can be no eſcape from the wrath of God. *For except ye repent, ye ſhall periſh.* Unſenſibleneſs of ſin, and the evil of it, locks up the heart in obduration and impenitency; and that will ſhut up the ſoul under wrath. But God loves the ſenſible humbled ſoul: Jer. xxxi. 20. ‘Is Ephraim my dear ſon? is he a pleaſant child? for ſince I ‘ſpake againſt him, I do earneſtly remember him ſtill: ‘therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will ſurely have mercy upon him, ſaith the Lord.’

Secondly, In true humiliation there is a kindly ſorrow for ſin: Zech. xii. 10. ‘I will pour upon the houſe of ‘David, and upon the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, the ſpirit of grace and of ſupplications; and they ſhall look ‘upon me whom they have pierced, and they ſhall ‘mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only ſon, and ‘ſhall be in bitterneſs for him, as one that is in bitterneſs for his firſt born.’ The ſoul is not only filled with remorſe, but true grief, for offending a holy, gracious God. He grieved the Spirit in committing of ſin, his ſpirit is grieved in repenting of it. The hard heart is broken, the adamantine heart diſſolved into tears of godly ſorrow, the rock is ſtruck by the rod of the goſpel, and the waters guſh out. The way to Zion lies through the valley of Baca: Jer. l. 4, 5. ‘In thoſe days, and in that time, ſaith the Lord, the children of Iſrael ſhall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they ſhall go, and ſeek the Lord their God. They ſhall aſk the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, ſaying, Come, and let us join ourſelves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant that ſhall not be forgotten.’ And it is the mourners for ſin whom the Lord comforts with the conſolations of his Spirit. This is that brokenneſs and contrition of heart, which God calls for, and takes ſo much pleaſure in. This is the renting of the heart, which God requires, Joel ii. 12, 13. This is godly ſorrow, which hath theſe properties.

1. It is a ſorrow for ſin as ſin; not only for the guilt of it, but the loathſomeneſs of it; not only for the ill it does to ourſelves, but the diſhonour and wrong it does to a holy gracious God, Pſal. li. 4. Zech. xii. 10. The penitent in his ſorrow, goes farther than awakened reprobates, who ſeeing their ſouls ruined and dead, do put on their mournings. He grieves at the heart, becauſe of the offence done to God, the defacing of his image, tranſgreſſing a holy and moſt juſt law, furniſhing a ſpear and nails to pierce a Saviour.

2. It is an inward real ſorrow. Not the hanging down of the head like a bulruſh, Iſ. lviii. 5. Not a made ſorrow in a diſfigured countenance, which lies all in outward appearance. But it is a ſorrow ſoaking into the ſoul, and piercing the very heart, Iſ. lxi. 3. And therefore it follows the man in ſecret, where no eye ſees; making him mourn before the Lord, when the world knows nothing of it. For it ariſeth from an inward principle.

3. It is a lively ſorrow. The ſorrow of the world worketh death. It ſtupifies a man, and takes heart and hand for duty from him. But the ſpiritual pangs of godly ſorrow for ſin quicken a man to his duty: 2 Cor. vii. 11. ‘For behold this ſelf ſame thing that ye ſorrowed after a godly ſort, what carefulneſs it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourſelves, yea what indignation, yea, what fear, yea what vehement deſire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge!’ It makes the man active in ſalvation work. And the reaſon is, the one ſprings from ſlaviſh fear, which chills the ſoul, making it cold and ſtiff, and unfit for action; and the other from love, which warms the heart, and diſpoſeth it for action; Luke vii. 47. ‘Her ſins which are many, are forgiven; for ſhe loved much.’

4. It is an abiding ſorrow. It is not a flaſh of an affection, which is deceitful, but a *ſpirit of heavineſs*. Iſ. lxi. 3. The ſorrows of many are like a ſummerſhower, that wets the ſurface of the ground, but is preſently dried up, ere it do any good. But godly ſorrow is like that, Eccleſ. vii. 3. ‘Sorrow is better than laughter; for by the ſadneſs of the countenance the heart is made better.’ The ſoul, like Mary, mourns till it finds the Lord, Lam. iii. 49, 50. forecited. It may indeed remit of its degrees; but while ſin abides, the ſpring of mourning abides too.

5. It is an univerſal ſorrow. The true penitent heartily grieves for his own *ſin*, Pſal. xxxviii. 18. and for the ſins of others, Pſal. cxix. 136. It is like the letting out of waters: it may begin at one ſin, but it does not ſtop there, but goes through all known ſin, Pſal. li. 5. and unknown too, Pſal. xix. 12. ‘Who can underſtand his errors? cleanſe thou me from ſecret faults.’ They never truly mourn for one ſin, that do not mourn for all: for that which moves ſorrow in the repenting heart for one ſin, is to be found in all ſins, namely, its contrariety to the law and nature of God, the loathſomeneſs as well as danger of it. And hence, when once the flood-gate of godly ſorrow is opened, it overflows all; and the ſweeteſt morſel becomes bitter.

6. It is deep ſorrow. Peter repenting wept bitterly. He that would have a good crop, plows well; and he that would build ſurely, goes deep with the foundation. It was the want of depth of earth that was the ruin of the ſtony-ground hearers, Matth. xiii. 5. And deep digging was the ſafety of the houſe founded on a rock, Luke vi. 48. This ſorrow is a renting of the heart, Joel ii. 13.; a renting of it as the plough rents the earth, Jer. iv. 3.; a pricking and piercing of it as with daggers, ſwords, and ſpears, Acts ii. 37. compared with John xix. 34. a cutting it as it were with a knife, Jer. iv. 4.

It is a queſtion, Whether penitential ſorrow exceeds all other ſorrows for the comforts of this life, or not? If we meaſure by the moving of the heart and affections, it is evident, that at leaſt always it doth not exceed other ſorrows. But if we meaſure by the ſettled diſpoſition of the heart, it is as evident that it does exceed them all. As the deepeſt waters ordinarily make leaſt noiſe, ſo men will be more moved in a leſſer joy and grief than in a greater; for they are but the lighteſt joys that move laughter, and oft-times the greateſt ſorrows are above tears. It ſettles more firmly, and continues more than any other ſorrow whatſoever in the world.

7. *laſtly*, It is a heart-purifying ſorrow. It works repentance or forſaking of ſin: 2 Cor. vii. 10. ‘Godly ſorrow worketh repentance to ſalvation, not to be repented of.’ True mourning and turning are inſeparable companions; though there is a mourning for ſin, that is not deep enough to turn up the love of ſin by the root. True ſorrow in the heart is a ſpring, which as it runneth will work out ſin, as to the love, habitual practice, and dominion of it, as a ſpring works out the mud thrown into it.

Uſe. 1. There is no repenting with a hale heart, and without repentance no ſalvation. People muſt either be broken for their ſins in a way of mourning, or God will break them for them in a way of judgment. There are many ſtout hearts in our day, that will boldly outface challengers from the word and their own conſciences, without either breaking or bowing. But let ſuch remember, that there is a day coming when God will make the ſtouteſt heart to tremble, and the heart of adamant to fly in a thouſand pieces, Pſal. ii. 9. ‘Thou ſhalt break them with a rod of iron, thou ſhalt daſh them in pieces like a potter's veſſel.’

2. How far muſt they be from humiliation, that ſin deliberately, glory in their ſhame, and rejoice in ungodly courſes and practices! I think providences and ordinances are hardening to many in our day; they are not bettered by them, and therefore they are hardened and made worſe under them. Our penny-weddings and ſet drinkings, leaving ſuch a ſtench behind them, and attended with before unheard of profanity, are ſpeaking evidences of this. Are theſe Chriſtian methods to help poor people? Will God accept the gift, where ſuch a fat ſacrifice is offered to the devil? Is that charity for which drinking muſt open mens hearts and hands to give? If ſome methods be not fallen on to prevent theſe things, they will bring wrath on the congregation. I appeal to the conſciences of all ſober perſons, if it looked not judgment-like, that in that very time when abroad a deſign was managing to lay the congregation deſolate, at home many were met for a ſet drinking, carried on to a monſtrous height of profanity, in the day and in the night. It becomes us all to mourn for this, leſt we involve ourſelves in the guilt. And particularly I warn all ſuch as were any partakers of that ſcandalous riot, to repent, leſt wrath break out upon them. For it is a fearful thing to ſtand expoſed to the laſh of theſe threatenings, Hab. ii. 15. ‘Wo unto him that giveth his neighbour drink: that putteſt thy bottle to him, and makeſt him drunken alſo, that thou mayeſt look on their nakedneſs.’ Iſa. xxii.

12, 13, 14. ‘And in that day did the Lord God of hoſts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldneſs, and to girding with ſackcloth: and behold, joy and gladneſs, ſlaying oxen, and killing ſheep, eating fleſh, and drinking wine; let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we ſhall die. And it was revealed in mine ears by the Lord of hoſts, Surely this iniquity ſhall not be purged from you, till ye die, ſaith the Lord God of hoſts.’

3. The ſorrow of many for their ſins, will tend to no good account before the Lord. Few have any remarkable ſorrow for their ſins at all; but amongſt thoſe whoſe hearts are really grieved and pained for their ſin, how few are there that have any right ſorrow? The danger of it, the diſadvantage by it, the ſhame of it before the world, pains them a little; but the diſhonour done to God by it, touches them not effectually. And ſo their ſorrow will be but the beginning of hell, not of repentance.

4. *laſtly*, Be exhorted to mourn for ſin. Labour to get your hearts affected with this mournful object, and be not ſtrangers to this exerciſe. The ſins and threatned judgments of this day call for it; and it is the way to attain particular ſafety in common calamity: Ezek. ix. 4. ‘And the Lord ſaid unto him, Go through the midſt of the city, through the midſt of Jeruſalem, and ſet a mark upon the forehead of the men that ſigh, and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midſt thereof.’ If we were more in the duty of mourning, we would ſhare more of the goſpel comforts, Matth. v. 4. ‘Bleſſed are they that mourn: for they ſhall be comforted.’ And the more of the Spirit one has, the more will he be taken up that way.

Thirdly, In true humiliation there is a holy ſhame upon the account of ſin before the Lord: Rom. vi. 21. ‘What fruit had ye in thoſe things, whereof ye are now aſhamed? for the end of thoſe things is death.’ The remembrance of ſin fills the penitent with ſhame and bluſhing: hence ſays Ezra, chap. ix. 6. ‘O my God, I am aſhamed and bluſh to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increaſed over our head, and our treſpaſs is grown up into the heavens.’ Shame was never known in the world, till ſin entered; yet ſometimes ſin comes to ſuch a height with ſinners, that it quite baniſhes ſhame: but the caſe of ſuch is very deſperate, Jer. iii. 3. ‘Thou hadſt a whore’s forehead, thou refuſedſt to be aſhamed.’ Shame then is the remains of virtue in a ſinner, to which whoſo are loſt, are loſt to all good, Iſa. iii. 9. ‘The ſhew of their countenance doth witneſs againſt them, and they declare their ſin as Sodom, they hide it not.’ Now, the grace of God awakens this ſhame, and ſanctifies it in the penitent ſoul, ſo that he hangs down his head before the Lord, as aſhamed of his way and heart.

There are four things occaſion ſhame, and meet here.

1. Nakedneſs cauſeth ſhame. Hence ſaid Adam to the Lord, Gen. iii. 10. ‘I heard thy voice in the garden: and I was afraid, becauſe I was naked; and I hid myſelf.’ Sin ſtrips the ſinners of their beautiful garments, takes away the glory of the rational creature, and leaves them without a covering before the eyes of a holy God. The penitent ſees this, and is aſhamed; and ſo, with the publican, cannot lift up his eyes to heaven, but ſmites on his breaſt, as if he would wound the breaſt that ſin bred in, which has brought him to this ſhameful caſe.

2. Pollution and defilement, for that makes one loathſome to others, Job ix. 31. ‘Thou ſhalt plunge me in the ditch, and my own cloaths ſhall abhor me.’ Sin defiles the ſoul, takes away, and mars all its beauty, and deforms it in the ſight of God. And the penitent ſees this, and is aſhamed, Iſ. lxiv. 6. ‘We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteouſneſſes as are filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.’ Never was a man that had been plunged over head and ears in a mire, more aſhamed to come before others in that caſe, than the penitent is aſhamed to ſhew his face before God.

3. Diſappointments of raiſed expectations, Jer. ii. 36, 37. The ſinner in his impenitent ſtate, looked for his happineſs and ſatisfaction in ſinful courſes. But when his heart is touched, he is aſhamed; for he finds, that inſtead of bread expected, he has got a ſtone; inſtead of fiſh, a ſerpent. He finds that he has been courting his own death and ruin; and that from the wall he leaned on there has come forth a ſerpent and bit him. And hence is that reflection, Rom. vi. 21. ‘What fruit had ye in thoſe things, whereof ye are now aſhamed? for the end of thoſe things is death.’

4. Diſcovering of one’s reproach, Jer. ii. 26. ‘Sin is a reproach to any people.’ In the impenitent ſtate the ſoul’s reproach is hid to it; but when grace touches the heart, and the Lord brings the ſinner’s ways to mind, lays his ſins in broad-band before him, how can he miſs to be aſhamed? In a ſpecial manner, a conviction of baſe ingratitude fills one with ſhame, as to be convicted of deſigns againſt him who had ſaved our life. And thus the goodneſs of God duly conſidered, fills the penitent with ſhame and bluſhing, while he thinks what an ungrateful wretch he has been, Jer. iii. 25. ‘We lie down in our ſhame, and our confuſion covereth us: for we have ſinned againſt the Lord our God, we and our fathers from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God.’

Uſe 1. Shameleſsneſs in ſin is a badge of impenitency, and therefore a forerunner of deſtruction, Jer. vi. 15. Phil. iii. 19. A forehead of braſs is a ſign the heart is of ſtone. Impudence in ſin argues a filthy heart, an obſtinate diſpoſition, and a ſeared conſcience. And ſuch are a ſtage beyond others from the kingdom of God. What hopes can they have of the glory of heaven, that glory in their ſhame?

2. We ſee then that ſin will bring ſhame ſooner or later, here or hereafter. As for them that live and die without repentance, their ſhame is ſure, and they will be covered with it, before the great congregation of heaven and earth at the laſt day, and they ſhall never recover their countenance, Dan. xii. 2. ‘Many of them that ſleep in the duſt of the earth ſhall awake, ſome to ſhame and everlaſting contempt.’ And if people be recovered by repentance, they will be filled with ſhame before the Lord, even holy ſhame. But whatever ſhame men have, it is no holy ſhame that keeps them from glorifying God by taking ſhame to themſelves when called thereto; for no grace of God keeps folk back from duty, Joſh. vii. 19. Common diſcretion teaches us, that one aſhamed of an injury done to the honour of another, cannot look him in the face but with ſhame, till he has done what he can to repair that honour.

3. *laſtly*, The penitent ſoul is an ingenuous ſoul, and heartily at odds with ſin. For ſuch a one will be aſhamed before God, of what the world cannot tax him with. Many may be ſorry for ſin before God, becauſe of the terrible conſequences of it which they apprehend, who yet are not aſhamed before him, becauſe they ſee not the evil that is in ſin itſelf. But it argues a child like diſpoſition, to be heartily aſhamed of ſecret ſins before the Lord.

Fourthly, In true humiliation there is ſelf loathing and abhorrence, Ezek. xxxvi. 31. ‘Then ſhall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and ſhall loath yourſelves in your own ſight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations.’ The penitent not only loaths his ſin, but himſelf for his ſin. He cries out with Job, chap. xl. 4. ‘Behold, I am vile, what ſhall I anſwer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.’ Repentance ſets a man at variance with himſelf. He ſees his ugly face in the glaſs of God’s law, Chriſt’s ſufferings, and the Lord’s goodneſs, and he loaths himſelf. This ſelf loathing manifeſts itſelf,

1. In the low and mean thoughts the penitent juſtly entertains of himſelf. True penitents ſee ſuch vileneſs

in themſelves, as makes them give a very mean account of themſelves. Abraham owned himſelf to be but *duſt and aſhes*; Jacob, *leſs than all the mercies of God*; David, *a worm, and not a man*; Aſaph, *as a beaſt before the Lord*: Agur, *more brutiſh than any*; the centurion, *unworthy that Chriſt ſhould come under his roof*; Paul, *one born out of due time, the leaſt of the apoſtles*, nay, *leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints*, nay, *the chief of ſinners*; and the prodigal ſon, Luke xiv. 19. reckoned himſelf *no more worthy to be called a ſon*, but to be *made a hired ſervant*.

2. In the penitent's being heartily out with himſelf upon the account of his ſin, Job xlii. 6. ‘ Wherefore I ‘ abhor myſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes.’ As one cannot with any pleaſure touch himſelf, that has filth thrown on him, but his very heart ſtands at himſelf; ſo it is in ſpiritual ſelf loathing. He looks on himſelf as an ugly ſpectacle. He not only has nothing to ſay in defence of himſelf, but with indignation he rejects all the ſhifts and excuſes for it, which he was ſatisfied with before, Luke xviii. 13. ‘ The publican ſtanding afar off, ‘ would not lift up ſo much as his eyes unto heaven, but ‘ ſmote upon his breaſt, ſaying, God be merciful to me ‘ a ſinner.’

3. In holy revenge, 2 Cor. vii. 11. He that was going on in ſin before, is now divided againſt himſelf; ſo that the devil's kingdom of ſin in him muſt needs go to ruin. He acts the part of an accuſer, advocate, and judge, againſt himſelf; yea, in ſome ſort laſhes himſelf for his ſinful heart and life. Hence we find the humbled ſinner,

1ſt, Smiting on his breaſt, Luke xviii. 13. as it were thereby declaring, that he deſerves to be ſtruck at the heart, and die for his tranſgreſſion; that within him is the cauſe of all his ſin and ſorrows, he may thank himſelf for all; the ſource and ſpring of all is the corrupt heart.

2dly, Smiting on his thigh, Jer. xxxi. 19. as if he would thereby declare, that he would be willing to take vengeance on the feet that carried him out of the way of God; that he is filled with indignation againſt himſelf, for his unaccountable practices, ſaying, ‘ What have ‘ I done?’ what a wretched ſinner have I been?

There are theſe five things that ſtir up this ſelf-loathing, eſpecially in the penitent ſoul.

(1.) The remarkable blots, and ſignal miſcarriages in his way, that deeply wound and defile the conſcience, like Peter's denying of his Maſter, which made him weep bitterly when he came to himſelf. Theſe in a peculiar manner cover the ſoul with confuſion, and fill it with ſelf-abhorrence. And hence repentance begins at ſome ſuch thing, from whence it ſpreads to the whole body of ſin: Acts ii. 36, 37. ‘ Let all the houſe of Iſrael know ‘ aſſuredly, that God hath made that ſame Jeſus whom ‘ ye have crucified, both Lord and Chriſt. Now when ‘ they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and ‘ ſaid——Men and brethren, what ſhall we do?’

(2.) The fulneſs of ſin ſeen in the ſoul, Iſa. lxiv. 6. ‘ We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteouſ‘ neſſes are as filthy rags.’ The penitent being made ſenſible of his ſoul's caſe, ſees the leproſy ſpread over the whole man, his mind under much darkneſs, his will rebellious againſt the will of God, his affections diſordered, his whole nature corrupted, the ſeed of every ſin in it; ſo that he concludes, that his heart is full of iniquity, and that the luſts that are hatched there, their name may be *legion*. His life is a loathſome ſpectacle of the outbreakings and workings of that corruption. So that he ſees that ‘ from the ſole of the foot to the crown of ‘ the head there is no ſoundneſs;’ and therefore he loaths himſelf.

(3.) The pollution cleaving to his duties: Iſa. lxiv. 6. forecited. While he ſees how the running ſore of his natural corruption drops on all his holy things, and defiles them, how can he chuſe but loath himſelf? He ſees his beſt works are like a moth-eaten garment, full of holes: never a prayer, nor confeſſion made, but there are provocations againſt the Lord in them. His mournings for ſin muſt be mourned over, becauſe of the woful defects thereof; while he goes to mend one hole, ſtill he is ſure to ſtrike out another. Thus the penitent is in his own eyes like Job, who had not whole fingers to dreſs his ſores with; ſo he abhors himſelf.

(4.) The aggravations of ſin, Luke xv. 18. A ſight of theſe makes ſin look like an opened ſtinking ſore, wherein each of them contributes to make it more and more loathſome. When the penitent conſiders with what bent of affection he has ſinned, the light, the many mercies, vows, and reſolutions, &c. he has ſinned againſt, he cannot but loath himſelf as a wretched ſelf deſtroyer, as an ungrateful miſcreant, and as a beaſt before the Lord.

(5.) Inſtability in any thing that is good: Hoſ. vi. 4: ——‘ Your goodneſs is as a morning-cloud, and as the ‘ early dew it goeth away.’ Wavering hearts, and wavering hands, are very humbling to a ſoul truly touched. A good frame is a rare hour, and ſtays but a ſhort while. How often are reſolutions fairly taken up, and begin to bud in endeavours for practice, that yet are quickly let fall again? How often do men relapſe into the ſame ſins, they have ſometimes had made very bitter to them? There is nothing more apt than this to ſtir up ſelf abhorrence.

Uſe. 1. Self conceit is a need-nail to a ſtate of impenitency: Rev. iii. 17. ‘ Thou [the church of Laodicea] ‘ ſayeſt, I am rich, and increaſed with goods, and have ‘ need of nothing; and knoweſt not that thou art wret‘ ched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked.’ No repentance can be where there is no humiliation, and there can be no humiliation while people are puffed up with a conceit of themſelves. Publicans and harlots will enter into the kingdom of heaven before ſuch ſelf-conceited profeſſors. Whenever the Spirit of the Lord takes a dealing with ſuch perſons, and diſcovers to them the ſignal miſcarriages in their life, the fulneſs of ſin, *&c.* that ſwelling conceit of ſweet ſelf will fall away as ever the ſnow melts in a ſunſhine day. They that look on themſelves as among the chief of ſaints, will ſee themſelves the chief of ſinners.

2. Look into yourſelves, if ye would loath yourſelves and repent. Hence ſaid Iſaiah, chap. vi. 5. ‘ Wo is ‘ me, for I am undone, becauſe I am a man of unclean ‘ lips.’ Things may be going all wrong in the houſe, and the maſter not know it, while he is a ſtranger at home. Many a poor ſoul is pining away in its iniquity, and running with loathſome ſpiritual ſores, threatening its ruin, while in the mean time they are mightily in love with themſelves, and fond of their own condition, like a miſerable man that is happy in a dream. But heavy will the wakening of ſuch be.

3. *laſtly*, Sin muſt needs be a very loathſome thing in the eyes of a penitent, ſince it makes him loath himſelf. Alas! many times we love that in ourſelves which we loath in others. But when one loaths himſelf for his ſin againſt a holy, gracious God, it is an argument that that ſoul is heartily out with ſin.

Fifthly and *laſtly*, In true humiliation there is a penitent confeſſion of ſin. Hence is that exhortation, Jer. iii. 13. ‘ Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou ‘ haſt tranſgreſſed againſt the Lord thy God,’ &c. This is the way that penitent ſinners have always ſought pardon and eaſe to their conſciences in: Pſal. xxxii. 5. ‘ I ‘ acknowledged my ſin unto thee, and mine iniquity I ‘ have not hid: I ſaid I will confeſs my tranſgreſſions un‘ to the Lord; and thou forgaveſt the iniquity of my ‘ ſin.’ Confeſſion of ſin is the vomit of ſin, whereby the ſweet morſel is caſt up again; and it is the vent of real ſorrow, ſhame, and ſelf-abhorrence. And when the heart is looſed to it, the man becomes like the fiſh that is boiled in the water which it ſwimmed in.

This confeſſion is to be according to the nature of the offence. If the ſin be a ſecret one, a confeſſion to God in ſecret is ſufficient. If it be a private offence, the confeſſion is to be ſo too; James v. 16. 'Confeſs your faults one to another.' If it be a public offence, giving public ſcandal, the confeſſion is to be public alſo; 1 Tim. v. 20. 'Them that ſin rebuke before all, that others alſo may fear.' So penitent David left his confeſſion in record, for the church's edification. And ſo did the apoſtle Paul, 1 Tim. i. 13. And the reaſon is evident, ſince by ſin God's honour is impaired, and we can repair it no other way, but by confeſſing it with ſorrow, ſhame, *&c.* the confeſſion muſt be according to the nature of the offence, elſe the wrong done to the honour of God is not repaired by it. And in the private and public confeſſion, God is our party, and not men only, as well as in the ſecret one.

Now, confeſſion is a neceſſary part of humiliation. If the hard heart be looſed to be truly humbled for ſin, it follows of courſe, that the tongue will be looſed to confeſs it. Hence confeſſion is put for the whole of humiliation, yea, of repentance, Hoſ. v. 15. 'I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence.' 1 John i. 9. 'If we confeſs our ſins, he is faithful, and juſt to forgive us our ſins, and to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs.' Confeſſion of ſin hath two parts,

1. Self accuſing. God has given a law, the ſinner has broke it; the penitent confeſſeth his tranſgreſſion with ſhame and ſorrow, to the honour of the Lawgiver. He cannot hide it, he dares not deny it; his ſoul is humbled, and therefore he confeſſeth it, Pſal. li. 3. 'I acknowledge my tranſgreſſions: and my ſin is ever before me.' He approves of the law as holy, juſt, and good, and diſapproves of the tranſgreſſion. Thus the morſel that was ſweet in the mouth, turning bitter in the belly, is vomited up.

2. Self-condemning. Hence ſaid the returning prodigal, Luke xv. 18, 19. 'Father, I have ſinned againſt heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy ſon.' The penitent looks to the law, and the demerit of his ſin, reads his own doom, and paſſeth ſentence on himſelf. He owns that all the evil he ſmarts under for the preſent, is juſt and righteous with God; Dan. ix. 14. 'Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the Lord our God is righteous in all his works which he doth: for we obeyed not his voice.' If his broken bones pain him, he will own that it is juſt. If his ſin find him out, ſo that he read it in his puniſhment, he will acknowledge that it is a juſt contrivance; and that he deſerves to ſink under eternal wrath for it, ſaying with the afflicted church, 'It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not conſumed, becauſe his compaſſions fail not,' Lam. iii. 22. He will ſay, that God may juſtly take the filthy garments of his ſin, cover them with brimſtone, wrap him up in them, and caſt him into the pit, Pſal. li. 4.

Now, this confeſſion ſhould be ſincere, full, very particular, free, and accompanied with forſaking.

Uſe 1. Hiding and covering of ſin, and refuſing to confeſs it in the way that God calls for a confeſſion, is a ſign of an heart not humbled for it: Prov. xxviii. 13. 'He that covereth his ſins, ſhall not proſper: but whoſo confeſſeth and forſaketh them, ſhall have mercy.' Many in our day falling into public ſcandals by the works of darkneſs, put on a forehead of braſs, and refuſe to confeſs them for the glory of God, cheating themſelves with that, that they will confeſs their ſins to God, but not to men. But little do they conſider, that by that means they put a bar in their own way to pardon, while by reſolute lying they cover one ſin with another, and by refuſing to honour God at his call. Nor do they conſider the weight of that word ſtanding in the way of their peace with God, while they refuſe to remove the ſcandal, that ſo they may be reconciled to the church: Matth. xviii. 17, 18. 'If he ſhall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican. Verily I ſay unto you, Whatſoever ye ſhall bind on earth, ſhall be bound in heaven: and whatſoever ye ſhall looſe on earth, ſhall be looſed in heaven.' It is true, it is but a word: yea, but it is God's word, that will be more terrible to an awakened conſcience, than any puniſhment men can inflict.

2. They that ſhun to ſee their ſins, that they may confeſs them, cannot repent of them, Jer. ix. 6, 7. 'Thine habitation is in the midſt of deceit, through deceit they refuſe to know me, ſaith the Lord. Therefore thus ſaith the Lord of hoſts, Behold, I will melt them, and try them; for how ſhall I do for the daughter of my people?' It is true, there are ſins which we cannot ſo ſee in ourſelves as to confeſs them particularly; but in that caſe the ſoul does not refuſe conviction, as Pſal. xix. 12. 'Who can underſtand his errors? cleanſe thou me from ſecret faults.' But when one keeps the ſweet morſel under his tongue, and has no will to ſee the evil of it, leſt he ſhould be obliged to confeſs it before the Lord, this is quite another caſe, and ſpeaks a deceit of the heart, holding faſt ſin, and refuſing to let it go.

3. *laſtly*, Labour to be ſincere, full, free, *&c.* in confeſſing of your ſins. We are in debt to the juſtice of God, we cannot pay our debt; let us confeſs our debt, to prevent a purſuit, and that we may be capable to pray for forgiveneſs of it, which otherwiſe we cannot be. O, if we had a due ſenſe and ſorrow for our ſins, this would like an overflowing flood, bear down before them all thoſe things which now hamper us in confeſſing our ſins.

Thus far of humiliation, the firſt part of repentance.

2dly, I come now to the ſecond thing, *viz.* the returning of the ſoul unto God from ſin. This is the completing of repentance. Whatever ſenſe of ſin, ſhame, ſorrow, *&c.* for it one have, if it end not in returning to God, it is naught. It is under this notion that repentance is ſo often called for in the Old Teſtament, *Return, turn ye.* And it may be well put for the whole of repentance: for,

Firſt, The impenitent ſinner is out of himſelf, out of his wits; but by repentance he returns and comes to himſelf. Hence we read, that the prodigal, Luke xv. 17. *came to himſelf.* There is never a ſoul that is brought to repentance, but there is as great a change upon him, as on a madman that is returned to his ſound mind. He has quite other notions of things than he had before; he looks upon his ſinful courſes as the effects of ſpiritual frenzy. This is the firſt part of repentance, namely, humiliation.

Secondly, The impenitent ſinner is out of his place, like a wandering bird: Prov. xxvii. 8. 'As a bird that wandereth from her neſt: ſo is a man that wandereth from his place.' And ſo the ſoul is out of its reſt, and out of its duty. Adam ſhook himſelf and all his race out of their reſt, and out of that they wander up and down in the devil's common. Repentance is the ſinner's returning to bis place again, to take up his place again in God's houſe among his ſervants. This is the ſecond part of repentance. And whenever the ſoul comes to itſelf, it will come to God again. The grace of God finds the ſinner, as the angel found Hagar, Gen. xvi. 8, 9. and as Paul found Oneſimus, Phil. 10, 11, 12. Now, in this returning, according to the two terms,

I. There is a turning from ſin; Ezek. xiv. 6. 'Repent, and turn from your idols, and turn away your faces from all your abominations,' 2 Tim. ii. 19. 'Let every one that nameth the name of Chriſt, depart from iniquity.' Pſal. xxxiv. 14. 'Depart from evil.' The ſinner changes his courſe, and gives up with his former luſts. The penitent ſinner is like a miſled traveller, who finding himſelf wrong, will go no farther on, but leave the wrong way, and ſeek the right one. To repent of ſin, and yet continue in the practice of it, is a contradiction. No; the true penitent ceaſes from ſin, he gives over his work in the ſervice of ſin and luſt, Iſ. i. 16. He forſakes his former ways, chap. lv. 7. And though ſin remains in him, yet it reigns not as before. If the queſtion be, How the penitent turns from ſin, ſince he is daily offending, and ſin abides in him, while he is here? I anſwer,

1. True penitents turn from it in their heart and affection. There is a bond in the impenitent ſtate, whereby the ſinner's heart is knit to his luſts, as ever the ſucking child's heart is to the breaſt, which he can by no means want. Repentance looſeth that bond; Rom. vii. 24. 'O wretched man that I am, who ſhall 'deliver me from the body of this death!' So though ſin cleaves to the ſoul, yet the ſoul cleaves not to it as formerly. It hangs on him, it is true, but only as the chains on the captive, which are his burden; as the grave-cloaths on Lazarus raiſed, which he is working to put off. Thus repentance makes a change of the heart, And,

1ſt, His eſteem of ſin is turned to deſpite. His judgment is ſet againſt it, Iſa. ii. 20. 'In that day a man 'ſhall caſt his idols of ſilver, and his idols of gold, which 'they made, each one for himſelf to worſhip, to the 'moles and to the bats.' What he approved before, now he condemns: for the ſcales are turned, and what was higheſt before is now loweſt. Grace and holineſs get the aſcendant of ſin and wickedneſs in his eſteem. Thoſe he counted moſt happy ſometimes, becauſe they took the greateſt liberty in ſinful courſes, he now accounts moſt miſerable, as ſlaves to ſin, and in the road to deſtruction; and therefore takes up Joſhua's reſolution, chap. xxiv. 15. 'As for me and my houſe we will ſerve 'the Lord.'

2dly, His love of ſin is turned to hatred of it, Ezek. xiv. 6. forecited, Pſal. cxix. 113. 'I hate vain thoughts.' Verſe 104. 'I hate every falſe way.' It was good in his eyes before, better than the favour of God, and communion with him. He knew nothing good and deſirable but the world and luſts, and what might ſatisfy the corrupt cravings of the ſoul. But repentance turns his ſoul againſt it, and he hates it as an evil thing, as the worſt of evils, worſe than ſuffering and afflictions. Were he left to his choice without fear of puniſhment, he would never chuſe it; for he hates it for itſelf, its contrariety to God's nature and will.

3dly, His liking of ſin is turned to loathing of it. Hence repentance is called *a caſting away of ſin*, Ezek. xviii. 31. as one would do ſome filthy thing that he cannot endure to have near him. For the penitent looks not only on ſin as an ill thing, but as a loathſome thing which his heart ſtands at, Iſa. xxx. 22. And this is the ground of that ſelf-loathing which the penitent is filled with.

Laſtly, His cleaving to ſin is turned into a longing to be rid of it, Rom. vii. 24. The man longs to be free of it, as ever the priſoner for the opening of his priſon-doors, the captive for his being ſet at liberty, and the dropping off of his chains. It is a burden on his back, which he grones under, a ſickneſs to his ſoul, that he would fain have the cure of. And therefore Chriſt with all his ſalvation is lovely in his eyes; his ſanctifying Spirit, as well as his juſtifying blood.

2. They turn from it in their life and converſation. He that ſtood in the way of ſinners before, now leaves it, when once the grace of God toucheth the heart, Iſa. lv. 7. The penitent not only has a pure heart, but clean hands. Repentance will make a viſible change on one's life; for it ſets men to mortify the members of the body of death, Rom. viii. 13. to refuſe compliance with luſts and temptations, Tit. ii. 12. to ſtarve the luſts of the fleſh, Rom. xiii. 14. and to nail the body of ſin with all its members to the croſs of Chriſt, Gal. v. 24. And,

1ſt, They turn from the groſs pollutions of the outward man, Pſal. xxiv. 3, 4. An elect ſoul before converſion may be a habitual profane perſon, as well as others: but if he may be ſo after converſion, where is the difference betwixt Chriſt's ſheep and the devil's goats? It is true, they may make groſs ſlips, as David and Peter did; but they do not lie in them, they recover again by repentance. But a profane life is the mark of an impenitent ſtate, Gal. v. 21. And it is a wonder how men can pretend to repentance, while they live in the habitual practice of drunkenneſs, ſwearing, Sabbath-breaking, lying, diſhoneſty, and other groſs pollutions of the outward man, where one would think the profane devil is not ſo much as gone out, far leſs caſt out.

2dly, They become tender with reſpect to the ſins of common infirmity, labouring to make conſcience of their words and actions, Acts xxiv. 16. What others account light of, they will ſtand at a diſtance from, as having felt the ſmart of ſin; and that not only before the world, but even in ſecret, where no eye ſees but God's. They will ſtand aloof from temptations, and even from the appearance of evil: and wherein they are overtaken through the frailty of the fleſh, they will mourn for it before the Lord.

3. In reſpect both of heart and life. They turn againſt ſin to oppoſe and reſiſt it, in the inner and outward man, as taking now the contrary ſide to the devil, the world, and the fleſh. The ſpiritual combat is begun in the true penitent, Gal. v. 17. The war with ſin is proclaimed and begun, which never ends till death. They revolt from, caſt off the yoke, and ſtand up againſt their old maſters, 2 Tim. ii. 19.

1ſt, They reſiſt the motions of ſin in their hearts, and endeavour after heart purity, as well as life purity, Pſal. cxix. 113. 'I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love.' The phariſaical profeſſor may cleanſe the outſide of the platter, while he is little troubled about its being within full of ravening. But the hardeſt work a gracious ſoul has againſt ſin, is with the heart, with what the world neither ſees nor can ſee in him. And the guiding of the heart is the hardeſt piece of management in his religion.

2dly, They reſiſt the outbreakings of ſin in the life; Pſal. xviii. 23. 'I was alſo upright before him: and I 'kept myſelf from mine iniquity.' They ſee they are in a world where ſnares are thick laid; they ſee their own weakneſs, and how ready they are to be intrapped, and therefore labour to be on their guard, leſt they be carried away with the ſtream. Hence they are afraid of temptations, and therefore labour to ſhut their eyes from beholding vanity: ſometimes fearing to fall one day by the hand of temptation, and therefore longing to be beyond the reach of ſin.

4. and *laſtly*, Becauſe their turning from ſin is never perfect till death, therefore ſo long they are ay turning, and renewing their repentance, John xiii. 10. They are not true penitents who look on it as the work only of ſome days or weeks, at the ſoul's firſt converſion to God. A true penitent will ay be repenting, as long as he is ſinning. He ſees that he is often falling into the mire, and therefore muſt be often waſhing; daily contracting new debt, therefore muſt be daily crying for forgiveneſs. And the more heinous his after miſcarriages be, the longer he lives ſecure, his repentance will be the more bitter when he riſeth up again.

Now, this turning from ſin has theſe properties.

1. It is voluntary, as ſpringing from an inward principle ſet up in the heart againſt ſin, Job xlii. 6. 'I abhor myſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes.' The penitent does not only caſt away ſin as a live-coal out of his boſom, that would burn him, but as ſome loathſome thing, that would defile him. Some turn from their ſins againſt their will; they part with their ſins as Phaltiel did with his unlawful wife Michal, 2 Sam. iii. 15. They dwell in the tents of ſin, till the rigging tree break, and there is no abiding longer there for them; they part with their ſins, as the covetous man with his riches at death, when, nill he will he, he muſt let it go. But true repentance is a turning from ſin out of choice: and a forced reformation neither is ſincere nor will laſte, Pſal. lxxviii. 34.

2. It is ſincere, as being a turning from ſin as ſin, a turning from it becauſe it is turning away from God, a turning from it for its contrariety to God's holy nature and law, Luke xv. 18. The man leaves his ſin, not from the inferior motives only of danger to himſelf by it, but from the higher motives, namely, becauſe it is offenſive to God, diſhonours his Son, grieves his Spirit, tranſgreſſes his law, and defaces his image. If your turning from ſin proceed not from theſe motives, God will never regard it, as acceptable in his ſight. It is done for ſelf, not for God; and God will never be the reward of that work whereof he is not the end.

Queſt. What ſhould one do with reſpect to thoſe ſins he has turned from, from theſe lower motives of ſelf, or thoſe ſins that have left him before, before he left them? *Anſw.* Do not turn back to them; but do with them as they uſe to do with thoſe that die by their own hands, bury them diſgracefully, and throw ſtones on their grave. Look on them and loath them, riſe higher in your motives to forſake them than before. Ye left them for your own ſake, put them farther away for the ſake of God's honour. Set them before your eyes again, and ſee how provoking they have been to a holy God, how diſhonouring to his Son, *&c.*; repent and mourn over them on theſe accounts. And then your turning from them will be ſincere.

3. This turning from ſin is univerſal: Pſal. cxix. 104. 'I hate every falſe way.' Ezek. xviii. 31. 'Caſt away 'from you all your tranſgreſſions.' Whoever turns ſincerely from one ſin, turns from all known ſin whatſoever; becauſe the reaſon that moves the true penitent, is to be found in all as well as any one. Partial reformation is not ſincere: for God requires the whole heart, and will not be ſerved with halves. Every ſin is a deadly wound to the ſoul; and therefore though many be cured, if but one remain uncured, the man is a dead man by that one: Matth. v. 29. 'If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and caſt it from thee: for it is 'profitable for thee that one of thy members ſhould periſh, and not that thy whole body ſhould be caſt into 'hell.' A drop of poiſon will make a whole cup of good wine deadly, and one ſin retained, will render all our other reformation naught: as Abimelech the ſon of Jerubaal's concubine was the death of all his ſeventy ſons by his wives except one.

4. It is ſpeedy without delays: Pſal. cxix. 60. 'I 'made haſte, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.' As long as a man is undetermined to turn from his ſin, or delays to do it, his repentance is not ſincere. It is an evidence that the lance of humiliation has not gone deep enough, when the filthy matter does not preſently ſpring forth. A man whoſe heart is truly touched with a penitent ſenſe of ſin, will delay as long the flinging a burning-coal out of his boſom, as the caſting away of his ſin. No; when it goes to the quick, it muſt off preſently; though it were an offending right hand, it muſt be cut off preſently; though it were an offending right eye, it muſt be preſently plucked out.

5. *laſtly*, This turning from ſin is thorough; it makes complete work evangelically, though not legally. It was a flaw in Judah's repentance, that ſhe 'turned not 'unto the Lord with her whole heart, but feignedly,' Jer. iii. 10.; and in Ephraim's, that he 'mixed himſelf 'among the people,' and was 'a cake not turned,' Hoſ. vii. 8. Men turn thoroughly from ſin in theſe four reſpects.

1ſt, The true penitent ſticks at no known ſin, but turns from all without exception, even thoſe ſins that are deareſt and neareſt to them, and which they have been *moſt eaſily beſet with*, Heb. xii. 1. 'I kept myſelf from 'mine iniquity,' Pſal. xviii. 23. This turning from ſin is never thorough, till it reach the ſin that is the ſin of one's conſtitution, the ſin that is the ſin which moſt attends his calling, ſtations, and relations wherein he ſtands; the ſin that he has moſt frequent and ſtrongeſt temptations unto. That is the predominant evil which the heart muſt be looſed from, the right hand and right eye ſin, the one thing lacking, which mars all other things, Mark vii. 21. Unleſs there be a turning from, a warring with this, it is all wrong; though indeed they may ſometimes loſe as well as win in the battle.

2dly, He turns from that which is the inſnaring hook in any of his ſins, the handle whereby it caught hold of him, Pſal. cxxxi. 2. Pharaoh would have been content to let Iſrael go, ſo be they would have left their little ones, which he was ſure would have brought them again. And Satan will let people turn from ſin for a time, while they retain a reigning love to the bewitching thing that is in a ſinful courſe. For while it is ſo, the tree is indeed cut, but the root is left in the ground, and will grow again.

3dly, He turns from the occaſions of ſin, Ezek. xiv. 6. Wherefore David prays, 'Turn away mine eyes 'from beholding vanity;' and Solomon gives advice in the caſe of drunkenneſs, Prov. xxiii. 31. 'Look not thou 'upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itſelf aright.' It is vain to pretend to repent and turn from ſin, while men do not watch againſt the occaſions of it, and wreſtle againſt them, as againſt the ſin itſelf. They that in a ſiege mind really to defend the town, they will defend the out works as long as they can; wilfully to let the enemy in there, ſpeaks treachery. Much lies in this point for reformation: Prov. iv. 14, 15. 'Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of 'evil men. Avoid it, paſs not by it, turn from it, and 'paſs away.'

Laſtly, He turns from the enjoyment of the fruits of his ſin. To pretend to turn from ſin, and yet to feed ſweetly on the fruits of it, is an abſolutely vain pretence. When ſin itſelf is truly quit, the profit of it is given up with. This the prophet teacheth, Iſa. xxxiii. 15. 'He 'that walketh righteouſly, and ſpeaketh uprightly, he 'that deſpiſeth the gain of oppreſſions, that ſhaketh his 'hands from holding of bribes, that ſtoppeth his ears 'from hearing of blood, and ſhutteth his eyes from ſeeing evil,' &c. This is ſo evident, that even Judas in his repentance, ſuch as it was, could no longer brook the reward of his iniquity, Matth. xxviii. 3. A philoſopher had bought a pair of ſhoes, but had not paid the price of them; the tradeſman died, the philoſopher thought the money was gained; but his conſcience cauſed him bring back the money, and throw it into the ſhop; *Take it*, ſays he, *thou art alive to me, while dead to all the world beſides.* Hence two things belong to this part of repentance.

(1.) Reſtitution, or reſtoring the thing again, which has been ſinfully and wrongouſly taken away from others. He that can do it, and will not, cannot repent of that ſin: for he wilfully feeds on the fruit of that ſin; and that it is a continuing in it, inconſiſtent with turning from it. And ſince there is no pardon of that ſin which a man does not repent of, it is a maxim in divinity, *Non remittitur niſi reſtituitur*, namely, to a perſon that is able, but unwilling to do it. Hence Zaccheus proves himſelf a true penitent by reſtitution, Luke xix. 8. And one may as well think a thief may repent in the time he is feeding on what he has ſtolen from his neighbour, as that one may repent of what in other caſes he has unjuſtly taken from his neighbour, and can, but will not reſtore. When lovers part, they give back their tokens; and ſo, when a ſinner parts with his ſin, he reſtores all that he had unjuſtly taken from others.

(2.) Reparation as far as may be, in thoſe caſes wherein proper reſtitution cannot be made: as in the caſe of unjuſt wounding our neighbour's honour, reputation, peace, quiet and contentment, &c. Hence is that exhortation, Jam. v. 16. 'Confeſs your faults one 'to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be 'healed.' One may as well pretend to repent and go on in ſin, as wilfully to refuſe this and repent of the ſin. The like reparation is neceſſary in thoſe ſcandalous ſins, whereby the honour of God is impaired before the world, religion wounded, and expoſed to the contempt and ſcorn of profane men, and the hearts of the godly ſaddened. To repent of ſuch ſins, and yet wilfully to refuſe the way whereby the honour of God, and the credit of religion, might in ſome meaſure be repaired, is impoſſible. One may as well pretend to repent of his wounding a man while he ſtands looking on him bleeding to death, and will not, though it is in his power, bind up his wounds.

Uſe 1. Hence we may ſee what is the proper way to follow out the deſign of our congregational faſt, namely, to turn from our ſins which have provoked the Lord to wrath againſt us. For humiliation without reformation can do little ſervice. Let each of us lay our hands to our heart, and conſider what has been the coal that we have caſt in to raiſe this flame, and heartily turn from theſe things. If ſo, we would readily wear with thankfulneſs the bleſſings obtained by prayers.

2. All the trouble, grief, and ſorrow that men have for their ſin is little worth, if it iſſue not in turning from ſin. For men to be ſighing, but ſtill going backward, is not repentance, but of that ſort which may be carried on in hell, through eternity. If turning from be not joined to mourning for ſin, it is unſanctified ſorrow, that will neither be acceptable to God, nor profitable to our ſouls.

3. Turning from ſin outwardly, while the heart remains glewed to it, is not repentance either. It is an eaſy thing to reform outwardly; but the great buſineſs lies in getting the heart weaned from the world and its luſts. If we would be ſatisfied as to the truth of our repentance, we muſt likewiſe examine the motives prevailing with us to turn from ſin: for the mean and low motives that riſe no higher than ourſelves, our own advantage, eaſe, ſafety, &c. will never denominate us true penitents.

4. Repentance is not the work of a day or a year, but the work of our whole lives. For ſo turning from ſin is. Sin follows us, while we flee from it; often does it overtake us, and ſo we muſt renew our flight. The whole life of a Chriſtian is a war; in that war are many battles, ſometimes the Chriſtian gains the day, and ſometimes he loſes. If he loſe, he muſt renew the battle: if he win, he muſt purſue the victory, and lay his account with a new engagement. The great comfort is, that though he may loſe a battle, yet he ſhall be victorious in the war: ‘The God of peace ſhall bruiſe Satan under his feet ſhortly,’ Rom. xvi. 20.

5. *Laſtly*, See here the neceſſity of turning from ſin. *Except ye repent*, ſays the text, *ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.* Now, if ye do not turn from ſin, ye do not repent; therefore if ye turn not from it by repentance, ye ſhall periſh. Our ſins or our ſouls muſt go. Turn, or burn in the fire of God's wrath is the choice. Let us then return ſpeedily and thoroughly from all our iniquities, ſo *ſhall* they *not be our ruin.*

II. In repentance there is a *returning unto God:* Hoſ. vi. 1. ‘Come, and let us return unto the Lord.’ This is the term to which the ſinner comes back. Sin is a *departing from* God, repentance is a *coming back to* him again. It is a *coming back*, like that of a run-away ſervant to his maſter, returning to his place and duty in the family. Sin carried away mankind from God two ways.

1. Sin carried men away from God as a portion wherein to reſt. He is all ſufficient to himſelf and to his creatures, and none but he is ſo. Sin carried man away from God to the creature for happineſs and ſatisfaction: hence ſays Jehovah, Jer. iii. 13. ‘My people have committed two evils; they have forſaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out ciſterns, broken ciſterns that can hold no water.’ There he ſeeks a reſt to his heart. By faith man returns to God as a portion, unites with him again through Chriſt, and takes up his everlaſting reſt in him. Thus he returns as the dove to the ark, Iſa. lx. 8. ‘Who are theſe that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?’

2. Sin carried man away from God as a Lord and Maſter, to whom he owes obedience. In this reſpect man returns to God by repentance, returning to his duty, Pſal. cxix. 59. ‘I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy teſtimonies;’ as Hagar was by the angel ſent back to Sarah, Gen. xvi. 9. Men turning from God, turn their backs on his laws, and make their own luſts their laws; but the repenting ſinner turns back to the laws of God, Pſal. cxix. 59. forecited. He has ſlipt his neck out of the yoke of the commands of Chriſt, but he comes and takes it on again, never to throw it off more, Matth. xi. 29. He has gone off the road, the ſtrait way; but he comes back, and bids an eternal farewell to the broad way. And there is here,

1ſt, A return of the ſoul to God himſelf, 1 Kings xviii. 37. conſiſting in the heart's turning to the loving and liking of the Lord as a Lord and maſter. Sinners departing from God, not only miſlike their ſervice, but the maſter and his houſe: Luke xix. 14. ‘His citizens hated him, and ſent a meſſage after him, ſaying, We will not have this man to reign over us.’ They are filled with prejudices againſt him, there is a natural averſion in the heart to him, they cannot away with ſubjection to him. Hence ‘they ſay unto God, Depart from us; for we deſire not the knowledge of thy ways,’ Job xxi. 14. But in repentance that averſion is cured, and the ſoul inclines and moves towards him in heart and affections. This conſiſts in three things.

(1.) The ſoul is brought to eſteem the Lord worthy to be ſerved and pleaſed in all things. The name of God is to the penitent a *worthy name*, James ii. 7. The ſoul ſees the tranſcendent glory and excellency of God, worthy of all adoration and obedience; and ſo ſlights and diſdains all other maſters, as unworthy of the ſervice of an immortal ſoul.

(2.) The ſoul chuſeth him as its only Lord and maſter, ſaying, as in Iſa. xxvi. 13. ‘O Lord our God, other lords beſides thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.’ This was Joſhua's choice, chap. xxiv. 15. ‘As for me and my houſe we will ſerve the Lord.’ The enlightened mind beholds his glory, the glory and excellency of himſelf, his image, laws, ordinances, and ſervice; and the renewed will conſents and cleaves to him. It has tried many maſters, *ſerving divers luſts*, Tit. iii. 3. but could never have ſatisfaction in the ſervice of any of them, and therefore ſays, as Hoſ. ii. 7. ‘I will go and return to my firſt huſband, for then was it better with me than now.’

(3.) The ſoul looks upon the ſervice of God as its great happineſs. Hence ſaid the prodigal, ‘when he came to himſelf, How many hired ſervants of my father's have bread enough and to ſpare, and I periſh with hunger!’ Luke xv. 17. And therefore the ſaints are found declaring them happy who are moſt employed in his ſervice, as the queen of Sheba ſaid of Solomon's ſervants, Pſal. lxv. 4. ‘Bleſſed is the man whom thou chuſeſt, and cauſeſt to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts.’ And lxxxiv. 4. ‘Bleſſed are they that dwell in thy houſe: they will be ſtill praiſing thee.’ And till the ſoul come to this, to account the Lord's ſervice the only true freedom and happineſs, though they may take up his ſervice, they will not abide with it, becauſe they do not like their Maſter.

2dly, There is in this returning a return of the ſoul to its duty to God. Hence ſaid Saul, ‘Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?’ Acts ix. 6. Whoever returns to God, comes home as a ſervant to enter to work: for idlers about God's houſe may be nominal ſervants, but real ones they cannot be. God's ſervants have higher relations which they ſtand in unto him; but all of them have duty annexed to them. Are they married to Chriſt? they muſt *bring forth fruit*, Rom. vii. 4. Are they friends? they muſt *do whatſoever he commands them*, John xv.

14. See Mal. i. 6. Now, the penitent returns to his duty in theſe two reſpects.

(1.) The penitent returns to his duty in his heart. He is (1.) reconciled to the whole law of God, and the whole yoke of Chriſt, ſo far as it is known to him to be his law and yoke, Pſal. cxix. 6. ‘ I have reſpect unto all thy ‘ commandments.’ He has a love and liking of the duties of piety towards God, and righteouſneſs towards men. Though there remain in him a contradicting principle, yet he can ſay, as Rom. vii. 22. ‘ I delight ‘ in the law of God, after the inward man.’ The heart enmity againſt the law and the power of godlineſs is removed, and nothing is ſo deſirable to him as to be holy as God is holy. (2.) He has a full and fixed purpoſe of new obedience: Pſal. cxix. 57. ‘ O Lord I have ſaid, ‘ that I would keep thy words.’ Verſ. 112. ‘ I have ‘ inclined mine heart to perform thy ſtatutes alway, e‘ven unto the end.’ He returns with a purpoſe never to be what he has been; to purſue holineſs, to enter upon and keep the way of duty, whatever be the hardſhips and difficulties he may meet with in it. And this purpoſe is for to day, not for to-morrow only; not to delay a minute, but preſently to fall in with every known duty, as knowing there is no time for delaying.

(2.) The penitent returns to his duty in both heart and life. He is brought to ſincere endeavours after new obedience, 2 Cor. vii. 11. ‘ Behold, this ſelf-ſame thing, ‘ that ye ſorrowed after a godly ſort, what carefulneſs it ‘ wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourſelves, yea, ‘ what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement ‘ deſire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! in all things ‘ ye have approved yourſelves to be clear in this matter.’ Purpoſes without endeavours are but fair bloſſoms without fruit, which will never prove a penitent. If the lame man be cured, though not perfectly cured, he will riſe and walk as he can. It is true, while here we can do nothing perfectly well; but the true penitent will endeavour to do all, and aim at no leſs than perfection. Hence ſaid Paul, ‘ I preſs toward the mark, for the prize ‘ of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus,’ Phil. iii. 14. So the penitent returning to his duty,

[1.] Returns to the practice of every known duty. Hence ſaid David, ‘ I have reſpect unto all thy com‘mandments,’ Pſal. cxix. 6. He labours to know what is duty, and is willing to know it; and when known, endeavours to perform it. He puts hand to external and internal obedience; to ſerve God in heart and life too; to perform his duty to God and to his neighbour; perſonal and relative, ſecret, private, and public.

[2.] Returns to ſpirituality in every duty: Phil. iii. 3. ‘ For we are the circumciſion, which worſhip God ‘ in the ſpirit, and rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no ‘ confidence in the fleſh.’ The true penitent will not ſit in the carcaſe of duties, but will endeavour to get in to thoſe unſeen things where lies the life and ſoul of duties; namely, to have his heart oiled with love to God as the principle of his obedience, touched with regard to the honour of God as his end, raiſed above ſelfiſh ends and deſigns, and performing all in faith, leaning on the Lord for ſtrength.

Now, this returning to the Lord is,

1. A ſincere returning, not feigned and hypocritical, with the whole heart, Jer. iii. 10. Hypocrites are ſaid to have a heart and a heart, a divided heart, one for God, and another for their luſts. But the Lord ſays in this caſe, ‘ If ye take me, let theſe go away. For no man ‘ can ſerve two maſters.’ It is a returning to him to abide with him for ever, as Oneſimus to Philemon, verſ. 15. The penitent, like the ſervant under the law, his ear is nailed to God’s door-poſts, to ſerve him for ever. To return for a time is naught.

2. A voluntary return. The penitent comes back with heart and good will, Pſal. cx. 3. ‘ Thy people ſhall ‘ be willing in the day of thy power:’ as one that is going back to a good and honourable maſter, and will ſerve him with gladneſs, Pſal. c. 2. ‘ Serve the Lord ‘ with gladneſs.’ They that are only driven back to God, by heavy rods or ſharp convictions, will come away again; yet people may be driven at firſt to God, who ſeeing his glory and excellency, and the deſirableneſs of his ſervice afterwards, do voluntarily and heartily yield themſelves to him.

3. A ſpeedy return, Pſal. cxix. 60. ‘ I made haſte and ‘ delayed not to keep thy commandments.’ They that are ſincere will not delay for a moment; they will make no truce with ſin. The moment wherein true repentance touches the heart, is the preciſe term of going home to God; for they know that if they delay a moment longer, that moment may be the fatal moment to them.

4. A thorough return. The ſoul ſticks at no known duty, but embraces all, be it never ſo hard, and unpleaſant to fleſh and blood. Hence ſaid the Lord of David, Acts xiii. 22. ‘ I have found David the ſon of Jeſſe; a ‘ man after mine own heart, which ſhall fulfil all my ‘ will.’ The penitent puts a blank in God’s hand, ſaying, ‘ Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Speak, ‘ Lord,’ ſays he, ‘ thy ſervant heareth.’ He is for the will of God, without diſputing. For God is an abſolute maſter, and is therefore to be obeyed without reſerve.

Uſe of this point. It lets us ſee, that negative reformation is not ſufficient for repentance. One muſt not only turn from ſin, but turn unto God. We muſt not only put away evil, but take into us the contrary good: Iſ. i. 16, 17. ‘ Waſh ye, make you clean, put away the ‘ evil of your doings from before mine eyes, ceaſe to ‘ do evil, learn to do well,’ &c. We muſt not only give up with ſuch and ſuch luſts, but be endued with the contrary graces. Some people reform from the evils of their life, but they do not go forward to the poſitive ways of holineſs. They ſatisfy themſelves, with the proud Phariſee, that they ‘ are not unjuſt, no extor‘tioners,’ &c.; but, alas! they do not conſider, that when the houſe, which the devil goes out of is empty, he returns with ſeven ſpirits more wicked than himſelf, and ſo the laſt ſtate of ſuch a perſon is worſe than the firſt, Matth. xii. 44, 45.

The APPLICATION.

I come now to the APPLICATION of the whole. And here I would ſound the alarm in the ears of impenitent ſinners, to repent, and turn from their ſins unto God. O ſinners, repent, repent; ye are gone away to your luſts and idols, turn from them; ye have turned your back on God, turn to him again. In proſecuting this call to repentance, I ſhall,

1. Endeavour to convince you of the need you have to repent.
2. Lay before you a train of motives to repentance.
3. Shew you the great hindrances of repentance. And,
4. Give directions in order to your obtaining repentance.

I. I ſhall endeavour to convince you of the need you have to repent, to make way for motives to it their taking with you. There are three ſorts of perſons that will readily ſtave off all calls to repentance.

1. One ſays, I repent of my ſins daily. Well were it with thee, if it were ſo. Sure, there is need for it. But none are ſo ready to pretend to this, as thoſe that never yet knew what it is to repent. If ruing the ill thou haſt done, a ſigh for it, and a ſhort-winded wiſh for mercy, be repentance, it is eaſy work. But it is not ſo. Thou canſt not repent with a hale heart; that heart of thine muſt be rent for ſin, and rent from it; thou muſt turn from ſin unto God in all duties of obedience. If ye pretend then to repentance, bring forth fruits meet for it. But to ſuch pretended penitents we may ſay, as Samuel to Saul, 1 Sam. xv. 14. ‘ What meaneth then ‘ this bleating of the ſheep, and the lowing of the oxen?’

2. Another ſays, I have repented already. But O conſider, repentance is not the work of a day, but of thy

whole lifetime, ſince thou art never free of ſin, Jer. viii. 6. New provocations require new repentance; nay, old ſins are not to be forgotten. Hence ſaid Moſes, Deut. ix. 7. ‘Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedſt the Lord thy God to wrath in the wilderneſs.’ And hence prays the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. xxv. 7. ‘Remember not the ſins of my youth, nor my tranſgreſſions.’ And if thou repent of them thoroughly, thou wilt be aſhamed, and the wound will bleed afreſh at the remembrance of them. Hence ſaid the apoſtle, Rom. vi. 21. ‘What fruit had ye in thoſe things, whereof ye are now aſhamed?’

3. Another ſees no need of repentance for him; for ſuch perſons are of that blinded generation, ‘that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not waſhed from their filthineſs,’ Prov. xxx. 12. They deny their ſin, inſtead of mourning over and confeſſing it, ſaying as ver. 20. ‘I have done no wickedneſs.’ They poſſibly keep free from the groſs pollutions of the outward man; and for the poſitive duties of religion, they either ſee no need of them, or if they do perform them too, they are blind to the corruption of their nature, and to heart-ſins, and the ſpirituality of the law of God. But ye need repentance as much as the proud Phariſee, Luke xviii. and as the apoſtle Paul, Rom. vii. 9. compared with Tit. iii. 3. But O conſider,

1ſt, Are there not many of us that never got a ſound awakening all their days? They have lived under the ſound of the goſpel, but it never broke their reſt effectually in a ſinful courſe. I will read the myſtery of your caſe, Luke xi. 21. ‘When a ſtrong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace.’ Repent then, or ye are undone.

2dly, Are there not many whoſe awakening has produced a partial change on them, but it has ended in a fearful apoſtacy from the way of God? 2 Pet. ii. 22. ‘It is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and, The ſow that was waſhed, to her wallowing in the mire.’ Their fair bloſſom they once had, has gone up as duſt. Repent, or your backſliding will be your ruin.

3dly, Are there not many ſleeping virgins at this day, who are in a courſe of departing from God? The life, vigour, and tenderneſs they ſometimes had, is gone; and death has ſettled down on their eye-lids, and they are turned to be of the colour of the earth. To theſe we muſt ſay, as Rev. ii. 5. ‘Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the firſt works.’

4thly, Are there not many living in known ſin? They know the particulars wherein they are wrong, and yet on they go, as an ox to the ſlaughter. Their corruptions are too ſtrong for conſcience. Ye muſt repent, or ye will periſh. Profane courſes will make a miſerable end, and one ſin retained will ruin the ſoul.

5thly, Look and ſee whether thou canſt perceive the footſteps of Chriſt's flock, or of the devil's drove, on the way which thou art going, Cant. i. 8. Is your caſe the caſe wherein the fair company walked with diſplayed banners to Canaan, or that wherein many have ſlept and ſlipt away to the pit?

6thly, Canſt thou deny but that there are many foul ſteps thou haſt made and art making? O then repent. Go no farther on; one ſtep more may put you beyond returning, Luke xiv. 24. Little knows the ſinner, how ſoon God may take the foot from him, either by clapping a withering curſe on him, as on the fig-tree, Hoſ. iv. 17. or by taking him red-hand in his ſin, and ſending him to the pit, Prov. xxix. 1. ‘He that being often reproved, hardneth his neck, ſhall ſuddenly be deſtroyed, and that without remedy.’

II. I will lay before you a train of motives to repentance.

Mot. 1. Conſider the obligations that lie on you to repent. Sit down and conſider how manifold ties are on you to it.

1. The command of God obligeth you to it: Acts xvii. 30. ‘God commandeth all men every where to repent.’ And will ye not have regard to the ſovereign authority of him that made you? The command to repentance is one of the two great commands of the goſpel, Acts xx. 21. ‘Teſtifying both to the Jews, and alſo to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.’ This is the command which the prophets of old did ſo often inculcate, Ezek. xviii. 30. ‘Repent, and turn yourſelves from all your tranſgreſſions; ſo iniquity ſhall not be your ruin.’ This our Lord Jeſus and the Baptiſt preached, and his diſciples, ſaying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ This the apoſtles preached, Acts ii. 38. ‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, for the remiſſion of ſins.’ And this all along is the joint ſound of the preachers of the goſpel. So it is an old and new command too. No command is more peremptorily laid on, as in the text. As ye regard then God's authority, repent.

2. Your baptiſm obligeth you: Mark i. 4. ‘John did baptize in the wilderneſs, and preach the baptiſm of repentance, for the remiſſion of ſins.’ It is a ſolemn tie laid upon you to return to and ſerve God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt: to die unto ſin, to live unto righteouſneſs. Ye have then taken on the Lord's badge; how dreadful muſt it be to continue runaways from your Maſter? Repent, then, and return, as ye would not be treated as runaways from your colours, as rebels that caſt off your allegiance ſworn to the King of heaven.

3. Your mercies oblige you in point of gratitude; Rom. ii. 4. ‘Deſpiſeſt thou the riches of his goodneſs, and forbearance, and long-ſuffering; not knowing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance?’ your common mercies, and ſpecial ones, preventing, reſtraining, *&c.* Every mercy is forfeited by ſin; yet ye are ſtill in God's debt, and every day a new load of favours is laid on, and theſe are ſtrong ties to repentance.

4. *laſtly*, Your profeſſion obligeth you. Ye profeſs yourſelves Chriſtians. If ye will *name the name of Chriſt*, then *depart from iniquity*, 2 Tim. ii. 19. Why do ye call God *Father*, if ye will needs *do the works of the devil*, (John viii. 14.) which Chriſt *came to deſtroy*? Do ye profeſs Chriſt your Redeemer, the Holy Ghoſt your Sanctifier? why then do ye continue in bondage to your ſin, in unholy courſes? Do ye believe every ſin deſerveth God's wrath? what madneſs is it then to be treaſuring up wrath againſt the day of wrath? Quit your profeſſion then, or quit your ſinful courſes.

Mot. 2. Seriouſly conſider what ſin is, that ye are ſo fond of, prefer to Chriſt, and for the enjoyment of it forfeit the favour of God. What do you ſee in it, that does ſo powerfully charm you? If you are taken with the profit of it, ye would conſider that no advantage will quit the coſt of the ſoul's ruin brought about by it: Matth. xvi. 26. ‘For what is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?’ Job xxvii. 8. ‘For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his ſoul?’ If you are taken with the pleaſure of it; that is dear bought, being purchaſed at the rate of eternal flames, which ſin will bring men to without repentance. The pleaſures of ſin are but momentary, Heb. xi. 25. And there is far more in God's ſervice, even in this world: Pſal. iv. 6, 7. ‘There be many that ſay, Who will ſhew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou haſt put gladneſs in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and wine increaſed.’ Conſider, I pray you,

1. Has not every bait a hook with it? Prov. xxiii. 31, 32. Is there not trap, gin, and ſnare in them all for you? How often have ye ſeen that there has been death in the pot, when ye have ſit down to feed your corruptions? Ye have ſnatched at the bait, but ye have not in

the mean time felt yourſelves wounded with the hook? Ye have ſmelled the roſe, but have not the prickles mean while annoyed you? And how can it be otherwiſe? for ‘he that diggeth a pit, ſhall fall into it; and whoſo breaketh a hedge, a ſerpent ſhall bite him,’ Eccleſ. x. 8.

2. Is there any ſolid reſt in a ſinful courſe? No, ſurely: Iſa. lvii. 21. ‘There is no peace, ſaith my God, to the wicked.’ Do not your conſciences witneſs, that the ſting of guilt in the conſcience is like a dead fly in the ointment, cauſing all to be unſavoury? Is there not always a worm at the root of every ſinful gourd you ſit down under the ſhadow of? Do not the very may-be's of conſcience ſuck the ſap out of your luſts many times? Will any man ſay, that ever he found reſt to his ſoul in a courſe of departing from God? No, no; ten thouſand worlds will not ſatisfy an immortal ſoul.

3. Do not ye find ſin to be an inſatiable tyrant, like the grave and the barren womb, never ſaying, ‘It is enough?’ Iſ. lvii. 20. ‘The wicked are like the troubled ſea, when it cannot reſt, whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt.’ O but they have a hard taſk, that have living raging luſts to feed! James iv. 2, 3. ‘Ye luſt, and have not: ye kill, and deſire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, becauſe ye aſk not. Ye aſk and receive not, becauſe ye aſk amiſs, that ye may conſume it upon your luſts'. Pſal. lxxviii. 18, 19. ‘And they tempted God in their heart, by aſking meat for their luſt. Yea, they ſpake againſt God: they ſaid, Can God furniſh a table in the wilderneſs?’ The more they are indulged, the more they grow rampant; the more their thirſt is cared for, the greater thirſt is created. Hence men in a ſinful courſe go from evil to worſe.

4. Is not a ſinful courſe a moſt fooliſh courſe? No man is unfaithful to God, but he is unfaithful to himſelf, and his own intereſt and happineſs. The Lord offers to reaſon the matter with you, and to make your conſciences judge, Iſ. i. 18. ‘Come now, and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord: though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as white as ſnow; though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wool.’ It ſtands betwixt you and temporal and eternal happineſs. It is a poiſonous cup, bringing death along with it. And how fooliſh is it for men to hug a ſerpent in their boſom, when called to throw it out; to drink a cup of poiſon, when called to throw it away; to take coals in their boſom, when it is told they will burn them; to court their own death and ruin?

5. Is not ſin the ſeparation wall betwixt God and you? Iſ. lix. 2. ‘Your iniquities have ſeparated between you and your God, and your ſins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.’ Does it not mar your comfort from the word, your confidence in the Lord, and your acceſs to God in duties? does it not make as it were a gulph betwixt heaven and you, that whatever communion others have with heaven, your unrepented of ſins lets you have none? Shall this be your choice? Sure then, ye need not wonder, if ye will not come back to God, he bid you at laſt depart from him, ‘into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.’

6. *Laſtly*, Conſider what will be the end thereof. Surely it will be bitterneſs in the end! Jer. ii. 19. ‘Thine own wickedneſs ſhall correct thee, and thy backſliding ſhall reprove thee: know therefore and ſee, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou haſt forſaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, ſaith the Lord God of hoſts.’ However pleaſant the cup ſeem to be at the brim, the dregs of it will be bitter: Prov. ix. 17, 18. ‘Stolen waters are ſweet, and bread eaten in ſecret is pleaſant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there, and that her gueſts are in the depths of hell.’ However taking the entertainment be, the reckoning will be dreadful.

Mot. 3. Conſider ye muſt die: Heb. ix. 27. ‘It is appointed unto men once to die.’ Death is certain, and therefore repentance is neceſſary. O if men would realize death to themſelves, ſinners would ſoon find it neceſſary to turn over a new leaf. One hearing Gen. v. read in the church, was ſo impreſſed with thoughts of death, that he preſently betook himſelf to a new courſe of life, that he might die well. We muſt all meet with death, lie down in the grave; let us view it aforehand, and ſee how it calls us to repent. Look to thy dying hour, and to thy grave, O impenitent ſinner, and conſider theſe few things.

1. Wouldſt thou be content to die as thou liveſt? Thou liveſt in thy ſin, without God; wouldeſt thou deſire to die ſo? Many indeed entertain Balaam's wiſh, for the death of the righteous, while they care not for their life, Numb. xxiii. 10. ‘Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my laſt end be like his.’ But remember he did not get it, chap. xxxi. 8.——‘Balaam alſo the ſon of Beor they ſlew with the ſword.’ And while death is ſo uncertain, it is the hanging of an eternal weight on a hair, to look to get matters mended then, that are not mended now.

2. Conſider, what will a ſinful life look like on a deathbed? How will ye be able to look your unrepented-of guilt, and a long eternity in the face together? Ezek. xxii. 14. ‘Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be ſtrong in the days that I ſhall deal with thee? I the Lord have ſpoken it, and will do it.’ Sin ſits eaſy now on a ſleepy conſcience, while health and ſtrength laſtes, and death appears not. But when death ſtares thee in the face, and the awakened conſcience flies upon thee, it will cut thee to the heart, that thou haſt not repented before.

3. What will it be to die, and go to another world with a load of unrepented-of guilt on thy back? Look to your grave aforehand; think with yourſelves, how will it be to lie down there with your bones full of your iniquity? Is it not beſt now, to ſhake off and caſt away your tranſgreſſions, as knowing that however ye may live with them, ye cannot die with them well.

4. At a dying hour ye muſt part with the world, and the enjoyment of your luſts. The foul feaſt ye ſit at now, death will overthrow the table, and the ſad reckoning for it comes in then, and continues for ever. O riſe up now, and leave it by repentance. Part with theſe things at God's call, which ye muſt part with ere long, whether you will or not.

5. *laſtly*, There is no repentance in the grave, Eccleſ. ix. 10. Ye muſt repent, or ye periſh; and it is now or never. Mar matters now by an impenitent life, and let death catch you there, ye ſhall never be able to mend them more. The working time, and time of trial is over then. If the brittle threed of life were broke, which may be ſnapt aſunder in a moment, then ye are beyond the line of mercy. The candle burnt to ſnuff, ſhall be as ſoon brought to burn again, as time ſhall be recalled.

Mot. 4. Take a view of the tribunal of God, before which thou muſt appear, 2 Cor. v. 10, 11. ‘We muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we perſuade men.’ O ſinner, knoweſt thou not that there is a judgment to come, and how this calls thee to repent? Acts xvii. 30, 31. ‘God commandeth all men every where to repent: becauſe he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by that man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead.’ Were men to lie forever neglected, without a future reckoning, as the beaſts that periſh, they might live as they liſt, the hazard of condemnation for an eternity would not preſs them. But it is not ſo, Heb. ix. 27. ‘It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.’ Conſider,

1. While thou art going on in ſin, thy debt to the divine juſtice is increaſing, thy accounts are ſwelling;

and the reckoning for them before the tribunal will be terrible, however little ye think of them now, Eccleſ. xi. 9. They may fall out of thy memory, but they will not fall out of the book of God's remembrance, Hoſ. xiii. 12. But now is the time to get them laid over on the cautioner's ſcore.

2. Though thou wilt not ſeek them out now to mourn over them, and turn from them, they will find thee out before the tribunal of God. Happy would the ſinner be, if his ſins would part with him at the grave; but they 'ſhall lie down with him in the duſt,' Job xx. 11.: or if they would lie down with him there, if they would lie ſtill and never riſe again; but 'God ſhall bring every work into judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil,' Eccleſ. xii. 14. The Judge is omniſcient, nothing can be hid from him, he is not capable to forget the leaſt injury which the ſinner has done to his glory; all muſt come into the account.

3. When thou ſeeſt Chriſt come again, and his throne ſet for judgment, when the trumpet ſhall blow, and the dead ariſe, and made to compear before that tribunal, when the heavens and earth ſhall paſs away, what will be thy thoughts of ſtaving off repentance?

4. *laſtly*, Thy ſtate for eternity will be determined there according to thy deeds done in the fleſh. Impenitent ſinners will get a long eternity to rue their obſtinacy in, while thoſe that repented in time ſhall be happy for ever.

Mot. 5. To move you to repentance, conſider the ſufferings of Chriſt. A Roman ſenator intending to provoke the people to revenge the death of Cæſar killed by Brutus, brought forth his bloody robe, and cried, Here is the robe of your late emperor. And O will ye look to the bloody robe of Chriſt, hung up on the pole of the goſpel, to move you to repentance? Zech. xii. 10. 'They ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they ſhall mourn for him,' &c. And learn here,

1. How dreadful muſt God's indignation againſt ſin be, which is written with the blood of Chriſt, pierced with the ſword of juſtice. Is it not 'a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God?' And ſhall we continue in ſin, againſt which ſuch indignation appeared?

2. Sin appeared terrible in Sodom when in flames, but yet more terrible in mount Calvary, where the juſtice of God purſued the Son of God with the ſword of vengeance. A ſpectacle of amazement, The Son of God ſet up for a mark to the arrows of God! Do ye not aſk into the cauſe of all this? It was ſin. The children ate the ſour grape, and the father's teeth were ſet on edge. They contract the debt, juſtice lays hold on him, and he 'reſtores what he took not away,' Pſal. lxix. 4. The elect took on the debt jovially, but he is put to tears and ſtrong cries in the paying of it. And will we not hate and loath ſin?

3. *Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods* from above nor from below *drown it.* 'Behold how he loved you.' He might have been happy in his Father's love, though mortals had never ſhared of it with him. But ſuch was his love to ſinners, as made him lay down his life for them, that ſo a way might be paved for the egreſs of his Father's love towards them. And will ye not hate and loath ſin which was the cauſe of his death? 'Is this your kindneſs to your friend?'

4. When Chriſt ſuffered, the earth quaked, rocks rent, the dead aroſe, the ſun was ſtruck blind with the ſight, and hid his face for ſhame: and how can we ſtand unmoved, who were the firſt movers of the bloody tragedy, whoſe ſins furniſhed a Judas to betray him, a Pilate to ſentence him, *&c.*? Look here, and mourn for, and turn from ſin.

5. *laſtly*, Did he not ſuffer enough? muſt he ſuffer more ſtill, even his ſtate of exaltation? will ye grieve his Spirit, trample on his laws, yea and his blood, continuing impenitent in your ſins?

Mot. 6. Conſider the wrong done to God by your ſin, in which you may ſee the ugly picture of it. This kept Joſeph from yielding to a ſtrong temptation, Gen. xxxix. 9.; and pierced David's heart with repentance for his ſin, Pſal. li. 4.; and lay heavy on the prodigal ſon, Luke xv. 18. Every ſin reacheth the throne of God in heaven, and him that ſits on it. It is true, the malice of ſinners againſt God is impotent malice, and can do him no real prejudice, do their worſt. They cannot make him leſs happy, they cannot diſturb his peace, Job xxxv. 6, 7. But the ſinner is like the beggar full of ſores lying on a dunghill, venting his ſpite againſt the prince on the throne. He wrongs the honour of God, his declarative glory, though he can do nothing againſt his eſſential glory. Sinner, thou wrongeſt God by thy ſin.

1. By ſetting thyſelf in oppoſition to his nature and will. What is ſin continued in without repentance? *A walking contrary to God*, Lev. xxvi. 21.; and interpretative aim to throw him down from his ſovereignty, Pſal. xiv. 1. 'The fool hath ſaid in his heart, There is no God.' Thou mayeſt put what fair colours thou pleaſeſt upon it; but it is a throwing out the flag of defiance againſt the God that made thee. For doſt thou not thereby in effect, diſregard his all-ſeeing eye, and preſence every where bid defiance to his juſtice, and call in queſtion his truth, deſpiſe his goodneſs and mercy, and run counter to his holy nature and will, while thou run ſtill on that of which he has ſaid, Jer. xliv. 4. 'O do not this abominable thing that I hate?' And is this a courſe to be perſiſted in?

2. Thou wrongeſt God by trampling on his laws, Iſ. xxxiii. 22. He has given thee a law to be the rule of thy life, he has ſtamped it with his own ſovereign authority, fenced it with puniſhments threatened, ſuitable to his infinite greatneſs; but thou makes no more of theſe than if they were cob-webs, fit only only to catch flies. Thou breakeſt through the fences, and in contempt of his authority, will be over into the forbidden ground. Thus thou affronteſt the God that made thee: will he ſit with it think ye? No; he can avenge the affront, James iv. 12. 'There is one lawgiver, who is able to deſtroy;' and he will do it, Luke xix. 27. 'Thoſe mine enemies, which would not that I ſhould reign over them, bring hither, and ſlay them before me.'

3. Thou wrongeſt God by deſpiſing his Son, John v. 40. Ye wrong God at the rate Heathens cannot do, and therefore your condemnation will be greater than theirs, John iii. 19. God has ſent his Son into the world, by his death to procure reconciliation betwixt God and ſinners; he has *exalted him to give repentance*, Acts v. 31. but by your continuing in ſin, ye ſlight his death, and the purchaſe of his blood: you love your diſeaſe ſo, as you loath the Phyſician. What will be the end of theſe things? Acts xiii. 41. 'Behold, ye deſpiſers, and wonder, and periſh.'

4. Thou wrongeſt God by grieving his Spirit, Eph. iv. 30. Hear God's complaints of impenitent ſinners, Ezek. vi. 9. 'I am broken with their whoriſh heart which hath departed from me, and with their eyes which go a-whoring after their idols.' Amos ii. 13. 'Behold, I am preſſed under you, as a cart is preſſed that is full of ſheaves.' How often has the Spirit of the Lord been at work with you to turn you from your ſins, ſpeaking to you by the word, providences, the ſecret checks of your own conſcience, and ſecret motions and whiſpers within your own breaſt, but all to no purpoſe? This will not laſte, Gen. vi. 3. 'And the Lord ſaid, My ſpirit ſhall not always ſtrive with man, for that he alſo is fleſh.' And it will have a doleful end, if ye do not repent, Iſa. lxiii. 10. 'They rebelled and vexed his holy Spirit; therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought againſt them.' If ſinners continue to be a burden to the Spisit of God, and do not take off the burden by repentance, God will throw it off to their coſt, Iſa. i. 24. 'Therefore ſaith the Lord, the Lord of hoſts, the mighty One of Iſrael, Ah, I will eaſe me of mine adverſaries, and avenge me of mine enemies.'

5. Thou wrongeſt God by defacing the remains of his image in thy own ſoul. 'God made man upright, after his own image.' Adam's ſin ruined this image in us. But the more we go on in ſin, we render ourſelves ſtill the more unlike God, and the more contrary to him. How fearful is this, to be ſtill blotting out any appearance of the tracts of God's image in us?

6. *laſtly*, Thou wrongeſt God by the ill influence your example has on others. Hence ſays our Lord, Matth. xxiv. 12. 'Becauſe iniquity ſhall abound, the love of many ſhall wax cold.' Every impenitent ſinner is an agent for the devil, and invites and encourages others to deſpiſe God and his ways, and ſo will be made to reckon for the miſchief his ſin does that way. The rich man in hell was ſenſible of this, though it would ſeem not before, Luke xvi. 27, 28. 'I pray thee, father, (ſaid he to Abraham,) that thou wouldſt ſend him [Lazarus] to my fathers houſe: for I have five brethren; that he may teſtify unto them, leſt they alſo come into this place of torment.'

Now, will ye go on, thus wronging God by your ſin, and not turn from it unto him? Conſider, I pray you,

1. He is your Creator, Eccleſ. xii. 1. He gave you a being, and brought you out of the womb of nothing, and will ye not be for him? will ye be againſt him? Has not he that made you a right to rule you? does not reaſon itſelf ſay, that God's creating us gives him a ſovereign dominion over us? O why will the creature thus ſet itſelf againſt the Creator? Will the potſherds ſtrive againſt the potter?

2. He is your Preſerver, Heb. i. 3. Acts xvii. 28. You live on his earth, feed on his good creatures, breathe in his air, and will ye not hearken to his voice? Who was it that preſerved thee in the womb, that brought thee out of it, ſo that it was not made thy grave? Who has kept the brittle thread of thy life from being broken hitherto, and fed thee all thy life long, did not the Lord? And wilt thou fight againſt him with his own benefits which he has beſtowed on thee, yea, is beſtowing on thee while thou goeſt on in thy ſin? Shall the life, ſtrength, comforts of life, time, *&c.* which he has given thee, be employed to the grieving of his Spirit? What will the end of theſe things be?

3. He can deſtroy you, and that when he will, Mat. x. 28. Your life and breath is from him, and he can ſtop it when he pleaſeth. He does not ſuffer you to go on in your ſin, becauſe he cannot help it; nay, the moment thou provokeſt him, he can ſtrike thee dead, or ſend thee down alive into the pit. But he waits to be gracious. And this one conſideration might determine ſinners to repent, if madneſs were not in their hearts, ſetting them to provoke him, who in a moment can deſtroy them, and make them ſilent in the grave.

4. He is your Witneſs, Pſal. li. 4. Luke xv. 18. Sinners that like not to retain God in their knowledge, do in effect pleaſe themſelves with the notion that God is cloſed up in heaven, Ezek. ix. 9. 'For they ſay, The Lord hath forſaken the earth, and the Lord ſeeth not.' But the day comes when they will ſee themſelves miſerably deceived. No; he is a witneſs, though many times a ſilent witneſs; but he will ſpeak in due time, Pſal. l. 21, 22. The opening of the book of conſcience, and of God's remembrance, will clear his being a witneſs of your whole way, and every ſtep of it.

5. *laſtly*, He will be your Judge, 2 Cor. v. 10. And he is an omniſcient one, from whom nothing can be hid; a juſt one, that will reward every one according to his works; an omnipreſent one, from whoſe preſence there can be no eſcape; an omnipotent one, who can without fail make his ſentence take effect. Will men pretend to believe a judgment to come, and yet be at no pains to make the Judge their friend aforehand, but keep up the war againſt him, and not break it off by repentance? Alas! horrid unbelief is at the bottom of impenitency.

Mot. 7. God is calling you to repentance. Be not deaf to the calls of God, leſt the Lord pay home your rebellion, by refuſing to hear you when ye call to him, Prov. i. 24. and downwards. God is calling you to repentance.

1. By the mercies wherewith he is daily loading you. *Quot beneficia, tot ora.* Rom. ii. 4. 'Deſpiſeſt thou the riches of his goodneſs and forbearance, and long ſuffering; not knowing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance?' Theſe are the cords of a man, wherewith God is drawing you. That you have a ſparing on God's earth, that you are kept out of hell, that he gives you daily bread, and does not lock up heaven and earth, that they may not help you, call aloud to you to repent, and turn to him. And he takes notice how little theſe prevail, Jer. v. 24. 'Neither ſay they in their heart, Let us now fear the Lord our God that giveth rain, both the former and the latter in his ſeaſon; he reſerveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harveſt.'

2. God is calling you to repentance by the croſſes and afflictions, either laid on you, or threatened. Every croſs providence is a meſſenger from heaven calling you to repentance; Mic. vi. 9. 'Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.' They meet you in the way of ſin, as the angel did Balaam; they bid you halt, and go no farther on; nay, they bid you return to the Lord. God is ſpeaking to the land this way, to this church, and to the congregation, and to every one of us, at this day.

3. God is calling you to repentance by the preaching of the word, Acts xvii. 30. This is the great ſcope of all our preaching, that ye may repent, and turn from your ſins unto God. And while God continues the goſpel with us, it is a ſign he is waiting for our repentance: but to continue in ſin over the belly of all warnings, will have a fatal end to take us from the goſpel, or the goſpel from us; which we have ground to fear at this day on more accounts than one. Hence ſays Chriſt to the church of Epheſus, Rev. ii. 5. 'Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the firſt works: or elſe I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candleſtick out of his place, except thou repent.'

Mot. ult. Conſider the text, 'Except ye repent, ye ſhall periſh.' There are two things in this to preſs you to repentance.

1. If ye repent not, ye ſhall periſh. Sin unrepented of, brings ruin upon kingdoms, churches, congregations and families. And that is like to be the ruin of our land, and of our church, at this day. For alas; the face of all at this day is like that deſcribed Jer. viii. 6. 'I hearkened and heard, but they ſpake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedneſs, ſaying, What have I done! every one turned to his courſe, as the horſe ruſheth into the battle.' God has threatened us with deſolating ſtrokes, and is yet threatening; but the generation is like to thoſe ſcoffers ſpoken of, 2 Pet. iii. 4. ſaying, 'Where is the promiſe of his coming?' And becauſe God does not ſpeedily execute the ſentence, therefore men caſt off fear, and go on in their ſins, in defiance of heaven. But that concerns us nearly; Jer. ix. 9. 'Shall I not viſit them for theſe things? ſaith the Lord: ſhall not my ſoul be avenged on ſuch a nation as this?'

Sin unrepented of will ruin your ſouls; 'Except ye repent, ye ſhall periſh.' Conſider your life, your ſouls lie at ſtake. Sinner, thou haſt gone away from God, thy ſoul is left in pawn that thou ſhalt return by repentance. If thou return not, thy pawn, thy ſoul, is loſt loſt for ever. Heaven's gate is too narrow to let you in there with a burden of unrepented of ſin on thy back. Nay, heaven thou canſt never ſee; hell thou canſt not eſcape, if thou repent not. The goſpel calls you to repent; if not, 'the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on you that know not God, and that obey not the goſpel of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.' 2 Theſ.

i. 7, 8. Have pity therefore on your ſouls, Ezek. xviii. 31, 32. 'Caſt away from you all your tranſgreſſions, 'whereby you have tranſgreſſed, and make you a new 'heart and a new ſpirit; for why will ye die, O houſe 'of Iſrael? For I have no pleaſure in the death of him 'that dieth, ſaith the Lord God: wherefore turn your-'ſelves, and live ye.' To this narrow point the matter is brought, Repent, or periſh eternally; quit your ſins, or quit heaven.

Now, I pray you conſider here,

1ſt, The certainty of your ruin in an impenitent ſtate. Ye have it from the mouth of the Lord himſelf, in moſt plain and peremptory terms, that 'except ye 'repent, ye ſhall periſh.' If it were but a may be, it were ſufficient in all reaſon to determine us to repentance; for it is unaccountable to put the ſoul in hazard of everlaſting deſtruction, for all the profit or pleaſure of a ſinful courſe; a thouſand times more than for one to put himſelf in hazard of drowning to catch a fly. But it is not a may be, but certainly it ſhall be.

2dly, All other grounds of hope are cut off, if ye repent not. Tell me, O impenitent ſinner, that will not turn from thy ſin, what wilt thou truſt to for ſalvation from the wrath of God? Wilt thou truſt to the mercy of God? I tell thee thou art a deſpiſer of mercy, Rom. ii. 4. and thou cannot have it in this caſe, but over the belly of the truth of God; for he has ſaid, 'Except ye 'repent, ye ſhall periſh.' Pray conſider, if thou would have mercy, thou muſt ſeek it in God's way: If. lv. 7. 'Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous 'man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, 'and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, 'for he will abundantly pardon.'

Wilt thou truſt to Jeſus Chriſt, his blood and merits? Do not deceive yourſelf. Is not this Chriſt's own word, 'Except ye repent, ye ſhall periſh?' does not the Saviour tell thee this? *q. d.* None of my blood ſhall be wared on a ſinner to ſave him from wrath, that will not repent and turn from his ſin. Why does any body at all periſh that hears the goſpel, if folk may continue impenitent, and yet ſhare of Chriſt's blood? No, no; to whom Chriſt will be a Saviour from wrath, he will be firſt a Saviour from ſin, Math. i. 21. He will firſt give repentance, before he give acceſs to heaven; for Chriſt's blood was never ſhed to bring in dogs and ſwine into his Father's houſe, but ſhed, 'that he might redeem us 'from all iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar 'people, zealous of good works,' Tit. ii. 14.

3dly, Where will the fruit of ſin be, when this dear reckoning begins? Heb. x. 31. 'It is a fearful thing to 'fall into the hands of the living God.' Thou mayeſt get a time to run thy courſe: but at length thy eye-ſtrings will break, the laſt pulſe beat, and the ſoul will take wing, and go to another world, and becauſe of unrepented of ſin, be condemned to everlaſting flames. And when thou enters there, what will abide with thee of all the ſatisfaction thou haſt had in thy ſinful courſes? No; then thou muſt bid an eternal farewell to all ſatisfaction, eaſe, or delight whatſoever, either in God or thy luſts.

4thly, How wilt thou be able to ſtand under the load of wrath in the pit of deſtruction? Iſa. xxxiii. 14. 'The 'ſinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulneſs hath ſurpriſed 'the hypocrites: who among us ſhall dwell with the de-'vouring fire? who among us ſhall dwell with everlaſt-'ing burnings?' How wilt thou be able to grapple with vengeance, the Mediator's vengeance, while God ſhall hold thee up with the one hand, and puniſh thee with the other? Think in time on the worm that never dies, and the fire that is never quenched: for either thou muſt repent now, or that worm will gnaw thee, and that fire ſcorch thee for ever.

Laſtly, Conſider the eternity of this ſtate. The pleaſure, profit, and eaſe of ſin are but for a moment; but the deſtruction for ſin unrepented of is for ever, 2 Theſſ. i. 9. O madneſs! to run the riſk of everlaſting pain for a moment's pleaſure! If ruing, ſorrow, remorſe, rage againſt one's ſelf for ſin, were repenting, there would be repentance enough in hell. Men have off repentance now for the bitterneſs of it; but there is a ſweet in it too: but then ye ſhall have the bitterneſs of it in full meaſure, but never taſte of the ſweetneſs of it; for then the hopes of mercy are razed; and a fearful ſight of an everlaſting continuance of miſery, without end.

Have pity then on your own ſouls, and throw them not away for that which cannot profit.

2. If ye repent, ye ſhall never periſh. Repentance is the way to keep off the wrath of God from nations, churches, *&c.* Repentance is the way for each of us to eſcape the wrath of God: Ezek. xviii. 30. 'Repent, and 'turn yourſelves from all your tranſgreſſions; ſo iniqui-'ty ſhall not be your ruin.' *Acts* ii. 38. 'Repent, and 'be baptized every one of you in the name of Jeſus 'Chriſt, for the remiſſion of ſins.' All the threatenings of wrath are ſummonſes to repent, and have always that clauſe underſtood in them, 'Except ye repent, ye ſhall 'periſh:' Rev. ii. 22. 'Behold, I will caſt her into a 'bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great 'tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.' Though ye have ſinned with the world, if ye repent with God's elect, ye ſhall not periſh with the world. Conſider,

1ſt, It is not falling into ſin, but lying in ſin without repentance, that ruins folk to whom the goſpel comes, John iii. 19. For there is a remedy provided; and it is for all diſeaſes of the ſoul, even the worſt and moſt deſperate: and ſo nothing can be fatal to thoſe that are willing to employ the Phyſician, and to undergo his method of cure. They are in glory this day, whoſe ſins have been of the firſt magnitude, as David, Paul, Manaſſeh, Peter, *&c.*; but they were repenting ſinners.

2dly, There is mercy for thee, if thou wilt repent, and come to Chriſt. Good news, O ſinners, If ye repent, all your ſins ſhall be blotted out, ye ſhall be embraced in the wide and warm arms of mercy; if, as ye have gone away from God, ſo ye will come back again: Iſa. lv. 7. 'Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous 'man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, 'and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, 'for he will abundantly pardon.' Rev. iii. 20. 'Behold, 'I ſtand at the door and knock: If any man hear my 'my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, 'and will ſup with him, and he with me.' O ſirs, will not bowels of mercy draw you? God is now on a throne of mercy; he ſtretches out the golden ſcepter to you for peace, if ye will have it in his own way: and in his name we proclaim mercy to all poor ſinners that deſire to turn from their ſins unto God. O will not the proclamation of the indemnity touch the hearts of rebel ſinners, and cauſe them to relent?

Object. 1. But my ſins are many and great ſins. *Anſw.* God's mercies are many, Pſal. li. 1. and great too, Pſal. lxxxvi. 13. and his mercy is magnified in pardoning of ſuch. If thy ſins were as great as mountains, as many as the catalogue of them would reach from heaven to earth, there is mercy for thee, if thou wilt repent, Iſa. i. 18. 'Come now, and let us reaſon together, ſaith the 'Lord; though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as 'white as ſnow; though they be red like crimſon, they 'ſhall be as wool.' There is *riches of mercy*, Eph. ii. 4. *abundance of pardoning grace*, Iſa. lv. 7.

Object. 2. I have relapſed, gone back with *the dog to the vomit*, and with *the ſow that was waſhed to the wallowing in the mire.* *Anſw.* There is mercy for backſliders too, Jer. iii. 14. 'Turn, O backſliding children, 'ſaith the Lord, for I am married unto you.' Verſ. 22. 'Return, ye backſliding children, and I will heal your 'backſlidings.' If it were not ſo, who could be ſafe? Men muſt forgive in that caſe, and much more God will, Luke xvii. 4. For as the heavens are above the earth, ſo are God's thoughts above ours, Jer. iii. 1. 'They ſay, If a man put away his wife, and ſhe go from 'him, and become another man's, ſhall he return unto 'her again? ſhall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou haſt played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me ſaith the Lord.'

Object. 3. But I have deſpiſed and ſlighted mercy, and the remedy of ſin. *Anſw.* They had gone all that length, who had ſo far deſpiſed mercy, and the remedy of ſin, as they had murdered the Lord of glory, and yet they obtained mercy, Acts ii. 36, 37, 38. Deſpiſe and ſlight it no more, and your former ſins ſhall not be remembered.

Object. 4. I have ſo long gone on in ſin, that I can have no hope. *Anſw.* The longer the greater is your ſin; yet God has not diſcovered to us any particular time, beyond which he will not wait. There are ſome called at the eleventh hour; and thoſe that come in then, are not rejected. So was the thief on the croſs, See Ezek. xxxiii. 10, 11. Luke xiv. 22. Joel iii. 21.

Object. 5. But there is no body's caſe like mine. *Anſw.* Conſider the caſe of Manaſſeh, 2 Chron. xxxiii. and of Paul, 1 Tim. i. 13. Such inſtances are deſigned to encourage ſinners to repent in hopes of mercy, Eph. ii. 17. Adam's caſe was more hopeleſs, who had ſinned againſt more light and mercy, than ye were capable to do. But ſuppoſe your caſe is a non-ſuch evil, the mercy of God and the blood of Chriſt are non-ſuch remedies. And ye may be ſure, ſince he has ſaid, John vi. 37. 'Him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out,' that he will work a new thing on the earth, rather than that your caſe be unhelped, if ye will put it in his hand. So I conclude that there is mercy for you if you will repent.

Laſtly, Thou ſhalt certainly be ſaved for ever, if thou doſt repent, Ezek. xviii. 30. 'Repent, and turn yourſelves from all your tranſgreſſions; ſo iniquity ſhall not be your ruin.' No true penitents go to hell. Heaven is the landing place of all true penitents. They that turn from their ſins now, and turn unto God, ſhall for ever be with the Lord in another world.

O look to the glory that is above, and let your ſouls be moved to repentance by it. Caſt not away the hopes of eternal happineſs for what does not profit.

Now, ſinners, conſider theſe things, and be ſtirred up to repentance, and do not adventure over the belly of fair warning to go on in a courſe of impenitency. Impenitency under the goſpel is a ſin of a deep dye; beware of it.

1. It is a continuation of ſin; it draws out the thread of a God-provoking courſe, adding ſin to ſin, till God cut the thread of life. And O are there not enough of *items* ſtanding in God's accounts againſt you already? why will ye ſtill be adding more, inſtead of diminiſhing and breaking off the courſe by repentance?

2. It ſeals ſin and guilt on your ſoul. Impenitency keeps all the reſt of your ſins faſt on your ſouls, John iii. 19. 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds were evil.' If you would repent, no ſins whatſoever you are guilty of, would be ever able to ruin you; but if you do not, that one will keep all the reſt in life and vigour, to your utter ruin.

3. It flies in the face of the goſpel, of Chriſt himſelf, his apoſtles and miniſters, who with one voice call ſinners to repentance. If ye do this, ye do all; if ye do not this, ye do nothing; ye receive the grace of God in vain; it will be in vain to you that ever you heard the goſpel, that Chriſt died for ſinners, &c. for ye will have no benefit by any of theſe things.

4. *laſtly,* It is a bloody ſin, that will involve you in everlaſting miſery. For there is no eſcaping of the wrath of God, if you do not repent; ye are undone for ever. For *except ye repent, ye ſhall periſh.*

Now, ye have had a meſſage from the Lord, what anſwer ſhall I return to him that ſent me? I think I may rank up all in theſe ſix ſorts of ſinners.

1. The brutiſh ſinner, that hears as if he heard not. The word makes a noiſe in their ears becauſe they are capable of hearing; but alas they are no better than the beaſts, in ſo far as they make no reflections on it, with reſpect to their ſtate and caſe. What ſhall I ſay to you, but that the time comes when theſe ſouls of yours, drowned in a moſs of fleſh and blood, will be ſeparated from your bodies, and get a long eternity to reflect on the calls ye have had to repent. Iſ. i. 3. 'The ox knoweth his owner, and the aſs his maſter's crib: but Iſrael doth not know, my people doth not conſider.' Pſal. xxxii. 9, 10. 'Be not ye as the horſe or as the mule, which have no underſtanding: whoſe mouth muſt be held in with bit and bridle, leſt they come near unto thee. Many ſorrows ſhall be to the wicked.'

2. The ſullen deſperate ſinner, whoſe anſwer will be that, Jer. ii. 25. 'There is no hope. No, for I have loved ſtrangers, and after them will I go.' Their hearts are glued to their ſins, they have no will to part with them, and they have no hope that ever they ſhall be made willing, or if they were ſo, that God would receive them; and therefore they are reſolved to take their time. But O conſider, they have been reformed that have been as mad on their idols as you, as Manaſſeh and Paul. If that cannot draw you, pray anſwer that queſtion, Iſ. xxxiii. 14. 'Who among us ſhall dwell with devouring fire? Who amongſt us ſhall dwell with everlaſting burnings?'

3. The crafty ſubtile ſinner, whoſe anſwer will be that of Saul to Samuel, 1 Sam. xv. 15. 'Bleſſed be thou of the Lord; I have performed the commandment of the Lord.' But let the return to them be that of Samuel to Saul, verſe 14. 'What meaneth then this bleating of the ſheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?' What means your continuing in ſin, your not wreſtling and ſtriving againſt it in heart and life, if it be ſo?

4. The preſumptuous ſinner, whoſe anſwer will be that, Deut. xxix. 19. 'I ſhall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart.' There are ſome who have a heart of adamant, and put on a forehead of braſs, that nothing of this ſort can affect them. Let the meſſengers of the Lord be ſaying what they will, they will be doing. They will have their courſe, and perſwade themſelves all ſhall be well. To ſuch I would ſay, as verſ. 20, 21. 'The Lord will not ſpare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealouſy ſhall ſmoke againſt that man, and all the curſes that are written in this book ſhall lie upon him, and the Lord ſhall blot out his name from under heaven. And the Lord ſhall ſeparate him unto evil, out of all the tribes of Iſrael, according to all the curſes of the covenant, that are written in this book of the law.' See Iſ. xxviii. 16. and downwards.

5. The ſlothful ſinner, whoſe anſwer will be that of Felix to Paul, Acts xxiv. 25. 'Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient ſeaſon, I will call for thee.' They are convinced that they muſt repent, and reſolve to do it, but not yet. Young folk put it off to old age; old folk delay it to a deathbed. Every one puts it off from time to time. But O ſirs what certainty have ye of an hour, let be of a year? How many are there that never ſee old age? How many drop into eternity ere ever they are aware?

6. *laſtly,* The convinced ſinner, who being awakened, ſays, 'What ſhall I do to be ſaved?' For which reaſon I ſhall,

III. Shew you the great hindrances of repentance. And,

1. Thoughtleſſneſs is a great hindrance of it, Jer. viii. 6. 'I hearkened and heard, but they ſpake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedneſs, ſaying, What have I done? every one turned to his courſe, as the horſe ruſheth into the battle.' Men do not conſider their ſoul's ſtate, caſe, and way. They ſleep away their time careleſly without due reflection; and therefore their ſpiritual ſtate goes to wreck, and they pine away in their iniquity, and are not aware of the ſame,

2. The love and cares of the world are great hindrances of repentance, Luke viii. 14. Theſe take up mens hearts ſo, as that they have neither heart nor hand for the caſe of their ſouls. How many are there, whom the world keeps in a conſtant hurry all their life long, that they never come to conſider their way till death ſtare them in the face?

3. Prejudices againſt religion and ſeriouſneſs are great hindrances of repentance. Some ſee no profit in it; but 'godlineſs is profitable unto all things, having promiſe of the life that now is, and that which is to come,' 1 Tim. iv. 8. Some ſee no pleaſure in it: but 'wiſdom's ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace,' Prov. iii. 17. Some think that it is needleſs to be at all that pains, far leſs will ſerve: but, alas! they do not conſider what a holy jealous God the Lord is, and how many ſhall ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able.

4. Preſumption is a great hindrance of repentance, Deut. xxix. 19. They hope ſtill all ſhall be well, however they take their liberty in a ſinful courſe. They abuſe the mercy of God as a ſcreen to their luſts; not remembering that 'he will by no means clear the guilty.'

5. Unbelief, the not embracing of Chriſt, and apprehending the mercy of God in him, is likewiſe a great impediment in the way of repentance. And,

6. *laſtly*, Slothfulneſs, whereby the buſineſs is ſtill put off from time to time.

IV. I ſhall give direction in order to your obtaining repentance. Suppoſing what I have ſaid before of the way to gain repentance by believing, I offer further theſe following directions.

1. Labour to ſee ſin in its own colours, what an evil thing it is, Jer. ii. 19. What makes us to cleave to ſin is falſe-apprehenſions we have about it. To ſee it in itſelf would be a means to make us fly from it. For this end conſider,

1ſt, The majeſty of God offended by ſin. Ignorance of God is the mother of impenitency, Acts xvii. 30.

2dly, The obligations we lie under to ſerve him, which by ſin we trample upon.

3dly, The wrath of God that abides impenitent ſinners.

4thly, The good things our unrepented-of ſins deprive us of.

Laſtly, The many evils which are bred by our ſin againſt the honour of God, our own and our neighbour's true intereſt.

2. Be much in the thoughts of death. Conſider how ſhort and uncertain your time is. Hopes of long life bring many into a hopeleſs caſe. And who knows when he may have outlived his day of grace, when the moment comes that God ſhall ſay, *My Spirit ſhall not ſtrive* any more *with* this *man; for that he alſo is fleſh.*

3. Dwell on the thoughts of a judgment to come, where ye ſhall be made to give an account of yourſelves.

4. Meditate on the ſufferings of Chriſt.

5. Pray for repentance, and believingly ſeek and long for the Lord's giving the new heart, according to his promiſe, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. 'A new heart will I give you, and a new ſpirit will I put within you, and I will take away the ſtony heart out of your fleſh, and I will give you an heart of fleſh.' Ver. 32. 'Not for your ſakes do I this, ſaith the Lord God, be it known unto you: be aſhamed and confounded for your own ways, O houſe of Iſrael.'

6. *laſtly*, What ye do, do quickly. The ſooner you begin, the eaſier will the work be.

Take the three following marks of true repentance.

1. Sorrow for ſin, as offenſive to a good and gracious God, Zech. xii. 10.

2. Hatred of ſin, as the moſt abominable thing, Rev. ii. 6. This will be, 1. univerſal, againſt all known ſin; 2. conſtant, without intermiſſion; 3. implacable, without reconciliation; and, 4. vehement, without tolerating of it.

3. A fixed purpoſe and deſire of eſchewing ſin, and following of duty; guarding againſt preſent ſins, and the occaſions of theſe we are in hazard of; honeſtly endeavouring after it in the uſe of means, and labouring to remove the hindrances to a holy life.

The Danger of delaying REPENTANCE.

PROV. vi. 10, 11.

Yet a little ſleep, a little ſlumber, a little folding of the hands to ſleep. So ſhall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

I Have been preſſing ſinners to repentance from the former text, and I hope by this time all of you may be convinced of the neceſſity of it. But, alas! delays in this matter kill their ten thouſands. Men put off the work from time to time, till time be gone, and they are ſurpriſed into ruin, as we may learn from this text. Where,

1. We have the ſluggard's picture drawn, in reference to his eternal concerns; which is the main thing here aimed at. He is one that puts off his great work from time to time, 'Yet a little ſleep, a little ſlumber, a little folding of the hands to ſleep.'

In the 6th verſe the ſlothful ſinner is ſet to ſchool to learn a leſſon of the emmot; which though ſhe has not the advantages that he has, yet has ſo much natural ſagacity, as to provide for winter, in the time of ſummer and harveſt, when meat is to be got. In the 9th verſe there is a rouſing call to the ſinner to follow that example. But behold how he entertains it; as a perſon that is loth to ariſe, he begs *a little* more *ſleep, a little* more *ſlumber, a little* more *folding of the hands to ſleep.* Here is,

1ſt, Something ſuppoſed; and that is threefold.

(1.) The ſleeper convinced that he has ſlept, and neglected his work. There are many who ſee themſelves wrong, yet have no heart to endeavour to get right. They are convinced that their great work is far behind, yet have no heart to ſtir to ſet it forward.

(2.) The ſleeper convinced that he muſt awake, and ſet to his work. Slothful ſinners may ſee that the caſe they are in, is not a caſe they would venture to die in; they ſee that it is neceſſary to turn over a new leaf, to mind their ſalvation at another rate than they have done, or are doing.

(3.) The ſleeper reſolved to awake, and mind his buſineſs. He would fain ſleep, but he does not deſign to ſleep long, to ſleep always. No; he deſigns but a little ſleep, if ye will believe him, and afterwards to awake; though, poor ſoul, he does not conſider that he is ſleeping within the ſea-mark, and may be ſwallowed up ere he awake out of his little ſleep.

2dly, Something expreſſed; and that is threefold too.

(1.) A delay craved: *Yet a little ſleep*, &c. He is not thinking never to waken, never to repent, but only he cannot think on doing it as yet. However long a ſleep he has taken in ſin, yet he muſt have more. For as men, the more they ſleep, the more they would ſleep; ſo the more they continue in ſin, the more they would continue. And the more they put off repentance, they are the more unfit for it.

(2.) The quantity of this delay: it is but a *little* in the ſluggard's conceit. Though the Spirit of the Lord be grieved and wearied with waiting on his awakening, yet he thinks that all is but little. If the ſluggard conſidered that his whole time is but little in compariſon of eternity, the leaſt time he ſpends in his ſleep would appear very great. But, alas! he conſiders it not.

(3.) The mighty concern he is in for this delay. Though his ruin be wrapt up in it, he is fond of it, his heart is ſet upon it; and he pleads for it, as a ſtarving man for bread. Eaſe is ſweet to him; and ſo he ſpeaks, *A little ſleep*, *a little ſlumber*. There are three things here he craves, each leſs than the other; which ſhows how loath he is to beſtir himſelf. (1.) *A little ſleep*; not a dead ſleep, but a moderate one. (2.) If that cannot be granted, let him have but *a little ſlumber*; a napping, as it were a middle betwixt ſleeping and waking. (3.) If he cannot get that, yet he would have *a folding of the hands to ſleep*; Heb. *to lie a-bed*. Let him but lie ſtill loitering and embracing his ſweet ſelf, and not preſently be obliged to riſe to put hand to work. Love to folded hands goes deep with him.

Obſerve, how the hearts of ſinners are glued to their ſins, and carnal ſecurity. When conſcience begins to draw them out of their bed of ſloth, they will not yield, they will diſpute every foot of ground with it. And they will take very little ere they want all. O were we as nice in the point of our ſalvation, as in the ſtate of blindneſs, in the point of our ruin, how happy might we be?

2. We have the fatal iſſue of this courſe. Delays are dangerous, but moſt of all in matters of eternal concern. The iſſue of theſe delays is, The man is ruined, he never awakes till it is out of time. His *little ſleep*, &c. ſpends all his little time, and throws him out quite unprovided into a long eternity. Here conſider,

1ſt, What ruin comes upon him: *Poverty* and *want*. It is held forth under theſe notions, to anſwer to the proviſion the ants make for themſelves. They provide for themſelves in ſummer and harveſt; ſo that when the winter comes, when they cannot ſtir out of their holes, they live on the proviſion they have laid in. There is a winter abiding us, a time wherein no man can work, when there will be no acceſs to God's grace and favour. Death brings in this. This time is our ſummer and harveſt, wherein matters may be ſecured for eternity: but, alas! the ſluggard ſleeps in working time; and ſo when it is over, he muſt ſtarve, and periſh for ever.

2dly, How this ruin comes upon him. It comes on,

(1.) Swiftly and ſpeedily. So the word rendered *one that travelleth*, imports one that walketh vigorouſly, as a man in a haſte upon the road. Though the ſinner lies at eaſe on his bed of ſloth, yet his ruin haſteth on apace, 2 Pet. ii. 3. The ſun ſtands not ſtill, though the ſluggard's work goes but ſlowly on. Every breath he fetches in his ſpiritual ſleep, draws his deſtruction a ſtep nearer.

(2.) Silently and ſurpriſingly: *Thy poverty ſhall come as one that travelleth*. If we ſend one an errand, we will be looking for him again at the time appointed; but we know nothing of the traveller, till he come at us. So ruin comes on the delaying ſinner ere he is aware; deſtruction is at his bedſide ere he is awakened, Prov. xxix. 1.

(3.) Irreſiſtibly: *Thy want ſhall come as an armed man*; Heb. *a man of a buckler*, who may hurt thee; but not thou him, for his buckler defends him. Were this traveller unarmed, the danger were not ſo great; or were the party attacked watching, and armed too, he might poſſibly come off ſafe. But, alas! the poor man is naked, and ſleeping too; how then can he make his part good againſt his enemy? He cannot; he muſt fall a ſacrifice to his own ſloth. Which brings me to conſider,

3dly, What all this is owing to: *So ſhall thy poverty come as one that travelleth*, &c. It is all owing to the curſed love of eaſe, to ſloth, to the delays and put-offs, wherewith precious time is ſquandered away, and the precious ſoul is irrecoverably loſt. They delay and delay on, till the golden opportunity is loſt, and they are ſwept away into the pit, with all their good reſolutions for the time to come, which they never ſee.

The point I intend to ſpeak to from theſe words, is,

Doct. *The delaying and putting off of repentance or ſalvation-work, is a ſoul-ruining courſe among goſpel-hearers.*

In diſcourſing this doctrine, I ſhall ſhew,

I. Why it is that goſpel-hearers delay and put off repentance.

II. That this delaying is a ſoul-ruining courſe.

III. *Laſtly*, Make application.

I. I ſhall ſhew *why it is that goſpel hearers delay and put off repentance*. There is a generation that are not reſolved never to repent, never to ply ſalvation-work: but only they are not for it yet. They hope to mend and reform afterwards, but for the preſent they have no heart to it; ſo by cheating themſelves out of their preſent time, they put a cheat on themſelves for ever. They are called by the word, and by their own conſciences, to make ready for another world, to work out their ſalvation; but their hearts ſay, *Yet a little ſleep*, *a little ſlumber*, *a little folding of the hands to ſleep*; and their practice is conform. Why is it ſo?

1. Satan has a great hand in this. If he cannot hold out the light altogether from diſturbing them, he will do what he can to lull them aſleep again, before they be fully awakened, Luke xi. 21. 'When a ſtrong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace.' Thus he did with Felix, Acts xxiv. 25. who, 'as Paul reaſoned of righteouſneſs, temperance, and judgment to come, trembled, and anſwered, Go thy way for this time: when I have a convenient ſeaſon I will call for thee.' When the ſoul begins to think on making its eſcape, all the art of hell will be employed to hold it faſt; and it is eaſier to get one to put off ſalvation-work till afterwards, than downright to refuſe it altogether. And thus Satan is always on one of the two extremes, urging either that it is too ſoon, or elſe that it is too long a-doing.

2. The cares and buſineſs of the world contribute much to this. Hence our Lord explained 'the ſeed which fell among thorns,' to be thoſe, 'who when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches, and pleaſures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection,' Luke viii. 14. How often are people in ſuch an unſanctified throng of buſineſs, that they cannot find a convenient ſeaſon for putting their ſalvation-work to a point? They have ſo many other cares upon their heads, that they juſtle out the care of their ſouls, they find themſelves wrapt up in a cloud of cares; but think with themſelves, that were they but once through that, they ſhall ply their main work. Well, but they are no ſooner out of that, than they are in to another; and ſo on, till the work being put off from time to time, is quite neglected. The truth is, perſons in ſuch a caſe will hardly find a time for that work, till they be reſolute that they ſhall take it as they can find it.

3. The predominant love of carnal eaſe; Prov. xxvi.

15. ‘The ſlothful hideth his hand in his boſom, it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth.’ We are all naturally like Iſſachar, ‘who ſaw that reſt was good, and the land that it was pleaſant; and bowed his ſhoulder to bear, and became a ſervant unto tribute,’ Gen. xlix. 15. Could people get ſleeping to heaven on the ſluggard's bed, would drowſy wiſhes carry them thither, many would be the paſſengers in that way. But that will not do. Men muſt labour, ſtrive and wreſtle; and that is hard in the eyes of carnal men; and therefore, if it cannot be altogether refuſed, it is put off as long as may be. And hence never will a ſoul ply ſalvation-work in earneſt, till it be effectually rouſed out of its lazy diſpoſition.

4. The predominant love of ſin. Why do perſons ſtave off repentance, but becauſe they are like thoſe who entertaining their friends whom they have no will to part with, do therefore put off their departure from day to day? The parting with ſin is like the cutting off of a member of the body, Matth. v. 30. which one will never yield to, unleſs he be very reſolute. No man will delay a minute to throw a burning coal out of his boſom; but they will love to keep a ſweet morſel under the tongue, who yet know that they muſt ſpit it out at length. And hence it is, that no purpoſe of reformation, which is only for afterwards, can be ſincere: becauſe it argues a love to, and loathneſs to part with ſin.

5. A natural averſion and backwardneſs to holineſs, Rom. viii. 7. ‘The carnal mind is enmity againſt God: for it is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.’ The heart will never be reconciled to the yoke of Chriſt, till grace make it ſo, Pſal. cx. 3. But like as the bullock unaccuſtomed to the yoke is loath to ſtoop to it, and therefore ſtill draws aback; ſo will the heart of man do, till overcoming grace reach it, Jer. xxxi. 18. Hence, when light is let into the mind, but the averſion ſtill remains in the will; what can be expected, but that the buſineſs of repentance, which they dare not abſolutely refuſe, will be delayed?

6. The hope of finding the work eaſier afterwards. The ſluggard thinks with himſelf, that *a little* more *ſleep, a little* more *ſlumber, a little* more *folding of the hands to ſleep*, would make it eaſier to him to get out of his bed; though on the contrary, the more he ſleeps unſeaſonably, the more he would ſleep; and the longer perſons delay the work of repentance, it is the harder to go through with it. For ſin is a diſeaſe, which, the the longer it laſts, gathers the more ſtrength, and is harder to cure. And he that is not fit to-day to repent, will be leſs fit to morrow.

7. A large reckoning on the head of time that is to come: hence the rich man reckoned, ‘I will ſay to my ſoul, Soul, thou haſt much goods laid up for many years; take thine eaſe, eat, drink, and be merry.’ But let us hear the judgment of God concerning this ſpeech: ‘But God ſaid unto him, Thou fool, this night thy ſoul ſhall be required of thee: then whoſe ſhall thoſe things be which thou haſt provided?’ Luke xii. 19, 20. God has given no man a tack of years, no nor hours; yet every body is ready to tell what they will do to-morrow, next month, or next year. The young people think they have a great deal of time before their hand for repentance; the old people think they have enough before them for that too; and in people's conceit there is always enough, till their time be gone quite, and they be wakened out of their dream. Hopes of long life have ruined many a ſoul. O to be wiſe! Jam. iv. 13, 14. ‘Go to now, ye that ſay, To-day or to-morrow we will go into ſuch a city, and continue there a year, and buy, and ſell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what ſhall be on the morrow: for what is your life! it is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vaniſheth away.’ But what folly is it to venture eternity on ſuch uncertainty!

8. A fond conceit of the eaſineſs of ſalvation-work. There is a generation that pleaſe themſelves with the thought, that it is but to believe and repent, and that is ſoon done. What perſons can do with a touch of their hand, they think they need to be in no haſte with. But O how contrary is this to the whole ſtrain of ſcripture, and the ſaints experience? Matth. vii. 14. ‘Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.’ Luke xiii. 24. ‘Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate: for many, I ſay unto you, will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able.’ Eph. i. 19, 20. The apoſtle ſpeaks of *the exceeding greatneſs of* God's *power toward* them *who believe, according to the working of his mighty power; which he wrought in Chriſt, when he raiſed him from the dead.* 1 Pet. iv. 18. ‘If the righteous ſcarcely be ſaved, where ſhall the ungodly and the ſinner appear?’ Did men believe this, that there is ſuch a difficulty in getting to heaven, they would not dare delay for a minute entering on the way.

9. A conceit of ſufficient ability in ourſelves to turn ourſelves from ſin unto God. That the doctrine advancing the power of natural reaſon and ability in ſpiritual things, does take ſo much with the world, is no wonder, ſince man naturally is ſuch a ſtranger to his own ſpiritual impotency. Hence it is obſerved, that the firſt queſtion with the awakened is, ‘What ſhall I do to be ſaved?’ It is worth obſerving how the carnal heart turns itſelf into different ſhapes, to retain its ſinful luſts. Sometimes the man ſays, that he is not able to do any good; but when his ſin cannot find ſhelter under this covert, but he is purſued hot with conviction, he puts off his reformation and repentance to another time; thereby in effect declaring that he can do it, if he had but a ſeaſon for it. He that is to uſe his oars may row at what hour he pleaſes; but he that muſt ſail by the help of the wind, muſt ſet off while it blows, becauſe he cannot command it.

II. I ſhall ſhew, *that this delaying is a ſoul-ruining courſe.*

This is evident, if ye conſider,

1. It is directly oppoſite to the goſpel-call; which is for to-day, not for to-morrow: Heb. iii. 7, 8. ‘To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.’ All the calls of the goſpel require preſent compliance, and do not allow ſinners to put off till another day. It is true, ſalvation-work muſt be deliberate work; but ye are not allowed a time to deliberate whether ye will come to Chriſt and be holy or no. It is like the call to quench fire in a houſe, that muſt preſently be done, yet done deliberately, ſo as the work be not marred in the making. How then can it be but a ſoul ruining courſe?

2. It is threatened with ruin. The text is very expreſs, *So ſhall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.* And one with a thouſand times more ſafety might venture on a ſword-point, than the edge of ſuch a divine threatening. See Prov. xxiii. 21. Eccleſ. x. 18. And this threatening has been accompliſhed in many, whom their ſlothful delays have cauſed to periſh; as in the caſe of Ephraim, Hoſ. xiii. 13. and of Felix, Acts xxiv. 25. Many have been not far from the kingdom of God, who yet never came to it.

3. Whenever grace touches the heart, men ſee that it is ſo. Hence ſays the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. cxix. 60. ‘I made haſte, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.’ When men are in earneſt to get to Chriſt by faith, and to get back to God by repentance, they dare linger no more in the ſtate of wrath, they flee out of it, as one fleeing for his life, Matth. iii. 7. Their eyes are opened to ſee their danger, and therefore they are preſently determined.

4. It has a native tendency to ſoul-ruin, which inevitably overtakes them, if they do not at length break off all delays, and come away. This is evident, if ye conſider,

1ſt, The ſtate of ſin is a ſtate of wrath, where ruin muſt needs compaſs a man about on every hand: John

iii. 36. ‘ He that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee ‘ life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.’ To have ſtaid in Sodom that day it was to be burnt, was dangerous; but to abide a moment in the ſtate of wrath, is far more dangerous. Who would venture into a houſe that is about to fall? Who would not preſently leave it? And will men venture *yet a little ſleep, a little ſlumber, a little folding of the hands to ſleep,* in a ſtate of enmity with God? Surely ſuch perſons know not God's greatneſs, nor the worth of their own ſouls.

2dly, The longer ye continue in ſin, your ſpiritual death advanceth the more upon you. Every ſin ſets you a ſtep farther from God, is a new bar in the way of your peace with him, ſtrengthens your natural enmity againſt him, and alienates you more from the life of God. And where can this natively end, but in your ſoul's ruin? Ah! are we not far enough on in that way already? Why delay more, that we may go yet farther off from God?

3dly, While ye remain in this ſtate, there is but a ſtep betwixt you and death, which you may be carried over by a delay of ever ſo ſhort a time. All that is your ſecurity in this caſe, ſo far as ye can ſee, is the brittle thread of your life, which may be broken with a touch, and then ye are ruined without remedy. So that every delay, ſhorter or longer, of repentance, is a venturing of eternity on that uncertain life of yours, which in a moment may be taken from you.

USE 1. For *Information.* This ſets us ſee,

1. That delayers of repentance are ſelf deſtroyers, ſelf-murderers. Well may it be ſaid to ſuch, as Ezek. xviii. 31. ‘ Why will ye die? Should a man wilfully neglect a remedy for his diſeaſe, which puts him in hazard of his life, he could not be guiltleſs of his own death; more than one who being called to riſe and quench the fire in his houſe, and yet would lie ſtill till it were conſumed to aſhes, would be blameleſs of its ruin. Self love, that is, love of ſinful ſelf, is the ſource of the greateſt cruelty; whereby luſts are ſpared to the deſtruction of the life of the ſoul.

2: By delays the intereſt of hell is advanced: where many are this day who had reſolved to repent, but death did not wait their time, and ſo they were diſappointed. No wonder new grounds of delay be ſtill laid to perſons hands, for it is Satan's great drift to get men intangled in the wilderneſs, that they may not make forward to Canaan's land. And every new intanglement ſets the ſoul a ſtep nearer to deſtruction; and who will queſtion but Satan has art enough to coin new pretences for delays?

3. No wonder Satan is moſt buſy to ply the engine of delays, when a ſinner is ſomewhat awakened by conviction, as he did with Felix, Acts xxiv. 25. ‘ A ‘ ſoft anſwer turneth away wrath;’ and delays will blunt the edge of convictions, as much as a peremptory refuſal. Under convictions, at a ſermon, or on a ſick bed, the ſinner is awakened out of his ſleep; but then nothing can ſerve Satan's purpoſe better, than *yet a little ſleep;* which if they get, they ſleep off the edge of convictions.

4. They are ſinners beſt friends, that give them leaſt reſt in a ſinful courſe. And whatever men think of them now, they will think ſo afterwards, Prov. v. 11, 12, 13. Every body loves eaſe, and therefore faithful preaching and dealing with ſouls, is a torment to thoſe who love to be undiſturbed in their reſt in ſin, Rev. xi. 10. But what ſuits beſt with our ſinful inclinations, is worſt for our ſouls, and will in the end be found ſo. Flattery has ruined many, when plain dealing and fair warning has brought many out of the ſnare.

Uſe 2. Of *Lamentation.* We may lament here the caſe of many, nay of moſt, that hear the goſpel. They put off their work from time to time, and ſo their ſpiritual caſe is going to wreck day by day. This is the caſe in natural things: Eccleſ. x. 18. ‘ By much ſlothfulneſs the building decayeth, and through idleneſs of ‘ the hands the houſe droppeth through.’ They are in a dying condition, the phyſician comes to their bedſide, and offers them a remedy; they do not abſolutely refuſe it, only they put off the taking of it. In the mean time their diſtemper increaſes, and death is advancing apace. The market of free grace is opened, and they are called to come and buy; they ſee they need to buy, yet they are not like to ſtir till the market be over. O madneſs and folly to be lamented with tears of blood! Poor ſlothful creature, that is yet for a *little ſleep, a little ſlumber, a little folding of the hands to ſleep,* there are four things thou knoweſt not.

1. Thou knoweſt not the worth of a precious ſoul, which thou art throwing away for what will not profit. Will the ſweet ſleep in ſin quit the coſt of the ſouls ruin? No, no. ‘ For what is a man profited, if he ‘ ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? ‘ or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?’ Matth. xvi. 26. Chriſt left the boſom of the Father, and ſhed his precious blood to redeem the ſoul. He was wiſe that paid the price, and if leſs would have done, he would not have been at needleſs expence of blood: he was a Father that received it; and would not have put his Son to that, if it had not been neceſſary. Satan goes about without intermiſſion to ruin it. But what low thoughts doſt thou entertain of it, that wilt not break thy reſt to ſave it from ruin?

2. Thou knoweſt not the excellency of precious Chriſt; ſleep locks up thine eyes that thou canſt not ſee the raviſhing ſight, John i. 10. The eyes of ſaints and angels are fixed on him, as the glory of the upper houſe: the eyes opened here by grace, are arreſted by his overcoming glory. Hence are theſe rapturous expreſſions in ſcripture, Pſal. lxxiii. 25. ‘ Whom have I ‘ in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth ‘ that I deſire beſides thee.’ Cant. i. 3. ‘ Becauſe of ‘ the ſavour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ‘ ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love ‘ thee.’ Zion's crowned king is making his progreſs through the city where thou dwelleſt; the cry to come out and behold him, reaches thine ears, Cant. iii. *ult.*: but while he goes by thou muſt have *yet a little ſleep, a little ſlumber, a little folding of the hands to ſleep,* and ſo thou loſeſt the ſight. The royal bridegroom ſtretches forth his hand unto thee, to eſpouſe thee, ſaying, *Behold me, behold me;* thou openeſt thy drowſy eyes, and beginneſt to ſtretch forth the hand; but ſleep overcomes thee, thine eyes cloſe, and thy hand falls down again, and the match is marred. The chariot of the covenant that is driving on to his Father's houſe, halts at thy door, and thou art called out; the ſhip is to ſail to Immanuel's land, thou art called to come on board: but *yet a little ſleep, a little ſlumber, a little folding of the hands to ſleep,* and all is loſt.

3. Thou knoweſt not the worth of precious time. The apoſtle will have time *redeemed,* Eph. v. 16.; but thou ſquandereſt it away, as a thing of no value: and working time is turned by thee into ſleeping time. Precious moments ſlip away, and thou regardeſt not; though once gone they can never be recalled. What would thoſe who are paſt hope, give for an hour of that time, whereof thou letteſt days, months, and years, ſlip without any improvement for eternity? O unhappy ſoul, who ‘ knoweſt not in this thy day, the things that belong ‘ unto thy peace!’

4. Thou knoweſt not the weight of the wrath of God. It is true none can have a full comprehenſion of it, Pſal. xc. 11. ‘ Who knoweth the power of thine anger?’ But all the elect of God get ſuch a notion of it, as rouſes them up to fly from it, 2 Cor. v. 11. ‘ Knowing the ‘ terror of the Lord, (ſays the apoſtle,) we perſuade ‘ men.’ And if thou hadſt tolerable apprehenſions of it, it would break off thy ſleep and ſlumber, and cauſe thee put forth thy hands to work. Didſt thou conſider what ‘ a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the

‘living God,’ and how when thou falleſt down again into thy bed of ſloth, thou art truly in hazard of it, it would give thee ſuch a gliff as would keep thee waking.

There are three things thou doſt not obſerve.

1. Thou doſt not obſerve what ſpeed thy ruin is making, while thou lieſt at eaſe; how thy ‘judgment lingereth not, and *thy* damnation ſlumbereth not,’ 2 Pet. ii. 3. The avenger of blood is purſuing thee, though thou art not fleeing from the wrath to come. Thou art like a man ſleeping in a leaky ſhip, which is drawing water every moment, and within a little it will be full, and ſink to the bottom of the ſea, if he do not awake and help it. Every hour thy debt is growing, the cup of wrath is filling, and fills ſo much the faſter, as thou art ſecure.

2. Thou doſt not obſerve how near thy deſtruction may be. Thou art like the old world, who ‘were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not untill the flood came, and took them all away,’ Matth. xxiv. 38, 39. Thy ſpiritual lethargy and dead ſleep hinders thee from hearing the ſound of the feet of the approaching ſtroke. Thou lieſt open to the moſt terrible ſurpriſe, to ſleep the ſleep of death, which thou mayeſt never awake out of till in hell, Luke xii. 19, 20. and xvi. 23. And O how ſad is it for men to be paſt hope, ere they begin to fear; to have the houſe falling, ere they get over their bed!

3. Thou doſt not obſerve how utterly unable thou art to ward off the blow when it comes: Iſa. xxxiii. 14. ‘The ſinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulneſs hath ſurpriſed the hypocrites; who among us ſhall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us ſhall dwell with everlaſting burnings?’ Ezek. xxii. 14. ‘Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be ſtrong in the days that I ſhall deal with thee? I the Lord have ſpoken it, and will do it.’ Can worm man ſtand before the Almighty God, whoſe patience may be worn out ere thou awake? And if mercy and patience quit the field, juſtice will ſucceed into their room; and there ſhall be no more ſleeping, nor eaſe for ever.

Uſe 3. Of *Reproof* to delayers of ſalvation-work. Why do ye go on in this ſoul ruining courſe? Have ye no reſpect to the calls of the goſpel, none to your ſouls, none to eternity? Why do not ye with all your might whatever your hand findeth to do; I would apply myſelf here,

1. To delaying ſaints.
2. To delaying ſinners.

I. To delaying ſaints; for ſuch there may be, and of ſuch there are many at this day, Cant. v. 2, 3.; and our text is a general truth and warning. Spiritual ſloth is ſo interwoven with our corrupt natures, that it will never be quite rooted out, till the corrupt nature be perfectly expelled. And as it remains in great meaſure in the ſaints, ſo it is fruitful of delays. There are theſe five delays incident even to the ſaints.

1. A delay of righting their caſe when matters are wrong, by renewing their repentance, and the actings of faith. Sometimes their caſe is quite out of order; their graces are not in exerciſe; they are ſtrangers to the Spirit's influences, and to acceſs to and communion with God in duties. They have a ſecret diſſatisfaction with this, and are reſolved to get to their feet again; but ſloth maſters them, and the work is put off from time to time; as was the caſe with the ſpouſe, Cant. v. 2, 3. ‘I ſleep, but my heart waketh, (ſays ſhe:) it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, ſaying, Open to me my ſiſter, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night. I have put off my coat, how ſhall I put it on? I have waſhed my feet, how ſhall I defile them?’

2. The delaying to give up with ſome boſom-idol that mars their communion with God, Cant. iii. 1. Pſal. lxvi. 18. They are convinced, that the harbouring of it does much harm to their ſouls caſe, and many reſolutions they take to put the knife to the throat of it, but ſtill they draw back their hand. And from one time to another the crucifying of it is put off; ſo that ſtill it lives like a waſter in the candle, cauſing the ſoul's caſe go to wreck.

3. The delaying to clear their ſtate before the Lord. They ſee need to have marches rid, and to be brought to a point whether they be in Chriſt or not, whether in a ſtate of grace or not. They have reſolutions to put it to a ſolemn trial, to examine themſelves, and ſearch what evidences they have for a title to heaven; but ſtill the heart draws back, and the trial is put off.

4. The delaying of ſome particular duty, or piece of generation-work, which they are convinced God calls them to. They have often thoughts of ſetting about it in earneſt; but ſtill ſome one thing or other intervenes, and it is put off. They begin perhaps ſometimes; but it is broken off again, and they muſt yet have *a little ſleep, a little ſlumber, a little folding of the hands to ſleep.*

5. *laſtly*, The delaying of actual preparation for eternity; like the virgins, Matth. xxv. 5. who, ‘while the Bridegroom tarried, all ſlumbered and ſlept.’ They ſee that it is no eaſy thing to die; they reſolve to labour to put themſelves through grace into a caſe for it; but day after day it is delayed. The lamps are not trimmed for meeting the Bridegroom. Though they be in a good ſtate, they have not a dying frame.

To all ſuch I would ſay, as Jonah i. 6. ‘What meaneſt thou, O ſleeper? ariſe, call upon thy God, if ſo be that God will think upon *thee*, that *thou* periſh not.’ Let me expoſtulate with you upon this head, O delaying ſaints,

1. Do ye find yourſelves any thing the nearer your purpoſe by all your delays? Nay, the longer ye delay, do not ye find yourſelves the farther from it? Does not your averſion and backwardneſs to duty grow upon you the more? and is not your confidence in the Lord ſtill the more leſſened? Yes, the more ye give yourſelves to ſpiritual ſleep, the more ye will deſire to ſleep.

2. Do not ye find this the way to rank poverty and want? Your conſciences will witneſs the truth of that, that where the diligent ſhall abound with bleſſings, the idle ſoul ſhall ſuffer hunger. Is it with you as in months paſt? Have ye that ſenſe and guſt of religion, that acceſs to God in duties, which ye have had when ye were doing with your might what your hand found to do?

3. Has not your poverty come upon you as one that travelleth? Have ye not been ſometimes, like Samſon, awaked out of Delilah's lap, and found your ſtrength gone from you when you had moſt to do with it? Perhaps thou haſt ſpent many days in eſtrangment from God, with much eaſe, but at length ſome ſtrong temptation, or piercing trial has overtaken you; and then you have ſucked the bitter ſap of your ſlothful delays.

4. *A little* more *ſleep*, *a little* more *ſlumber*, *a little* more *folding of the hands to ſleep*, and the occaſion may be loſt, the opportunity for doing neglected duties may be loſt. Either they may be taken from you, or ye from them. No man has a tack of his life, nor of occaſions of doing good; and therefore ‘as we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, eſpecially unto them who are of the houſehold of faith,’ Gal. vi. 10. And though the ſoul that is in Chriſt ſhall be ſaved ſurely, yet this will make the ſalvation to be ſo as by fire.

5. *laſtly*, The long-delayed work is hard work when it comes to the ſetting to, Cant. v. 5.—8. When the awakening comes, there may be little time, much oppoſition, and leſs ſtrength than otherwiſe thou wouldſt have had, and yet more to do with it than otherwiſe. The longer thy hand is from thy caſe, the more ravelled will it be. And it will readily occaſion much fear, darkneſs, and perplexity, in a dying hour.

II. I would apply myſelf to delaying ſinners, to thoſe that are yet out of Chriſt, and have all to do for eternity ſtill. They are living in a ſtate of wrath, and yet they linger, and put off their removal from Sodom. They delay repentance, and go on in their ſin. I would ſay to you, as Prov. vi. 9. ‘ How long wilt thou ſleep, O ‘ ſluggard? when wilt thou ariſe out of thy ſleep?’ I muſt expoſtulate with you on this head,

Firſt, Ye young people, why do ye delay repentance? why are ye like the wild aſſes colts, untractable and unteachable? No doubt ye think it is too ſoon for you; that it may be time enough ſeveral years after this. Ye think repentance and ſeriouſneſs ſuits beſt with the wrinkled brows, the pale face, and hollow eyes, &c. that it is pity to ſpoil the bloom of youth with ſuch work. When do ye mind to repent then? It is like, it is when ye are ſettled in the world, or when ye grow old; at leaſt the days of youth muſt be over firſt. But poor fool,

1. Is the debt of ſin ſo ſmall upon thy head, that thou muſt run thyſelf deeper in the debt of God's juſtice? Doſt not thou know that thou waſt born a child of wrath, Eph. ii. 3.; that thou broughteſt that into the world with thee, that will damn thee, if thou repent not, and come to Chriſt? And will not that ſink thee deep enough in deſtruction, though thou add no more to it, unleſs thou repent?

2. Is not the ſame holy law binding on thee, ſince thou could diſcern betwixt good and evil, that is binding on the oldeſt alive? Have the young a liberty to ſin, and to caſt off the fear of God and religion, more than the old? See Gal. iii. 10. ‘ For as many as are of ‘ the works of the law, are under the curſe: for it is ‘ written, Curſed is every one that continueth not in ‘ all things which are written in the book of the law ‘ to do them.’ Here there is no exception. The follies of youth men may paſs: but aſſure yourſelves, God will not paſs them: Eccleſ. xi. 9. ‘ Rejoice, O young ‘ man, in thy youth, and let thy heart chear thee in the ‘ days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine ‘ heart, and in the ſight of thine eyes: but know thou, ‘ that for all theſe things, God will bring thee into ‘ judgment.’ And I doubt not, but if ye ſaw your ſinful thoughts, words, and actions, whether vain or vile, laid before you, as you muſt reckon for them at length, how few ſoever your years have been, you will ſee them to be more than the hairs on your heads. And I muſt tell you, that being yet unrenewed, and ſtrangers to the life of grace, all your actions have been ſin: Prov. xxi. 4. ‘ An high look, a proud heart, and the ploughing ‘ of the wicked is ſin.’ And is it not then high time to repent.

3. Who has aſſured thee, that ever thou ſhalt ſee the age thou ſpeakeſt of? Go to the church-yard, and ye will ſee graves of all ſizes, of your length, and under. There are far more young corpſes, than there are of thoſe that carry gray hairs, ten to one. It is obſerved, by theſe who have accurately examined the records of the dead, that one half of mankind die before five years of age, and near a third more before twenty. How few then muſt arrive at old age? Moſt men and women are cut off before they come to old age. What has befallen others as young and flouriſhing as you, may befal you too. And therefore, ſince ye know not but ye may die young, repent while ye are young, leſt in the end ye find yourſelves miſerably diſappointed.

4. Who has beſt right to your youth and ſtrength? God or the devil? God is courting you for his own gift, Eccleſ. xii. 1. ‘ Remember now thy Creator in the days ‘ of thy youth.’ Satan will labour to keep his poſſeſſion. God is the firſt and laſt; and he required the firſt and beſt, the firſt-fruits, the firſt-born, the morning ſacrifice; and he requires the firſt of your days, and he takes pleaſure therein, Jer. ii. 2. ‘ I remember thee, the kindneſs of thy youth, the love of thine eſpouſals, when ‘ thou wenteſt after me in the wilderneſs, in a land ‘ that was not ſown.’ And will ye devote the firſt and beſt to ſin and Satan, reſerving the laſt and worſt to your Creator?

5. Great is the advantage of thoſe that get a grip of religion while they are young, beyond others, in many reſpects. (1.) Readily their paſſage in the pangs of the new birth will be eaſier than that of others. In none is that ſcripture fulfilled more, Mark iv. 27. of ‘ the ſeeds ſpringing and growing up, none knoweth ‘ how,’ than where grace joins with good education in young perſons. The nail lately driven draws eaſily in compariſon of that which has been long ruſted in. Where grace catches perſons before they begin to dip into the groſs pollutions of the world, it frees them of much remorſe that theſe muſt occaſion to thoſe that have been led away with them. (2.) Young people's affections are eaſieſt moved; and as they move eaſieſt, ſo they move moſt vigorouſly, whatever way they be ſet. Hence they lie moſt fair for taſting the ſweet of religion, Hoſ. ii. 14. ‘ I will allure her, and bring her into the ‘ wilderneſs, and ſpeak comfortably unto her.’ God ſometimes dandling young converts upon the knees, and giving them ſenſible taſtes of the pleaſure of religion, is agreeable to the particular promiſe made for their encouragement, Prov. viii. 17. ‘ I love them that love me, ‘ and thoſe that ſeek me early, ſhall find me.’ (3.) They are in the faireſt way to have moſt acceſs to ſerve God in their generation. Suppoſe a man to be converted when he is old, his ſalvation will be ſecure; but alas! his time for ſerving God's honour in the world is almoſt gone ere he puts hand to work.

6. *laſtly*, God commands you to repent preſently, and therefore it is on the peril of your ſoul, that ye venture to delay a moment longer, Heb. iii. 7, 8. ‘ To‘day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.’ Remember that word, Eccleſ. xi. 9, 10. ‘ Rejoice, O ‘ young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart chear thee ‘ in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy ‘ heart, and in the ſight of thine eyes: but know thou, ‘ that for all theſe things God will bring thee into judg‘ment. Therefore remove ſorrow from thy heart, and ‘ put away evil from thy fleſh: for childhood and youth ‘ are vanity.’ A ſinful youth will at length make a ſad ſoul. Ye know not how ſoon God may be provoked againſt you to cut you off, if you delay. Monuments of the Lord's anger have been ſet up in childhood and youth, as well as in old age. Witneſs the children at Bethel, 2 Kings ii. 23, 24.

Let not Satan deceive you, as if there were no pleaſure in religion. No; wiſdom's ‘ ways are ways of ‘ pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace.’ Prov. iii. 17. There is a ſweet in religion a thouſand times preferable to all the pleaſures and vanities youth gades after.

Secondly, Ye middle aged people, why do ye delay repentance? Why do not ye think with yourſelves ſeriouſly, where ye are like to take up your eternal lodging, and prepare for eternity by repentance? No doubt ye think ye have time enough too; but no time at preſent, for ye have another thing ado, the care of a family upon your heads, Luke xiv. 20. When is your term day of repentance? It is like it is when ye ſhall have more time than now, or when ye grow old. But, O Sirs,

1. What know ye that ever ye ſhall ſee old age? Yea, what doſt thou know, but, as Luke xii. 20. ‘ this night ‘ thy ſoul ſhall be required of thee?’ Alas! ſhall men thus from time to time venture their eternal ſtate upon a mere uncertainty? Thy life is but a day, a ſhort day, a winter day, and thou haſt a long journey to go; thy forenoon is paſt already, and wilt thou ſleep on till evening that will ſoon be upon thee? The declining ſun calls thee to awake.

2. What reaſon is there, that thy buſineſs in the world ſhould ſhuffle out thy buſineſs for eternity? Remember they had as good excuſes as you, who upon the ſending of them were rejected, and it was declared their day of grace was paſt, Luke xiv. 18, 19, 20. 24. Oh haſt thou not a ſoul to provide for, thy eternal ſtate to look after? Can ye wonder, if, as ye prefer the world to Chriſt now, he give you your portion in this life; and

if ever the time come that thou ſet thyſelf to repent, he deny thee his grace, and bid thee go to the gods thou haſt ſerved?

3. Conſider the advantages thou haſt now for ſeriouſneſs, when the foam of youth has ſettled, and the infirmities of old age have not yet drawn on. O conſider, and ſhew yourſelves men. Ye have ſpent your youth in vanity, and will ye ſpend this age too that way? What is it ye deſign for God, the dregs of thy years, that age that is the ſink of infirmities? and ye will part with ſin, when ye can follow it no longer. O Sirs, what confidence can ye have, that God will accept that off your hand? Mal. i. 8. ‘ And if ye offer the blind for ſacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and ſick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governour, will he be pleaſed with thee, or accept thy perſon? ſaith the Lord of hoſts.’

4. Suppoſe ye ſhould live till ye grow old, O how few are there that get grace to repent when they are old? I ſhall not ſay, there are none ſuch; but truly though they be, they are very rare. Be not ye encouraged to delay, becauſe ſome were called at the eleventh hour, Matth. xx. 6. for if ye mark the text, theſe were others than thoſe that were ſtanding there at the third ſixth, and ninth hour. We ſet no bounds to ſovereignty, but as for thoſe that live under the goſpel, and ſpend their beſt days in ſin and eſtrangedneſs from religion, common obſervation tells us, that it is God's ordinary way to plague them with hardneſs of heart, when they grow old, Job xx. 11. ‘ His bones are full of the ſin of his youth, which ſhall lie down with him in the duſt.’ About three hundred years after Chriſt, there was one that had lived a Pagan till he was an old man; when he told Simplicianus that he was a Chriſtian, he would not believe him: but when the church ſaw that he was really ſo, there was great ſhouting and gladneſs, ſaying, *Caius Marius Victorius is become a Chriſtian!* They wondered to ſee a man when he was old born again.

5. *laſtly*, Will ye ſee the deceit of delays. When ye were young, did not ye put it off to this time; and now when that is come, ye are as unready as before. Delay no more then, leſt ye ſleep the ſleep of death.

Thirdly, Old people, why do ye delay repentance: why is not your heart bowing to God's call, when ye are begun to bow to meet the grave? ye who have always thought ye had time enough all your days, ye will think there is time enough yet. But when is your term day for repentance? a death bed, it is like. And when ye come there, ye will hope it will be but a ſick bed, and ſo drive off your work to the utmoſt point. But O ſirs!

1. May not *the time paſt of your life ſuffice to have wrought the will of the fleſh?* Muſt ye have *yet a little ſleep, a little ſlumber, a little folding of the hands to ſleep?* Well, when ye have taken it over the belly of God's call to you all your days, what confidence can ye have to look for grace or mercy then? Sin, Satan, and the world ſhall have all your time, and ye will look to God, and ſeek his favour, when ye can do no more. O, are ye not afraid, that that be accompliſhed on you? Prov. i. 24. *&c.* ‘ Becauſe I have called, and ye refuſed, I have ſtretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have ſet at nought all my counſel, and would none of my reproof; I alſo will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as deſolation, and your deſtruction cometh as a whirlwind; when diſtreſs and anguiſh cometh upon you,’ *&c.* I trow if your conſcience were awakened juſt now, ye ſhould have enough ado to faſten your feet on a promiſe of mercy.

2. How do ye know, that ye will get a death-bed or ſick-bed? What do ye know, but that in a moment ye may drop into eternity, as many have done? Mind him who uſed to ſay, three words would do his turn at death. Death does not always ſend meſſengers to warn us of its approach. Nay, ſee what our Lord ſays expreſsly, Matth. xxiv. 48. to 51. ‘ If that evil ſervant ſhall ſay in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming. And ſhall begin to ſmite his fellow-ſervants, and to eat and drink with the drunken: the Lord of that ſervant ſhall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of; and ſhall cut him aſunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.’

3. *laſtly*, And is dying ſuch an eaſy buſineſs, that ye muſt be laying up other work, yea your main work, for a dying time? I ſhould think, that dying itſelf, with the pains, throes, and ſickneſs that ordinarily attend it, were enough of themſelves. Surely, if we were rightly exerciſed in health, we would endeavour, that when we come to die, we ſhould have nothing ado but to die. But I pray you remember, you may come to die roving, without the exerciſe of your reaſon. But though ye ſhould have it to the laſt, I pray you conſider, is the work of repentance ſuch an eaſy work as to leave it till the time you can do nothing elſe? Will ye put off turning to God, till ye are not able to turn yourſelves on a bed, but as ye are lifted? Taking heaven by ſtorm, till your ſtrength be gone? Crying to God, till ye are not able to ſpeak two ſentences at once? Making ready for death, till it be come to your bed-ſide?

Use. *ult.* I exhort you all to delay repentance and ſalvation-work no longer.

Mot. 1. Conſider ye do but mock God, and cheat yourſelves by your delaying. For it is inconſiſtent with a ſincere purpoſe to repent, and turn from ſin, 1 Pet. iv. 1, 2, 3. For he that ſincerely minds to turn from ſin, will preſently turn from it.

Mot. 2. Repentance is not in your power; it is God's gift, which he gives when he will, Acts v. 31. ‘ God hath exalted Chriſt with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Iſrael.’ The time of God's grace is limited; a time wherein he will be found, and when not: Iſa. lv. 6. ‘ Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.’ Death certainly puts a period to it. But it ſeems to be clear, that men may out-live their day of grace: Luke xiv. 24. ‘ I ſay unto you, that none of thoſe men which were bidden, ſhall taſte of my ſupper.’ Time was when Eſau might have had the bleſſing, but then he deſpiſed it; but the time came when he could not have it: Heb. xii. 17. ‘ Ye know how that afterwards when he would have inherited the bleſſing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he ſought it carefully with tears.’ Strike in then with the occaſion; for if wind and tide fail, there can be no ſetting to ſea.

Mot. 3. Though we knew certainly, that our day of grace were far from the end; yet it is a moſt unworthy thing ſo to deal with God. Shall men abuſe mercy and grace, becauſe the Lord waiteth to be gracious? Will men abuſe the divine patience, becauſe it ſuffers long? What a folly is it to ſtand off as long as we can from him, to whom we muſt needs ſubmit ourſelves at length?

Mot 4. The time is ſhort, the work great, and ſo is the oppoſition. Salvation-work is a great work; it is no eaſy thing to be a Chriſtian: ye muſt lay your account with all the oppoſition the devil, the world, and the fleſh can make you; ye have but an age that is as an hand-breadth, as nothing, to do it in.

Mot. 5. Your life is moſt uncertain. We are tenants at will, we have no tack for to morrow, James iv. 13, 14. forecited. We are agreed about the neceſſity of repentance; the only queſtion is, When ſhall it be done? God ſays, *To day*, and to morrow is not yours, but God's. How then can ye deſtinate for this uſe the time that is not yours; “ Return to God one day before thy death,” ſay the Jewiſh doctors. Wiſely ſaid; return then to day, for it may be ye ſhall die to morrow.

Mot. 6. The longer ye delay, the work will be the harder. For ſin becomes ſtronger, as the waters, the farther from the head, the greater they grow. And the arrow that going from the bow ſtrays from the mark, how far wide will it be ere it come to the utmoſt point? It is obſerved, that Chriſt groaned at the raiſing of Lazarus four days dead; but not ſo at the raiſing of the young man of Nain, or Jairus's daughter. Jer. xiii. 23. 'Can the Ethiopian change his ſkin, or the leopard his ſpots? then ye may alſo do good, that are 'accuſtomed to do evil.' Their number increaſeth; the devil who comes alone at firſt, at length his name is Legion. The heart grows harder, the mind blinder, the will more perverſe, the affections more carnal.

Mot. 7. A moment's delay may be an eternal loſs, becauſe thou knoweſt not any moment that may not be thy laſt.

Mot. ult. God commands you to repent preſently, Heb. iv. 7. Therefore upon your peril it is, if ye delay any more.

Object. The thief on the croſs repented at the laſt gaſp. *Anſw.* His repentance was one of the miracles at Chriſt's death; and he glorified God more at his death than ye could if ye had been a penitent all your days. But though there was one that none might deſpair, yet there was but one that none might preſume. The other thief even died as he lived.

The extraordinary Caſe of the Thief on the Croſs no Argument for delaying REPENTANCE.

Two SERMONS, preached at Etterick, in June 1717.

LUKE xxiii. 42.

And he ſaid unto Jeſus, Lord, remember me when thou comeſt into thy kingdom.

THE love that ſinners bear to their luſts, and the conviction men generally have of the neceſſity of repentance, each of them putting in for a ſhare, do natively produce a delay. And Satan and the corrupt heart join to ſupport the delaying temper, both by pretended reaſons, and abuſed examples: amongſt which laſt none is more ſo than this of the thief who repented on the croſs.

My great deſign being to convince you, that this inſtance can be no encouragement to delay repentance, I need not here lay for a foundation the proof of this man's ſincerity, which the text and context put beyond all doubt; nor inſiſt on explaining this his prayer, full of faith and repentance, which had a moſt gracious anſwer.

Every body knows the ſtory; and they that know very little of the Bible, will be found acquainted with this inſtance of the penitent thief on the croſs; and they abuſe it to their own ruin, drawing encouragement from it to put off repentance till they come to a death-bed.

We need not much wonder, that this becomes a ſtumbling-ſtone to many, on which they are ruined. Hearing the thief was converted near the laſt gaſp, and having led a ſinful life, the thread was ſuddenly broken, and he died happily; his day was a dark day all over, till in the evening the ſun broke out with a bright though ſhort glimpſe, and then ſet: that is, I ſay, abuſed and turned to a ſtumbling ſtone by impenitent ſinners, is no great wonder, if ye conſider the following things.

1. As a vitious ſtomach corrupts the beſt of meat; ſo impenitent ſinners abuſe the beſt things to their own ruin: ſo that what raiſes up others taught of God, is an occaſion of falling to them. The altar of God, and the whole law was ſo to the unbelieving Jews, Rom. xi. 9. Is not the very goſpel, and the preachers thereof, a *ſavour of death* to ſome? 2 Cor. ii. 6. Nay, Chriſt himſelf is *a ſtumbling block* to them, 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8.

2. There is a particular diſpoſition in the hearts of impenitent ſinners to abuſe and wreſt the ſcriptures. Hence Peter ſpeaking of Paul's epiſtles, ſays, 'In them 'are ſome things hard to be underſtood, which they 'that are unlearned and unſtable wreſt, as they do alſo 'the other ſcriptures, unto their own deſtruction,' 2 Pet. iii. 16. The ſcripture is a light, and a rule of divine authority; and it may well be expected, that if ſinners cannot but perſuade themſelves of a ſhelter there for their ſins, it will be the moſt effectual one. This is the moſt feaſible means for ſtilling the clamours of an ill conſcience, and cheating men into their own ruin.

3. Abuſed ſcripture is one of the chief pieces of Satan's armour, wherewith he maintains and promotes his kingdom among thoſe that have the ſcriptures. Thus Satan ſaid to Chriſt, Matth. iv. 6. 'If thou be the Son 'of God, caſt thyſelf down: for it is written, He ſhall 'give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their 'hands they ſhall bear thee up, leſt at any time thou 'daſh thy foot againſt a ſtone.' Hence unclean perſons ſtill their conſciences with the example of David, ſwearers with that of Joſeph by the life of Pharaoh, or Peter's, *&c.* Men that are mere moraliſts ſcreen themſelves with that, Micah vi. 8. 'He hath ſhewed thee, O man, 'what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, 'but to do juſtly, and to love mercy, and walk humbly 'with thy God?' And others ſatisfy themſelves with good meanings and deſires, becauſe of that, Matth. v. 6. 'Bleſſed are they which do hunger and thirſt after 'righteouſneſs; for they ſhall be filled.' Others think, they may repent at any time, from that ſcripture, Ezek. xviii. 27. 'When the wicked man turneth away from 'his wickedneſs that he hath committed, and doth that 'which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſave his ſoul alive.' And thus it becomes harder to convince men that have ſome notional knowledge of the Bible, than thoſe that never knew it.

4. Reigning love to ſin makes people very dexterous to find out ſhifts for to preſerve their luſts; as in Saul's ſpeech to Samuel, 1 Sam. xv. 15. 'They have brought 'them from the Amalekites: for the people ſpared the 'beſt of the ſheep and of the oxen, to ſacrifice unto the 'Lord thy God, and the reſt we have utterly deſtroyed.' What people would fain have to be true, it is eaſy to perſuade them of: and what they are loath to part with, it is not hard to invent ſhifts to hold it ſtill. Were men willing to be the Lord's, they would be ſo preſently; and they would be loath to delay one moment; leſt they ſhould never ſee another.

To come to this particular inſtance in the text, I muſt tell you, That though here is ground of hope for poor trembling ſinners, that they may be brought to repentance, and be accepted of God; yet there is no ground here for crafty delaying ſinners to put off repentance, in hopes to go through with it afterwards, eſpecially in a dying hour.

I. There is ground of hope for trembling ſinners. And we may learn from this inſtance theſe following leſſons.

1. They may go long on, and far on in the way to hell, whom yet God may bring home to himſelf. Here is a man, a thief, whoſe courſe brought him to an ill end, to a violent death, and yet grace reaches him. See the following remarkable paſſage, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11. ‘Know ye not that the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abuſers of themſelves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, ſhall inherit the kingdom of God. And ſuch were ſome of you: but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God.’ From this it appears, that ſome of the Corinthian converts had been formerly the vileſt of wretches, and guilty of the moſt enormous lewdneſs and impiety; and yet became famous monuments of the triumphs of ſovereign efficacious grace. What a length did Manaſſeh and Paul go; and yet what illuſtrious penitents did they afterwards become? The latter juſtly acquired the character of the greateſt of ſaints, and the moſt eminent of all the apoſtles.

2. Grace ſometimes catches them that in appearance, and to the eyes of the world, are fartheſt from it. It paſſeth by the moſt likely, and pitches on the moſt unlikely objects. While chief prieſts, ſcribes, and elders mock Chriſt, the thief on the croſs is converted. The Lord loves to ſet up the trophies of his victory in the midſt of the devil's kingdom. Hence is that promiſe, Iſa. lv. 5. ‘Behold, thou ſhalt call a nation that thou knoweſt not, and nations that knew not thee, ſhall run unto thee, becauſe of the Lord thy God, and for the holy One of Iſrael; for he hath glorified thee.’

3. Grace makes a vaſt difference betwixt thoſe betwixt whom it finds none. Here are two thieves, both on the croſs; graces touches the heart of the one, but paſſeth by the other; and makes the one a convert, while the other dies hardened. So true is Paul's obſervation, Rom. ix. 16. ‘So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that ſheweth mercy.’

4. *laſtly*, While there is life there is hope. Here is one converted when near the laſt gaſp; while his laſt ſand is running, grace overtakes him; opens the eyes that before were cloſed, wins the heart that had been all along hardened. But I ſtay not on theſe things. Only the uſe that is to be made of this is,

1. Let thoſe that ſeek God early be encouraged from this, that they ſhall find him, Prov. viii. 17. ‘I love them that love me, and thoſe that ſeek me early ſhall find me.’ Was he ſo ready to receive a penitent ſoul coming in at the laſt hour, then ſurely he will be very ready to receive thee that comes in before that time. He rejected him not becauſe he was long a-coming; but received him becauſe he came. Come then forward with aſſured hope of thy acceptance upon thy early return.

2. Let not thoſe whoſe day is almoſt gone, before they have begun their work, deſpair. Who knows but that may be done in the evening, that was neglected the whole day before? A gale from heaven may blow, that may put life in an old ſinner, and make his fleſh freſher than that of a child. The door of the vineyard ſtands open for labourers to come in even at the eleventh hour. Sovereignty is not penned up to times and ways, but takes a latitude in both.

3. *laſtly*, Let us ſow beſide all waters, in the morning and in the evening. It depends on the working of free grace, which ſhall proſper. We are ready to be hopeleſs of ſucceſs, where perſons have long ſtood out againſt the Lord. But God's heavy hand on a man, and a view of eternity, may afford a ſeaſon wherein the wild aſs may be caught.

II. But there is no ground here for the crafty delaying ſinner to put off repentance, eſpecially till a dying hour. To ſet this matter in a true light, conſider theſe following things.

1. It is a moſt rare example. There is not an inſtance like it in all the book of God, unleſs it be that of Achan, Joſh. vii. 20, 21. Yet the Lord has left that caſe of Achan's much under a cloud; ſo that it is not poſitively determined, as this is, though we may charitably hope the beſt in his caſe too. Now, here I would have you to conſider,

1ſt, What leſs could there have been to have cleared a poſſibility of acceptance with God, for a ſinner at the laſt, after he has ſpent all his days in ſin? If we had not this inſtance, what could have been ſaid to ſhew ſuch wretched miſ-ſpenders of time, that ever any that was ſo long a ſetting off in their journey to heaven did get in? And becauſe this ſays, that none ſhould deſpair; muſt it therefore import, that they may ſafely delay? The ſun once ſtood ſtill in the days of Joſhua; which ſays it is poſſible ſuch a thing may be; but will any man delay his work in hope of ſuch an extraordinary caſt again? and why will ye?

2dly, As one ſwallow makes not ſpring, ſo neither can this one event make a general rule that you or I may truſt to. The ordinary rule is, That as men live, ſo they die; a holy life, a happy end; a graceleſs, careleſs life, an unhappy and miſerable end. Becauſe providence may go off the ordinary road, and do that in a few minutes with ſome, that ordinarily coſts many years to others; can you venture eternity on that, that he will do ſo with you? Moſes faſted forty days and nights, Exod. xxxiv. 28. yet who will venture on that in hopes of having his life preſerved without food?

3dly, Are there not eminent inſtances to the contrary, wherein men living in their ſin have been ſtruck down in a moment, getting no time to repent of them, but fiery wrath has put an end to their days? Conſider the caſe of Nadab and Abihu, Lev. x. 1, 2. of whom it is thought they had erred through drink, verſe 9. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, Numb. xvi. 31. &c. Ananias and Sapphira, Acts v. who died inſtantly with a lie in their mouth. But why do I inſtance in particular perſons? did not millions die together in their ſins, by the deluge that ſwept away the old world, the fire and brimſtone that burned up Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim. What multitudes were there there, who being warned, put off to the day they never ſaw? And ſhall this one inſtance encourage you to delay, over the belly of the dreadful example of millions on the other hand.

4thly, The moſt that this ſo rare an example can amount to, is a poſſibility. It is not ſo much as a probability or likelihood. That is a probable event, which though it does not always fall out, yet for the moſt part it does ſo; as the huſbandman getting more than his ſeed again. But from what is ſaid, it appears, that for the moſt part it falls out otherwiſe, namely, that people even die as they live. So that it is probable, that if thou do not repent before, God will deny thee grace to repent at the laſt. How then can a man that has any belief of a God, a heaven, a hell, venture his ſalvation on a mere poſſibility, while the probability lies the other way?

2. Though there were two thieves on the croſs at that time, yet it was but one of them that got grace to repent. The one indeed was a true penitent; but the other died as he lived, hardened in his ſin; nay perhaps worſe; for he died blaſpheming the Son of God, before

whoſe tribunal he was to appear, ver. 39. Now, upon this I would make theſe rational reflections.

1ſt, Is it not poſſible that thou mayeſt die blaſpheming, if thou do not repent now in time? Thou canſt not deny the poſſibility of it, when there is ſuch a plain inſtance of it in the caſe of one of theſe thieves. Thou thinkeſt it may be thou may die a penitent with the good thief; and I ſay, it may be thou mayeſt die blaſpheming with the other. The one is even as certain, as to us, as the other. Thou liveſt impenitent all thy days; when thou comeſt to a death-bed, God may withhold his grace from thee which thou haſt all along refuſed; he may let thee ſee thy caſe hopeleſs for ever, and thou mayeſt be filled with deſpair; and in that caſe it is more than poſſible that both tongue and heart may riſe againſt God.

2dly, It is at leaſt an equal venture, that thou mayeſt die impenitent, as that thou mayeſt die a penitent. Thou hopeſt to repent at the laſt; why? becauſe the thief on the croſs repented. And I muſt ſay, that delaying repentance till then, thou runneſt the riſk of dying impenitent; for the other thief died ſo. And who has told thee, whether thy lot ſhall be with the one or with the other? Now, to repent preſently, makes thy ſalvation certain; to delay it, does at beſt leave it to a venture. And conſider with yourſelves ſeriouſly, if ſalvation and damnation be ſuch trifling things, as to be left to an uncertainty, you do not know how it may fall.

3dly, It is inconſiſtent with common ſenſe, to leave that thing to a venture, which may be made ſure, where a hit or a miſs is of the utmoſt concern. Suppoſe a rebel might certainly have his life by a willing ſubmiſſion to his prince, ſhould he chuſe to ſtay till he were apprehended by the officers, he would act moſt unreaſonably, and put his life in hazard where there is no need; as in the caſe of Shimei, 1 Kings ii. 42. A thouſand times more unreaſonable art thou in ſuch delays of repentance, for now thou mayeſt make heaven ſure: but if thou delay, thy ſoul is left to a dreadful venture; and if thou miſs when it comes to the point, thou art ruined for ever.

4thly, Nay but the venture is very unequal; for it is far more likely that delaying thou mayeſt die impenitent, than that thou mayeſt die penitent. Few took part with the good thief amongſt all the croud of ſpectators; the multitude went the other thief's way, mocking, verſe 35. And what caſts the balance here in caſe of likelihood, is,

(1.) Common obſervation, that tells us, that moſt people even die as they live. Repentance is a flower rarely ſeen ſpringing up from a death-bed. A melting of heart for ſin, becauſe of the diſhonour done to God by it, is ſeldom ſeen in ſuch as have lived a graceleſs, careleſs, preſumptuous life; but that diſpoſition even hangs about them to the end.

(2.) It is certain that few are ſaved, in compariſon of them that are left, Matth. vii. 14. 'Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.' As to what ſome ſay of the infants of all mankind; all that are ſaved muſt go by the ſtrait gate, and ſtill theſe are few. It is evident, that moſt men live impenitent, yet all muſt die; and therefore it follows, that few get grace to repent at their laſt, but moſt of thoſe that live impenitent even die ſo too.

(3.) The ſad threatenings denounced againſt ſinners going on in their ſin, with reſpect to their latter end: Prov. i. 24.—27. 'Becauſe I have called, and ye refuſed, I have ſtretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have ſet at nought all my counſel, and would none of my reproof; I alſo will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as deſolation, and your deſtruction cometh as a whirlwind; when diſtreſs and anguiſh cometh upon you.' Ezek. xxiv. 13. 'In thy filthineſs is lewdneſs: becauſe I have purged thee, and thou waſt not purged, thou ſhalt not be purged from thy filthineſs any more, till I have cauſed my fury to reſt upon thee.' Now, ſhow me one promiſe in all the Bible, promiſing the grace of repentance to thoſe that delay, for to balance this. It is true, the goſpel-offer is general, and excludes none while in this world: but O what a hazard is there, that theſe threatenings be accompliſhed to the denying the grace to lay hold on them then.

(4.) Corrupt nature ſticks faſt in thee; and it will harden thee in the face of death as well as it does now, unleſs thou get grace from above. Now, that corruption has poſſeſſion long continued already, thou art ſure of it; but thou haſt no certainty for the grace of God to break it in thee, and work repentance in thy ſo long impenitent heart. And therefore I muſt conclude the venture to be very unequal.

(5.) Repentance is not to be wrought by the ſinner's being brought to an extremity, as you may poſſibly imagine. Here was a man that was hanging on a croſs bleeding to death in great torment, having a preſent proſpect of eternity before him, who could have no more pleaſure in the world. But did that humble him? No, no. His heart remains obdured to the laſt gaſp. He is going into eternity; yet he is adding ſin to ſin; and going out of the world as he lived in it, if not worſe. We find from Matth. xxvii. 44. that after the chief prieſts, ſcribes, and elders had mocked and railed on Chriſt, it is added, that *the thieves alſo which were crucified with him* joined in the railing. Whence ſome think, that even the other too joined in this railing on Chriſt, till grace broke in upon him, and overcame his nature.

(6.) The moſt powerful and likely means of grace will not prevail, unleſs accompanied with a ſpecial operation of the Spirit. This blaſpheming thief was near Chriſt himſelf, and heard his words and groans. He had the example of his companion moving him to repent. Grace was at work working wonders upon his neighbour. He had a dying preacher to call him to repent. The ſun's light was eclipſed, the earth quaked, the rocks rent, the graves opened; yet for all theſe he died impenitent, and hard-hearted. Think on this, ye that deem it ſo eaſy to repent, if ye were come to your laſt.

(7.) They that delay repentance till a dying hour, readily find they have another thing to do then, than to repent; as is evident from the caſe of the other thief on the croſs, verſ. 39. 'And one of the malefactors which were hanged, railed on him, ſaying, If thou be Chriſt, ſave thyſelf and us.' Death is the deſtruction of nature, and therefore nature wreſtles againſt it, though there be no hope. This man was more concerned to get his body ſaved, than to get his ſoul ſaved. And, alas! is not this the caſe of the moſt part at that time? They have ſo much ado with the diſeaſe, that they can hardly get a due concern for their ſouls, or a compoſed thought.

3. There is no evidence that this thief had before ſuch means of grace as you have. Who can ſay, that ever he heard the goſpel preached by Chriſt, or any of his diſciples? It is moſt likely he was a rake; that if he heard any thing of God, it was from the ſcribes and Phariſees at times; and may be, when he might have heard either them, or Chriſt and his diſciples, he was about his thieviſh trade. Now,

1ſt, It is unreaſonable to think, that it ſhould fare at the laſt with thoſe who have had means of grace all their days, and deſpiſed them, as it may do with thoſe who never have ſuch means till they come to die. One would think it no wonder at all to ſee a man converted at his laſt, who gets the firſt notice of Chriſt and the way of ſalvation when on his death bed. But what is that to thee, who haſt all along been invited to repent, and come to Chriſt, but wouldeſt not? The former is no wonder in compariſon of the latter.

2dly, This converſion of the thief doubtleſs was a perfect ſurpriſe to him, a thing he was not looking for. But thou art ſetting tryſt with repentance at thy laſt hours, Can you believe, that ever this thief delayed repentance in hopes of what he met with, namely, to die on a croſs with Chriſt, and then to feel the power of his grace? No body can believe it. What is his example then to thee? Is it rational for thee to expect that favour which one has ſometimes been ſurprized with, and got when he was not looking for it?

4. This thief was converted, when by the hand of public juſtice he was to die. When he was made a public example to the world, and as a malefactor brought to an untimely end, for his crime, he got repentance at the gallows, not on a death-bed. He was cut off perhaps in the midſt of his days; at leaſt he died not by the courſe of nature, nor by any ſickneſs, but was execute for his evil deeds. And it is obſervable, that the one other caſe which looks likeſt to this in the Bible, was of the ſame ſort, namely, Achan's. Now,

1ſt, It is evident, that wicked men, who are running on in ſuch courſes as will bring them to an untimely death, by the laws of the land, ſuch as thieves, robbers, murderers, *&c.* have a fairer ground from this to delay repentance till they come to the ſcaffold, than you have, who are looking for a death-bed, and delay repentance till you come there. For their caſe is nearer a-kin to this than yours. But are not they moſt fooliſh if they ſo do, even in your eyes? No doubt they are. And ſo are ye in the eyes of others, whoſe eyes God has opened.

2dly, If we compare the caſe of this thief put to death for his crimes, and of other malefactors ſo dying, with the caſe of men that have lived impenitently dying in their beds; though grace is alike free to both, yet, humanly ſpeaking, there is more hope of the repentance of the former than of the latter. And this I ſay on theſe three grounds.

(1.) It is more eaſy to convince a malefactor upon the ſcaffold, of his crime, and the evil of it, and of thoſe other ſins that have been the inlets to it, than to convince another of his ſin on a death bed, as common obſervation ſheweth. Hence our Lord ſays 'that the 'publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God 'before' the ſelf righteous Phariſees, Matth. xxi. 31. Many a time is Sabbath breaking, diſobedience to parents, drunkenneſs, neglect of the means of grace, confeſſed and regretted on a ſcaffold, while there is not one word of them from a death bed, in caſes where there is perhaps as good ground for it. When the corruption of nature breaks out in ſome atrocious crime, that brings a perſon to an untimely end, there is more acceſs to convince them of it, than others who have the ſame plague in them, but it has not ſo appeared.

(2.) The view that the thief had of eternity upon the croſs, and that other malefactors have in ſuch a caſe, is more certain than what impenitent ſinners generally have on a death bed. The one ſee they muſt die without peradventure, the other have ſome hopes of life generally while they have breath. And ſo the terror of death muſt needs be more operative in the one than the other; foraſmuch as there is ſuch a difference in the certainty of the view of it.

(3.) If we except the time wherein both are actually grappling with death, the one with a violent death, the other with a natural one; the former have leſs hindrances from the body to prepare for death than the latter: foraſmuch as the one is toſſed with bodily ſickneſs and indiſpoſition, the other commonly is not.

5. The converſion of the thief on the croſs was an extraordinary manifeſtation of our Lord's power, made for ſpecial reaſons. And therefore though it ſhows what the Lord can do; it does not ſhow what ordinarily he will do. Conſider here, to evince this, that,

1ſt, It was done in ſuch a juncture of time, as the like never was, and the like never will be again; namely, when the Lord of glory, the Saviour of the world, was actually hanging upon the croſs, paying the ranſom for the loſt elect world: Rom. vi. 9. 'Chriſt being 'raiſed from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no 'more dominion over him.'

2dly, It was a wonder wrought in a time allotted in a particular manner beyond all times, for God's working of wonders. The time of the Lord's giving the law on mount Sinai, was a time of wonders; but not comparable to this. The leading wonder there was God's making his voice to be heard, and ſpeaking forth a holy law; and it was attended with other wonders, namely, thunders, lightnings, a thick cloud upon the mount, ſmoke, and fire, and the ſound of a terrible trumpet waxing louder and louder, Exod. xix. 16. *&c.* But the leading wonder on mount Calvary was yet greater, namely, the Son of God, and Saviour of the world, hanging, groaning, dying on a croſs; and therefore the attending wonders were proportionably greater. For,

(1.) The ſun was under a dreadful eclipſe, for the ſpace of not a few minutes, but three hours, Matth. xxvii. 45. The eye of the viſible world was ſtruck blind at the ſight.

(2.) The vail of the temple was, without hands, rent from the top to the bottom, Matth. xxvii. 51; to ſhew that by his death an end was put to the ceremonial law, and the way unto the holieſt of all made open.

(3.) The earth quaked at the dreadful fact of crucifying the Lord of glory, Matth. xxvii. 51.

(4.) The hard rocks rent, upbraiding the ſpectators and guilty multitude with the hardneſs of their hearts, Matth. xxvii. 51.

(5.) The graves were opened, and many of the dead ſaints aroſe, to ſhew that Chriſt by his death had overcome the power of death over his people, Matth. xxvii. 52.

(6.) The ſpectators of thoſe ſtrange things ſmote their breaſts, being ſtruck to the heart, Luke xxiii. 48.

(7.) *laſtly*, The centurion and his ſoldiers were convinced, that he whom they had crucified was the Son of God, Matth. xxvii. 54.

Now, upon all theſe I would make theſe reflections.

[1.] Is it reaſonable, becauſe the thief was converted at the laſt hour, in a time that the like never was, nor will be, for thee to expect that it ſhall fare ſo with thee? Thou mayeſt as well throw thyſelf into a burning fiery furnace, and hope to come forth ſafe, becauſe Daniel and his fellows were once ſo delivered. Were Chriſt to come again, and to be crucified a ſecond time between two malefactors, and thou wert one of them to be crucified with him, it might be that thou mighteſt be converted at thy laſt hour. And yet thou couldſt not be ſure; for it might be thy lot to be the hardened one, as it was the other thief's. But ſince it is not ſo, how dareſt thou truſt to ſo late a repentance?

[2.] Is it any wiſe ſtrange, that amongſt all theſe wonders of juſtice, power, and faithfulneſs, there was one wonder of mercy upon the thief on the croſs? that the ſame power that was rending the rocks, did mercifully open the heart of one of thoſe thieves to receive Chriſt and his grace? But how canſt thou think that the time of thy departure will be a time of ſuch wonders! And if not, how canſt thou deceive thyſelf into a delay of repentance, in expectation of receiving ſuch a ſignal diſplay of divine grace and mercy!

[3.] Was it not very becoming the divine wiſdom, that when the divine glory of the Son of God was vailed upon the croſs, a ray of it ſhould break forth in the converſion of one of the two that were hanging there with him; that when his judges, and the rulers and people had got him on the croſs as a malefactor, he ſhould have his glory owned by one of thoſe crucified with him: But what is that to thee in a day wherein it is long ſince Chriſt was ſet down at his Father's right hand, and his glory publiſhed through the world by the goſpel.

[4.] Is it any thing ſtrange, that when our Lord was triumphing over principalities and powers, he ſet up one trophy, one ſign of his victory, in the field of battle; Col. ii. 15. Was it not very natural, that he who when he ſhould be liſted up, was to draw all men after him, ſhould actually in the very time draw one after him! But what encouragement can that be to thee to delay to the laſt, when that nick of time is over long ago. And now there are thouſands of viſible monuments of Chriſt's conqueſt by his death ſet up, ſo that thou will never be miſſed, though thou die, as thou liveſt, impenitent.

6. *laſtly*, The penitent thief on the croſs was not only ſincere, but he glorified Chriſt more in his late repentance, than thou art capable to do by thine, nay more than if thou hadſt lived a penitent all thy days. For conſider,

1ſt, When our Lord was in his loweſt ſtep of humiliation, he profeſſed his faith of his divine nature, and his being king of the other world: 'Lord (ſays he) 'remember me when thou comeſt into thy kingdom.' What wonderful faith was this, that while Chriſt was ſo low as hanging on a croſs, he owns him king of heaven; that dying, he was going to receive a kingdom; that he has all power there; that he is full of mercy, compaſſion and faithfulneſs; ſo that the very remembrance of him would be ſufficient to ſecure his eternal welfare! Thou mayeſt believe and profeſs all this, but never at ſuch a time. He is now the exalted Redeemer, who has aſcended far above all heavens, and ſits on the right hand of God. But what is that to the glorifying of him in his loweſt humiliation.

2dly, When others had crucified him as a malefactor, and were mocking him, and railing on him, as one that deſerved not common compaſſion, he was praying to him, as Lord of the other world. If thou ſhouldeſt now do ſo too, yet remember how ſmall a thing is that in compariſon of what the good thief did in theſe circumſtances.

Laſtly, All this he did, and more, publickly before a multitude of ſpectators, which thou art not likely to have when thou comeſt to a death bed. He juſtifies God before them all; he condemns himſelf; he does what he can to convince and convert his poor graceleſs companion, who poſſibly ſinned with him as he did ſuffer; he condemns thoſe that crucified Chriſt, and gives his publick teſtimony againſt them as men that feared not God.

To conclude this matter: Repent ye timeouſly, and truſt not to a late repentance. Let not this example of the thief on the croſs, or any thing elſe, make you to delay. Many a call ye have had to return to the Lord; but, alas! to the moſt part they have been ineffectual. God is giving us a providential call to repentance, at this time; he is ſaying to us, as he did to the church of Epheſus, Rev. ii. 5. 'Remember therefore from 'whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the firſt 'works; or elſe I will come unto thee quickly, and 'will remove thy candleſtick out of his place, except 'thou repent.' God knows what our preſent trial may end in. But in that dark diſpenſation we may clearly ſee that God is a jealous God, and makes people's ſins to find them out. Repentance would be the moſt feaſible means to extricate us out of our difficulties. If there were a ſpirit of prayer and mourning for the cauſes of the Lord's controverſy with us, it would be a token for good. But, alas! the work of repentance for the moſt part is put off from time to time, till it be put off to a death-bed; and who can ſecure the tryſt to be kept there?

There are three things I would ſay of death-bed-repentance.

1. If it be got, it is the moſt unuſeful repentance for God, and the moſt uncomfortable to one's ſelf. Unuſeful; for then men begin their work for God, when their time is ending; and ſo, though they may be ſaved, yet God gets little honour from them. And uncomfortable to perſons themſelves; for being ſaved, they are ſaved ſo as by fire; they muſt go to heaven by the brink of hell; while they ſee their laſt ſand running, and get their conſciences awakened, eternity muſt once be to them a dreadful ſpectacle.

2. Death-bed-repentance is ſeldom ſincere. The king of terrors may make a Pharaoh ſay, 'I have ſinned.' But what ſincerity is in the moſt part of thoſe things that begin on death-beds, may be learned from the caſe of many, who being paſt hopes of recovery from their ſickneſs, either as to themſelves or others, do yet recover, and turn juſt the old men and women they were before. When the beſt appearances of death-bed repentance are, it is hard to make ſuch concluſions; but as Auguſtine ſaid in ſuch a caſe, *Non dico damnabitur, non dico ſalvabitur; ſed tu, dum ſanus es, pœnitentiam age.* i. e. I do not ſay, that ſuch a perſon ſhall be damned, or that he ſhall be ſaved: but do thou, whilſt thou art in health, mind the buſineſs of repentance.

3. *laſtly*, Many truſt to deathbed repentance that never ſee it. Some are ſurpriſed into eternity; ſome are toſſed ſo with ſickneſs that they cannot have a compoſed thought; ſome quickly loſe the uſe of their ſenſes and reaſon; and moſt part die as they live: therefore repent ye in time, and delay no more, leſt ye bring the ruin on your ſouls that will never be recovered.

God's Delay of executing the Sentence of Condemnation againſt ungodly Men, often miſerably abuſed by them.

Several SERMONS, preached at Etterick, in Summer 1728.

ECCLES. viii. 11.

Becauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is not executed ſpeedily; therefore the heart of the ſons of men is fully ſet in them to do evil.

THIS book of Eccleſiaſtes is in a particular manner a book of providence, wherein Solomon gives his obſerves upon it. It is a ſubject that has puzzled the beſt of men, how to reconcile it with the being and attributes of God: but there is no inconſiſtency; all odds will be made even at length.

He had obſerved ſome ſet on high to their ruin, made rulers of others to their own deſtruction, to the feeding of their own luſts, and ſo aggravating their own condemnation, ver. 9. He had obſerved them live proſperouſly in their wickedneſs, die in honour, and buried magnificently, ver. 10. He opens the ſecret of diſpenſation in the text, namely, That a reprieve is no pardon. In the words we have,

1. God's patience with, and forbearance exerciſed towards ungodly ſinners: *Becauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is not executed ſpeedily.* (1.) It is ſuppoſed that ſentence is paſſed in their caſe. There is a righteous ſentence ſtanding againſt an evil work, and the evil worker for what he has done: it is not overlooked, nor forgotten. *Heb. doing of the evil;* by which is meant an ungodly courſe. This is plain from 1 John iii. 8, 9. 'He that committeth ſin is of the devil; for the devil ſinneth from the beginning. For this purpoſe the Son of God was manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the devil. Whoſoever is born of God, doth not commit ſin; for his ſeed remaineth in him: and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God.' See the ſentence, Rom. ii. 9. 'Tribulation and anguiſh upon every ſoul of man that doth evil.' (2.) The execution is oft times delayed; it is not ſpeedily execute. Though the word is gone out of the mouth of the Judge, he does not preſently bring on the blow; he ſpares the criminal a while for holy ends. (3.) It ſuppoſeth, that though the execution be ſlow, yet it is ſure, if the ſentence be not got reverſed, and a pardon obtained. Saying, that it is not ſpeedily executed, he intimates that it will be execute at length.

2. The wretched abuſe ſinners make of this patience of God with them. *Therefore the heart of the ſons of men is fully ſet in them to do evil.* Becauſe ſentence is not execute ſpeedily, they think it never will be execute; and ſo they give themſelves the looſe. *Their heart is fully ſet in them to do evil.* They find providence gives them head, does not check and ſtrike them down in their courſe; and ſo they even run away with themſelves. Their impunity fills their heart for their ſinful courſes, that they drive on like a ſhip with a full ſail before a briſk gale.

Three doctrines may be deduced from the words thus explained.

Doct. I. *There is a ſentence paſſed in the court of heaven, and ſtanding, againſt ungodly men, evil workers, however eaſy they be under it for a time.*

Doct. II. *The Lord often-times does not ſoon come to the execution of the ſentence againſt ungodly men, evil workers: but delays it for a time.*

Doct. III. *God's delay of execution is often miſerably abuſed by ſinners, to the filling of their hearts to do evil, and ſinning more and more.*

I ſhall handle each of theſe doctrines in order.

Doct. I. *There is a ſentence paſſed in the court of heaven, and ſtanding, againſt ungodly men, evil workers, however eaſy they be under it for a time.*

In proſecuting this doctrine, I ſhall,

I. Shew, that there is a ſentence paſſed in the court of heaven, and ſtanding againſt ungodly men, evil workers.

II. Explain the nature of this ſentence.

III. Make ſome practical improvement of the ſubject.

I. I ſhall ſhew, that *there is a ſentence paſſed in the court of heaven, and ſtanding, againſt ungodly men, evil workers.*

1. They are already judged and condemned of God, John iii. 18. 'He that believeth not is condemned already, becauſe he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.' Ungodly men, evil workers, are unbelievers; and being unbelievers, they have not the benefit of abſolution by Chriſt; ſo they are under condemnation of the law for their evil works. For whom the goſpel doth not abſolve, the law doth condemn.

2. Only thoſe that are in Chriſt, are not under condemnation; and their freedom from it is of no older date than their believing, Rom. viii. 1. 'There is no condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus.' But evil workers are not in Chriſt, 1 John iii. 8, 9. forecited. If they were in Chriſt, they would be new creatures, 2 Cor. v. 17. 'For if any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature.' Therefore they are ſtill under condemnation.

3. They are in a ſtate of death, dead in ſin, Eph. ii. 1. They who are morally dead in ſin, being without a principle of ſpiritual life, Eph. iv. 18. are legally dead too; they are dead men in law, under a ſentence of death, John v. 24. Hence they are called 'children of wrath, of hell,' *&c.*

4. The power that Satan has over them, proves this. They are cloſe priſoners, bound hand and foot, Iſa. lxi. 1. Satan is the keeper of the priſon, Heb. ii. 14. and they are under his power, Acts xxvi. 18. What gives him the power over them, but that they are condemned in law! Let the ſentence be reverſed, and he has them no more under his power, 1 Cor. xv. 56.

5. *laſtly,* The Spirit of bondage witneſſeth the truth of this, convincing the ſinner that he is a dead man, Rom. vii. 9. and that he ſtands in need of a remiſſion, chap. iii. 19. This teſtimony is true; for it is the teſtimony of the Spirit of God, whereby he brings ſinners to ſee their need of Chriſt.

II. To *explain the nature of this ſentence,* conſider,

1. Every evil work is a breach of God's law; and every ſinful thought, word, and action is an evil work: 1 John iii. 4. 'Whoſoever committeth ſin, tranſgreſſeth alſo the law: for ſin is the tranſgreſſion of the law.' No man is lord of himſelf, but is anſwerable to God for every action of his life; and being guilty, if out of Chriſt, he is liable to vengeance, under the curſe; if in Chriſt, he is liable to temporal ſtrokes. So all ungodly ones, evil workers, are liable to the curſe for their ſins.

2. The law is the accuſer, that accuſeth the ſinner of rebellion againſt God, and demandeth vengeance on him, John v. 45. Every command broken by the ſinner accuſeth him before God; and as many breaches as he has made of it, as many articles there are of the libel againſt him. And though theſe be innumerable to men, and many of them unknown to him; they are not ſo unto an omniſcient God.

3. God is the Judge that judgeth and paſſeth the ſentence againſt the guilty, Pſal. l. 6. And he is a judge whom no artful concealment can beguile. He cannot be blinded, bribed, nor biaſſed, 1 Pet. i. 17. His ſentence, however ſevere, is always righteous, Rev. xvi. 7. And there lies no appeal from his tribunal; for there is none above him, who is the Moſt High. Only, while the ſinner is in this world, there is acceſs to a remiſſion in Chriſt.

4. The ſentence is a ſentence of death, Gen. ii. 17. death in its full latitude, comprehending all miſeries of ſoul and body, eternal death in which the gnawing worm never dies, nor is the fire quenched. The ſentence of men are at moſt the death of the body: but his ſentence adjudgeth the ſoul to die eternally. The reaſon is, the infinite dignity of the divine Majeſty offended by ſin.

5. The grounds of this heavy ſentence, are the tranſgreſſions of God's holy law: Gal. iii. 10. 'Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.' The holy law is a tranſcript of the purity of the divine nature; in it he hath ſet forth his own image. That image the ſinner does what he can to deface, by violating the law: but God will magnify the law, and make it honourable, in the deſtruction of the ſinner.

The grounds of it more particularly are,

1*ſt,* The ſin of nature, original ſin imputed, Rom. v. 12.; and original ſin inherent, that corrupt frame of ſoul that is natural to us, whereby we are prone to evil, and averſe to good, Gen. vi. 5. By reaſon of this we come into the world under the ſentence of death. And as ſerpents and vipers are objects whoſe deſtruction men ſeek on the firſt ſight of them, becauſe of their poiſonous nature; ſo it fares with men, the very ſight of whom, in reſpect of their original ſin, is loathſome unto a holy God, and thereby they become objects fit only for deſtruction.

2dly, The ſins of the heart, Pſal. xxiv. 4. Matth. v. 28, 29. Heart ſins are not liable to man's judgment: but how can they eſcape the judgment of God, to whoſe all-ſeeing eye our hearts are juſt as open as our lives? He ſees the rottenneſs that is within the whited ſepulchres, and paſſes his ſentence againſt luſts of covetouſneſs, uncleanneſs, malice, revenge, *&c.* burning within the heart, as well as againſt the ſame defiling the converſation.

3dly, The ſins of the tongue, Matth. xii. 37. It is a channel by which the heart vents much of its inbred corruption, contempt of God, *&c.* Jude 15. in his mocking, maligning, and running down of ſeriouſneſs, and agenting the cauſe of irreligion; and contempt of our neighbour, in railing, reproaching, obſcenity, lying, *&c.* which may ſhew why the rich man in hell is repreſented ſeeking water to cool his tongue.

4thly, The ſins of the life, wicked actions, whether of impiety againſt God, unrighteouſneſs againſt men, or intemperance againſt ourſelves, Jude 15. None of all theſe will eſcape the judgment of God, however craftily they be managed, whatever fair colours be drawn over them, Eccleſ. xii. *ult.* 'For God ſhall bring every work into judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.' Sinners may forget them and let them ſlip out of mind; but 'the Lord hath ſworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works,' Amos viii. 7.

5thly, Omiſſions of duty, Matth. xxv. 41. *&c.* Men will find ſentence paſſed on them by a juſt God, not only for the ill they have done, but for the good they were obliged to have done, but did it not. The man that hid his talent, and improved it not for his Lord, is doomed to utter darkneſs, Matth. xxv. 24. 30.

6. This ſentence againſt the ungodly is openly pronounced in the word, Rom. ii. 8, 9. 'But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteouſneſs; indignation, and wrath; tribulation and anguiſh upon every ſoul of man that doth evil.' God ſpeaks from heaven to men, Heb. xii. 25. not by a voice coming through the clouds, but by his voice in the written word, 2 Kings xxii. 19. compared with verſe 11. The Bible is God's word to us, whereby he is ſpeaking to us, and will ſpeak to men unto the end of the world, either abſolution or condemnation, according to their ſtate.

7. It is regiſtered there too, Gen. ii. 17. 'In the day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.' Ezek. xviii. 4. 'The ſoul that ſinneth, it ſhall die.' The ſcripture is the record of the court of heaven, where the ungodly may read their doom, and ſee the ſentence ſtanding againſt them. And that certainly is one of the cauſes of the neglect of the ſcriptures in our day; for in it 'the wrath of God is revealed from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs, and unrighteouſneſs of men, who hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs,' Rom. i. 18. Ahab hated Micajah, becauſe he never ſpake good of him. The ſcripture never ſpeaks good of a man that is wedded to his luſts, and has no will to part with his beloved liberty in the way of ſin; and therefore he hates or neglects it.

8. It is ſecretly intimate by the conſcience ſometimes, 1 John iii. 20. Conſcience is God's deputy within the man: and when his corruption drives him full to do an ill work, and when he has done it, to defend it; conſcience will be condemning it, and him too, from the holy law, Rom. ii. 15. And when it is thoroughly awakened, it will ſo pronounce the ſentence againſt the man, as will fill him with the greateſt of terror.

9. It will be openly pronounced before all the world at the laſt day, Matth. xxv. 41. 'Then ſhall he ſay alſo unto them on the left hand, Depart from me ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' Where it is obſervable, that they are declared curſed and condemned ones, before that ſolemn publiſhing of the ſentence againſt them. For none will be condemned then, but ſuch as are in this world before that in this life condemned already.

10. *laſtly*, Howbeit the time of the execution of the ſentence, in particular, is not now intimate to the ſinner. The Lord keeps that a ſecret, that ſinners may not adventure to live a moment in the ſtate of condemnation; but not knowing but it may be execute next moment, they may not put off a moment the ſuing for a remiſſion.

USE 1. Of *Information.* Hence learn,

1. The ſtate of every ungodly perſon, worker of iniquity, and all unbelievers, is a miſerable ſtate, a ſtate of condemnation. They are as really under a ſentence of death as ever any malefactor was, John iii. 18. 'He that believeth not, is condemned already; becauſe he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.' Think on this, ye young and old ungodly ones; though the ſentence is not execute againſt you, it is paſſed on you; look into your Bible, and ſee it.

2. As ſilent as God ſits in heaven, while ſinners on earth are neglecting and affronting him, he is no idle ſpectator of their way and manner of life, Pſal. l. 21. 'Theſe things haſt thou done, and I kept ſilence: thou thoughteſt that I was altogether ſuch a one as thyſelf: but I will reprove thee, and ſet them in order before thine eyes.' He has ſentenced them and *ſees their day is coming*, Pſal. xxxvii. 13. They have their ſinning day, and God ſees their day of count and reckoning is coming on them, Eccleſ. xi. 9. 'Know thou, that for all theſe things God will bring thee into judgment.' They laugh at the evil day, becauſe they do not ſee it come; God laughs at them becauſe he ſees it coming: and his will be when theirs is done, Prov. i. 26. when he *will laugh at* their *calamity, and mock when* their *fear cometh.*

3. It is not ſtrange, that the world is filled with the noiſe of mens luſts and ungodly lives. If ye were gone into a priſon filled with condemned men, ye would think it melancholy indeed, but not ſtrange to hear the iron chains rattling in every part of the room. This world is ſuch a place, crouded with condemned people: unmortified luſts are the chains on them: and that is the reaſon of the grating noiſe which the ſerious godly hear from every corner. And the jailor, the devil, is going among them.

4. *laſtly*, No wonder that moſt men love this life, ſo as to loath exchanging it for another, Pſal. lv. 23. 'But God ſhall bring them down into the pit of deſtruction.' The priſon is a heavy place to the condemned man; but to go out of it is more ſo, for that is to go to execution, Jer. xvii. 11. Death brings the execution of the ſentence.

USE 2. Of *Trial.* Try whether that ſentence is ſtanding againſt you, or whether it is reverſed, and ye juſtified.

To move you to put this to the queſtion, conſider,

1. One thing is ſure, that once it was paſſed and ſtanding againſt you, Eph. ii. 3. 'And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.' Gal. iii. 10. 'Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.' Compared with Rom. iii. 19. 'Now we know that what things ſoever the law ſaith, it ſaith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be ſtopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.' Now, what courſe have ye taken to get this ſentence taken off? and if you have been aiming at it, have ye carried it?

2. As your ſtate is in this life, condemned or juſtified, ſo it will be determined at death and judgment, Eccleſ. ix. 10. 'Whatſoever thy hand findeth to do, do

it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom in the grave whither thou goeſt.' Now, there is acceſs for a remiſſion; but when death comes, there will be no more for ever.

3. Men are apt to miſtake in this point. Many draw an abſolviture from the ſentence for themſelves, which God will never ſet his ſeal to, Luke xvi. 15. 'Chriſt ſaid unto them, Ye are they which juſtify yourſelves before men; but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is highly eſteemed among men, is an abomination in the ſight of God.' Iſa. xliv. 20. 'He feedeth of aſhes; a deceived heart hath turned him aſide, that he cannot deliver his ſoul, nor ſay, Is there not a lie in my right hand?' The fooliſh virgins called themſelves the Bridegroom's friends; but he ſhut the door on them as his enemies.

4. *laſtly*, A miſtake here is very fatal. By it men let the time of obtaining a remiſſion ſlip. The oil might have been got for the lamps, if they had miſſed it timely. It brings a ruining ſurpriſe: dreaming of peace, they are awaked with the noiſe of war for ever.

Mark 1. They that never ſaw themſelves in a ſtate of condemnation, are under it to this day. For they are ſtrangers to the very firſt work of the Spirit, conviction, John xvi. 8. 'The law is our ſchool-maſter, to bring us unto Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by faith,' Gal. iii. 24. They that have never been at the law's ſchool, to learn that they are curſed and condemned ſinners by nature, are not Chriſt's diſciples.

Mark 2. They only are abſolved, who laying hold on Chriſt in the covenant of grace have pled to the law's ſentence of condemnation againſt them, the righteouſneſs of Chriſt wrought by him, and offered to and accepted of by them. Hence ſays the apoſtle, Phil. iii. 7, 8. 'But what things were gain to me, thoſe I counted loſs for Chriſt. Yea doubtleſs, and I count all things but loſs, for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord:—and do count them but dung that I may win Chriſt.' They continue not in mere ſuſpenſe, but renouncing ſelf-confidence, and law-confidence, and creature-confidence, have betaken themſelves to him as their only refuge, caſting anchor on the promiſe of the goſpel.

Mark 3. If the condemning power of ſin is removed, the reigning power of ſin is removed too, and contrariwiſe: Rom. vi. 14. 'For ſin ſhall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.' If the condemned man has got his remiſſion, he is taken out of his irons, and his priſon, and the power of the jailor. The chains of reigning luſts rattling about thee, declare thee a condemned man ſtill; but it is otherwiſe with the pardoned, Rom. viii. 1, 2. 'There is no condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus, who walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, hath made me free from the law of ſin and death.' If ye are juſtified, ye are waſhed, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11.

Mark 4. If the ſentence be reverſed, ye will be habitually tender in your conſcience with reſpect to temptations, ſin and duty, and appearances of evil. Hence Paul could ſay, Acts xxiv. 16. 'Herein do I exerciſe myſelf, to have always a conſcience void of offence toward God, and toward men.' The man who under the ſentence of death, has obtained a remiſſion, will readily fear falling into the ſnare again. Hence we find this was Hezekiah's exerciſe, Iſa. xxxviii. 17. 'Behold for peace I had great bitterneſs: but thou haſt in love to my ſoul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou haſt caſt all my ſins behind thy back.' Ver. 15. 'What ſhall I ſay? he hath ſpoken unto me, and himſelf hath done it: I ſhall go ſoftly all my years in the bitterneſs of my ſoul.' Abſolved perſons may be guilty of acts of untenderneſs; but habitual untenderneſs is a black mark of condemnation.

Mark ult. The fruits of faith in a holy life follow the reverſing of the ſentence. We are juſtified by faith without works; but the faith that juſtifies produces good works. Hence we read, Acts xv. 9. 'of purifying the heart by faith.' If the curſe is removed, the fruits of the Spirit will ſpring up in the ſoul, Gal. v. 22, 23. 'love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, faith, meekneſs, temperance.' The apoſtle James ſhews that faith not to be true, that is not attended with the fruits of holineſs.

Now, if the ſentence once ſtanding againſt you is reverſed, then,

1. Love the Lord, who freely gave you your remiſſion, inſtead of leading you forth to execution; as did the woman, of whom of our Lord ſays, Luke vii. 47. 'Her ſins, which are many, are forgiven; for ſhe loved much.' Remember the day when ye ſtood ſelf-condemned, and law condemned before the Lord, and he ſaid, Job xxxiii. 24. 'Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ranſom.'

2. Pity and be concerned for thoſe that are as yet under the condemnation which ye are freed from, Tit. iii. 2, 3. Where people's contempt and diſdain have the heels of their pity, compaſſion, and concern for the welfare and recovery of ſinners, it is a ſad ſign; ſpeaking forth more of pride and preſumption, than of themſelves being in a ſtate of remiſſion.

3. Walk humbly and tenderly. The remembrance of the ſentence of death ſometime lying on you, may humble you while you live. It ſets us ill to be proud and conceity, who owe our life to a remiſſion. Stand aloof from the deadly ſnare; a pardoning God has ſaid, 'Go, and ſin no more,' John viii. 11.

4. Bear your troubles and trials in a world patiently. Your life was forfeited, and that is ſafe by grace. Why does a living man complain? This is a day wherein the Lord ſeems to be riſing up to plead againſt the generation, bringing on common calamity. Take thankfully what falls to your ſhare of it, in conſideration that the ſentence againſt your ſoul is reverſed. If the ſeed ſhould rot under the clod, and the beaſts of the field periſh under the ſtroke; kiſs the rod, and be thankful, that the execution is not upon yourſelves.

5. *laſtly*, Be of a forgiving diſpoſition: Eph. iv. 32. 'Be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Chriſt's ſake hath forgiven you.' The Saviour that brought in remiſſion of ſins, binds us to love our enemies; and the bitter revengeful ſpirit againſt others ſpeak us unforgiven, Mat. vi. 15. 'If ye forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your treſpaſſes.'

But if ye are of thoſe againſt whom the ſentence ſtill ſtands in the court of heaven, lay the matter to heart, and conſider it is a moſt heavy caſe, as it is indeed, deſerving tears of blood. And ſo I proceed to

USE 3. of *Lamentation*. We may here lament over the caſe of every ungodly one, and natural man. The ſtate of one under ſentence of death, is a lamentable caſe. O ungodly ſinner, however eaſy thou art, God's law has condemned thee, and thou art under the ſentence of eternal death, John iii. 36. 'He that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.' See thy heavy caſe in this glaſs.

1. You are forfeited of your covenant right to the creatures, as a condemned perſon. Whether thou haſt little or much in the world, it is a ſorry right you have to it; a mere providential right, ſuch as a condemned man to his meat, till the day of execution come. Therefore 'a little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked,' Pſal. xxxiv. 16. There is little ſatisfaction in that.

2. God is your enemy, befriend you who will, John iii. 36. forecited. He bears a legal enmity againſt thee, as a judge againſt a condemned man. Ye can have no communion with him; Amos iii. 3. 'Can two walk together except they be agreed?' All comfortable in-

tercourſe betwixt God and thy ſoul, is drowned in the gulf of thy ſtate of condemnation. There can be no peace between God and you.

To allude to the conference between Joram and Jehu, 2 Kings ix. 22. ‘ And it came to paſs when Joram ſaw Jehu, that he ſaid, Is it peace, Jehu ? And he anſwered, What peace, ſo long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel, and her witchcrafts are ſo many ?’ How can they have peace with God, whom his law condemns ? What peace ye have in your conſciences, God allows not, Iſa. lvii. 21.

3. Nothing you do can be acceptable to God; there is a laſting cloud over your heads that never clears : Pſal. vii. 11. ‘ God is angry with the wicked every day.’ While the condemning curſe of the law lies on a man, it blaſts all the good he does : Tit. i. 15. ‘ Unto them that are defiled, and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and conſcience is defiled.’ Hag. ii. 12. ‘ If one bear holy fleſh in the ſkirt of his garment, and with his ſkirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, ſhall it be holy ? And the prieſts anſwered and ſaid, No. Then anſwered Haggai, and ſaid, So is this people, and ſo is this nation before me, ſaith the Lord ; and ſo is every work of their hands, and that which they offer there is unclean.’ It mars ſanctifying influences, without which there can be no fruit, John xv. 5. ‘ for without me ye can do nothing.’ Hence all ye do is turned to ſin.

4. The ſentence againſt you is confirmed daily. The truth of God confirms it : Numb. xxiii. 19. ‘ God is not a man, that he ſhould lie, neither the ſon of man, that he ſhould repent : hath he ſaid, and ſhall he not do it ? or hath he ſpoken, and ſhall he not make it good ?’ And the cords of thy guilt are growing ſtronger and ſtronger; for the grounds of condemnation againſt thee are multiplying; while none of the old debt is removed, but new is ſtill contracted. And though one may think, that it is but dying for all; yet the puniſhment will be increaſed, as evil works are: for men will be rewarded according to their deeds.

5. Juſtice craves execution againſt thee. There was a cry to heaven againſt Cain, and againſt Sodom : and ſo there is againſt every ungodly ſinner, Jer. ix. 9. ‘ Shall I not viſit them for theſe things ? ſaith the Lord : ſhall not my ſoul be avenged on ſuch a nation as this ?’ Mercy may ſuſpend execution a while againſt the ungodly ; but if they continue in that ſtate, it cannot reverſe it; ſince God cannot ceaſe to be juſt.

6. All is ready for the execution. The bow is bent to let fly the arrows of wrath againſt thee, the arrows of death, Pſal. vii. 12, 13. The pile of fire is ſet on, Iſa. xxx. 33. ‘ For Tophet is ordained of old : yea, for the king it is prepared ; he hath made it deep and large : the pile thereof is fire and much wood, the breath of the Lord, like a ſtream of brimſtone, doth kindle it. When thou lieſt down, thou has no ſecurity, that it ſhall not be execute ere thou ariſe, *&c.*

7. *laſtly*, Thy life depends, as to thee, only on God's long-waſted patience and long-ſuffering, procuring thy reprieve from day to day, if ſo thou wilt ſue out thy pardon. As ſecure as thou art, the ſword of juſtice hangs over thy head, by the worn hair of long tired patience ; which if once broken, thou art gone for ever.

USE *ult.* of *Exhortation.* Wherefore beſtir yourſelves to get out of the ſtate of condemnation, to get the ſentence reverſed.

Motive 1. It is a ſad and miſerable life to live in the ſtate of condemnation. For in effect ſuch a life is a continued death. (1) It is a diſhonourable life. Condemnation fixes a blot and ſtain on man, ſpeaks him guilty of crimes for which he is not worthy to live. And ſurely the judgment of God is according to truth. (2.) It is an uncomfortable life : Iſa. lvii. 21. ‘ There is no peace ſaith my God, to the wicked.’ There is enough in it to ſqueeze the ſap out of all created comforts; and for the conſolations of God, they can have none of them, Amos iii. 3. ‘ Can two walk together, except they be agreed ?’ The joy and comforts of a natural man is but like that of a madman ; and ſo when he comes to himſelf, all is ſwallowed up in that, he is a condemned man. This the prodigal found, Luke xv. 17. ‘ And when he came to himſelf, he ſaid, How many hired ſervants of my father's have bread enough and to ſpare, and I periſh with hunger !’ (3.) It is an unſafe life : John iii. 36. ‘ He that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him.’ Amidſt all thy mirth and jollity, the ſword of juſtice is hanging over thy head by a hair, and every moment, for all that thou knoweſt, it may fall, and cleave thee aſunder. This our Lord threatens in the parable of the wicked ſervant, Matth. xxiv. 50, 51. ‘ The Lord of that ſervant ſhall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of ; and ſhall cut him aſunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites : there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.’

Mot. 2. The reverſing of the ſentence by a remiſſion, is not ſo eaſily obtained as men are apt to imagine. Many think there is no more ado, but after a careleſs graceleſs life, when they come to die, to commend their ſouls to God, with a *God have mercy on me* ; and all will be ſafe. But they that get out a remiſſion, get it ſo as as they are taught other thoughts of it. Hence is that exclamation of the church, Micah vii. 18. ‘ Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and paſſeth by the tranſgreſſion of the remnant of his heritage ? he retaineth not his anger for ever, becauſe he delighteth in mercy.’ Conſider,

1ſt, Sin is the greateſt of evils, the deepeſt of all ſtains to waſh out. Fair words, nay tears, nay not the blood of bulls and goats, nor the blood of one's own body, will waſh it out ; only the blood of the Son of God ; Heb. ix. 22. ‘ Without ſhedding of blood is no remiſſion.’ Compared with 1 John i. 7. ‘ The blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son cleanſeth us from all ſin.’ Sin is the moſt contrary to God's nature, Hab. i. 13. ‘ Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canſt not look on iniquity.’ And therefore it is the object of his greateſt loathing. Going on in ſin, thou art engaged againſt all the attributes of God, Sin has marred the whole frame of God's workmanſhip, provoking him to break it in pieces. Can it be eaſy to get all this buried in forgetfulneſs with a jealous God ?

2dly, God's giving of remiſſions, is one of his greateſt works. Hence is that prayer of Moſes, Numb. xiv. 17. 19. ‘ And now, I beſeech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou haſt ſpoken. Pardon, I beſeech thee, the iniquity of this people, according unto the greatneſs of thy mercy, and as thou haſt forgiven this people, from Egypt, even until now.’ This is a work greater than the making of a world. That was done by a word ſpoken. But in this caſe, juſtice ſtands up for ſatisfaction, truth for the honour of a broken law, and wiſdom finds a way for mercy only by the blood of Chriſt : John iii. 16. ‘ God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.’

3dly, Sad breakings of heart do ſinners ordinarily endure, ere they, being once touched with a ſenſe of ſin, get the pardon of it. This was the caſe of Peter's hearers, Acts ii. 37. ‘ They were pricked in their heart and ſaid unto Peter, and to the reſt of the apoſtles, Men and brethren what ſhall we do ?’ Paul can tell you from his experience of the terror of the Lord ; David of broken bones. However lightly ye think now of the way of coming at it ; a medicine given you for ſweating out the poiſon of ſin, will readily make you ſick at heart, and perhaps bring you to the laſt gaſp, Iſaiah xxxiii. 24.

Mot. 3. Howbeit God is now on a throne of grace to grant remiſſions, 2 Cor. v. 19. ‘ God is in Chriſt, reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them.' Ye may get a pardon now in the Lord's own way, Iſa. lv. 7. 'Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.' Heaven's white flag of peace yet hangs out, the market of free grace ſtands open, an indemnity is proclaimed in the goſpel, Acts xiii. 38. 'Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveneſs of ſins.'

Mot. 4. *laſtly,* Acceſs to remiſſions will not laſte, Iſa. lv. 6. 'Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.' Abuſed patience will break out into fury, Luke xiii. 24, 25. 'Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate; for many, I ſay unto you, will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able. When once the maſter of the houſe is riſen up, and hath ſhut to the door, and ye begin to ſtand without, and to knock at the door, ſaying, Lord, Lord, open unto us: and he ſhall anſwer, and ſay unto you, I know you not whence you are.' Beware you ſit not your day of grace, and delay not till ye will find no place for repentance, Luke xiv. 24. 'For I ſay unto you that none of thoſe men which were bidden, ſhall taſte of my ſupper.'

Object. My ſins are great. *Anſw.* Neither the greatneſs, multitude, nor backſliding into them will hinder, Iſ. i. 18. 'Come now, and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord: though your ſins be as ſcarlet they ſhall be as white as ſnow; though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wool.' Iſa lv. 7. 'Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.' Jer. iii. 22. 'Return, ye backſliding children, and I will heal your backſlidings.' The Lord has ſet up inſtances of pardoning mercy, that none may deſpair; as Adam, Manaſſeh, Paul, and the Jews, crucifiers of Chriſt.

Direction 1. Be ſenſible of your ſin; of the evil of it; of the miſchief done to yourſelves, and the injury and diſhonour done to God. Look to the law, the juſtice of God, *&c.*

Dir. 2. Go to God, and confeſs your ſins fully and freely; and condemn yourſelves, acknowledging yourſelves juſtly condemned by the law, and God to be righteous, if he ſhould execute the ſentence.

Dir ult. Look to Jeſus Chriſt the propitiation held forth to you in the goſpel, his unſpotted righteouſneſs offered to you, and the covert of his blood, the retiring place for ſafety to guilty creatures. Believe the goſpel, that theſe are made over to you therein, and take poſſeſſion thereof, by truſting wholly thereon for your remiſſion, and the ſanctification of your nature, John iii. 16. 'God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.' So ſhall ye be united to Chriſt by faith.

Take that advice, which the ſervants of Benhadad offered to their maſter, 1 Kings xx. 31. Put on the ſackcloath of deep humiliation, ropes about your necks, acknowledging you are worthy of death, and go forth to Chriſt by faith; for the King of Zion is a merciful king, and will ſave your life.

DOCT. II. *The Lord oftentimes does not ſoon come to the execution of the ſentence againſt ungodly men, evil workers, but delays it for a time.*

In proſecuting this doctrine, we ſhall

I. Take a view of the method of providence in this matter.

II. Account for this ſlow method of Providence.

III. Make application of the ſubject.

I. We ſhall take a view of *the method of providence in this matter.* There is a twofold method of Providence with the ungodly, evil workers, in reſpect of execution againſt them; viz. a ſwift and a ſlow method.

Firſt, There is a *ſwift* method the Lord ſometimes takes with ſinners: Mal. iii. 5. 'I will come near to you to judgment, and I will be a ſwift witneſs againſt the ſorcerers,' *&c.* Sinners adventure on evil works; and God ſentences them for them preſently, and purſues them hard with execution, without delay. (1.) Sometimes the ſinner has an ill work in deſign, and the Lord counts his will for the deed, and prevents by a ſpeedy execution, as in Haman's caſe. He hatched the miſchief, but he did not ſee it come forth. (2.) Sometimes the ſinner is in actual motion to the evil work, and execution is done on him ere he get it performed. So it fared with the rebellious Iſraelites, in their attempting to go into the promiſed land, Numb. xiv. 44, 45. And ſo it fared with Jeroboam, putting forth his hand to lay hold on the prophet, 1 Kings xiii. 4.; and with Uzziah having the cenſer in his hand, 2 Chron. xxvi. 19. (3). Sometimes the execution tryſts with the very doing of the ill work, ſo that the ſinner is taken away with the ſtroke in his ſin. Thus fared it with Nadab and Abihu offering ſtrange fire, Lev. x. 1, 2.; with Zimri and Coſbi cut off in the act of uncleanneſs, Numb. xxv. 8. and with Herod, who was eaten up of worms for his atheiſm and blaſphemy, Acts xii. 23. (4.) Sometimes as the ill work is done out and ended, the execution begins. So it fared with Sennacherib's blaſphemous letter. He had writ it, and it was read: ſo his ſin was compleated: and that very night the Lord ſmote his army, and ſoon after himſelf, 2 Kings xix. 14. 35. (5.) Sometimes the execution keeps pace with the ill work, and the one goes on as the other does; judgment in the ſeveral degrees following hard at the heels of the ſin. So it fared with Hiel, in his building of Jericho, 1 Kings xvi. ult. (6.) Sometimes execution begins with the ſinner's beginning to reap the fruit of his ſin: when he leans upon his wall, a ſerpent bites him. So it fared, with Ahab taking poſſeſſion of Naboth's vineyard, 1 Kings xxi. 18, 19. And ſo it fared with the luſters in the wilderneſs, Pſalm lxxviii. 30, 31. (7.) *laſtly,* Sometimes when one's ſin begins to work, in its bitter fruits and effects on others, it recoils on the ſinner himſelf. So it fared with Judas the traitor, Matth. xxvii. 3, 4, 5. It is a ſport to ſome to do miſchief to others; but ere all be done, it may, in the juſt judgment of God, come as heavy on themſelves, as on their neighbour.

Secondly, There is a *ſlow* method the Lord takes oftentimes with ſinners, Neh. ix. 17. They commit their evil works; the ſentence is preſently paſſed on them: but then the execution is delayed, Pſal. l. 21. And that is what is particularly noticed in our text. Concerning this method I offer theſe obſerves.

1. The ſinner may get his evil work contrived and accompliſhed; without any let in his way from heaven, by any execution againſt him. There is a God in heaven who has his eye upon them all along; but that God keeps ſilence, and lets the ſinner take his ſwing, Pſal. l. 21. He could cut him off from the purpoſes of his heart, and break his arm, that he ſhould not accompliſh his work: but he does it not.

2. The ill work being done without let, the ſinner may alſo for a time paſs unpuniſhed, and as little notice may ſeem to be taken of it, as if there were not a God to judge upon the earth, Ezek. ix. 9. There are times wherein holy Providence, as it were, winks at ungodly ſinners, Acts xvii. 30. Hence God is ſaid to *awake to judgment*, when that time is over, Pſal. vii. 6.

3. Yea, ill works may not only for a time eſcape unpuniſhed, but undiſcovered too, Hoſ. xii. 7, 8. Prov. xxx. 20. There are many abominations that appear with open face in the world, but there are perhaps more

that are not diſcovered, being reſerved unto the judgment of the great day, 1 Tim. v. 24. Rom. ii. 16. An omniſcient God could pull the vail off them, but in the ſlow method, it is long a doing.

4. Sinners finding it go thus, encourage themſelves in evil, repeat their evil works, add ſin to ſin, and give themſelves the looſe in their ſinful courſes. This is obſerved in our text. None go to the higheſt pitch of wickedneſs all of a ſudden, but by degrees. Ill works at firſt have a terror about them, and the ſinner trembles under ſome fearful expectation at firſt: but a long-ſuffering God ſtrikes not. Thence the ſinner gathers courage, Pſal. lxiv. 3. and ventures again, and the terror wears off by degrees.

5. Nay ſinners may proſper in an ill courſe. So far may they be from execution done againſt them, that they may thrive in the world in it: Pſal. xxxvii. 35. ‘I ‘ have ſeen the wicked in great power, and ſpreading ‘ himſelf like a green bay tree.’ The ſun of worldly proſperity may ſhine light and warm on men in a courſe of ſin, gone away from God, and God from them. Yea, objects of God's indignation may in that reſpect be treated as if they were the darlings of heaven; and the objects of God's ſpecial love, as if they were the buts of his wrath: Ecclеſ. viii. 14. ‘ There is a vanity ‘ which is done upon the earth, that there be juſt men ‘ unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the ‘ wicked: again, there be wicked men unto whom it ‘ happeneth according to the work of the righteous.’ This has been ſometimes puzzling to the ſaints, as to Jeremiah. See chap. xii. 1, 2.

6. More than all that, they may proſper by their ill works, they may enjoy the fruits of their ſin, and thrive by their ill courſes; as Ephraim did, Hoſ. xii. 7, 8. Riches are called *the mammon of unrighteouſneſs*, becauſe oft times they are got together by unrighteouſneſs. Many a fair eſtate, and great worldly wealth has been got together by oppreſſion; yea the foundation of ſome has been laid in blood, Hab. ii. 12. A plain evidence, that men may not only proſper in, but by ſin.

7. Sinners may get a long time of it, wherein they ſin, and God ſpares ſtill. The old world got a long day of one hundred and twenty years. Job obſerves, that the wicked may live, and become old, and continue proſperous too, Job xxi. 7. and Iſ. lxv. 20. Sometimes God quickly cuts off men in a courſe of ſin; but it is not always ſo; for men may grow grayheaded in the way of wickedneſs.

8. The Lord may ſeem to be in his way to execute the ſentence ſometimes, and yet may give another delay; his hand ſtretched out, he may withdraw again, Pſal. lxxviii. 38. Criminals may be ſet on the brow of the hill, and yet be returned ſafe, and make a very ill uſe of the deliverance, turning worſe on the back of it. The 120 years being out, the old world got ſeven days more reſpite, and they gave themſelves the looſe. See Matth. xxiv. 38.

9. When execution is at length begun, it may be carried on very leiſurely for a time; the drops may come very few and ſoft before the ſhower, Iſ. ix. 1. God may deal very gently with impenitent ſinners, even when he is riſen up againſt them, before he come to the full execution. God's judgments coming with iron hands, may yet proceed with leaden feet in ſlow pace.

10. *laſtly*, More than all that, the execution may be entirely put off during this life. Men may live wickedly and proſperouſly, die peaceably, and be buried honourably; and ſo would wholly eſcape with their ill works, were it not that there is another world and an after-reckoning, and that there is no delay of execution, there. This is plain from Ecclеſ. viii. 10. ‘ I ſaw the ‘ wicked buried, who had come and gone from the ‘ place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city ‘ where they had ſo done.’ Luke xvi. 19. 22. ‘ There ‘ was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple ‘ and fine linen, and fared ſumptuouſly every day. The ‘ rich man alſo died and was buried.’ Pſal. lxxiii. 4. ‘ There are no bands in their death: but their ſtrength ‘ is firm.’ Sometimes God makes the world witneſs to the execution of the ſentence againſt an ill work; but oft-times men get out of the world without it, in this ſlow method of providence.

II. We ſhall *account for this ſlow method of providence*. And there is much need to do it, becauſe there is a myſtery of providence in it that is not eaſy to unriddle, and among men there are ſad blunders about it. And,

1. It is wreſted by many a ſinner in his own caſe, to his own ruin, Prov. i. 32. We naturally have ſuch high thoughts of the world's ſmiles, that we are apt to imagine God thinks highly of them too, and that he expreſſes his ſpecial love and kindneſs by them. But quite the contrary, Rev. iii. 19. ‘ As many as I love, I re‘ buke and chaſten.’ Hence a proſperous ſinner can hardly imagine himſelf not to be a favourite of Heaven, at leaſt cannot think God is ſo angry with his way as ſome would give out; and ſo he continues ſecure in his courſe, Pſal. l. 21.

2. Being miſunderſtood, it is ruining to many ſpectators, and is in hazard of turning them atheiſtical, and contemners of religion, Mal. iii. 14, 15. ‘ Ye have ſaid, ‘ It is in vain to ſerve God: and what profit is it, that ‘ we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked ‘ mournfully before the Lord of hoſts? And now we ‘ call the proud happy: yea, they that work wicked‘ neſs are ſet up; yea, they that tempt God, are even ‘ delivered.’ There are many who have no inward principle of religion. Now, when theſe ſee that there is worldly advantage to be got by it, they embrace it, like the mixed multitude from Egypt; but when they ſee the way of wickedneſs proſperous, and ſinners to keep the road for all the threatenings againſt them, and the godly afflicted and bowed down for all the promiſes to them; they are ready to think, that the threatenings and promiſes of the word, are both but empty ſounds, and that they ſee ſo.

3. There is a difficulty in it, that has puzzled many a great ſaint, and made him to ſtagger. So ready are we to walk by ſenſe, not by faith. This was a knotty piece of the book of providence to Jeremiah, though he reſolved to believe over the belly of ſenſe, Jer. xii. 1, 2; and to Habakkuk, chap. i. 2, 3, 4. It had almoſt carried Aſaph quite off his feet, Pſal. lxxiii. 2.——13, 14.

4. There being a darkneſs on the minds of all men with reſpect to the methods of divine procedure, they are apt to imagine an inconſiſtency of this method of providence with the perfections attributed to God. And there are four divine perfections, that are apt to run a riſk with poor ſinners blind and raſh in judging.

1ſt, His *omniſcience*, whereby he ſeeth and noticeth all things done in the world, Prov. xv. 3. ‘ The eyes ‘ of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil ‘ and the good.’ But when men themſelves are conſcious of their own wickedneſs, and yet ſee that God does not proceed againſt them for it, they are apt to ſay, as Ezek. ix. 9. ‘ The Lord hath forſaken the earth, and ‘ the Lord ſeeth not.’ So the Pſalmiſt repreſents men going on in their wickedneſs, ſecure as to any notice to be taken of it from heaven, Pſal. xciv. 5, 6, 7. ‘ They ‘ break in pieces thy people, O Lord, and afflict thine ‘ heritage. They ſlay the widow and the ſtranger, and ‘ murder the fatherleſs. Yet they ſay, the Lord ſhall ‘ not ſee: neither ſhall the God of Jacob regard it.’ Therefore Job aſſerts it on that occaſion, chap. xxiv. 1. ‘ Why, ſeeing times are not hidden from the Almigh‘ ty, do they not know him, nor ſee his days?’

2dly, His *holineſs*, whereby he is pure in himſelf, and cannot but hate all impurity and ſin in his creatures. It is certain that it is ſo. The angels proclaim it, Iſa. vi. 3. ‘ Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hoſts.’ The Pſalmiſt pointedly declares it, Pſal. v. 4, 5. ‘ Thou art ‘ not a God that hath pleaſure in wickedneſs: neither ſhall evil dwell with thee. The fooliſh ſhall not ſtand in thy ſight; thou hateſt all workers of iniquity.' But when men ſee this method of providence with ſinners, they can hardly believe it, Pſal. l. 21. 'Theſe things haſt thou done, and I kept ſilence: thou thoughteſt that I was altogether ſuch a one as thyſelf: but I will reprove thee, and ſet them in order before thine eyes.' For, think they, if it were ſo, how could he bear with ſuch unholineſs in ſinners affronting him, and trampling on his laws? Therefore the prophet aſſerts it on that very occaſion, but withal owns a difficulty of reconciling this method of providence with it, Hab. i. 13. 'Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canſt not look on iniquity: wherefore lookeſt thou upon them that deal treacherouſly, and holdeſt thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?'

3dly, His *juſtice* or *righteouſneſs*, whereby he ſo hates ſin that he cannot but puniſh it. It is certain it is ſo, Gen. xviii. 25. 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' He has demonſtrated it in the death of his own Son. But when men ſee ungodly ſinners going on in their ſin unpuniſhed, they are apt to think, that God is not ſo very juſt in that matter, as ſome give him out to be; for they cannot ſee ſin get a juſt recompenſe. Therefore Jeremiah aſſerts it on that occaſion, Jer. xii. 1. 'Righteous art thou, O Lord.'

4thly, His *goodneſs* to his own people, whereby being good in himſelf, he does good to them that are good. It is certain it is ſo, Pſal. xxxiv. 8, 9, 10. 'O taſte, and ſee, that the Lord is good: bleſſed is the man that truſteth in him. O fear the Lord, ye his ſaints; for there is no want to them that fear him. The young lions do lack, and ſuffer hunger: but they that ſeek the Lord, ſhall not want any good thing.' The prophet got it in commiſſion Iſa. iii. 10. 'Say ye to the righteous, that it ſhall be well with them: for they ſhall eat the fruit of their doings.' But when men ſee this method of providence dandling ungodly ſinners, and ſmiting the godly, they are apt to think it is not ſo. And therefore Aſaph aſſerts it on that occaſion, Pſal. lxxiii. 1. 'Truly God is good to Iſrael, even to ſuch as are of a clean heart.'

Now, to remove theſe miſconſtructions, and account for the ſlow method of providence, I offer theſe conſiderations.

Firſt, This method is taken to bring ſinners to repentance, and prevent their ruin, 2 Pet. iii. 9.; and it is becoming the perfections of a merciful God, therefore to uſe it. By this means ſinners,

1. Have time and ſpace to repent given them, Rev. ii. 21. Were they always taken away juſt in the heat of their unmortified luſts, we would be ready to cry out of ſeverity, Numb. xvii. 12. But God gives them leave to cool ordinarily, if ſo they will bethink themſelves, and turn to the Lord, and ſo prevent their own ruin.

2. They are invited to repentance, and drawn towards it with the ſofteſt methods, Rom. ii. 4. Every ſparing, preventing, bounteous mercy the impenitent meets with, calls aloud to him to repent. It ſays to him, 'Do thyſelf no harm:' it upbraids him with wilfulneſs for his own ruin, 'Why will ye die?' with ingratitude 'Is this thy kindneſs to thy friend?' And ſo hereby,

1ſt, God has the glory of ſome perfections, which otherwiſe would not ſhine forth ſo illuſtriouſly.

(1.) He has the glory of his long-ſuffering and patience: 2 Pet. iii. 9. 'The Lord is long-ſuffering to us-ward, not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance.' Grave obſervers of the ſlow method of providence muſt cry out, O wonderful long-ſuffering of a God! The patience of the meekeſt man on earth, would be quite worn out with leſs than the half of what a God bears with.

(2.) He has the glory of his univerſal good-will to poor ſinners of mankind, 2 Pet. iii. 9. forecited. 1 Tim. ii. 4. 'Who will have all men to be ſaved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.' Juſtice is his act, his ſtrange act; but mercy is what he has a peculiar delight in. He is ſlow to anger, but ready to forgive. This is written in very legible characters in this method.

(3.) He has the glory of his overcoming goodneſs. To do evil for good, is deviliſh; to do good for good, is humane: but to do good for ill, is divine. Here ſhines forth the glory of the divine goodneſs, overcoming evil with good, Luke vi. 35. This is goodneſs becoming God.

2dly, As to the ſinner, it iſſues always in one of two.

(1.) His recovery, to the ſaving of his ſoul from ſin, and periſhing eternally. And God, who has a due value for immortal ſouls, ſees that a great thing; and treats it as worth the waiting on, Luke xv. 7. The ſcripture holds out this as a noble attainment, James v. 20. 'Let him know, that he which converteth a ſinner from the error of his way, ſhall ſave a ſoul from death, and ſhall hide a multitude of ſins.' How many are there ſinging Hallelujahs in heaven this day, by means of the ſlow method, that by the ſwift method had been roaring with the damned? "Had I died before threeſcore and ſixteen, I ſhad periſhed, for I knew not Chriſt." *Turk. hiſt. p.* 96.

(2.) Or elſe his being left inexcuſable, Rom. i. 20. The longer God has borne with, and the more kind he has been to impenitent ſinners, the more inexcuſable they will be; and the more will God's ſeverity againſt them be juſtified. And ſo this method tends to the clearing of God's juſtice.

Secondly, In the ſlow method God takes with ſinners, he often has an eye to poſterity; and that,

1. To poſterity in general. And it is of uſe to them, whether the ſinner ſo ſpared, repent or not. If he repent, it is of noble uſe to encourage them that come after, to turn to God. How uſeful to many one has been the ſlow method which God took with Manaſſeh and Paul! 1 Tim. i. 16. If he repent not, and vengeance ſeize him at length in ſight of the world, he becomes a warning piece to others that come after, Pſal. xxxvii. 35.—37. Though it do not, his memory rots; and the conſcience of every one that notices his wickedneſs ſilent and at an end in the grave, judges him to have ſpent his life fooliſhly, Job xxiv. 19, 20. Thus many who are of no uſe in the world to others but for miſchief, God in his providence makes good uſe of them.

2. To the ſinners own poſterity; and that,

1ſt, To their poſterity yet unborn. There may be veſſels of mercy in the loins of veſſels of wrath. Many graceleſs parents have been fathers and mothers of gracious children. It is for the elects ſake that the world is kept up: and if the laſt elect were born and brought in, the world will quickly be at an end. The law ſpares a condemned woman, if ſhe is with child, till ſhe has brought it forth: and God often ſpares long, condemned ſinners, for the elect that may be in their loins, Matth. xxiv. 22. There was a ſentence paſſed againſt the generation which came out of Egypt, which for this very reaſon was about thirty eight years ere it was execute on ſome.

2dly, To their poſterity already born; and that two ways.

(1.) As Satan gives ſome a ſurfeit of religion and ſobriety in their parents; ſo God makes repriſals on him, by giving others a horror of ſin and wickedneſs in theirs, Ezek. xviii. 14. And God ſpares them, that they may be a glaſs wherein their poſterity may have a view of the hatefulneſs of ſin. A wretched office, but it juſtifies the ſlow method of a holy God.

(2.) Men are often puniſhed in their poſterity. Many a poor child has ſmarted upon the occaſion of the parent, and many a fair and flouriſhing family has wickedneſs raſed. A holy juſt God ſometimes purſues quarrels againſt ſome evil workers through ſeveral generations, as is threatened in the ſecond command. The third and fourth generation are mentioned, becauſe men may live to ſee themſelves puniſhed in their children, grand children, and great grand children. And they may be ſpared in this ſlow method for that very end. Witneſs Zedekiah.

Thirdly, In the ſlow method God takes with ſinners, he has an eye to his own people: 2 Cor. iv. 15. ‘For all things are for your ſakes, that the abundant grace might, through the thankſgiving of many, redound to the glory of God.’ As the world is kept up for the ſake of God's people, ſo it is guided as it is by providence for their ſakes. And it is their good that is deſigned by it: Rom. viii. 28. ‘And we know, that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpoſe.’ The way that it comes to be for their good, is by means of the ſharp trial they have by it. So God takes the ſlow method with ungodly ſinners for the trial of his own children. And it is a ſharp trial to them two ways.

1. They ſmart ſore under their wickedneſs. Ungodly men are God's rod, as the Aſſyrian was God's hand againſt his people, Pſal. xvii. 14. Oft times they feel as much at their hand as makes them ſmart by the rod: Hab. i. 12. ‘O Lord, thou haſt ordained them for judgment; and O mighty God, thou haſt eſtabliſhed them for correction.’ They always ſee as much of them, as occaſions to them many a heavy heart, verſe 3. ‘Why doſt thou ſhew me iniquity, and cauſe me to behold grievance? for ſpoiling and violence are before me: and there are that raiſe up ſtrife and contention.’ Wherefore ſince God's people need the rod, it is preſerved, and not flung into the fire.

Mean while this tends to their good. The ungodly oblige them to pray, watch, live in the exerciſe of faith, more than otherwiſe they would do. Hence many times the moſt tender Chriſtians are found among the moſt notoriouſly profane neighbours, like Lot in Sodom, who carried not ſo well in the cave. For as the godly are eye ſores to the wicked, ſo the wicked are often as whetſtones and files to the godly.

2. They ſmart the ſorer under their own afflictions: Pſal. lxxiii. 10. ‘Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.’ The proſperity of the wicked carries the afflictions of the godly to a dangerous pitch, through the ſleight of Satan improving it againſt them. This was the caſe of Aſaph: Pſal. lxxiii. 12, 13, 14. ‘Behold, theſe are the ungodly, who proſper in the world, they increaſe in riches. Verily, I have cleanſed my heart in vain, and waſhed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chaſtened every morning.’ Job's friends acted Satan's part on that bottom, endeavouring to prove him an unſound man, becauſe he was a man ſo afflicted.

But this alſo tends to their good. It makes them look more concernedly into their Bible, and find ſweet and relief where otherwiſe they would find no more than others do; as we ſee in Aſaph's caſe, Pſal. lxxiii. 16, 17. ‘When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me: untill I went into the ſanctuary of God; then underſtood I their end.’ And it makes them to look more narrowly into their own hearts, and to their ſincerity, Job x. 7. It obliges them to live more by faith, and not by ſight; to the exerciſe of hope, patience, *&c.*

Fourthly, In this ſlow method God often carries on his awful, yet holy work of hardening ſinners. There is ſuch a work, Rom. ix. 18. ‘Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy; and whom he will, he hardeneth.’ And it is a moſt dreadful plague and judgment, whereby God ceaſing to puniſh men for their ſins one way, puniſhes them another way in a dreadful manner. This appears, if ye conſider,

1. It is a ſpiritual ſtroke, lighting on the ſoul, and therefore more terrible than external ſtrokes on people's bodies or ſubſtance, Rom. i. 28. Hereby the mind is blinded, the will doubly enſlaved to luſts, and the conſcience ſeared; a kind of ſtroke rife this day.

2. It is a ſtroke whereby the diſeaſe of ſin is increaſed, and the goſpel remedy is rendered ineffectual. The heart being hardened, the looſe is given to luſts, that before were under ſome reſtraint, Eph. iv. 19. and the means of grace become uſeleſs, if not noxious; the hardened heart turning the food of the ſoul, as it were, to poiſon in effect, Iſa. vi. 10. 2 Cor. ii. 16.

3. It is a fearful preparative to utter deſtruction, Rom. ix. 22. A naſty earthen veſſel, that gets leave to contract more and more naſtineſs, and is not purged and cleanſed, is deſigned to be broken in pieces, and thrown away, Ezek. xxiv. 13. ‘In thy filthineſs is lewdneſs: becauſe I have purged thee, and thou waſt not purged, thou ſhalt not be purged from thy filthineſs any more, till I have cauſed my fury to reſt upon thee.’ So it is awful.

Yet it is a holy work in the hand of the Lord. God is holy in his hardening, as well as in his ſoftening work, Iſa. vi. 3. compared with verſe 10. For,

1. God hardens no ſoft hearts, hardens none but thoſe who firſt harden themſelves, Rom. i. 28. Men firſt ſhut their own eyes to the light, and then a juſt God blinds their eyes; they are wilful in their ſin, and God gives them their will, Hoſ. iv. 17. For who can ſay, he is obliged to ſtrive on with them ſtill?

2. Sin is a meet puniſhment of ſin, Rom. i. 27. And therefore it is juſt with God to puniſh ſin by ſin, to take off the reſtraint from thoſe who cannot endure it; to let them fall into the mire, and lie in it, that will needs be in it.

Now, God in this ſlow method often carries on this hardening work; and that both on the ſinner himſelf and others.

1. In this method oft-times the ſinner himſelf is hardened judicially. God is at much pains with ſinners to bring them back from their ſinful courſes: he tryſts them with rebukes from his word, convictions, terrors, and anxieties, and adds to theſe ſharp croſſes and afflictions. But they ſtruggle againſt all theſe, and over the belly of them purſue their ſins: ſo God judicially hardens them, and carries on that fearful work in the ſlow method.

1ſt, Denying or withdrawing his grace, and giving them up to their own luſts, Pſal. lxxxi. 12. There is reſtraining grace given to many, who never get ſanctifying grace; good motions, thoughts, and convictions are put into their hearts: theſe the Lord withdraws, and leaves men to the ſwing of their corruptions; as he did Ephraim, Hoſ. iv. 17. ‘Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.’ They rebel againſt the light, and the Lord lets it die out. They are impatient of reſtraint, and the Lord takes it off. They like the government of their luſts, and the Lord gives them up to them.

2dly, Giving them up to Satan to be hardened by him, as the executioner of God's juſt vengeance, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. Men reſiſting, grieving, and vexing the Holy Spirit of God, provoke him to depart, and to leave them in the hand of the evil ſpirit, who then finds eaſy work with them; as in Saul's caſe. Hereby Satan's power over them is confirmed, the oppoſition to his intereſt in them is much removed, and ſo his influence over them is increaſed.

God proceeding in the ſlow method with the ſinner in this caſe, doth awfully carry on the hardening work upon him. In which we may obſerve,

(1). Their impunity hardens them. They venture on ſin, God in anger lets them go on unpuniſhed, Hoſ. iv. 14. And Satan and their own corrupt hearts improve that to the encouraging and ſtrengthening them in their ſins. Thence a wind from hell riſes that fills their ſails. Hence in the text, *Becauſe ſentence againſt* *an evil work is not executed ſpeedily; therefore the heart of the ſons of men is fully ſet in them to do evil.*

(2.) Their proſperity in the world hardens them; Pſal. lxxiii. 5, 6. ‘They are not in trouble as other men: neither are they plagued as other men. Therefore pride compaſſeth them about as a chain: violence covereth them as a garment.’ The hotter the ſun ſhines, the clay becomes the harder: and the warmer the ſun of worldly proſperity ſhines on the ſinner given up to his own luſts and the power of Satan, he, like a dunghill, becomes the harder, and ſends forth the more rank ſavour.

(3.) In the ſoft dealings of providence with them, objects, occaſions, and means to do their ill works, are juſtly laid before them: they are tempted, flattered, and encouraged by others. And thus the warm influence of providence on them in external things, which ſhould lead them to repentance, is, by means of their own luſts to which they are left, turned hardening and ruining to them: Prov. i. 32. ‘For the turning away of the ſimple ſhall ſlay them, and the proſperity of fools ſhall deſtroy them.’ Theſe are to them like a full wind to a ſhip without ballaſt, in a ſtorm.

(4.) Proper means for checking them are in the juſt judgment of God rendered ineffectual, and that hardens them. Thus it was with Pharaoh: the miracle of the rod turned into a ſerpent, waters into blood, bringing in the frogs, ſeemed to Pharaoh's eye-ſight done by the magicians too. And thus were they rendered ineffectual to him.

(5.) *Laſtly*, The adverſity and frowns of providence on the ſerious godly, harden them, Job xii. 4, 5, 6. Theſe are improven, by the ſleight of Satan, to the contempt of both the religious and religion.

2. In this method God carries on a hardening work upon ungodly ſpectators of it. Hence there is a ‘woe to the world, becauſe of offences,’ Matth. xviii. 7. The generality of men have ſo little ſenſe of religion, and inſight into the myſteries of providence, that they are apt to think that that is the beſt way which is the moſt proſperous, Prov. xix. 4. Hence there was a generation that would needs make that the ſtandard of religion. Jer. xliv. 17, 18. ‘But we will certainly do whatſoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incenſe unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the ſtreets of Jeruſalem; for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and ſaw no evil. But ſince we left off to burn incenſe to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been conſumed by the ſword, and by the famine.’ And ſo the Lord doth in his holy providence lay that method of it before worldly and carnal men, at which they, by reaſon of their own wilful blindneſs, do ſtumble, to their own ruin, Mal. iii. 14, 15. forecited.

Fifthly, The general method of providence in managing the world, is ſoft to his adverſaries, and ſharp to his own children in this life: 1 Cor. xv. 19. ‘If in this life only we have hope in Chriſt, we are of all men moſt miſerable.’ Rev. iii. 19. ‘As many as I love, I rebuke and chaſten.’ This is the general rule, though it admits of exceptions, both in the caſe of the one and the other. God's adverſaries ſometimes meet with ſharp things, his children with ſoft. But the general and ordinary courſe of providence is ſoft to the former, and ſharp to the latter.

This appears particularly in two things.

1. God's children are held ſhorter by the head, in point of particular rebukes of providence, than his adverſaries are.

1ſt, God ſharply noticeth many things in his own, that he will paſs in others, and greater too. Hence ſaid Job. ‘If I ſin, then thou markeſt me, and thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity, chap. x. 14. The common proverb holds here, ‘One man had better ſteal a horſe, than another look over the hedge.’ A child of God many times pays dearer for a vain thought, than others for a vile action; for a raſh word, than others for blaſphemy and contrived wickedneſs. How did Moſes ſmart for an unadviſed word? Pſal. cvi. 32, 33. ‘They angered him alſo at the waters of ſtriſe, ſo that it went ill with Moſes for their ſakes: becauſe they provoked his ſpirit, ſo that he ſpoke unadviſedly with his lips.’ Compare Numb. xx. 10. 12. ‘And Moſes and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and ſaid unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; muſt we fetch you water out of this rock? and the Lord ſpake unto Moſes and Aaron, Becauſe ye believed me not, to ſanctify me in the eyes of the children of Iſrael; therefore ye ſhall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.’ But ſee Pſal. lxxiii. 9, 10. ‘They ſet their mouth againſt the heavens: and their tongue walketh through the earth. Therefore his people return hither; and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.’

2dly, When both meet with rebukes for an ill thing, his own oft-times get the ſharpeſt. Hence the lamenting church ſays, Lam. i. 12. ‘Is it nothing to you, all ye that paſs by? Behold and ſee, if there be any ſorrow like unto my ſorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me, in the day of his fierce anger.’ The controverſy for unworthy communicating was pleaded with ſome godly Corinthians, to the ſickening of their bodies, yea, even to death, 1 Cor. xi. 30. ‘For this cauſe many are weak and ſickly among you, and many ſleep.’

2. A lot of adverſity is in a peculiar manner the lot of God's people in this life, and the world ſmiles moſt on its own friends: John xvi. 33. ‘Theſe things I have ſpoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye ſhall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world,’ Pſal. lxxiii. 10. ‘Therefore his people return hither; and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.’ In the caſe of the church and people of God in this life, adverſity ſeems to be the rule and ordinary courſe, proſperity the exception; but in the caſe of the men of the world, proſperity the rule, and adverſity the exception. This appears,

1ſt, From the ſcripture, wherein we find the rod of adverſity the beaten path in which the ſaints under the Old and New Teſtament have walked: the godly often groaning under the weight of their own afflictions, and the weight of proſperous wickedneſs in their enemies. The Cainites build cities, and have the harp and the organ among them; while the church dwelt ſtill in tents: Abraham a ſtranger in the land of promiſe, while the curſed Canaanites enjoy it: Jacob's poſterity in ſlavery in Egypt, while the Edomites were ſettled in their own land, having a king of their own. Perhaps among the Jews in Canaan worldly proſperity was more annexed to piety, agreeable to the diſpenſation they were under, wherein temporal promiſes bear great bulk. But conſider that people in compariſon with other nations, and ye will find their proſperity very ſhort, in compariſon of their neighbours, and their adverſity very long: Zech. i. 11, 12. ‘And they anſwered the angel of the Lord that ſtood among the myrtle-trees, and ſaid, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and behold, all the earth ſitteth ſtill, and is at reſt. Then the angel of the Lord anſwered and ſaid, O Lord of hoſts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jeruſalem, and on the cities of Judah, againſt which thou haſt had indignation theſe threeſcore and ten years?’ But under the New Teſtament the thing is moſt clear. Our Saviour points out this as the ſtated method of providence: Luke vi. 20.—26. ‘And Jeſus lifted up his eyes on his diſciples, and ſaid, Bleſſed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. Bleſſed are ye that hunger now: for ye ſhall be filled. Bleſſed are ye that weep now: for ye ſhall laugh. Bleſſed are ye when men ſhall hate you, and when they ſhall ſeparate you from their company, and ſhall reproach you, and caſt out your name as evil, for the Son of man's ſake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets. But woe unto you that are rich: for ye have received your conſolation. Woe unto you that are full: for ye ſhall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now: for ye ſhall mourn and weep. Woe unto you when all men ſhall ſpeak well of you: for ſo did their fathers to the falſe prophets.' chap. xvi. 25. 'But Abraham ſaid, Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedſt thy good things, and likewiſe Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.'

2*dly*, From experience and obſervation. One needs but to open his eyes, and look about through the world, and he cannot miſs to ſee the world's greateſt favours beſtowed on them who have leaſt ſenſe of God and religion; wickedneſs triumphant, while ſerious godlineſs is preſſed down; ſinners often laughing, while ſaints weep.

Now, this method becomes the divine wiſdom. For,

(1.) At this rate the evil have a taſte of good, and the good a taſte of evil, Luke xvi. 25. forecited. The former, who will at length drink deep of endleſs ſorrow, are patiently born with, to bring them to repentance: the latter, who ſhall rejoice for evermore, have now the trial of a weeping time.

(2.) As a father is more concerned for, and exact in correcting the faults of his own children, than of his ſervants: ſo is our Father in heaven with reſpect to his family. The more he loves, the more he corrects with his rod: Amos iii. 2. 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will puniſh you for all your iniquities.' There are ſome who are to dwell with him for ever: there are others who are to depart from him for ever. What wonder, that he is at more pains to purify the former than the latter!

(3.) This is moſt agreeable to the way he took with his own Son and his enemies. While Chriſt was in the world, he was a man of ſorrows, and acquainted with grief; the wind blew in his face continually, till he was cruelly put to death on the croſs. The ax lay at the root of the Jewiſh church and ſtate, his enemies; yet was it not weilded againſt them all the time he was among them, nor till about forty years after. This was the pattern that is copied after in this method: Rom. viii. 29. 'For whom he did foreknow, he alſo did predeſtinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firſt-born among many brethren.'

Sixthly, Though the ſlow method ſeems ſtrange to us ſhort-ſighted creatures, it is not at all ſtrange being viewed in the glaſs of the infinite perfections of the divine nature. A thing will appear in a ſhallow river, that being caſt into the ſea, will appear no more. We wonder at the ſlow method of providence while we look to men; but we will ceaſe to wonder if we look to God, and obſerve, that,

1. God is eternal, from everlaſting to everlaſting, Pſal. xc. 2 If men do not ſoon purſue their quarrels, death may ſnatch them away, and they can have no acceſs more to do it: but however long the Lord delays pleading his quarrel, he can loſe no time, for he is eternal.

2. In God's eternal duration there are no differences of time; all is preſent to him. Time is for meaſuring created things, but not the infinite Being. So a thouſand years and one day are alike unto him, whatever odds there is betwixt them to us: Pſal. xc. 4. 'For a thouſand years in thy ſight are but as yeſterday when it is paſt, and as a watch in the night.' This conſideration the apoſtle ſuggeſts, 2 Pet. iii. 8. 'One day is with the Lord as a thouſand years, and a thouſand years as one day.'

3. He ſees exactly the time appointed for execution againſt every impenitent ſinner, and will not let it paſs beyond that, one moment: Hab. ii. 3. 'For the viſion is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it ſhall ſpeak, and not lye: though it tarry, wait for it; becauſe it will ſurely come, it will not tarry.' We ſee the beginning and middle of things, but cannot foreſee the end. God ſees all at once. Well he can bear with ungodly ſinners, for he ſees their day coming with ſpeed, Pſal. xxxvii. 13. What needs haſte in reſpect of God? for he ſees the ſinful creature fading, and will drop down into a grave, ere long, Pſal. lxxviii. 38, 39.

4. He knows what he minds to do, and none can let him: Dan. iv. 37. 'All the King of heaven's works are truth, and his ways judgment, and thoſe that walk in pride he is able to abaſe.' The prince that is afraid of the rebels, will ſtrive to cruſh them ere they gather a head; but he that knows he can cruſh them when he will, may let them gather all their ſtrength together. God can carry on the deſigns of his glory, by bearing long with impenitent ſinners: Rom. ix. 17. 'For the ſcripture ſaith unto Pharaoh, Even for this ſame purpoſe have I raiſed thee up, that I might ſhew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.' This alſo he can laugh at the trial of the innocent: Job ix. 23. 'If the ſcourge ſlay ſuddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent.' Like a father holding his child in his hands over a deep pool: the child cries, and the father ſmiles.

5. *laſtly*, He is infinitely bleſſed in himſelf; and nothing the creature can do againſt him, can hurt him; nor in the leaſt diſturb his repoſe in himſelf, Job xxxv. 6, 8. 'If thou ſinneſt what doſt thou againſt him? or if thy tranſgreſſions be multiplied, what doſt thou unto him? Thy wickedneſs may hurt a man as thou art, and thy righteouſneſs may profit the ſon of man.' If the whole creation ſhould conſpire againſt him opening their mouths againſt the heavens, and doing to the utmoſt of their power againſt him; he might contemn their impotent malice, they would be but like men running their heads againſt a rock. The longeſt interval of time cannot make him weary, Iſa. xl. 28. 'Haſt thou not known? haſt thou not heard, that the everlaſting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?'

Seventhly, There is a neceſſity for both the ſwift and ſlow methods being uſed by providence in the government of the world; it is ſo corrupt and atheiſtical. And,

1. The ſwift method is neceſſary to ſhew, that there is a God to judge upon the earth: Pſal. lviii. 10, 11. 'The righteous ſhall rejoice when he ſeeth the vengeance: he ſhall waſh his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man ſhall ſay, Verily, there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.' For as ordinary as the ſlow method is, there are never wanting inſtances now and then of ſwift proceſs againſt ungodly ſinners; which is neceſſary to bear teſtimony to the being of a God, and of a providence concerned in human affairs. And there are as many of theſe, as may give ſufficient warning to all.

2. The ſlow method is neceſſary, to ſhew there is a judgment to come, 2 Theſſ. i. 4.—7. 'We ourſelves glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your perſecutions and tribulations that ye endure. Which is a manifeſt token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye alſo ſuffer; ſeeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompenſe tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled, reſt with us; when the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels,' *&c.* What the carnal world improves in behalf of Atheiſm, is neceſſary to prevent Sadduciſm: for if all mens wickedneſs were puniſhed in this life, it would thence be concluded, that there were no after-reckoning; but there is never a ſentence paſſed againſt

an evil work, that is miſſed to be execute now, but is a pledge of the judgment to come.'

Laſtly, The ſloweſt vengeance againſt impenitent ſinners, will be ſure vengeance; and the ſlower it is in coming, it will be the ſorer when it comes, Deut. xxxii. 35. 'To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot ſhall ſlide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that ſhall come upon them make haſte.' The old world was ſpared a hundred and twenty years, but was ſwept away at length.

1. Let ſinners be ſpared never ſo long, not one of all their ill works will, or can be forgotten. They may have forgot them themſelves, but God never will. There is a book of remembrance of their ill, as well as of the ſaints good words and works, Amos viii. 7. 'The Lord hath ſworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works.' Pſal. l. 21. 'Theſe things haſt thou done, and I kept ſilence: thou thoughteſt that I was altogether ſuch a one as thyſelf: but I will reprove thee, and ſet them in order before thine eyes.'

2. The longer ſinners are ſpared, their counts will be the greater, and all will come on at once, Luke xi. 50, 51. 1 Sam. iii. 12. It is people's mercy, that God ceaſeth not to be a reprover to them; as it is the mercy of weak people to pay their debt by littles, whereas they are broken, if it get leave to run on.

3. When it comes on the impenitent ſinner, God will charge both the intereſt and the principal ſum together. They ſhall not only pay for their ill works, but for their mercies, and the ſparing they have gotten: Rom. ii. 4, 5. 'Or deſpiſeſt thou the riches of his goodneſs, and forbearance, and long ſuffering; not knowing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardneſs and impenitent heart, treaſureſt up unto thyſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.' What aggravated their ſin, will aggravate their condemnation and puniſhment.

And how long ſoever the execution of the ſentence againſt ungodly ſinners, evil workers, may be delayed, and how many external favours of providence be heaped on them; all will appear but ſmall and ſhort, when one conſiders,

1ſt, The ſeverity of the execution when it comes. They will at length be *cut aſunder*, Matth. xxiv. 51 *In flaming fire he will take vengeance on them*, 2 Theſſ. i. 8. They will *fall into the hands of the living God.*

2dly, The eternity of it. That is a killing aggravation in the ſentence, *Depart into everlaſting fire.* If the worm were once awakened, and ſet on them, it *dieth not*: the fire once kindled, will *not be quenched.*

USE 1. Of *Information.* What has been ſaid, may inform us,

1. That preſent eaſe and proſperity in the world is not a ſure ſign of God's ſpecial favour, Eccleſ. ix. 1, 2. Indeed men are apt to conſtrue it ſo; and Satan and the deceitful heart help them to draw ſuch a concluſion. But ſo far is it from being ſuch a ſign, that it may very well conſiſt with their being in a ſtate of wrath, under a ſentence of condemnation; and is ſo with many.

2. That preſent eaſe, impunity, and proſperity, is no ſecurity againſt the time to come. Men are ready to be ſecure upon it, and to dream that to morrow will be as this day: Pſal. x. 6. 'He hath ſaid in his heart, I ſhall not be moved: for I ſhall never be in adverſity.' But the mountain may be ſtanding ſure now, that ere long may be overturned. The ſun ſhined fair on Sodom, the morning of that day in which God rained fire and brimſtone on it. The rich man was full of thoughts of eaſe in that day, in the night whereof he was ſtruck, Luke xii. 18, 19, 20.

3. There cannot be ſuch worth in outward proſperity, nor ſuch evil in affliction, as we generally imagine. For a holy, wiſe God would never heap what is really beſt on the objects of his wrath, and what is really worſt on the objects of his love. Were there as much real value in the world's wealth, eaſe and honour, health, ſtrength, ſilver, gold, &c. as we imagine, or were there as much evil in trouble, adverſity, &c. as we think, would they be ſo dealt, as that the greateſt ſhare of the former ſhould be given to the condemned, and of the latter to the juſtified? It is owing to the weakneſs of human ſight, that ſo much beauty appears in ſome human faces, and in ſome victuals we feed on. If they were looked to with a microſcope, the beauty would diſappear. Faith is the microſcope here, Eccleſ. i. 2. 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.

4. God is a patient and long-ſuffering God, not ſubject to paſſions as we are, 2 Pet. iii. 9. If he were liable to the tranſports of paſſion as we are, the world would have been many times burnt to aſhes ere now; conſidering the provocations given to the eyes of his glory. But the infinite mind enjoys the profoundeſt ſerenity and calm, beholding all the confuſions of evil workers in the world.

5. *laſtly*, Sad and heavy ſtrokes may be abiding a land and generation, though long warded off. Long has the Lord borne with this apoſtatizing generation in principle and practice; and long have we been threatned; and through the delay we have been brought to ſay, *The days are prolonged, and every viſion faileth*, Ezek. xii. 22. But a reprieve is no pardon: the cloud is ſtill hanging over our heads; and it is to be feared, that ſome will live to ſee a fearful breaking of it.

USE 2. Of *Exhortation.* And,

1. Let ungodly ſinners be exhorted to repent of their evil works, and beware of abuſing the divine patience with them. Ye have heard the ſlow method rationally accounted for; if hereafter ye will deceive yourſelves, and turn the grace of God into wantonneſs, encouraging yourſelves in ſin from your impunity and proſperity; know, that ye are wilfully blind, that ye ſhall be inexcuſable, and your blood will be on your own heads. But,

1ſt, Let the ſenſe of gratitude move you to repentance, Rom. ii. 4. Think with yourſelves, what caſe ye had been in, if God had ſtruck you down, as he could in the very act of your evil work; how you might have been beyond all hope and poſſibility of recovery. You owe your life to the ſlow method of providence; his patience exerciſed towards you has kept your ſoul back from the pit. Therefore repent and go no farther on.

2dly, Let the account ye have heard of the ſlow method, fright you from abuſing it. I am ſure, ye cannot but ſee now, that there is no ground to take encouragement to ſin from it. Conſider what has been ſaid, and ſhew yourſelves men. If ye go on to abuſe it ſo, ye make a jeſt of a moſt ſerious and wiſe diſpenſation of providence. Ye turn your food into poiſon, and ſtumble at noon day. And it will be a ſure preſage of everlaſting ruin to you, Hoſ. xiv. 9. 'Who is wiſe, and he ſhall underſtand theſe things? prudent, and he ſhall know them? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the juſt ſhall walk in them: but the tranſgreſſors ſhall fall therein.'

2. Let all beware of cenſuring the ſlow method of providence with ungodly ſinners, evil workers. Take heed how ye ſpeak on that head; beware of riſings of the corrupt heart upon it. For however rationally ye think ye pronounce upon the matter, ſooner or later ye ſhall be made to recant that ſentence, either in mercy, as Job did, chap. xlii. 3. and as Aſaph did, Pſal. lxxiii. 22. or in wrath, Mal. iii. 14, 15. with 18. Conſider,

1ſt, There may be a myſtery in the diſpenſations of providence; but there can be no iniquity, error, or miſtake, Deut. xxxii. 4. 'He is the rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment; a God of truth, and without iniquity, juſt and right is he.' Silently adore that wiſdom, and the deep deſign of providence which ye cannot ſee through, that certainly are in the ſlow method God uſes with ſome ungodly ſinners, evil workers. Though ye cannot ſee how God's glory can miſs to ſuffer by it, believe that God will doubtleſs get glory by it.

2*dly*, The myſtery of that diſpenſation in the caſe of every ungodly ſinner, will be opened out before the world at length, to the ſatisfaction of all humble waiters: and the confuſion of the impenitent evil workers, ſcoffers, and murmurers, 1 Cor. iv. 5. 'Judge nothing 'before the time, untill the Lord come, who both will 'bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and will 'make manifeſt the counſels of the hearts, and then ſhall 'every man have praiſe of God.' Be not raſh, wait the end, and then ye ſhall be allowed to judge: Prov. xviii. 13. 'He that anſwereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and ſhame unto him.' But why ſhould ye judge of the web of providence ere it be wrought out?

3. Fret not at it, neither envy proſperous wickedneſs, Prov. xxiii. 17. 'Let not thine heart envy ſinners: but 'be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.' Pſal. xxxvii. 1. 'Fret not thyſelf becauſe of evil doers, neither be thou envious againſt the workers of iniquity.' Who would envy the ſtate of a condemned man, though he have a long reprieve, and enjoy many comforts in the iron houſe? Such is the caſe of the ungodly, whatever world's eaſe they have. And therefore they are juſt objects of pity and compaſſion, but not of envy. One had better be a pardoned one in the depth of worldly miſery, than in a ſtate of wrath and condemnation in the top of worldly felicity. 'For what is a man profited, if 'he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? 'or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?' Matth. xvi. 26. Conſider,

1*ſt*, Such fretting and envy proceeds from a diſtempered heart: Pſal. lxxiii. 22. 'So fooliſh was I, and 'ignorant: I was as a beaſt before thee.' See Mal. iii. 15. It is the procedure of a mixture of ignorance, raſhneſs, and inconſideration, unbelief and worldly-mindedneſs. And there needs only to cure it, to have our eyes opened, to ſee things in their true ſtate: the laying aſide of unruly paſſions; faith, and due weanedneſs from the world, Pſal. xxxvii. 1, 2. 'Fret not thy'ſelf becauſe of evil doers, neither be thou envious 'againſt the workers of iniquity. For they ſhall ſoon 'be cut down like the graſs, and wither as the green 'herb.'

2*dly*, Every one's ſtate is to be rated according as it is before God. If God be one's friend, he is a happy man, though the world ſhould never give him its good word nor kind look. If God is one's enemy, he is a miſerable man, though all the men and things of the world ſhould favour him to his wiſh. For as is one's ſtate with God, ſo is his preſent ſafety; and ſo will be his well or woe through eternity.

4. Let all learn to regulate their conduct by the example of God in this his government of the world, ſo far as it is propoſed for our imitation: Eph. v. 1. 'Be 'ye therefore followers of God as dear children.' And we may learn from it,

1*ſt*, To be patient and ſlow to anger. How ill does it become us to be ſo ready to fire at every provocation, againſt our fellow-creatures; when the higheſt One uſes ſo much patience towards us? Matth. xviii. 23. &c. The more meekly and patiently one carries himſelf, he is the more like unto God who hath ſet us an example.

2*dly*, To learn to bear with ſinners, in order to the ſeeking of their recovery: Gal. vi. 1. 'Brethren, if a 'man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are ſpiritual, 'reſtore ſuch an one in the ſpirit of meekneſs; conſi'dering thyſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted.' Not that we are to ſuffer ſin upon him, ſo far as it is in our power to remove it. God can bring good out of evil, but we cannot do that: therefore that part of the conduct of providence towards the ungodly, we are not called to imitate. But let us be followers of God, in dealing ſtill with the worſt of ſinners to recover them, and not give them over for hopeleſs.

3*dly*, To do good to the worthleſs, unthankful, and evil: Luke vi. 35. 'Love ye your enemies, and do 'good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your 'reward ſhall be great, and ye ſhall be the children of 'the Higheſt: for he is kind unto the unthankful, and 'to the evil.' It is a naughty world, that people had need of ſuch a principle to prompt them to do good to others. If we confine our good to thoſe that do good to us, what more do we than others? If we confine it to thoſe worthy of it, we do it only for the creature's ſake. But if we propoſe to follow the example of God, we will do good to all as we have acceſs, and act from a Chriſtian principle in it.

5. *laſtly*, Let us not be ſecure with reſpect to the caſe of the land and generation we live in. Let us not think that God has forgotten the iniquity of our fathers in their perfidy and cruelty againſt the godly for his cauſe; or that he approves of the courſe of apoſtaſy from the truth and holineſs of the goſpel this day, whereby the preſent generation has entered itſelf heir to the apoſtatiſing, perſecuting generation that went before. The ſentence is not execute, yet it is but delayed; therefore we may look for it, if repentance prevent it not.

Doct. III. *God's delay of execution is often miſerably abuſed by ſinners, to the filling of their hearts to do evil, and ſinning more and more.*

In diſcourſing this doctrine, I ſhall,

I. Point out the abuſe of God's patience in the delay of execution, that ungodly ſinners make, to the filling of their hearts to do evil.

II. Shew how it comes to paſs, that ſinners ſo abuſe God's patience with them.

III. Make application of the doctrine.

I. I ſhall *point out the abuſe of God's patience in the delay of execution, that ungodly ſinners make, to the filling of their hearts to do evil.*

1. They abuſe it to carnal ſecurity: Pſal. x. 6. 'He 'hath ſaid in his heart, I ſhall not be moved: for I ſhall 'never be in adverſity.' Finding that God does not execute his threatenings againſt them, they conclude they are in no hazard: and they begin to look on them as mere ſcarecrows, ver. 5. 'His ways are always grie'vous; thy judgments are far above out of his ſight.' And ſo they go on ſecurely in their ungodly courſes. Hence it is that the execution overtakes them quite unexpectedly, 1 Theſſ. v. 2, 3. 'The day of the Lord ſo 'cometh as a thief in the night. For when they ſhall 'ſay, Peace and ſafety; then ſudden deſtruction com'eth upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; 'and they ſhall not eſcape.'

2. They abuſe it to a ſenſual life, wherein their aim is not to keep a clean conſcience, but to gratify their ſenſes, as their circumſtances in the world will permit; as the rich man did, Luke xii. 19. 'I will ſay to my 'ſoul, Soul, thou haſt much goods laid up for many 'years; take thine eaſe, eat, drink, and be merry.' So the more that Providence favours them in external things, the more ſenſual they are, fulfilling the deſires of the fleſh and of the mind: Hoſ. xii. 6. 'According to their 'paſture, ſo were they filled: they were filled, and their 'heart was exalted: therefore have they forgotten me.' Hence the lives of many are trifled away, and wholly ſpent in making proviſion for the fleſh, 'the luſt of the 'fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life.' And that is endleſs buſineſs: Eccleſ. i. 8. 'All things are 'full of labour, man cannot utter it: the eye is not ſa'tisfied with ſeeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.'

3. They abuſe it to impudence in ſin, Jer. vi. 14. 15. When God ſtrikes men in a ſinful courſe, they are aſhamed readily as pointed at by the hand of heaven, as

tranſgreſſors: but when men proſper in a ſinful courſe, they put on a brow of braſs, they gather a ſtock of impudence in ſin, as if Providence had given them a patent for wickedneſs: Pſal. lxxiii. 5, 6. ‘They are not in trouble as other men: neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compaſſeth them about as a chain: violence covereth them as a garment.’

4. They abuſe it to contempt of God, and all that is ſacred: Pſal. lxxiii. 9. ‘They ſet their mouth againſt the heavens: and their tongue walketh through the earth.’ Agur ſaw the danger of this ſnare, and therefore prayed thus, Prov. xxx 8, 9. ‘Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty, nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me; leſt I be full, and deny thee, and ſay, Who is the Lord? or leſt I be poor, and ſteal, and take the name of my God in vain.’ Iſrael fell into it: Deut. xxxii. 15. ‘Jeſhurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatneſs; then he forſook God which made him, and lightly eſteemed the Rock of his ſalvation.’ The ungodly have not love to God: if they have any thing that way of ſuch affection, it is fear of him, a ſlaviſh fear of his wrath, ſpringing from the love of themſelves: this fear they loſe alſo, when God delays to ſtrike. And ſo it iſſues in contempt, as is natural in the caſe of one we love not, nor fear neither. And then all that is ſacred is deſpiſed.

5. They abuſe to ſinning more diffuſively, giving looſe reins to their ſeveral luſts, Jer. vii. 9, 10. One ſin makes way for another, and proſperity in ſinful courſes gives many occaſions of ſin: and as the vitious ſtomach, the more it receives, breeds the more ill humours; ſo the more one proſpers in a ſinful courſe, the more vile does he grow.

6. They abuſe it to ſinning more eagerly: Eph. iv. 19. ‘Being paſt feeling, they have given themſelves over unto laſciviouſneſs, to work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs’ The more that luſts are fed, the more ſtrong they grow, and carry out the man more violently to ſatisfy them. So that the heart in that caſe is like a ſhip having a full gale of wind, and is eagerly ſet to do evil.

7. *laſtly*, They abuſe it to incorrigibleneſs and obſtinacy in ſin, Jer. xxii 21. A proſperous ſinner quickly gets above reproofs, Hoſ. iv. 4. As affliction tends to humble, proſperity puffs up an ungracious heart: and the heart ſwelled with pride ſcorns to ſtoop, till God by his grace or judgments do lay it.

II. *How it comes to paſs that ſinners ſo abuſe God's patience with them?*

1. Sin reigning in the ungodly, fear of wrath is their higheſt motive to good, and moſt forcible reſtraint from evil; and ſo when that reſtraint is taken off by the delay of execution again and again; the heart naturally goes to its own bias, and is like the wild aſs's colt ſnuffing up the wind at her pleaſure. The love of holineſs for itſelf, and likeneſs to God, would prevent it.

2. They miſtake the deſigns of providence. They miſinterpret the ſlow method of procedure with them, Pſal. l. 21. The deſign of it is to lead them to repentance; but that they notice not. But they conſtrue it, as if God approved of their ways, or had ſuch a regard for them, that he would not be ſo angry with them, as one would make them believe: they cannot think that he is ſo very angry at their ſin, while they proſper in it by his providence.

3. There is a root of Atheiſm in the hearts of all men naturally, and it reigns in the ungodly: Pſal. xiv. 1. ‘The fool hath ſaid in his heart, There is no God.’ Unleſs God be every now and then proving his being, providence, and juſtice to them, by his works of judgment on themſelves; they are apt to forget him, and deny him. It is the intereſt of men wedded to their luſts, that there were not a God; or if there be, that he were not ſuch as the ſcripture repreſents him. So they are ready to entertain every thing that may favour it.

4. *laſtly*, The Lord often in that way carries on a holy hardening work. In which caſe, Satan and the evil heart conſpire to this abuſe.

Use 1. of *Information.* This lets us ſee,

1. That we need not be ſurpriſed to ſee ſinners eſcaping with one evil work fall into another, and ſo on; growing ſtill more vile, the more outward favours are heaped on them. It is but a fulfilling of this ſcripture. Providence often has an odd aſpect in our view, till we carry the matter to the Bible; and there we ſee it exactly anſwering the word.

2. It is good for men to be under frequent rebukes of providence. Affliction is ſore, but it is the more ſafe lot, Pſal. cxix. 71. In the one men are put in mind of their ſins, in the other they are apt to forget both their God and themſelves. It would be profitable for the afflicted to conſider the wretched abuſe the heart is ready to make of eaſe and proſperity.

3. Slow vengeance will be ſore vengeance when it comes. For the longer it is a-coming, ſin goes the deeper: the more God ſpares impenitents, the more they treaſure up wrath againſt the day of wrath; the counts run on, and ſwell the more. So whether we conſider it coming on in time, or eternity, the heavier will it be.

4. *laſtly*, Great is the corruption of human nature. See it here as in a glaſs, how the mercy and goodneſs of God is deſpiſed by the corrupt heart, that will not be drawn by ſuch cords of love. See how it turns our food into poiſon, and that which ſhould be for our welfare into a ſnare and trap. See it an ungrateful nature, apt to be inſenſible of the ties of gratitude to our beſt Benefactor.

Use 2. of *Exhortation.* Take heed of abuſing the patience of a long ſuffering God, of turning his grace, goodneſs, and forbearance, into wantonneſs, of your heart filling to do evil, while God ſpares.

1. Conſider the evil of it. There is in it,

1*ſt*, An over-valuing of ourſelves, as if we deſerved not to be worſe treated, and therefore were nothing obliged to our Benefactor, Hab i. 16. ‘They ſacrifice unto their net, and burn incenſe unto their drag: becauſe by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous.’ Men, who are not bettered by God's goodneſs, their hearts ſwell in pride, as patience is uſed towards them, Pſal. lxxiii. 5, 6. ‘They are not in trouble as other men: neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compaſſeth them about as a chain: violence covereth them as a garment.’

2*dly*, An under-valuing of others whom providence doth not treat ſo ſoftly. Hence Job ſaid, chap. xii. 5. ‘He that is ready to ſlip with his feet, is as a lamp deſpiſed in the thought of him that is at eaſe.’ How lightly do many that are at eaſe, look on the heavy things others ſuffer? They are as unconcerned with them, as if they were creatures of an inferior rank. Were men ſenſible of God's goodneſs in his patience towards them, it would make them ſympathiſe with others, wondering that it is not worſe with themſelves, 2 Chron. xxviij. 10.

3*dly*, A monſtrous abuſe of the creature, and comforts of life, Hoſ. ii. 8. The uſe of the creature was given to man, for his comfort indeed; but always in a ſubſerviency to the glory of God. But abuſers of divine patience turn the weapons againſt God, which he has armed them with for his ſervice, Deut. xxxii. 15. ‘But Jeſhurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatneſs; then he forſook God which made him, and lightly eſteemed the Rock of his ſalvation.’ They are called *adulterers* and *adultereſſes*, James iv. 4. becauſe they beſtow God's good gifts on their luſts, verſe 3. Hence the creation grones under the burden of the ungodly evil workers, Rom. viii. 22.

4thly, A denying the due tribute to our Sovereign Lord and King. All that we have we hold of him, in the way of free mercy, Lam. iii. 22. The king in his palace, and the beggar in his cottage, is God's tennant; our food and raiment, coarſe or fine, with all conveniencies of life are given us of God. We can pay him nothing, but the tribute of praiſe in our lips and lives: and that is denied. Hence,

5thly, Monſtrous ingratitude, a ſin of a deep dye: Deut. xxxii. 6. 'Do ye thus requite the Lord, O fooliſh people and unwiſe? Is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and eſtabliſhed thee?' It is a deviliſh diſpoſition of heart, that cannot be won with benefits; a baſe ſpirit, which good done them cannot engage. But abuſers of mercies, the more God loads them with benefits, the more they load him with their provocations. Ah! ſhall men ſin, becauſe grace abounds? ſhall their hearts be filled in them to do evil, becauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is not ſpeedily executed?

6thly, Practical blaſphemy, as if men ſhould ſay, they are hired to be vile, Jer. vii. 9, 10. Abuſers of the doctrine of the goſpel, to licentiouſneſs, make Chriſt the miniſter of ſin: therefore abuſers of the kind providence of God to that end, make God in his government of the world ſo. While heaven ſmiles in outward favours on men, and they uſe them ſo, the language of that practice is blaſphemous.

7thly, Much Atheiſm and contempt of God. It is a denial of his providence, as if he had no concern about human affairs, Ezek. ix. 9. It makes a jeſt of his threatnings in his word, 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4. It miſrepreſents his holy nature, Pſal. l. 21. or bids him defiance, Iſa. v. 19. and throws off his yoke, Pſal. xii. 4.

2. Conſider the danger of it. If ye go on ſo,

1ſt, Ye will make your recovery ay more and more hopeleſs, Jer. vi. 29, 30. Sin is a current, the farther it runs, the deeper it grows; and the more goodneſs men ſin againſt, the more is their heart hardened, and their conſciences ſeared. Withal it provokes God to give up with men, leave ſtriving with them, and give them up to their luſts, and to the devil to be hardened more.

2dly, If God have any thoughts of good towards you, it will make your recovery more difficult. Strong diſeaſes muſt have ſtrong remedies: and long abuſed patience will make broken bones, at beſt; if ye be ſaved, it will be ſo as by fire. At beſt ye are but laying up for bitter repentance; the more looſe and licentious one is in an unconverted ſtate, the more ſevere pangs and throes he will readily find in the new birth. Witneſs Manaſſeh, Paul, &c.

3dly, Be it as it will, that patience will have an end: ye ſhall not ſin on and God ſpare on very long. The coupling of theſe two will be broken, and God will ſhew you that he will bear no longer with your abuſe, Eccleſ. vii. 6. 'For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, ſo is the laughter of the fool.' Ye will find God will awake to judgment, and wake you out of your dream; and ye will either be his converts or broken to pieces by him.

4thly, The breaking up of patience with you is likely to be very ſudden or ſurpriſing, 1 Theſſ. v. 2, 3. So was it with the rich man, Luke xii. 19, 20. God bore long with the old world, but at length the deluge came on like a thunder clap in the midſt of their carnal mirth and jollity. God does it in juſt recompenſe of long abuſed patience.

Laſtly, Abuſed patience, when it breaks off, will turn to fury; and the longer God has delayed execution, the more ſevere will it be when it comes on, Lev. xxvi. 28. The more a man has had in truſt, his accounts will be found the greater, and the harder, to clear off, when once the creditors fall on him. It is moſt pleaſing to the fleſh, to live in eaſe and fulneſs: but the abuſe of theſe will make a more fearful reckoning, than otherwiſe.

DOCT. IV. *Though the execution be never ſo ſlow, it will be ſure, againſt impenitent ſinners, evil workers.*

In handling this doctrine, it is propoſed to ſhew,

I. In what reſpects the execution againſt impenitent ſinners, evil workers, will be ſure.

II. That the execution againſt them will be ſure.

III. Apply the doctrine.

I. *In what reſpects will the execution againſt impenitent ſinners, evil workers, be ſure?* It will be ſure, in reſpect of,

1. The full tale of their evil works: Eccleſ. xii. 14. 'For God ſhall bring every work into judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.' Neither the multitude of them, nor the long time they ly over unreckoned for, will cauſe any of them to be forgotten. But the ill works of the ſeveral periods of the ſinner's life, will be charged upon him exactly. God keeps a regiſter of all their evil works, a book that will be opened at the laſt day, Rev. xx. 12.; and has ſworn that none of them ſhall be forgotten, Amos viii. 7.

2. The whole aggravations of their evil works, Jude ver. 15. A juſt God will remember againſt impenitent ſinners, the manner as well as the matter of their ſins; the time, place, and other circumſtances of their ill works, will be remembered againſt them. Their abuſed mercies, the light they rebelled againſt, the warnings from the word and providence they ſlighted, the effects their ill example had on others, the ſnares others were intangled in by their means, *&c.* will all be charged on them.

3. The conviction of their own conſciences, Jude ver. 15. Sinners now find ways to cloke and cover their evil works, to deny or mince them: and few will now ſuffer themſelves to be admoniſhed or reproved, but they have a great deal to ſay in their own defence; but the lying lips, and tongues that ſpeak proudly, will then be put to ſilence, Matth. xxii. 12. The light of conſcience will then be like broad day light, that is now as the darkneſs of the night. It will convince them clearly of what ſhall be laid to their charge, that they can no more deny it, John viii. 9.; and of the juſtice of God in proceeding againſt them, Pſal. l. 6.

4. Juſt puniſhment brought on them for their evil works, 1 Theſſ. v. 3. While God delays, men dream with Agag, that the bitterneſs of death is paſt: but will find themſelves deceived, as he, when Samuel took the ſword and hewed him in pieces before the Lord. They cannot eſcape the due demerit of their ſin at length; but as the needle draws the thread after it, ſin will draw wrath. Judgment is ſin's ſhadow.

5. The correſpondence there will be between their ſin and puniſhment. God will write every ungodly ſinner's ſin in his puniſhment. Oft times it is ſo here with them, as in the caſe of Adonibezek, Judges i. 7. but always ſo hereafter, as in the caſe of the rich man, Luke xvi. 19. with 24. Hence the worm is ſaid never to die; ſignifying the eternal remorſe they ſhall have for their evil works. And the degrees of puniſhment will be ſuited to the degrees of their ſin. They that have committed many ſins, ſhall have many ſtripes.

6. Its inevitableneſs, when once patience is come to an end: Luke xiii. 24, 25. 'Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate: for many, I ſay unto you, ſhall ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able. When once the maſter of the houſe is riſen up, and hath ſhut to the door, and ye begin to ſtand without, and to knock at the door, ſaying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he ſhall anſwer and ſay unto you, I know you not whence you are.' The door of mercy may ſtand open long, but it will be ſhut at length. And then there is no more eſcaping. For,

1ſt, Omniſcience will find out the ſlier, and diſcover his moſt ſecret crimes, and overthrow all his defences: Heb. iv. 13. 'Neither is there any creature that is not 'manifeſt in his ſight: but all things are naked, and 'opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to 'do.' Pſal. cxxxix. 7. 'Whither ſhall I go from thy 'Spirit? or whither ſhall I flee from thy preſence?' There is no blinding of the eye of an omniſcient judge.

2*dly*, Divine power will bring him under, and cauſe him to ſtand and receive the juſt reward of his deeds: Job ix. 4. *He is wiſe in heart, and mighty in ſtrength: who hath hardened himſelf againſt him, and hath proſpered?* There will be no reſiſting of omnipotence: the ſtouteſt ſinner will be poured out like water before an angry God.

3*dly*, The divine ſeverity will proceed over the belly of all entreaties, made out of time: Luke xiii. 24, 25. forecited. They that ſlight mercy while God's time for it laſteth, will get no mercy when God's time is out, and theirs is come.

4. *laſtly*, Its eternity. The execution once on, will never be off; once begun, never will end: Mark ix. 44. *In hell the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.* While God is, he will purſue the quarrel. The ungodly ſin on as long as they are in the world, and live as long as they will, they will not alter their courſe; and God will purſue them for ever, when he breaks off.

II. *That the execution againſt them will be ſure*, appears,

1. From the inviolable regard God has to the honour of his holy law, Iſa. xlii. 21. Sinners trample on it, ſlight its commands, and deſpiſe its threatenings; but God highly regards it, as that wherein he has eminently expreſſed the holineſs of his nature. If ſinners then honour it not in the way of duty, it will be honoured upon them in a way of judgment. God's regard to his law may be ſeen clearly,

1*ſt*, In the works of providence. As ſoon as ſin entered into the world, and the law was broken, the face of providence on the world was quite changed. And it has blown continually ſince in the face of the creation leſs or more, Rom. viii. 22. Ofttimes it has riſen to violent ſtorms, to avenge the quarrel of the diſhonour of the holy law by ſinners. Remember how, in that quarrel, Adam was driven out of paradiſe, the world drowned by the flood, Sodom burnt, Jeruſalem deſtroyed, with the many awful ſtrokes brought on impenitent ſinners in latter times.

2*dly*, In the work of redemption. God choſe ſome from eternity unto ſalvation; but being breakers of the law, they behoved to be redeemed, and the price paid to the full reparation of the honour of the law. Chriſt the Son of God was their Redeemer; but that the law's honour might be ſeen to, he met with no ſparing: Rom. viii. 32. *He ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.* So God wrote his regard to the law in the ſalvation of his elect, and blood of his ſon.

2. The truth and veracity of God inſures the execution. He has ſaid, he will do it; Gen. ii. 17. 'In 'the day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.' His Son has intimated to us from heaven, that impenitent ſinners ſhall not eſcape: Luke xiii. 3. 'I tell you, 'nay: but except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe pe'riſh.' Every leaf of the ſcripture almoſt, has ſomething to this purpoſe; and 'hath he ſaid, and ſhall he 'not do it? or hath he ſpoken, and ſhall he not make 'it good?' Numb. xxiii. 19. God's truth muſt either fail, or ungodly ſinners be reckoned with at length.

3. The juſtice of God requires it; Gen. xviii. 25. 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' Men may be unjuſt judges; but God cannot. He will give every tranſgreſſion a juſt recompence of reward; for it is in his power to do it, and his nature requires it. He hates ſin, and cannot but hate it; and therefore though he delay for a time, he will puniſh.

4. The conſtant conduct of providence hitherto confirms it. There have been multitudes of ungodly men in the world; but may we not put the queſtion, Job ix. 4. *Who hath hardened himſelf againſt him, and hath proſpered?* Some have indeed been long ſpared; but did not they at length either bow or break before him? What became of the giants in the old world, of Pharaoh, of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram? Theſe things happened for warnings to us. And if any have eſcaped during life, is there not ſufficient evidence of execution on them in another world? as is evident from the caſe of the rich man, Luke xvi.

5. *laſtly*, The peremptory appointment of the day of general judgment, puts it out of queſtion: Acts xvii. 30, 31. 'And the times of this ignorance God winked 'at; but now commandeth all men every where to re'pent: becauſe he hath appointed a day in the which 'he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by that man 'whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given aſſu'rance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from 'the dead.' The Judge is named for that effect already, the commiſſion to him for that end has paſſed the ſeals in his reſurrection; it is to be general, all muſt be judged by him; yea, the ſentence againſt the ungodly is conceived already, 'Depart from me, ye curſed, 'into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his 'angels.'

For Use, I ſhall drop a word to,

1. The ungodly, evil workers. And to you I would ſay,

1*ſt*, Let not your impunity for the preſent, make you ſecure for the time to come; as is the caſe of the wicked man, Pſal. x. 6. 'He hath ſaid in his heart, I ſhall not 'be moved: for I ſhall never be in adverſity.' As ſure as ye think your mountain now ſtands, it may ſuddenly be overturned; yea, it ſhall aſſuredly, if ye repent not. God is giving you ſpace to repent: do not trifle and dream it away, leſt ye repent it when it is too late.

2*dly*, Let not your obſervation of the proſperity of other ſinners, encourage and harden you in your ſinful courſe, as it did thoſe, Mal. iii. 15. 'And now we call 'the proud happy: yea, they that work wickedneſs are 'ſet up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.' Ye have ſeen much of their ſinful courſe, and of God's patience. But ye have not ſeen the end of it yet: Iſa. xvii. 11. 'In the day ſhalt thou make thy plant to grow, 'and in the morning ſhalt thou make thy ſeed to flou'riſh: but the harveſt ſhall be a heap in the day of 'grief, and of deſperate ſorrow.' Many a day has begun fair, and held on long ſo, that has had a foul evening. And whatever ye have obſerved of them, their proſperity in their ill courſe ſhall either end in bitter repentance, or in their deſtruction; or elſe the word of truth fails.

3*dly*, Take the alarm in time, and flee from the wrath to come: Iſa. lv. 6, 7. 'Seek ye the Lord while he may 'be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the 'wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his 'thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he 'will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he 'will abundantly pardon.' Know ye cannot proſper to the end, in your looſe and licentious ways. Ye muſt come to Chriſt by faith, and leave the world lying in wickedneſs; muſt break off your ſins by repentance, or elſe ye will periſh. If ye do it not, ye will mind that ye have been fairly warned, and lament for ever your ſlighting of it.

2. To the godly I would ſay,

1*ſt*, Beware of entertaining any idol of jealouſy in your heart, wherewith the Lord may be provoked againſt you. He is impartial in his judgments, and even his own ſhall not eſcape: Iſa. xlii. 24. 'Who 'gave Jacob for a ſpoil, and Iſrael to the robbers? did 'not the Lord, he, againſt whom we have ſinned? for 'they would not walk in his ways, neither were they 'obedient unto his law.' Though being in Chriſt ye have ſhut the gulf as to condemnation, ye may be ſeverly chaſtiſed; and ye may get broken bones for your tranſgreſſions, though ye cannot loſe your ſouls.

2*dly*, Be not diſcouraged in the Lord's way, becauſe in it ye meet with many ſore trials, while others that are far from it go at eaſe. The work-ox goes with the yoke on his neck, while the ſlaughter-ox is full fed. But the former is preſerved, while the latter is ſlain and hewed in pieces.

3. *laſtly*, To all I would ſay,

1ſt, Know that God is a holy jealous God. The way of ſin is dangerous; and there will be no peace in the end of it.

2dly, Let us prepare to meet our God in the way of his judgments. God's proceedings againſt the land are ſlow, but they are like to be ſure and ſore. He has made the earth to quake beneath us, ſhewn his anger from the face of the heavens above us.

The Sin, Folly and Danger of Mens calling Chriſt their Lord, and not yielding Obedience to his Laws: Or, The Sinfulneſs and Hazard of a Profeſſion of Religion, without a correſpondent Practice.

Several SERMONS, preached at Etterick, in Summer 1728.

LUKE vi. 46.

And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I ſay?

THERE was, together with the diſciples, a great multitude gathered to hear Chriſt, and to be healed by him, ver. 17. Many of them pretended a great regard for him; but it went no farther than good words. Our Lord here tells them, that ſuch is every man, good or bad, according as his life is, ver. 44, 45. 'For every 'tree is known by his own fruit: for of thorns men do 'not gather figs, nor of a bramble-buſh gather they 'grapes. A good man out of the treaſure of his heart, 'bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man, 'out of the treaſure of his heart, bringeth forth that 'which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart, his 'mouth ſpeaketh.' And he cloſely applies this to their conſcience in the text. Wherein we have,

1. A conceſſion. He grants they made a fair profeſſion; they called him *Lord, their Lord.* They owned his authority and Lordſhip over them, as if they were his ſubjects and ſervants ready to receive and obey his commands. They addreſſed themſelves to him for his help, one and another crying, Lord, help me, pleading to receive benefit by him as their Lord. And this they did at times with much ſeeming zeal and concern, *Lord, Lord.*

2. A charge. He charges them with being nothing like this in their practice. Though they called him *their Lord*, they carried not themſelves at all as his ſubjects and ſervants. Though they would have him to do for them, they would do nothing for him. In his preaching and life, he laid their duty before them: but though they owned him for their Lord, they ſhewed no regard in their practice to what he ſaid, no conformity to his doctrine and example.

3. An expoſtulation. He puts them to conſider the inconſiſtency of theſe things, and the unaccountableneſs of yoking together a profeſſion and a practice that deſtroyed one another. A lord, and a ſubject or ſervant are relatives; to the one it belongs to command, to the other to obey, Mal. i. 6. Why will ye plead the relation, and yet throw off the duty of the relation? 'If you 'call me your Lord, why do ye not what I ſay or bid 'you? If you will not do what I ſay or bid you, why 'do ye call me your Lord?'

Two doctrines are deducible from the text thus explained.

DOCT. I. *There are who call Chriſt their Lord, owning his authority over them, and looking for benefit by him, who yet make not conſcience of doing the things which he as a Lord ſays to them, and requires of them.*

DOCT. II. *It lies on mens conſciences before the Lord, to take it home to themſelves, to conſider and anſwer it, how they come to call Chriſt their Lord, and yet make not conſcience of doing the things which he as a Lord ſays to them, and requires of them.*

I ſhall handle theſe doctrines in order.

DOCT. I. *There are who call Chriſt their Lord, owning his authority over them, and looking for benefit by him, who yet make not conſcience of doing the things which he as a Lord ſays to them, and requires of them.*

In diſcourſing this doctrine, I ſhall,

I. Conſider mens calling Chriſt their Lord.

II. Conſider their not doing the things which he ſays, notwithſtanding their calling him their Lord.

III. Shew how it comes to paſs, that people do call Chriſt Lord, and their Lord, and yet make no conſcience of doing what he ſays.

IV. Apply the doctrine.

I. I will conſider *mens calling Chriſt their Lord.*

Under this head, I will ſhew,

1. How men call Chriſt their Lord.

2. What they do call Chriſt, that call him their Lord.

3. What is the import of their calling him Lord.

Firſt, I will ſhew how men call Chriſt their Lord. Men call him their Lord.

1. Profeſſing Chriſtianity. *Chriſtians* is the name of Chriſt's diſciples who owned him for their Lord and Maſter, Acts xi. 26. 'The diſciples were called Chriſ'tians firſt at Antioch.' As ye are called Chriſtians, ye are called by his name, owning him for your Lord and Maſter, Matth. xxiii. 10. 'One is your Maſter, e'ven Chriſt.' Some, that they may take to themſelves a liberty, which others may not, will pretend they do not make a profeſſion. Strange! Chriſtians and yet not profeſſors! Can there be a more holy profeſſion, than that of Chriſtianity, whereof Chriſt is the head? Heb. iii. 1. 'Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the 'heavenly calling, conſider the apoſtle and high prieſt 'of our profeſſion, Chriſt Jeſus.' Nay, at that rate ye take the name, and throw off the thing.

2. Being baptized in his name, Matth. xxviii. 19. They are thereby externally marked for his ſubjects and ſervants, and renounce the devil, the world, and the fleſh. It is a badge of ſubjection to Chriſt, which the members of the viſible church have taken on, to diſ-

ſtinguiſh them from the world, whereof Satan is the god; while Chriſt is the Lord and God of the church.

3. Praying unto him, or to God in his name, Acts vii. 59. Dan. ix. 17. Every praying perſon, ſo far as he prays like a Chriſtian, calls Chriſt his Lord, and begs his help; though many do little conſider what that requires of them in their practice.

4. Attending the aſſemblies of his people to hear his word, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. The Lord Chriſt has appointed theſe aſſemblies for declaring his will to his people, as to what he will do for them, and what he will have them to do; and the very coming thither in a way of outward reverence, is a calling him Lord, from whom we are to learn our duty.

5. Conſenting perſonally to the covenant, Iſa. xliv. 5. Thereby they ſay, he is and ſhall be for ever their Lord, and that they ſhall be his only, wholly, and for ever. And at whatever time any have given ſuch conſent, they have no power to retract it after. Whether ever they ſhall renew it again or not, it ſtands recorded before God, and they will be judged before him accordingly.

6. *laſtly*, Partaking of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper. The very name of that ordinance bears the partakers to call him ſo, 1 Cor. xi. 23. 26. And it is a very ſolemn profeſſion before the world, angels, and men, that he is our Lord, and we give up with all other lords. We take heaven's ſeal upon it, and in a manner make oath that it is ſo.

Secondly, I will ſhew what they do call Chriſt, that call him their Lord.

1. They call him their Lord God; as Thomas did, John xx. 28. 'My Lord, and my God.' They own him to be God their Creator, who made them, and preſerves and ſuſtains them, to be their ſovereign Lord, the Moſt High God with his Father and Spirit, unleſs they declare the contrary. For ſo the univerſal church of Chriſt on earth do underſtand Chriſt to be the Lord, Rom. ix. 5. however lightly men may let of his commands.

2. Their Lord Proprietor, Maſter and Owner, however little regard they ſhow to the will of his providence and precepts, Rom. xiv. 9. For as all things are his by creation, ſo the Father has by a new title made him heir of all things, Lord of all, which is declared in the goſpel, Acts x. 36. And ſo the head of every man is Chriſt.

3. Their Lord Redeemer, Exod. xx. 2. however unſuitably they walk to the redemption purchaſed by him. For ſo his people underſtand him to be our Lord, who bought us with his precious blood, paying our ranſom while we were captives of Satan, giving himſelf for us.

4. Their lord Huſband, however refractory and diſobedient they prove to him: Jer. iii. 14. 'Turn, O 'backſliding children, ſaith the Lord, for I am married 'unto you.' Iſ. liv. 5. 'Thy Maker is thine huſband 'the Lord of hoſts is his name.' And ſo they own their obligation to be ſubject to him, faithful and obedient till death. For as he is Lord, he is a Lord Head and Huſband, to his church.

5. *laſtly*, Their Lord King, however rebellious they be; Iſ. xxxiii. 22. 'The Lord is our judge, the Lord 'is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, he will ſave 'us.' They own him to be king in *Zion*, having power and royal dominion over them, to command, reward, and puniſh, as they carry themſelves towards him.

Thirdly, What is the import of their calling him Lord? Men calling him ſo, do in effect own, acknowledge and profeſs,

1. His undoubted authority to command and preſcribe duty to them; owning him as their Lord, Huſband, King, and God, they cannot deny but he has authority to bind them with laws. The huſband claims authority over his ſpouſe, the king over his ſubjects; and ſhall not God claim authority over his own creatures? All theſe meet together in Chriſt; ſo, by our own confeſſion, he has authority over us.

2. The juſtice and equity of his commands: Rom. vii. 12. 'The law is holy; and the commandment, 'holy, and juſt, and good.' Huſbands and kings among men, may require unjuſt things of their relatives, thro' their own perverſeneſs or blindneſs: but he being our Lord God, is eſſentially juſt, and can command nothing but what is truly good. Will we venture to attack the holineſs of God, to accuſe his commands of injuſtice, for an excuſe of our neglect of them?

3. Our abſolute obligation to obey him. If he is our Lord, we owe him an illimited ſubjection, obedience, without diſputing of his commands, Pſal. cxix. 4. and a reſignation to his providence without reſerve, Matth. xx. 15. As the clay is in the hands of the potter, ſo are we in his. The potſherds of the earth may ſtrive with one another, but ſhall they ſtrive with their Maker?

4. The ſtrongeſt ties upon us to be for him. If he is our Proprietor and Redeemer, are we not bound by all the ties of honour and gratitude to be wholly his? Do we ſay, he redeemed us from death, can we deny but we are bound to live for him? Has he redeemed us by dying for us, in our room and ſtead, and ſo ſaved us from dying eternally; what poſſible ſtronger incentive can there be to obedience?

5. *laſtly*, The expectation of happineſs from him. Calling him our Lord, we expect from him and by him, the pardon of our ſin, the favour of God, and a part in the kingdom of heaven, Matth. vii. 21. We know that he is not only Lord of this world, but of the other alſo: and ſo we raiſe our expectations accordingly.

II. I will conſider *mens not doing the things which he ſays, notwithſtanding of all this.* We may take it up in three things.

1. Chriſt as a Lord preſcribes duty to his ſubjects. He has not an empty title of lordſhip and dominion, but is a Lawgiver: Iſa. xxxiii. 22. 'He is our Lawgi'ver.' And the law of the ten commands, in their ſpirituality and extent, is his law, binding by his authority on all that call him Lord, Exod. xx. 2, 3. *&c.* As he is the Lord our God, he claims abſolute and illimited ſubjection and obedience of us; as he is our Proprietor, he claims the abſolute diſpoſal of us; as he is our Redeemer, he requires our living wholly to him; as he is our Huſband, he demands our being ſubject to him in love, faithfulneſs, and obedience till death, yea for ever; and as he is our King, he requires the duty of faithful ſubjects, and to have no commerce with his enemies.

2. He intimates his will to them as to their duty. He ſays what he would have them to do. We have his written laws in the Bible, which is God's word to every one into whoſe hand it comes. His miniſters, as his meſſengers, do in his name proclaim his laws, and require obedience to them. Conſcience within mens breaſts teſtifies the neceſſity of obedience. So that none can pretend ignorance. If they be ignorant of his will, it is affected; they deſire not to know it; as thoſe do, Job xxi. 14. who 'ſay unto God, Depart from us; for 'we deſire not the knowledge of thy ways.'

3. Yet men neglect it, and regard it not in their practice. They plead their relation to him, but make no conſcience of the duty of it. He has laid down their duty in laws and commands, and has intimate it to them: but they take no heed to regulate their practice according to them. He ſays what things he would have them to do, but they do them not.

1*ſt*, They have no due ſenſe of their being abſolutely bound up to his will, but fancy themſelves to be at ſome liberty to walk according to their own, as if the government were divided betwixt Chriſt and themſelves: Pſal. xii. 4. 'Who have ſaid, With our tongue will we pre'vail, our lips are our own: who is lord over us?' They do not feel the tie of the yoke of Chriſt always upon them, but are 'like bullocks unaccuſtomed to the yoke,' ſkipping at eaſe according to their own pleaſure.

2*dly*, They frame not their life according to his will.

Their habitual walk and practice is not holy, but looſe, licentious, untender, carnal, and like the world, not like the followers of Chriſt; like the Epheſians in their unconverted ſtate, Eph. ii. 2. who 'walked according to 'the courſe of this world, according to the prince of the 'power of the air, the ſpirit that now worketh in the 'children of diſobedience.' They attend ordinances, and perform ſome religious duties: but look into the ſtrain of their converſation, it is no wiſe Chriſt-like, but world-like; contrary to that exhortation, Rom. xii. 2. 'Be ye not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.'

3dly, They never ſet themſelves to do all that he ſays; contrary to what the Pſalmiſt did, Pſal. cxix. 6. who 'had reſpect unto all God's commandments.' This one or other thing that he ſays, they do: but they were never brought to a compliance without reſerve. They pick and chuſe out ſome things, but they reject others: A clear evidence, that his authority which is ſtamped on all his commands, has little weight with them, Jam. ii. 11.

4thly, They habitually do againſt what he ſays, making their luſts and inclinations their law: like thoſe who ſaid, Jer. ii. 25. 'I have loved ſtrangers, and after them 'will I go.' They call him their Lord; but Satan and their luſts are really their lords, to whom they yield their obedience, being captives at their pleaſure.

5. *laſtly*, They do nothing purely becauſe he ſays it, elſe they would endeavour to do all. In what they do, they have other ends than to pleaſe him; they do it to pleaſe themſelves, for their own profit, pleaſure, or ſafety.

III. The *third* general head is, to ſhew *how it comes to paſs, that people call Chriſt Lord, and their Lord, and yet make not conſcience of doing what he ſays.* The ſprings of this ruining practice, that ſo prevails, are many. As,

1. The want of a thorough change in their nature; Luke vi. 43, 45. 'A good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit: neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth 'good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit: 'for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble 'buſh gather they grapes.' There is ſome change made on them, therefore they call Chriſt Lord; it is not carried through, therefore they do not what he ſays. Hence they are neither cold nor hot: they are neither profeſſed enemies, nor cordial friends; like the Laodiceans, of whom our Lord ſaid, Rev. iii. 15. 'I know thy 'works, that thou art neither cold nor hot.'

1ſt, Good education and religious company embalms ſome dead ſouls; but ſtill they want the principle of the Spirit of life; like thoſe of whom the apoſtle ſays, Jude 19. 'Theſe be they who ſeparate themſelves, ſen'ſual, having not the Spirit.' So they continue dead in ſin ſtill, and their courſe of life becomes abominable with dead works, till in end they are as *twice dead*, verſe 12.

2dly, The goſpel being new to ſome, makes a reel among their affections; as it did among the ſtony ground hearers, Matth. xiii. 20, 21. 'He that received the ſeed 'into ſtony places, the ſame is he that heareth the word, 'and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root 'in himſelf, but dureth for a while; for when tribula'tion or perſecution ariſeth becauſe of the word, by and 'by he is offended.' So that they have ſome liking of the goſpel; and begin to look kindly towards the way of God; but it changes not their hearts, verſe 21. And the newneſs going away, theſe affections wear off, and they begin to appear in their own colours of black nature. Hence we have many, who, while they were ſpringing up in youth, bloſſomed fair, and ſolemnly gave their names to Chriſt at ſacraments; but being grown up, turn ſtark naught.

3dly, They get ſome new light into their heads, but no new life into their hearts. This was the caſe of many of John's hearers, who afterwards withered away; concerning whom Chriſt ſaid, John v. 35. 'He was a 'burning and a ſhining light; and ye were willing for 'a ſeaſon to rejoice in his light.'

4thly, Many get awakening grace, that never get converting grace. Their convictions bring them to call Chriſt Lord: but they living ſtrangers to the work of converſion, cannot do the things which he ſays.

2. Entertaining wrong notions of religion. They form to themſelves ſuch notions of religion, as leave them at liberty in the courſe of their walk. (1.) They think that is religion to call Chriſt Lord in performing duties of worſhip, praying, *&c.* and conſider not that the ſubſtance of religion lies in holy, tender walking, Tit. ii. 11, 12. 'The grace of God that bringeth ſalvation, 'hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that denying 'ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, 'righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world.' Hence having done theſe duties of worſhip, they are at no more care to keep their hearts in the Lord's fear all the day long; but, on the contrary, can take the greater liberty to themſelves in looſe walking; as the whore did, Prov. vii. 14, 15. 'I have peace offerings with me; this day 'have I paid my vows. Therefore came I forth to meet 'thee, diligently to ſeek thy face, and I have found thee.' Hence publicans and harlots enter into the kingdom of heaven before ſuch perſons. (2.) They think that faith will ſave them, though it be dead, idle, and unactive; contrary to what the apoſtle ſaith, James ii. 14. 'What 'doth it profit, my brethren, though a man ſay he hath 'faith, and have not works? Can faith ſave him?' ver. 26. 'As the body without the ſpirit is dead, ſo faith 'without works is dead alſo.' They do not conſider, that that faith is not ſaving faith, which is ſo. Hence they can take a great deal of liberty in the way of ſin, and put off repentance from time to time, even to a deathbed, upon the confidence that their faith in Chriſt will ſave them. Such have been of old, and ſtill are, Jude 4. 'For there are certain men crept in unawars, 'who were before of old ordained to this condemna'tion, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into 'laſciviouſneſs, and denying the only Lord God, and 'our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.' There is no true faith but what *purifies the heart*, Acts xv. 9. and ſanctifies the whole man; and the ſalvation, is ſalvation from ſin.

3. Reigning unbelief. Of this our Lord complained, John v. 40. *Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.* Whatever pretences there are to believing in Chriſt, the unholineſs of the lives of men is a convincing evidence, that unbelief is reigning at bottom with moſt of us: Iſ. liii. 1. 'Who hath believed our report? and 'to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?' The holineſs of God, the ſpirituality of his law, his hatred of ſin, and how ſeverely he puniſheth, are not believed. The report concerning Chriſt, another world, heaven and hell, ſinks not deep into the hearts of many. If theſe things were truly believed, it is not poſſible that men could be ſo eaſy in a way of ſin.

4. Want of conſideration, Luke xv. 17. People may dream away their life time; and however deep they can enter into the conſideration of other things, they have no power to conſider their ſouls ſtate and caſe; Iſ. xliv. 20. *He feedeth of aſhes: a deceived heart hath turned him aſide, that he cannot deliver his ſoul, nor ſay, Is there not a lie in my right hand?* Self examination is utterly neglected; ſo there is no due reflection made on their ſouls ſtate, and the courſe of life they are leading: Iſ. i. 3. *The ox knoweth his owner, and the aſs his maſter's crib: but Iſrael doth not know, my people do not conſider.*

5. The natural enmity of the heart prevailing againſt conviction: Rom. viii. 7. 'The carnal mind is enmi'ty againſt God: for it is not ſubject to the law of God, 'neither indeed can be.' Hence is rebelling againſt the light, keeping the truth priſoner in the head, that it may not get into the converſation to rule there, Rom. i. 18. There are notions of truth that force their way into the mind, eſpecially under a clear goſpel miniſtry,

the natural enmity yoking with theſe, fights againſt them; and getting over them, runs with a ſtronger current than otherwiſe, Rom. vii. 13.

6. *laſtly*, Unmortified luſts ſtill keeping the rule and dominion over the ſoul, though Chriſt has the name of their Lord. Many call Chriſt Maſter, who are ſtill ſervants to ſin, ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures. Hence theſe hurry them into ſinful courſes, that they muſt do what their impetuous luſts drive them to, and cannot do the things that Chriſt ſays.

USE 1. of *Information.* Hence we may ſee,

1. That ungodly ſinners under the dropping of the goſpel, are ſelf condemned, and will be condemned out of their own mouths. They own Chriſt's authority over them, which Jews and Pagans do not; and yet they regard it not in their walk, Mal. i. 6.

2. They are unreaſonable and fooliſh in their expectation of benefit from Chriſt, and ſhall be diſappointed: Matth. vii. 21. 'Not every one that ſaith unto me, 'Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven: 'but he that doth the will of my Father which is in 'heaven. O how can ye expect ſalvation from Chriſt, who have no regard to what he ſays! Ye will not do his will to honour him, but diſhonour him by trampling on his commands; will not be ſaved from ſin.

3. A profeſſion of ſubjection to Chriſt, and bearing the external badges of it, is common to many of the devil's goats with Chriſt's ſheep. No body needs value themſelves upon it; for though we ſay well for Chriſt as our Lord, yet if we do not accordingly, we but deceive ourſelves.

4. *laſtly*, No man has reaſon to be ſtumbled at religion itſelf, becauſe of the unſuitable lives of ſome profeſſors of it. Many ſuch ſtumbling blocks are laid down this day in the way of the blind world; they that lay them ſhall bear their judgment: but why ſhould it be improven againſt the truths or practice of religion itſelf, ſince our Lord plainly forewarns that it will be ſo?

USE 2. of *Exhortation.* Ye do all call Chriſt your Lord, profeſs Chriſtianity, have been baptized in his name, *&c.* Conſider calmly and ſeriouſly, how your life anſwers your profeſſion, whether ye do what he ſays or not, what regard ye ſhew to his commands in your practice. Conſider,

1. It is expected that they who own Chriſt for their Lord, ſhould carry themſelves as his ſubjects and ſervants, that his will ſhould be their law, his commands the rule of their life. To call him Lord, and yet caſt his laws behind your backs, is to mock him, with thoſe, Matth. xxvii. 29, 30. 'And when they had platted a 'crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed 'in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before 'him, and mocked him, ſaying, Hail King of the Jews. 'And they ſpit upon him, took the reed, and ſmote 'him on the head.'

2. If he is your Lord, as he has power and authority to command you, ſo he has power to revenge your diſobedience, and to reward your obedience. His obedient children may be ſure their labour ſhall not be in vain, 1 Cor. xv. *ult.*: and the diſobedient will find the weight of his hand, that will grind them to powder, 2 Theſſ. i. 7, 8.

3. As he is a Lord, he is Lord and Saviour, Lord Redeemer. And what is it that he redeems from, and ſaves from? Is it not ſin? Tit. ii. 14. He 'gave himſelf 'for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and 'purify unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good 'works.' Matth. i. 21. 'Thou ſhalt call his name Je'ſus: for he ſhall ſave his people from their ſins.' He gave his life for that end, Eph. v. 25, 26. What horrid injury muſt it then be, to pretend he is your Lord, to ſave you, and yet ye will live in your ſin, directly contrary to what his precious blood was ſhed for?

4. *laſtly*, Though we are not ſaved by our doing, but by believing; yet faith and holineſs are inſeparable: James ii. 14. 'What doth it profit, though a man ſay 'he hath faith, and have not works? can faith ſave him?' Where there is not holineſs of heart and life, there is no true faith in Chriſt there. Faith, if it be true, unites the ſoul to Chriſt, works by love, purifies the heart, carries the ſoul heavenward in its converſation. Doing in perfection what Chriſt ſays, is reached by no believers here; but doing in ſincerity, is what differences them ſtill from unbelievers.

Conſider well then what regard ye ſhow to what Chriſt ſays. And let your conſciences anſwer theſe queſtions.

1. Can ye ſay before the Lord, appealing to his omniſcience, that ye have renounced your own will, luſts, and inclinations, to follow whatſoever the Lord diſcovers to be his will for you to do; and ye ſincerely endeavour to ſtick by that renunciation, to conform yourſelves to his will? Acts ix. 6. I doubt moſt of us have never been brought to that length yet; and that many who have ſaid it at ſome times, have reſiled from it, and follow their own will more than Chriſt's to this day.

2. Do ye really ſo far comply with whatſoever God has diſcovered to be your duty, that ye dare not neglect it, but muſt endeavour it? Pſal. cxix. 6. Can you think ye ſhow an upright regard to the Lord's commands, when there are ſome of them that you caſt behind your back? No; if you regard them not all, ye regard none of them as ye ought. Say not, There is none can do all. It is true none can do all perfectly; but there is no upright man, but he will put hand to all he knows to be his duty, and do his endeavour in every one of them.

3. Do ye ſincerely ſet yourſelves to oppoſe and fight againſt every thing the Lord diſcovers to be ſin, and are ye longing to have the victory over it? Rom. vii. 24. Are there not ſome ſins that are your boſom-idols, which ye cannot be brought to part with? Are there not ſuch ſins with many who indulge themſelves in ſins, of the vileneſs of which none can be ignorant, that are not given up to a reprobate ſenſe, as lying, filthineſs, diſhoneſt dealing, *&c.*

4. Do ye really lie open to diſcoveries of ſin and duty from the Lord's word? Job xxxiv. 31, 32. An upright ſervant deſires to know his maſter's will; but the refractory and rebellious ſervant, having no mind to do it, cares not for knowing it, Job xxi. 14. Do ye read the Bible, or care for hearing it read, and attend to it as that from whence ye are to learn your duty? When ye do read or hear the word, do ye embrace it as the rule you are to regulate your practice by?

5. What weight has Chriſt's ſaying a thing with you, when a multitude of the world ſays againſt it? The world ſays there is no ill in many things, that the Bible ſays there is much ill in. It ſays, there is no harm, where the word ſays there is. In a word, the Bible ſays, the way to heaven is the way of ſtrictneſs or ſtraitneſs: the world ſays, there is no need of that ſtrictneſs of life. Now, when the world's opinion carries it in your practice againſt Chriſt's deciſion in his word, do ye do the the things which Chriſt ſays?

6. Do ye, in every part of your life and converſation, endeavour to approve yourſelves to Chriſt as your Lord? 1 Pet. i. 15. 'As he which hath called you is holy, ſo 'are ye holy in all manner of converſation?' Do ye look on him as the party with whom ye have to do in all; not only in your religious duties, but in the common affairs of life, or worldly buſineſs, not only in your perſonal walk, but in the ſeveral relations wherein ye ſtand, as huſbands, wives, children and ſervants? 1 Cor. vii. 24. Alas! moſt men ſhuffle out any regard to Chriſt's commands, out of their worldly buſineſs, and their relations, confining their religion to their religious duties of praying, *&c.*

7. *laſtly*, How do ye take any intimations of the Lord Chriſt's will made to you, to diſcover your duty or your ſin in particular caſes? Have they a ſilencing weight with your conſciences, or do they but irritate your paſſions? Iſa. xi. 6. So the Pſalmiſt ſhewed his regard, Pſal. cxli. 5. 'Let the righteous ſmite me, it ſhall be a

kindneſs; and let him reprove me, it ſhall be an excellent oil, which ſhall not break my head.’ Thoſe that cannot bear an admonition, reproof, or to be told of a fault, but preſently are up in their own defence to ward off conviction, ſhew they have more regard to their credit, than their conſcience, the authority of Chriſt the Lord, and any thing he ſays, Hoſ. iv. 4.

DOCT. II. *It lies on mens conſciences before the Lord, to take it home to themſelves, to conſider and anſwer it, how they come to call Chriſt their Lord, and yet not make conſcience of doing the things which he as a Lord ſays to them, and requires of them.*

In diſcourſing this doctrine, I ſhall only ſhew the import of the expoſtulation in the text, and then, conclude with a word of application.

I. I will ſhew *the import of this expoſtulation.* It imports,

1. That Chriſt is in earneſt for our obedience. He is not indifferent what regard we ſhew to what he ſays as our Lord, Pſal. cxix. 4. He ‘ hath commanded us to keep *his* precepts diligently.’ He is a jealous Lord, and will not endure your baulking of any of his commands, Exod. xxiii. 21. ‘ Beware of him and obey his voice, provoke him not: for he will not pardon your tranſgreſſions: for my name is in him.’ Though we are not to lay the weight of our acceptance with God on our obedience, yet there is a weight of evidence lies on it. And,

1ſt, The evidence of our belonging to Chriſt, in a ſaving relation lies upon it; John xv. 14. ‘ Ye are my friends, if ye do whatſoever I command you.’ If ye do not what he ſays, he will diſown you as none of his, Luke xiii. 27, pretend what ye will. Chriſt ſets his ſeal on all that belong to him, as ſoon as they become his: whereby they may be diſtinguiſhed from the world lying in wickedneſs, 2 Tim. ii. 19. ‘ The foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.’ If ye want that ſeal, he will reject you as none of his.

2dly, The evidence of your right to heaven lies on it, Rev. xxii. 14. ‘ Bleſſed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.’ And therefore, at the great day, the works of the ſaints, and of the wicked, are brought out before the world in judgment; the former as evidences of their title to heaven, the latter, as grounds of the ſentence of damnation. If ye baulk any of the leaſt of his commands, ye thereby baulk your evidence for heaven, and ſo periſh: Matth. v. 19. ‘ Whoſoever ſhall break one of theſe leaſt commandments, and ſhall teach men ſo, he ſhall be called the leaſt in the kingdom of heaven.’

2. It is poſſible for us in this life to get the things that Chriſt ſays, done acceptably, in all the parts thereof. If it were not ſo, then, by the text, no body at all would be allowed to call him Lord; which is certainly falſe, Matth. vii. 21. ‘ Not every one that ſaith unto me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven.’ So there are two ſorts that call him Lord; ſome that do, ſome that do not what he ſays; the former allowed, the other rejected. The doctrine of the imperfection of the ſaints obedience, is a ſtone of ſtumbling to many a blind ſoul. To prevent your ſtumbling,

1ſt, Diſtinguiſh between doing the will of Chriſt in all its parts, and in all its degrees. The latter no man in this life can do at any rate; but in every part of his obedience he fails in ſome degree, James iii. 2. ‘ For in many things we offend all.’ But the former every true believer actually does, Pſal. cxix. 6. He has *reſpect unto all* God’s *commandments*. A whole family hears ſo many particular pieces of work preſcribed to them all by the father and maſter of the family. His grown children do them all exactly to his mind; the younger children, who are but learning to work, put hand to every one of them, and baulk none of the pieces; but they do none of them exactly. Refractory ſervants do ſome of them, but others of them they never notice. Juſt ſo it is with the ſaints in heaven, true believers on earth, and hypocrites.

Now here lies the ſnare; None, ſay you, in this world can do all that is required of them, but they come ſhort in many things; and ſo do but we. *Anſw.* They come ſhort of the degrees of every part, it is true; but if they are believers indeed, they do not come ſhort of the parts themſelves, as ye do. The whole parts of the will of God known to them, they do, and dare not but fall in with: and this will diſtinguiſh between them and you, that baulk any part of his will made known to you, as betwixt David and Paul, Acts xii. 22. Col. iv. 12.

2dly, Diſtinguiſh between doing the will of Chriſt perfectly and acceptably. No man in this life can do the former, Phil. iii. 12. But every true believer does the latter, Acts x. 35. Ye that are maſters know very well to make this diſtinction in your own work. If a child of yours, or a pliable ſervant, ſhow a real good will to obey your orders, you accept of their work, though it is not every way as ye would have it. So does the Lord: 2 Cor. viii. 12. ‘ For if there be firſt a willing mind, it is accepted, according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.’ But if a ſervant ſay, I cannot do it every way as he would have it done, and therefore I will let it alone altogether; how take ye that? And how will Chriſt take ſuch treatment off your hand, in plain inſtances of duty which ye quite neglect, and of ſin which ye indulge yourſelves in?

Here is your ſnare: None do the will of Chriſt perfectly: and I do many things, though not all. *Anſw.* Ay, but true believers, though they do not do it perfectly, yet they do it ſo as God for Chriſt’s ſake accepts of their doing it: and that ye do not, and that ye are not careful about, but can be eaſy whether he accept of it or not: and ſince ye are not univerſal in your obedience, ye are not ſincere, nor are accepted in any thing.

3dly, Diſtinguiſh between ability in yourſelves to do the will of Chriſt acceptably, and ability for it in Chriſt, offered to us in the goſpel, and to be brought in by faith. No man, ſaint or ſinner, has the former: 2 Cor. iii. 5. ‘ We are not ſufficient of ourſelves, to think any thing as of ourſelves.’ But all true believers do get the latter: Phil. iv. 13. ‘ I can do all things through Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth me.’ You bid a ſervant do ſuch a piece of work, and he neglecting it tells you, I wanted inſtruments for it; how take ye that? Will ye not ſay, Why did ye not come in and get the inſtruments for it? Did not my bidding you do it, ſuppoſe I allowed wherewith to do it?

Here is your ſnare: We can do nothing of ourſelves, ſay ye: and thereupon the ſluggard puts his hands in his boſom; and many a poor ſinner lies down in his bed of eaſe and ſloth, laying his head on this ſoft pillow, and ſleeps full ſound till the flames of hell awaken him. But that will not excuſe you from doing the will of Chriſt; but it will bring you under a double guilt, one of not doing what he ſays, another of ſlighting his offered grace that might have enabled you: and ſo ye will be condemned, not becauſe ye could not, but becauſe you would not do the things he ſaid.

In the covenant of works perfect obedience only could be accepted, and there was ſtrength for it allowed to Adam in that covenant, which he loſt. In the covenant of grace ſincere obedience, though imperfect, may be accepted: and there is ſtrength allowed in this covenant for it, whereby every piece of obedience that he requires may be done, though not as it ſhould be, yet ſo as it may be accepted: 2 Cor. iii. 5. ‘ Not that we are ſufficient of ourſelves to think any thing as of ourſelves: but our ſufficiency is of God.’ xii. 9. ‘ My grace is ſufficient for thee: for my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs.’ Philip. iv. 13. ‘ I can do all 'things through Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth me.' Only this ſtrength is lodged in Chriſt, and muſt be fetched in by believing the promiſes, Pſal. xxviii. 7. Jer. xvii. 7, 8. Now the commands of Chriſt, to ſinners that hear the goſpel, import an allowance of ſufficient grace and ſtrength for them thus to be fetched in: 2 Tim. ii. 1. 'Thou therefore, my ſon, be ſtrong in the grace that is 'in Chriſt Jeſus.' Exod. xx. 2. *&c.* 'I am the Lord thy 'God,' *&c.* 'Thou ſhalt have no other gods before me.' The little noticing of this weakens believers in their obedience, and the total neglect of it by others, ruins them.

3. Notwithſtanding the things that Chriſt ſays may be got done acceptably, yet many that call him Lord will not do them: Tit. i. 16. 'They profeſs that they 'know God; but in works they deny him,' *&c.* He has made his yoke eaſy, but yet they will not let it come on their fair necks: they ſay, as Luke xix. 14. 'We 'will not have this man to reign over us.' The devil and their luſts get leave to ride them, but they will not be led by Chriſt. They ſay, they cannot help it; but the truth is, they will not help it, for they will have none of his help for it; as the Lord complains the Iſraelites did, Pſal. lxxxi. 11. 'My people would not hearken to 'my voice, and Iſrael would none of me.' So their ruin is lodged upon a twofold ſcore.

1ſt, Obedience to ſin, and diſobedience to Chriſt, is their choice. The way of life and death are ſet before them, and they chuſe the latter: Prov. viii. 36. 'He 'that ſinneth againſt me, wrongeth his own ſoul; all 'they that hate me, love death.' Ezek. xviii. 31. 'Caſt 'away from you all your tranſgreſſions, whereby ye have 'tranſgreſſed, and make you a new heart, and a new 'ſpirit; for why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael?' Chriſt calls them to a holy, ſerious, humble, modeſt, and pious life. That they cannot endure; but coſt what it will, they muſt have a light, proud, unclean, ſenſual, and looſe life, wherein they may think, talk, and carry themſelves at liberty from the ſtrictneſs of a holy walk, and tender conſcience.

2dly, They have neither heart nor uſe for the grace and ſtrength that is in Chriſt Jeſus, John v. 40. Pſal. lxxxi. 11. And therefore they can live without him, John vi. 67, 68. They may have uſe for it, that really deſire to have their luſts mortified, temptations reſiſted, their heart and lives truly ſanctified: but that is not their caſe. How then can they have a heart for it? What heart can they have for cleanſing and purifying things, that love rather to be wallowing in the mire? Therefore the opened fountain of Chriſt's blood and Spirit is neglected. For as the Lord ſaith, Jer. xiii 27. 'I have 'ſeen thine adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewdneſs 'of thy whoredom, and thine abominations on the hills 'in the fields: woe unto thee, O Jeruſalem, wilt thou 'not be made clean? when ſhall it once be?'

4. Chriſt is highly diſpleaſed with the diſobedience of thoſe that call him Lord, who will not do what he ſays, Pſal. l. 16.——22. Men will not believe this: they think little of their neglect of what he ſays, and they think that he looks on it as they do. He is their Saviour; but they conſider not, that he is, and will be their Judge. But to perſuade you of it, conſider,

1ſt, His infinite purity and holineſs, Iſ. vi. 3. He is the holy one of Iſrael. He is of the ſelf ſame numerical eſſence or nature with the Father; all the attributes of God, and particularly his holineſs, are in him, Exod. xxiii. 21. *Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your tranſgreſſions: for my name is in him.* Therefore whatever is ſaid in ſcripture of the holineſs of God, belongs to him. And his willingneſs to receive ſinners is, not to ſave them in their ſins, but to cleanſe them from them.

2dly, The dreadful ſtrokes he has brought on ſuch as called him Lord, for not doing the things that he ſays. He has in all ages of the church ſet up ſome monuments of this his diſpleaſure. Whence came the fire that devoured Nadab and Abihu; came it not from before the Lord? Lev. x. 1, 2. and was not that the Lord Chriſt? Acts vii. 38. Who ſtruck Ananias and Sapphira dead for lying unto God; Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, Uzzah, &c. was it not Chriſt? John v. 22. 'For the Father judgeth no man: but hath committed 'all judgment unto the Son.'

3dly, Does he not refuſe communion with ſuch perſons in holy ordinances, and thereby teſtify his diſpleaſure againſt them? Hoſ. v. 15. 'I will go and return 'to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and 'ſeek my face.' What will it avail to attend ordinances, to come to a communion table, while we continue in ſuch a caſe? There can be no communion with Chriſt, Pſal. xxiv. 3, 4. Iſ. i. 15, 16. Even particular pieces of unrepented of tenderneſs, may be a controverſy on which he will refuſe communion with thoſe that are habitually holy: Pſal. lxvi. 18. 'If I regard 'iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.' What then can others expect? Amos iii. 3. 'Can two 'walk together, except they be agreed?'

Laſtly, Conſider how he will treat them at the laſt day: Luke xix. 27. 'Thoſe mine enemies which would 'not that I ſhould reign over them, bring hither, and 'ſlay them before me.' He is the *Lamb of God*, to *take away the ſins of the world*; but he will be as a lion to them that will not do what he ſays, when he cometh 'in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know 'not God, and that obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the 'glory of his power,' 2 Theſſ. i. 8, 9 In vain will they then call him Lord, and plead their eating and drinking in his preſence, Luke xiii. 25, 26, 27.

5. There is a great ill in calling Chriſt Lord, and not doing what he ſays; an ill that highly provokes him. as caſting diſhonour on him in a very ſpecial manner. There is ſomething in it, that, ſo to ſpeak. touches to the quick, beyond the diſhonour done to him by others: Rev. iii. 15, 16. 'I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So 'then becauſe thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor 'hot, I will ſpue thee out of my mouth.'

1ſt, Their ſins and looſeneſs of life reflect a peculiar diſhonour on him, as pretending a relation to him: Rom. ii. 24. 'For the name of God is blaſphemed among the Gentiles, through you.' How do ye think yourſelves touched and affronted with the miſcarriages of your children and ſervants? Learn from that, how Chriſt takes with your ſins and looſeneſs of life. They are a blaſpheming of his name and doctrine, calling him in effect, the miniſter of ſin, 1 Tim. vi. 1. Tit. ii. 4, 5. It is not in the power of open enemies to reach him ſuch a blow.

2dly, They do Satan a peculiar pleaſure. If there is any of the duſt that is the ſerpent's meat, that reliſhes better with him than the reſt, it is the ſins and miſcarriages of thoſe that call Chriſt Lord: that is a feaſt for him: he will do more for it than for other ten, Job i. 7, 8. As there is joy in heaven at a ſinner's repentance, there is a joy in hell among the devil and his angels at the fall of thoſe that call Chriſt Lord. The enemy takes a peculiar pleaſure and pride, in having not only his profeſſed ſervants, but others in Chriſt's livery following and ſerving him. In that he can vie with Chriſt for a good Maſter before the blind world, when he can ſhew them ſo many at his back, that ſometimes gave their names to Chriſt.

3dly, They wound the hearts of the real children of of God, and make the whole family ſigh more heavily, than the ſins of others would do, Pſal lv. 12. Where the ſins of open enemies do but ſcratch like a pin, theirs will pierce like a ſword. It covers them with ſhame, fills them with ſorrow and indignation, and makes them weary of their poſt; as did the prophet, Jer. ix. 2. 'Oh, 'that I had in the wilderneſs a lodging place of wayfaring men, that I might leave my people, and go from them: for they be all adulterers, an aſſembly of treacherous men.' What wonder then, that Chriſt the Maſter of the family reſent it dreadfully?

6. Chriſt will diſown them for his ſervants, that in their practice diſown him for their Lord, not doing what he ſays. They count the duty of ſervants grievous to them, and therefore he will diveſt them of the honour and privilege of his ſervants. They ſecretly loath him and his ſervice, however fair they carry it, calling him Lord; and he will let all the world ſee that his ſoul loaths them, Rev. iii. 16. 'Becauſe thou art luke warm, and neither cold nor hot, I will ſpue thee out of my mouth.' And this he doth two ways.

1ſt, Spuing them out of his mouth unto the earth; whereas before they were exalted unto heaven in reſpect of hopefulneſs of their ſouls caſe, and of external church-privileges. In ſcripture-ſtyle, the church is called *heaven*, profeſſors *the ſons of God;* the devil's kingdom, or the world lying in wickedneſs, is called *the earth, the children of men*, Gen. vi. 2. and xi. 1. Rev. xii. 4. The goſpel is Chriſt's call to ſinners to come out of the world lying in wickedneſs, and be ſeparate from them, joining themſelves to the church, the family of God. Many profeſs to come away, and join ſo, and ſolemnly declare it by partaking of the Lord's table: but though they ſo call him Lord, they do not the things that he ſays. And our jealous Lord being provoked with it, ſpues them out, and in the ſight of the world throws them back unto the earth they ſaid they came from; and there they lie again amidſt the world lying in wickedneſs.

Three things concur in this awful diſpenſation.

(1.) They are let fall into the mire of ſome groſs pollution of the outward man, 2 Pet. ii. 22. 'It is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned unto his own vomit again; and, The ſow that is waſhed, to her wallowing in the mire.' Cain turns a murderer, Judas a betrayer of his maſter, Ananias and Sapphira liars, Demas a lover of the world, Jezebel and her children in Thyatira fall into adultery and fornication, *&c.* Rev. ii. 20, 21, 22, 23. (2.) Their leaf of appearance in religion falls. Though they get ſpace, they get no grace to repent and recover, Rev. ii. 21. but they are from that time blaſted, wither, and fade away; John xv. 6. 'If a man abide not in me, he is caſt forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them and caſt them into the fire, and they are burned.' And they turn juſt the hue of the reſt of the world lying in wickedneſs; ſpiritual death is painted in their faces; whereof this generation affords many frightful inſtances, Luke viii. 18. 'Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whoſoever hath, to him ſhall be given; and whoſoever hath not, from him ſhall be taken even that which he ſeemeth to have.' (3.) Hence they loſe their new name, and get their old one back again. What credit or reputation they had for religion and ſeriouſneſs, is blown up. Their name ſtinks in that caſe among the ſerious godly, and they look upon them as none of theirs, Iſa. lxv. 15. 'And ye ſhall leave your name for a curſe unto my choſen; for the Lord God ſhall ſlay thee, and call his ſervants by another name.' This is an awful caſe, Zech. xi. 8. 'Three ſhepherds alſo I cut off in one month, and my ſoul loathed them, and their ſoul alſo abhorred me.'

2dly, Spuing them out of his mouth into the pit, at the laſt day, Luke xiii. 27, 28. 'He ſhall ſay, I tell you, I know you not whence you are: depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth, when ye ſhall ſee Abraham, and Iſaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourſelves thruſt out.' In vain will they then cry, 'Lord, Lord, open to us:' Matth. xxv. 11, 12. 'Afterward came alſo the other virgins, ſaying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he anſwered and ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, I know you not.' In vain will they plead their eating and drinking in his preſence. They called him Lord; but they walked with the workers of iniquity, and they will be led forth with them; Pſal. cxxv. 5. 'As for ſuch as turn aſide unto their crooked ways, the Lord ſhall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity.' They will ſee that he will count it inconſiſtent with his honour to own them, Mark viii. 38. 'Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me, and my words, in this adulterous and ſinful generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.' They got their names enrolled in the viſible church, among his ſervants; but he will blot them out publicly, Exod. xxxii. 33. 'And the Lord ſaid unto Moſes, Whoſoever hath ſinned againſt me, him will I blot out of my book.' Compared with Rev. iii. 5. 'He that overcometh, the ſame ſhall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot his name out of the book of life, but I will confeſs his name before my Father, and before his angels.'

7. Men are ruined in this way, becauſe they do not conſider it. It is want of conſideration that leaves them at eaſe, calling Chriſt Lord, and yet not doing what he ſays, Iſa. xliv. 20. 'He feedeth of aſhes: a deceived heart hath turned him aſide, that he cannot deliver his ſoul, nor ſay, Is there not a lye in my right hand?' They are out of their place, like a wandering bird, Prov. xxvii. 8. and they are eaſy in it, becauſe they are out of themſelves, out of their wits, like the prodigal, Luke xv. 17. They conſider not the matter.

1ſt, They call Chriſt Lord, and ſo bribe and ſoothe their blind and ſleepy conſciences. If they ſhould give up with all pretenſions to Chriſt and religion, they could have no peace with their conſciences: therefore they will attend ordinances; hear the word, though they will not do it: pray in ſecret or in their families, though perhaps out of the ſame mouth come forth bleſſing and curſing; they will partake of the Lord's table, though they will not give up with the table of devils. Theſe things flatter their conſciences to be eaſy; as was the caſe with Micah, Judg. xvii. 13. 'Then ſaid Micah, Now know I that the Lord will do me good, ſeeing I have a Levite to my prieſt.'

2dly, They do not the things that he ſays however, and ſo ſatisfy their unmortified luſts. Thus they pleaſe both parties within them. Their ſaying fair pleaſes their conſcience; and their not doing what Chriſt ſays, pleaſes their luſts. They have no more ado with Chriſt, but to *be called by his name.* For the reſt, they will *eat their own bread, and wear their own apparel,* and will not make their religion burdenſome to their luſts by mortification and tender walking; and ſo they are eaſy on that ſide.

But there are three things they do not conſider.

(1.) What inconſiſtency is in this courſe: 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15. 'What fellowſhip hath righteouſneſs with unrighteouſneſs? and what communion hath light with darkneſs? and what concord hath Chriſt with Belial?' It is made up of contradictions. Their profeſſion condemns their practice as abominable; and their practice condemns their profeſſion as horrid juggling and diſſembling with God. Ye pray for pardon of ſin as a crime, and yet return to it with delight: that God would make you holy; and yet ye will not part with your luſts, but have a horror of being bound up to a holy walk: that God would at length receive you into heaven; and yet if you were there even now in the temper ye are in, you would flee out of it as from a hell, becauſe ye have not reliſh of either perſon or thing that is there, and for nothing but what is not there.

(2.) How heinouſly the Lord Chriſt takes it, that men ſhould yoke Satan's ſervice with his, 2 Cor. vi. 15. forecited. He looks on it as highly diſhonourable to him, and after a ſort more than if they ſhould profeſs themſelves none of his, Rev. iii. 16. forecited. That is an awful word of great indignation, Ezek. xx. 39. 'As for you, O houſe of Iſrael, thus ſaith the Lord God, ‘Go to, ſerve ye every one his idols, and hereafter alſo, if ye will not hearken unto me: but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts, and with your idols.’ It bears, that their duties are but a polluting of his name. Your praying, hearing, and communicating, will not cleanſe the abomination of a looſe life: but looſeneſs of converſation will defile all theſe, Hag. ii. 12, 13, 14.

(3.) What the end of ſuch a courſe will be, what it will iſſue in at length: Deut. xxxii. 29. ‘O that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this, that they would conſider their latter end!’ It cannot miſs of a fearful iſſue: Iſa. l. 11. ‘Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compaſs yourſelves about with ſparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the ſparks that ye have kindled. This ſhall ye have of mine hand, ye ſhall lie down in ſorrow.’ Pſal. cxxv. 5. ‘As for ſuch as turn aſide unto their crooked ways, the Lord ſhall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity.’ See it in the parable of the fooliſh builder, the fooliſh virgins, the tares among the wheat, the man at the marriage-ſupper without the wedding-garment, *&c.* It is a pity men ſhould not conſider timely.

8. *laſtly*, People ought to conſider it, ſee what account they can make of it, and how they will anſwer it. And,

1ſt, How they will anſwer it to their own conſciences. Conſcience may be aſleep now, but it will certainly awaken: and the longer it be in awakening, it will be the more ſevere when it is rouſed, as in the caſe of Belſhazzar and Felix. Ye cannot evite a reckoning with your conſcience. As ſilent as it is, ye will find it has noted your ways in its book: Prov. xx. 27. ‘The ſpirit of man is the candle of the Lord, ſearching all the inward parts of the belly.’ And if conſcience condemn you as hypocritical pretenders to Chriſt, what will come of you? 1 John iii. 20. ‘For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.’ And if ye die with an ill conſcience, it will be a gnawing worm for ever.

2dly, How they will anſwer it to the Lord Chriſt in the judgment. There will be a day of judgment, wherein the tribunal will be ſet, the books opened, and mens whole lives will be called over: Eccleſ. xii. 14. ‘For God ſhall bring every work into judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.’ And every one will be judged according to his works: 2 Cor. v. 10. ‘For we muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt: that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.’ Then mens calling Chriſt Lord, will be tried by their doing or not doing the things that he ſays. And what will men then ſay to the queſtion in the text, *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I ſay?* and to that queſtion, *How cameſt thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment?*

II. I come now to a word of Application.

Firſt, Let me examine into this matter, and aſk and put it to every one's conſcience before the Lord, *Why call ye Chriſt Lord, and do not the things that he ſays?* You are rational creatures; ye will not allow that ye are fools, that have no reaſon for what ye do or not do. Therefore ‘produce your cauſe, ſaith the Lord; bring forth your ſtrong reaſons, ſaith the King of Jacob,’ Iſ. xli. 21. What is your plea? Is it,

1. We are ſaved by faith, and not by good works? *Anſw.* I have anſwered that already, that though the weight of our acceptance with God, lies not on good works, yet the weight of our evidence does. I add, that though we are not ſaved by, yet we are ſaved to, good works and obedience: Eph. ii. 10. ‘For we are his workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we ſhould walk in them.’ 1 Pet. i. 2. ‘Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through ſanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt,’ *&c.* So if you are not brought to do what Chriſt ſays, you are not ſaved. But perhaps you will inſiſt, and ſay, O but we will be ſaved after death. *Anſw.* If ye be not ſaved while ye are in life, ye will never be ſaved after death. The notion of ſalvation begun after death, is unknown to the Bible: Eph. ii. 8. ‘For by grace are ye ſaved, through faith; and that not of yourſelves, it is the gift of God.’ 2 Tim. i. 9. ‘Who hath ſaved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpoſe and grace, which was given us in Chriſt Jeſus, before the world began.’ Tit. iii. 5. ‘Not by works of righteouſneſs, which we have done, but according to his mercy he ſaved us, by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt.’

2. We have no ſtrength in ourſelves. *Anſw.* That alſo I have anſwered at large. If the law came to you with its commands without the goſpel, there would be ſomething in this, though not ſo much but the law would overthrow it; as in the caſe of Pagans, Rom. ii. 12. ‘For as many as have ſinned without the law, ſhall alſo periſh without the law: and as many as have ſinned in the law, ſhall be judged by the law.’ But ſince the goſpel comes with the law, telling you there is ability for it in Chriſt, which you may have by faith; your plea is rejected, and you are condemned, not only for not doing what Chriſt ſays, but for refuſing ſtrength to do it with.

3. We do ſeveral things, and there is nobody but has their failings. *Anſw.* Ye may do many things, as Herod, Mark vi. 20.; but if ye ſet not yourſelves to do all the parts of Chriſt's will known to you, without reſerve, ye do nothing: James ii. 10. ‘For whoſoever ſhall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.’ Sound believers fail of degrees, but not of the parts: Pſal. cxix. 6. David ſaid, ‘I have reſpect unto all thy commandments.’ Acts xiii. 22. ‘I have found David the ſon of Jeſſe, a man after mine own heart, which ſhall fulfil all my will.’

4. God is merciful, and Chriſt is our gracious Saviour; he will not be ſevere on us for our ſins. *Anſw.* That is a truſt in God and Chriſt, not upon his word, but over the belly of his word; ſo that either it muſt fail and diſappoint you, or God's truth muſt fail: Heb. xii. 14. ‘Without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord.’ Pſal. cxxv. 5. As for ſuch as turn aſide unto their crooked ways, the Lord ſhall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity.’ But ‘his confidence ſhall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it ſhall bring him to the king of terrors,’ Job xviii. 14. Is that the uſe ye have for the mercy of God? Pſal. cxxx. 4. and for the grace of Chriſt? See the character of ſuch, Jude 4. ‘There are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into laſciviouſneſs, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.’

5. What needs all that ſtrictneſs of life in our caſe; we are neither miniſters nor elders, to have any character of that ſort to ſupport? *Anſw.* It is evident, that many take a liberty in ſinful practices from this; practices which they would condemn in them, though they allow them in themſelves. Miniſters and elders untender and looſe in their life and practice, ſhall bear their judgment as betrayers of the cauſe of religion to an ungodly world. But it will be no comfort to you to go to hell with unholy miniſters and elders. And therefore ye muſt either take the ſtrait way with godly and tender miniſters and elders to heaven; or elſe, in the firſt place, find out in your Bible, where the ſtrait way to heaven is only for miniſters and elders, but there is a wide way to it for others. Ye muſt ſeek another Bible for it; for this mentions but one ſtrait way to heaven, for you and them both, Matth vii. 13, 14. ‘Enter ye in at the ſtrait

'gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to deſtruction, and many there be which go in thereat; becauſe ſtrait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.' But if ye belong to Chriſt, ye bear a character as venerable as that of a miniſter; ye are prieſts, 1 Pet. ii. 9. Rev. i. 6. Heb. xiii. 15. If ye ſay, ye are not ſo much as profeſſors! *Anſw.* Are ye Chriſtians or not? If ye be, ſet yourſelves to anſwer that profeſſion, and no more is required of you; or elſe why do ye profeſs ſo much?

6. *laſtly*, But we hope to repent, reform, and find mercy ere we die. *Anſw.* When? The young when they grow old, and the old when they come to a death bed. And who has ſecured you that ye ſhall ſee another day? not God, I am ſure, Heb. iii. 7. 'The Holy Ghoſt ſaith, To-day, if ye will hear his voice.' And if ye ſhould be old, and get a deathbed to lie in a while, how know ye that ye will get grace to repent? Truly it is not God's ordinary way: Job xx. 11. 'His bones are full of the ſin of his youth, which ſhall lie down with him in the duſt.'

Secondly, Let me expoſtulate this matter with you, how ye come to call Chriſt Lord, and do not the things that he ſays.

1. Do ye think that religion is juſt a matter of form and fair ſhew, to ſay prayers, and come to the kirk on the Sabbath, *&c.* not carrying it through the whole of your walk? If ye do, ye will ſhew yourſelves void of it, 2 Tim. iii. 5. Gal. vi. 12. Iſa. lviii. 5, 6, 7.

2. Do not ye mock the Lord Chriſt by this, and, like Judas, betray him with a kiſs? Matth. xxvi. 49. But 'be not deceived: God is not mocked: for whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap,' Gal. vi. 7.

3. Have ye no regard to the honour of Chriſt? If he is your Lord, and ye expect ſalvation by him, what hearts have ye that cannot be moved thereby to live to his praiſe, and be uſeful for him in the world? They that have no uſe for holy walking, after ſalvation is ſecured by Chriſt, are ſurely far from ſalvation.

4. Is not the cauſe of Chriſt and religion much the worſe of you? Rom. ii. 24. 'For the name of God is blaſphemed through you.' Do ye call him Lord, that ye may have the more acceſs to affront and diſhonour him? Do ye join yourſelves to the church and kingdom of Chriſt, that ye may by ſuch compliance advance the intereſts of Satan's kingdom.

5. Has Chriſt's character as a Lord no weight on your conſciences. Do ye think it is a mere empty title. You will find it otherwiſe: Mal. i. 6. 'If I be a Father, where is mine honour: and if I be a maſter, where is my fear; ſaith the Lord of hoſts, Luke xix. 27. *Thoſe mine enemies, which would not that I ſhould reign over them, bring hither, and ſlay them before me.*

6. *laſtly*, How will ye anſwer it at the great day. If ye think it is long to that, it will be longer after that it will ſit in your conſciences and gnaw, that you called him Lord, and did not the things that he ſaid: and it may be very ſhort while, that it may be in your power to get things put in better caſe for that day.

I ſhall conclude with a few advices.

1. Examine yourſelves, and ſearch out your ſins ſincerely, as in the ſight of God: Hag. i. 7. 'Thus ſaith the Lord of hoſts, Conſider your ways.' Look into the ſeveral parts and periods of your life, and ſee how they have been led. Look into your publick and private walk; into your relations, how ye have carried as a huſband, wife, &c. into both tables of the law, how ye have behaved towards God and man; into your ſins of omiſſion and commiſſion, your ſecret ſins that are hid from the eyes of the world, that ſin that is your particular bias. Look into your heart ſins; and trace up all to the ſin of your nature.

2. Seeing yourſelf a ſinful, ruined creature, ſolemnly take hold of the covenant of grace, perſonally entering into it by embracing of Chriſt offered to you in the goſpel, truſting in him as your Saviour, for his whole ſalvation from ſin and wrath, on the ground of God's faithfulneſs in the promiſe; thus going to Chriſt for your ſanctification as well as juſtification; to purge you from the filth as well as the guilt of ſin, 1 Cor. i. 30. receiving and eyeing him in all his offices.

3. *laſtly*, Lay down an honeſt purpoſe and reſolution, in the faith of the grace and ſtrength in Chriſt Jeſus, offered and exhibited to you in the goſpel, and provided in the covenant, to comply henceforth with the whole will of Chriſt declared to you in his word, without exception or reſerve; to ſubject your ſouls wholly to the authority of his word, to comply with every duty therein made known to you, and to fight againſt every ſin there diſcovered to you. So ſhall you call him Lord, and he call you his ſervants, Acts xi. 23. Pſal. cxix. 12.

The inſeparable Connection between a Sinner's having Part with Chriſt, and being waſhed by him: Or, The Myſtery of Sanctification by Chriſt opened up.

Several SERMONS, preached at Etterick, in the Year 1728.

JOHN xiii. 8.

If I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part with me.

THESE words are Chriſt's anſwer to Peter refuſing to let Chriſt waſh his feet. No doubt it was a kind of modeſty, reverence, and humility, that put Peter on this peremptory refuſal of Chriſt's aſtoniſhing kind offer. But all is not gold that glitters. There is much of this baſtard humility in the world, whereby people refuſe Chriſt's offers, and put them away from them with a very good grace, and great reſpect to the Lord Chriſt, as they think. Chriſt comes to ſinners in the goſpel, and offers to waſh them from their pollution: but will they offer a foul defiled ſoul to God, the infinitely holy Saviour, to be waſhed by him? No; they think they know more of their own ſinfulneſs and unworthineſs, and of Chriſt's greatneſs and holineſs, than that comes to. And ſo they affront him, under a pretence of honouring him.

There are three characters of this falſe humility.

1. It condemns the generation of the righteous, who came all to Chriſt, at his command, to be waſhed by him, received it with admiration of his condeſcenſion. The other diſciples, no doubt, were ſtruck with amazement at Chriſt's coming to waſh their feet: but true

humility took Chriſt's will for law and right, and makes them ſilently yield themſelves to the Lord. But Peter's behaviour condemns them as rude and diſreſpectful, ver. 5, 6. 'After that, he poureth water into a baſon, and began to waſh the diſciples feet, and to wipe them with the towel, wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter ſaith unto him, Lord, doſt thou waſh my feet.'

2. It keeps Chriſt at a diſtance, and ſo proceeds not from faith, but unbelief, ver. 6. No doubt, when Chriſt ſtretched out his hand to waſh Peter's feet, he drew them in quickly to him; and ſhewed by his deeds, as well as his words, that he had no mind that Chriſt's fair hand ſhould come on them. So folk, under a ſenſe of ſinfulneſs, may flee from Chriſt, while he follows them.

3. It argues a heart not duly humbled; and ſo it is but accurſed pride under the vail of a ſhew of humility. (1.) Carnal wiſdom and reaſon has the aſcendant, and will not bow to divine revelation: ver. 7, 8. 'Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, What I do, thou knoweſt not now, but thou ſhalt know hereafter. Peter ſaith unto him, thou ſhalt never waſh my feet. Jeſus anſwered him, If I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part with me.' Let the goſpel of God's grace be delivered never ſo plain, they will not give over meaſuring divine myſteries by their carnal reaſon. (2.) Inſenſibleneſs and ſelf conceit prevails. Peter doubtleſs thought either that his feet needed no waſhing, but that they might be borne with even in Chriſt's preſence, as they were; or, if they did, he would waſh them himſelf. So he is peremptory in his refuſal. And this lies at bottom in that falſe humility: either they think they are not ſo very polluted, but that they may be borne with; or elſe, that they will waſh themſelves clean before they come to Chriſt.

In the text, our Lord gives Peter a word that brings him down in a moment from all his heights, and makes him not only content, but earneſt to be waſhed all over by Chriſt, without pretending to wipe off one ſpot off himſelf by himſelf: 'If I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part with me.' verſe 9. 'Simon Peter ſaith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but alſo my hands and my head.' This word ſtrikes Peter to the heart, *If I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part with me.* Q. d. "Peter, no waſhing by me, no part with me to ſalvation. Waſhing by me, and part with me, you nor no man ſhall ever be able to ſeparate in your caſes. Have the one, have the other; want the one, and upon heaven's truth you want the other."

I think it is an inſipid queſtion here, Why ſo ſevere a threatening for refuſing ſo ſmall a thing? For Chriſt ſays not, 'If I waſh not thy feet, thou ſhalt have no part with me,' but ſimply, 'If I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part with me,' in the preſent time. Neither could it be drawn to the waſhing of the feet, if the queſtioniſts did not firſt ſuppoſe a change of the tenſe the Holy Ghoſt uſeth, which is not at leaſt without neceſſity to be admitted. *Gr. If I waſh thee not*, or, *If I have not waſhed thee, thou haſt no part with me.* Q. d. "Peter, if you belong to me, I have done more for you than to waſh your feet with water; I have waſhed you with my blood; if you have taken that vaſtly coſtlier waſhing off my hand, why refuſe you this? If I have not ſo waſhed you, you have no part with me; for none have part with me, but thoſe whom I ſo waſh."

The words then bear an inſeparable connection betwixt two things in the caſe of ſinners, ſtanding and falling together. (1.) The waſhing of them by Chriſt, to wit, from their ſins, Rev. i. 5. (2.) Their having part with him, partaking of his ſaving benefits, being joint-heirs of heaven with him. Compare Deut. xiv. 27. 'And the Levite that is within thy gates, thou ſhalt not forſake him: for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee.' The ſcripture knows no part ſinners can have of ſalvation or of heaven, but with Chriſt, Acts iv. 12. 'Neither is there ſalvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we muſt be ſaved.' They that miſs their part with Chriſt, there is but another ſide where their part will fall: Rev. xxi. 8. 'But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and ſorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, ſhall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimſtone: which is the ſecond death.' Now, if a ſinner either be not waſhed at all, or be waſhed only with the nitre and ſoap of his own faithleſs endeavours and reformation; if he be not waſhed by Chriſt; he has no part with him, he is none of his; he is in a ſtate of death and deſtruction, lying ready to be caſt out as an abominable thing, into the unclean place, the ſtinking lake.

The relation betwixt theſe two, is, the former is a neceſſary conſequent of the latter; and therefore is held forth as a neceſſary evidence of it. All that have ſaving part with Chriſt, are waſhed by him: therefore if Chriſt hath not waſhed thee, thou haſt no ſaving part with him.

The doctrine deducible from the words is as follows.

DOCT. *A ſinner's having any ſaving part with Chriſt, and his being waſhed by Chriſt from his ſin, are ſimply and abſolutely inſeparable.*

In diſcourſing from this doctrine, I ſhall,

I. Conſider a ſinner's having part with Chriſt,

II. His being waſhed by Chriſt.

III. The inſeparableneſs of the two.

IV. Improve the doctrine.

I. The firſt thing to be ſpoken to, is, *A ſinner's having part with Chriſt.* And this we take up in two things.

1. His being of Chriſt's myſtical body, through union with him, 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13. *For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: ſo alſo is Chriſt. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free: and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.* There are but two general corporations of mankind on earth, heaven, and hell: the corporation of the firſt and fallen Adam, who has diffuſed all manner of pollution and defilement over thoſe that are his, not to be waſhed off by human art; and of this ſociety we are all by nature members; the corporation of the ſecond Adam, Chriſt, who cleanſes and purifies all that are his, from that pollution and defilement: for the latter is raiſed out of the former. See the two, 1 John v. 19. 'And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedneſs.' 2 Cor. vi. 17. 'Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye ſeparate, ſaith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.' Now, if ye are not waſhed by Chriſt, ye belong not to the ſecond Adam's corporation; ye belong not to Chriſt.

2. The ſinner's having communion with Chriſt in his ſaving benefits, partaking of them in fellowſhip with him, 1 John i. 3. 'That which we have ſeen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye alſo may have fellowſhip with us; and truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt.' All ſalvation is in Chriſt; ſo that they who have part with him, are *complete in him*, Col. ii. 9, 10. And ſalvation is in him excluſively to all others, Acts iv. 12. Now, if ye are not waſhed by Chriſt, ye have no communion with him in his ſaving benefits, no part in his ſalvation, and ſo none in ſalvation at all. Chriſt has a righteouſneſs fully anſwering the law's demands; it is ſo broad a white raiment, that it covers all his people, partaking with him in it, Rom. iii. 22. But if he waſh you not, you have no part in it. He has taken out a new right to God, as his God, and all his people partake with him in it, Rom. viii. 17. 'And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Chriſt.' John xx. 17. 'I aſcend

‘ unto my Father,’ and your Father, and to my God, and your God.’ But if Chriſt waſh you not, you have no part in him, he is not your God.

II. The next thing to be ſpoke to, is, *The ſinner's being waſhed by Chriſt.* This is inſeparable from his having part with Chriſt, and is the privilege of all, and only thoſe who have part with him. Concerning this waſhing, I offer theſe particulars.

1. There is a filthineſs in ſin, whereby the ſoul is polluted and defiled before the Lord. This is ſuppoſed in the waſhing from it: Ezek. xxxvi. 25. ‘Then will I ſprinkle clean water upon you, and ye ſhall be clean: from all your filthineſs, and from all your idols will I cleanſe you.’ Sin does not only make the ſinner guilty, but filthy and abominable. It is *the abominable thing that God hates*, Jer. xliv. 4. *filth* itſelf, Iſa. iv. 4. This filthineſs of ſin lies in its contrariety to the holineſs of God expreſſed in his law. Holineſs is the glory of God, and the beauty of the ſoul, Exod. xv. 11.: ſin the deformity and filthineſs of it. Hence,

1ſt, It makes the ſinner loathſome before God, that he cannot look on him, but with abhorrence; and with ſuch abhorrence as one looks upon a thing he has a natural antipathy at, Zech. xi. 8. ‘My ſoul loathed them.’ Hab. i. 13. ‘Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canſt not look on iniquity.’ Pſal v. 4. ‘For thou art not a God that hath pleaſure in wickedneſs: neither ſhall evil dwell with thee.’

2dly, It fills the ſoul with ſhame before God. I mean not that holy ſhame that proceeds from a joint view of ſin's loathſomeneſs, and God's pardoning grace in Chriſt; that is a fruit of the Spirit, Ezek. xvi. 60, 61. ‘I will eſtabliſh unto thee an everlaſting covenant. Then thou ſhalt remember thy ways, and be aſhamed.’ But I mean a natural ſhame, whereby the ſinner, obliged to fix his eyes on God's holineſs, and ſeeing his own unlikeneſs to him, his countenance falls, he is damped, and filled with dread and horror, and therefore labours to make way out of his preſence; as Adam did, Gen. iii. 10. *I heard thy voice* (ſaid he to the Lord) *in the garden: and I was afraid, becauſe I was naked: and I hid myſelf.* Now, unwaſhed ſinners are filthy all over.

(1.) Their nature is filthy, Pſal. xiv. 3. ‘They are all gone aſide, they are altogether become filthy: there is none that doth good, no not one.’ Sin has ſpread its defilement over all the faculties of their ſouls, and over all the members of their bodies: Tit. i. 15. *Unto them that are defiled, and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and conſcience is defiled.* Their very bodies, however perfumed and adorned, are filthy before God, with ſpiritual filth cleaving to them, Heb. x. 22.

(2.) Their life and converſation is filthy, 2 Pet. ii. 7. Their daily walk is a heaping new filth upon their already filthy ſouls. Their habitual filthineſs produces ſtill actual filthineſs, as the poiſoned ſpring ſends forth poiſonous ſtreams, Pſal. xiv. 1.

2. Chriſt has them all to waſh who get part in him. Hence the redeemed church ſings praiſes *to him that loved* them, *and waſhed* them *from* their *ſins in his own blood*, Rev. i. 5. They come to him in their pollution, and are waſhed by him; they come to him defiled all over, in the defilement of their nature, and of their life, that they may be waſhed; and coming to him by faith, it is done, Ezek. xvi. 8, 9. Rom. iv. 5. 2 Cor. v. 17. How can it be otherwiſe? for they cannot waſh themſelves before they come. Is it poſſible for people to waſh, before they come to the waters? or to bathe before they come into the laver?

3. All thoſe who take part in him by faith, he waſhes with his blood from their ſin, Heb. xii. 24. Rev. i. 5. He offered himſelf a ſacrifice to God for ſin, and the blood of the ſlain ſacrifice is ſprinkled on the ſinners in him, for their cleanſing: 1 John i. 7. *The blood of Jeſus his Son, cleanſeth us from all ſin.* The ſtain of ſin was ſo deep, that nothing elſe could waſh it out; and had he not provided the laver of his own blood, Abraham, Paul, and all the ſaints now in glory, ſince they were once filthy, would have been filthy ſtill, with Cain, Judas, and other filthy veſſels of wrath.

There are two things in his blood, that make it to waſh out this ſtain, as deep as it is.

1ſt, An infinite value; for it is the blood of an infinite perſon, the blood of God, Acts xx. 28. the Son of God, 1 John i. 7. the Father's equal, the Moſt High.

2dly, An infinite efficacy, power and energy; for the Spirit is in it, the infinite Spirit of holineſs, John vi. 53. 63. The blood was given for atonement, becauſe the life of the fleſh, or the animal ſpirits, are in the blood, Lev. xvii. 11. And therefore it was to be ſprinkled while it was yet warm with the Spirits in it. Now, Chriſt's blood is always warm and freſh, with the ſpirits of life and holineſs in it, Heb. x. 20. Rev. iii. 1.

4. There is a twofold waſhing by the blood of Chriſt; one that makes clean in the eye of the law, leaving not the leaſt mark of a ſpot in the ſoul; peculiar to the ſaints in heaven, Heb. xii. 23. another making clean in the eye of the goſpel, though not abſolutely: John xv. 3. ‘Now ye are clean through the word which I have ſpoken unto you.’ Cant. iv. 7. ‘Thou art all fair, my love, there is no ſpot in thee.’ It is this laſt our text means only. Only obſerve, that they are not different kinds but degrees of the ſame waſhing by Chriſt's blood. It is the ſame laver of Chriſt's blood, that we are waſhed in before death to fit us for communion with God here, and that ſame laver that we are waſhed in at death, to fit us for communion with God in heaven. Only that efficacy of Chriſt's blood now exerted on us in part, is put forth on us in full meaſure to the utter abolition of ſin, Eph. v. 25, 26, 27. Rev. vii. 14, 15.

5. As waſhing is properly the purging away of filthineſs, ſpots or ſtains from the object waſhed; the waſhing from ſin is formally and directly the ſanctification of the ſinner, Eph. v. 26. So if Chriſt ſanctify us not, we have no part in him. Howbeit, it ſuppoſes or implies more than that wherein it formally conſiſts.

In all waſhing there are two things to be diſtinguiſhed: the looſing of the filth ſticking to the object; for if it do not ſtick, it cannot defile; and the removing of it being looſed, which is waſhing properly. Accordingly in waſhing a ſoul from ſin, there are two things.

1ſt, The looſing of the filth of ſin ſticking to the ſoul. Sin ſticks to our ſouls, as pitch or tar to a man's fingers: and there is no removing of it, till once it be looſed by an application of Chriſt's blood. Now, it is by guilt that it ſticks to our ſoul, 1 Cor. xv. 56. And that is done away in our juſtification; which muſt needs go before our ſanctification, as the looſing of ſticking filth, before the waſhing it away; as the Holy Ghoſt teacheth, Rom. vii. 6. ‘But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we ſhould ſerve in newneſs of ſpirit, and not in the oldneſs of the letter.’ Hence the apoſtle ſaith of the Corinthians, 1 Cor. vi. 11. ‘And ſuch were ſome of you; but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified, in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God.’

2dly, The removing and purging away the filth of ſin, being once looſed: and the ſame blood that looſes it, purgeth it away in ſanctification, as the ſame water that looſeth the filth, carries it away off the cloth: and ſo the pardoned ſinner is made holy: Heb. ix. 14. *How much more ſhall the blood of Chriſt, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himſelf without ſpot to God, purge the conſcience from dead works to ſerve the living God.* Rev. vii. 14. *Theſe are they which came out of great tribulation, and have waſhed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.* And this purging away of the filth of ſin off the ſinner, lies in three things.

(1.) The putting away of his former loathſomeneſs before God. The blood of Chriſt having come over the ſoul, it is clean, and God can look it with complacency, Rev. i. 5, 6. He calls her *beloved, that was not beloved.*

(2.) Making of the ſoul fair and clean before the Lord, Cant. iv. 7. ‘Thou art all fair, my love, there is no ſpot in thee.’ The Spirit in the blood leaves his own image on the ſoul, and carries it all over the man, 2 Cor. iii. 18. Tit. i. 14. Life, eternal life, is in that blood, and wherever it comes; and it going over the whole man, ſeeds of life are left in the ſoul that ſhall never die out. The Spirit in the blood takes of the fulneſs of grace in Chriſt, and communicates to them grace for grace, John i. 16. ſo transforming them into his image.

(3.) Removing the legal ſhame out of the ſoul before God, and cauſing it with child like kindly bluſhes to come before him, and preſs near him, crying Abba, Father, with the boldneſs of faith in greater or leſſer meaſure, Rom. viii. 15. ‘For ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.’ Ezra ix. 6. ‘O my God, I am aſhamed and bluſh to lift up my face to thee, my God; for our iniquities are increaſed over our head, and our treſpaſs is grown up unto the heavens.’

6. Faith is the inſtrumental cauſe of this waſhing. Hence the apoſtle, Acts xv. 9. ſpeaks of *purifying the heart by faith.* It lays hold upon, and applies the blood of Chriſt, Rom. iii. 25. ‘Whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins.’

7. *laſtly*, Afflictions are the occaſional cauſes of this waſhing, Iſa. xxvii. 9. ‘By this therefore ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his ſin.’

III. The next thing to be conſidered, is, *The inſeparableneſs of the two.* They are ſo,

1. In reſpect of their ſubject, which is neceſſarily one. He that has the one, has the other; and no man can have either of them ſingly. If thou haſt part in Chriſt, thou art waſhed by him; if thou art waſhed by him, thou haſt part with him.

2. In reſpect of time. That moment one gets part with Chriſt, he waſhes him from his ſins. In order of nature indeed, part with Chriſt goes before waſhing, and juſtification before ſanctification. But in reſpect of time they come together and at once. That they are ſo inſeparable appears,

1ſt, From the end and deſign of Chriſt's death, which cannot be fruſtrated. He died for that end, that ſinners taking part with him by faith, might be waſhed by him from their ſins, Eph. v. 25. *&c.* Tit. ii. 14.

2dly, From the nature of the thing. There is a lively efficacy in Chriſt's blood to waſh away ſin, ſo that the ſoul come to Chriſt, and having part in him, muſt needs be waſhed; or that precious blood muſt be counted as dead water, that has loſt its virtue, Heb. x. 20. Can a foul garment be laid in a pure running ſtream, and the waſhing of it not be begun the moment that it is laid in? And can an unholy ſoul be united by faith to Chriſt, and the waſhing of it not begun that moment by virtue from his blood?

USE 1. of *Trial.* Ye may hereby know whether ye have any part with Chriſt or not, and conſequently whether ye have a right to the Lord's table or not? Are ye waſhed by Chriſt from your ſins, or no? If ye are unſanctified, unholy ſouls, yet living in the filth of your ſins, I declare ye have no part with Chriſt; ſince where there is no true holineſs, there is no true faith.

Queſt. How may I know that I am waſhed by Chriſt?

Mark 1. If ye are waſhed by Chriſt, though ye are not waſhed perfectly, ye are waſhed univerſally; waſhed in every part, though not perfectly clean in any part: 2 Cor. v. 17. ‘If any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature: old things are paſt away, behold, all things are become new.’ Ye are waſhed from the groſs pollutions of the outward man, from the reigning pollutions of the inner man: Pſal. xxiv. 3, 4. ‘Who ſhall aſcend into the hill of the Lord? and who ſhall ſtand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lift up his ſoul unto vanity, nor ſworn deceitfully.’ There is a new ſet in you for purity, darting to all the points of the Chriſtian compaſs, though you fall ſhort of degrees in every point. That compaſs ye find, 1 John iii. 3. ‘And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure.’

2. Ye lay the ſtreſs of your acceptance with God, not upon your inherent cleanneſs, the effect of your waſhing; but on the blood of Chriſt, the cauſe of it: Phil. iii. 3. ‘For we are the circumciſion, which worſhip God in the ſpirit, and rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the fleſh.’ Cloſe hypocrites never fail to ſplit on this rock. That, Matth. v. 3. ‘Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,’ is ſet firſt, for it muſt be carried through all; and ver. 8. ‘Bleſſed are the pure in heart; for they ſhall ſee God.’

3. Your hearts are looſed from ſin, though it cleaves to you. It lies not like mud in a pool, where there is nothing to wear it out; but like mud in a ſpring, where the ſpring-water tends to work it out. So ye will be groaning under the remains of your uncleanneſs, ſaying, with the apoſtle, Rom. vii. 25. ‘O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death!’ You will be content to ſee every ſpot, Pſal. cxxxix. 23, 24. that it may be waſhed off; and really deſirous to be made perfectly clean; as was the apoſtle, Phil. iii. 13, 14. ‘I count not myſelf to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting thoſe things which are behind, and reaching forth unto thoſe things which are before, I preſs toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.’

USE 2. of *Inſtruction* and *Direction* to unwaſhed ſouls, yet lying in their blood. Sinners, will ye be made clean?

For *Motive*: To be left lying in the filth of ſin, is formally one half of the puniſhment of the damned, and virtually the whole of it. See the form of Chriſt's giving up with a ſinner, and dropping him for ever, Rev. xxii. 11. ‘He that is unjuſt, let him be unjuſt ſtill: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy ſtill.’ There is the puniſhment of loſs. And in that filth will be bred and fed the worm that never dies; out of it will ariſe the fire that is never quenched. And that is the puniſhment of ſenſe.

Now, the *Direction* is, if ye would be waſhed by Chriſt, get part with Chriſt. Say not, Will ever I get part with Chriſt, being ſo unclean, not purified and meet for him? But no uncleanneſs of yours can hinder your getting part with Chriſt, if you will but take it. See the caſe of the Corinthians, 1 Cor. vi. 11. ‘And ſuch were ſome of you: but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God.’ And ye ſhall rot and pine away in your filth, waſh otherwiſe as well as ye will, if ye will not take it: Pſal. lxxxi. 11, 12. ‘But my people would not hearken to my voice: and Iſrael would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts luſts: and they walked in their own counſels.’

Queſt. What acceſs have I to get part with Chriſt?

Anſw. Chriſt and his ſalvation are a common good: 1 John iv. 14. *We have ſeen, and do teſtify, that the Father ſent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.* Jude ver. 3. this ſalvation is called *the common ſalvation.* I proclaim to every one to come and take their part with Chriſt, aſſuring them of welcome: Rev. xxii. 17. ‘And the Spirit and the bride ſay, Come. And let him that heareth, ſay, Come. And let him that is athirſt, Come: And whoſoever will, let him take the water of life freely.’

Queſt. How may I be poſſeſſed of part with Chriſt?

Anſw. By faith, crediting the promiſe of the goſpel, and accordingly truſting on Chriſt as your Saviour, for his whole ſalvation; for ſalvation from ſin, as well as from wrath; for that holineſs and purity of heart and life, which are abſolutely neceſſary to make you meet for the inheritance of the ſaints in light, as well as for that righteouſneſs by which you can only be accepted in the ſight of God, and by which alone you can have a ſure and indefeaſible title to heaven and glory.

Laſtly, Let the ſaints conſider, that the more part they have with Chriſt, the more they will be waſhed; and that faith is the only way to have part with Chriſt in all his ſaving benefits, and that it is a mean of God's appointment, for waſhing and purification. Hence be exerciſing faith daily upon Chriſt, and particularly in the view of going to a communion table, in order to your being waſhed and ſanctified; remembering, that unleſs Chriſt waſh you, you can have no part with him.

The Myſtery of Sanctification by Chriſt.

Several SERMONS, preached at Etterick, August 25, 1728, and ſubſequent Lord's Days.

JOHN xiii. 8.

If I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part with me.

I Entered on theſe words laſt Lord's day, on occaſion of the ſacramental ſolemnity which was then celebrated among us; obſerved a doctrine, propoſed a method, which was briefly proſecuted, and I made ſome practical improvement of the ſubject. But as this text opens a large field of diſcourſe, and contains ample matter for directing faith and practice, I ſhall now endeavour to proſecute the deſign of the words more fully, in a ſeries of diſcourſes. For this end, I obſerve the following doctrine, *viz.*

DOCT. *Such an inſeparable connection there is between a ſinner's having part with Chriſt, and being waſhed from his ſins by Chriſt in a work of ſanctification, that if a ſinner is not waſhed from his ſins by Chriſt, he has no part with Chriſt, while he is ſo.*

Briefly, *If a ſinner is not waſhed from his ſins by Chriſt, he has no part with Chriſt.*

In handling this important ſubject, I ſhall conſider,

I. What it is to be waſhed from our ſins by Chriſt, *viz.* unto a cleanneſs in the eye of the goſpel.

II. The unwaſhed or unſanctified ſinner's having no part with Chriſt.

III. Conclude with ſome practical inferences.

I. I ſhall conſider *what it is to be waſhed from our ſins by Chriſt, viz. unto a cleanneſs in the eye of the goſpel.* And upon this head I ſhall ſhew,

1. What this waſhing ſuppoſeth.
2. Wherein it conſiſts.
3. How it is done and brought about.

FIRST, I ſhall ſhew what our being waſhed from our ſins by Chriſt ſuppoſeth.

1. It ſuppoſeth in the ſinner, a conviction of the filthineſs of ſin, and his loathſomeneſs by it. Hence the church ſays, Iſa. lxiv. 6. ‘ But we are all as an unclean ‘ thing, and all our righteouſneſſes are as filthy rags, ‘ and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities like ‘ the wind, have taken us away.’ They that never ſaw the vileneſs and abominable nature of ſin are not waſhed from it, Prov. xxx. 12. ‘ There is a generation that ‘ are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not waſhed from ‘ their filthineſs.’ The man cries not only with the criminal, *Guilty, guilty*: but, with the leper, *Unclean, unclean.* Sin is not only frightful, but hateful and loathſome to him, as the vileſt filth. Now, if ye have not been convinced of the filthineſs of ſin, ye have no part with Chriſt.

1ſt, This conviction is got by looking into the glaſs of the law, repreſenting the ſpotleſs holineſs of God, Rom. vii. 12, 13, 14. ‘ The law is holy; and the commandment holy, and juſt, and good. Was then that ‘ which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But ‘ ſin, that it might appear ſin, working death in me by ‘ that which is good; that ſin by the commandment ‘ might become exceeding ſinful. For we know that ‘ the law is ſpiritual: but I am carnal, ſold under ſin.’ The glaring beauty of God's holineſs expreſſed in the law, ſtriking the ſinner, he ſees himſelf filthy and loathſome before the holy God, as moſt unlike him.

2dly, It fixes an impreſſion of ſhame on the ſinner. He is aſhamed of himſelf, of what he is, what he has done, and what he has neglected to do; as the publican did, Luke xviii. 13. who *ſtanding afar off, would not ſo much as lift up his eyes unto heaven, but ſmote upon his breaſt, ſaying, God be merciful to me a ſinner.* He is like a child, that having got a clean white frock on him, has fallen into the mire, and ſtands aſhamed before his mother in that pickle.

2. It ſuppoſes a willingneſs to be made clean: Pſal. xix. 12. ‘ Who can underſtand his errors? cleanſe thou ‘ me from ſecret faults.’ It is not eaſy to bring a ſinner that length: Jer. xiii. 27. ‘ Wo unto thee, O Je‘ruſalem, wilt thou not be made clean? when ſhall it ‘ once be?’ Sin is ſo woven into our nature, and ſo ſtrengthened by cuſtom in ſin, which is a ſecond nature, that it is harder to make a ſinner willing to be made clean, than to bring a ſwine away from the mire and dirt it loves to neſtle and wallow in. But in the day of the waſhing of a ſinner, he is made as willing to be waſhed, as ever child aſhamed of his naſtying himſelf, is. So if ye have not been made willing to be clean, ye have no part with Chriſt.

3. It ſuppoſes a conviction that we cannot waſh ourſelves clean, by any thing we can do or ſuffer: Rom. vii. 24. ‘ O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver ‘ me from the body of this death!’ What mars the waſhing by Chriſt with many, is, that they think they can waſh themſelves clean enough by themſelves. They ſee now how faſt the filth of ſin ſticks to them, and ſo they think their praying, confeſſing, reforming, and tears, will do it. But hear what Job ſays, chap. ix. 30, 31. *If I waſh myſelf with ſnow-water, and make my hand never ſo clean; yet ſhalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own cloaths ſhall abhor me.* This every ſoul that is ſanctified is brought to. Therefore, if ye have not been convinced, that ye cannot waſh yourſelves clean, by any thing ye can do, ye have no part with Chriſt.

4. It ſuppoſes a hearty conſent of the ſoul to be waſhed by Chriſt. Chriſt waſhes none againſt their will: Jer. xiii. 27. ‘ Wo unto thee, O Jeruſalem, wilt thou ‘ not be made clean? when ſhall it once be?’ They that will needs lie ſtill in their filthineſs, ſhall lie and rot in

it for ever for him; Rev. xxii. 11. 'He that is unjuſt, let him be unjuſt ſtill: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy ſtill.' Hoſ. iv. 17. 'Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.' Chriſt makes all his elect willing to be holy, but he forces holineſs on none. Therefore if ye have not given a hearty conſent of your ſoul to be waſhed, ye have no part with Chriſt.

5. *laſtly*, It ſuppoſes a preſenting of our defiled ſouls to Chriſt to be waſhed by him. This is the work of faith, by which the ſoul comes to the waters: Iſa. lv. 1. 'Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.' The ſoul comes to Chriſt, as the leper to the Prieſt to be cleanſed: Pſal. li. 7. 'Purge me with hyſſop, and I ſhall be clean: waſh me, and I ſhall be whiter than ſnow.' compared with Lev. xiv. 6. *As for the living bird, he ſhall take it, and the cedar wood, and the ſcarlet, and the hyſſop, and ſhall dip them, and the living bird, in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water.* It eyes him as a Saviour from the filth, as well as the guilt of ſin: as a ſanctifier of the unclean, as well as a juſtifier of the ungodly. Therefore, if ye have not preſented your defiled ſouls to Chriſt, to be waſhed by him, ye have no part with Chriſt.

SECONDLY, I ſhall ſhew wherein our being waſhed from our ſins by Chriſt conſiſts. As waſhing in the general conſiſts in removing of filthineſs, and making clean; ſo does the waſhing of a ſoul by Chriſt, ly in removing the filth or ſin from off the ſinner, and making him clean in likeneſs to God. Now,

1. Chriſt waſheth ſinners in the inner man: Pſal. xlv. 13. 'The King's daughter is all glorious within.' Phariſaical waſhings reach the outer man only: but Chriſt's waſhing goes to the hidden man of the heart. Adam left us in the mire of ſin, with a nature corrupt and filthy, the very reverſe of the nature of God; all the faculties of our ſouls defiled, Tit. i. 15. But Chriſt waſhes our nature and faculties. And this lies in two things.

1*ſt*, Removing and waſhing off that filth of ſin, that either cleave to them from our birth, or has been added to them ſince: Tit. iii. 5. 'Not by works of righteouſneſs, which we have done, but according to his mercy, he ſaved us, by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt.' We came into the world with ſuch corruption cleaving to our nature and faculties, as not only diſabled us for all good, but made us prone to all evil, and averſe to all good. This is ſtrengthened and increaſed during the time one lives unregenerate. And the corruption of nature ſpreads itſelf, and takes many roots in the ſoul, in divers particular luſts, Rom. vi. 12. Now, Chriſt waſhing of this filth off the ſoul,

(1.) Purgeth our whole nature and faculties, from that corruption, ſo far as it does not reign there: Rom. vi. 14. 'For ſin ſhall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.' The total blindneſs as to the receiving of the things of God, is purged out of the mind; that averſion to good, out of the will; and the carnality out of the affections. The natural corrupt bent of the heart is taken away, removed, and broken; the ſtony heart is taken away, and a heart of fleſh is given, Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

(2.) He purgeth the ſoul from its old luſts, looſing them at the root: Gal. v. 24. 'They that are Chriſt's, have crucified the fleſh, with its affections and luſts.' As in the deluge of waters coming over the earth, trees deeply rooted were waſhed away by the roots, and lay floating here and there, and ſo might give ſome diſturbance to the ark: ſo Chriſt's efficacious blood coming over the ſoul, looſes old luſts by the roots, though they are not quite taken away, but give diſturbance to the believer. They are in him as a broken tooth, they hang at him as a leg out of joint.

2*dly*, It lies in introducing the beauty of habitual holineſs into our ſouls, in conforming us to the image of Chriſt: Tit. iii. 5. forecited. 2 Cor. iii. 18. 'But we all with open face, beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' As the veſſel of braſs or ſilver, being overlaid with naſtineſs, has nothing of its primitive luſtre; yet when it is waſhed and ſcoured, it recovers ſomewhat of its former brightneſs: ſo the unwaſhed ſinner has loſt all his primitive ſpiritual glory: but Chriſt waſhing him in the day of grace, he recovers it ſomewhat; and the waſhing being perfected in glory, he will be brighter and more glorious than ever. Now, Chriſt introducing this into our ſoul,

(1.) Implants in us a new nature, which goes over all the faculties of the ſoul. It is a *divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. as coming from God, and making the ſoul like God, John iii. 6.—— 'That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit.' Hence the man is a new creature; all his faculties are renewed, mind, will, and conſcience: 2 Cor. v. 17. 'If any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature: old things are paſſed away, behold, all things are become new.' This nature has a bent and propenſity to good, and an averſion to evil, and cannot loſe it as long as it is in being: and it will be ever, for it is an immortal nature. Hence the combat, Gal. v. 17. 'The fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the fleſh: and theſe are contrary the one to the other; ſo that ye cannot do the things ye would.'

(2.) This new nature hath in it the ſeeds of all ſaving graces: 1 John iii. 9. 'Whoſoever is born of God, doth not commit ſin; for his ſeed remaineth in him; and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God.' Compare Deut. xxx. 6. 'The Lord thy God will circumciſe thine heart, and the heart of thy ſeed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy ſoul, that thou mayeſt live.' We have a ſwatch of them, Gal. v, 22, 23. 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, faith and temperance.' And they are taken out of that fulneſs of grace that is in Chriſt the head, and communicated to the ſinner as a member: John i. 16. 'Of his fulneſs have all we received, and grace for grace.' And thus they bear the image of Chriſt, that as he was meek, lowly, &c. ſo are they in a meaſure. And hereby they are enabled for all acts of holy obedience, as a principle of life gives power for motion.

This is the waſhing of the ſinner in the inner man: and if ye are not ſo waſhed by Chriſt, ye have no part with him.

2. Chriſt waſheth ſinners in the outward man too: Pſal. xlv. 13. 'The king's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold.' Theſe two go together, the latter iſſuing from the former, Pſal. xxiv. 3, 4. 'Who ſhall aſcend into the hill of the Lord? and who ſhall ſtand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lift up his ſoul unto vanity, nor ſworn deceitfully.' James iv. 8. 'Cleanſe your hands, ye ſinners, and purify your hearts, ye double minded.' As the candle within ſhines through the lantern, ſo grace in the heart appears in the outward converſation, Matth. vi. 22. 'The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be ſingle, thy whole body ſhall be full of light.' As the corruption of nature reigning, vents itſelf in abominable works, Pſal. xiv. 1. ſo the cleanſing and purifying of our nature, vents itſelf in good works, Tit. ii. 14. 'Chriſt gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' For as the tree is, ſo will the fruit be.

Now, Chriſt waſhing ſinners in the outward man,

1*ſt*, Removes the filth that before clave to their life and converſation, Eph. iv. 22. It is no more a *vile* converſation, nay, nor a *vain* converſation, 1 Pet. i. 18. not a *diſorderly*, but a *well ordered* converſation, Pſal. l. 23. They that go back to their former converſation, whether in vanity or vileneſs, ſhew themſelves but Satan's waſhed ſwine, not Chriſt's waſhed ſaints, 2 Pet. ii. 22. It reaches,

(1.) Their words, and purifies them from corrupt communication. If the heart be circumciſed, ſo will the lips be too, James i. 26. ‘If any man among you ſeem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.’ If grace rule in the heart, the tongue will not be allowed to go at random. The liberty that ſome take with their tongues in obſcenity, lying, ſwearing, mocking and jeſting at ſerious religion, *&c.* proclaims them to be unwaſhed by Chriſt. See Pſal. xv.

(2.) It reaches the courſe of their actions, and purifies it, Heb. ix. 14. ‘How much more ſhall the blood of Chriſt, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himſelf without ſpot to God, purge your conſcience from dead works to ſerve the living God?’ It purifies their courſe from impiety againſt God, and injuſtice againſt man; teaching them to walk, as Tit. ii. 12. ‘ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly.’ Their hands are waſhed, as well as their hearts; and their feet are waſhed, that they go not in the way of ſinners as before.

2dly, He beautifies them in their life and converſation: Cant. vii. 1. ‘How beautiful are thy feet with ſhoes, O prince's daughter! the joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of a cunning workman.’ Compared with Eph. vi. 15. ‘And your feet ſhod with the preparation of the goſpel of peace.’ He makes them ſhine as lights in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe generation;’ and helps them to a converſation becoming the goſpel. And this alſo reaches,

(1.) Their words. Their tongue is made their glory, whereby they glorify God. Inſtead of corrupt communication, they produce ſomething for the uſe of edification. Being tranſlated from the power of darkneſs into the kingdom of God, they learn the language of it.

(2.) The courſe of their works. They not only *ceaſe to do evil*, but *they learn to do well*, Iſ. i. 16, 17. They become zealous of good works, Tit. ii. 14. As it is but half waſhing that takes away only the groſs filth, but makes not clean; ſo it is but half Chriſtianity, where people ſatisfy themſelves with not doing evil, but ſet not themſelves to do good.

Thirdly, I ſhall ſhew how our being waſhed from ſin by Chriſt is brought about. Chriſt waſheth ſinners, making uſe of ſeveral things to that bleſſed purpoſe.

Firſt, Chriſt waſheth ſinners, uſing ſome things more immediately for that purpoſe, towards them. And,

Firſt, Chriſt waſheth ſinners with his blood, as the moſt immediate cauſe of their cleanſing. Hence the church aſcribes praiſe to Chriſt, *who loved them, and waſhed them from their ſins in his own blood*, Rev. i. 5. The blood of Chriſt hath that place in waſhing of defiled ſouls, that water hath in waſhing defiled bodies: ſo it is the holy water wherewith we are waſhed from our ſins. Therefore it is called a *fountain*, and that not only to drink at, but to waſh at: Zech. xii. 1. ‘In that day there ſhall be a fountain opened to the houſe of David, and to the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, for ſin, and for uncleanneſs.’ Compared with 1 John i. 7. ‘The blood of Jeſus Chriſt cleanſeth from all ſin.’ This blood being applied to the ſoul polluted with ſin, it effectually removes the filth of ſin from the ſoul.

For underſtanding of this, theſe things may be noted.

1. The defilement or uncleanneſs ſin leaves on the ſoul, is not a bodily and viſible thing, as naſtineſs on our bodies or clothes, which may be taken away with hands: but it is a moral and ſpiritual uncleanneſs, viz. an unlikeneſs and contrariety to the holineſs of God expreſſed in his law: ſo that the waſhing of a ſoul from it, is the rendering that ſoul like God in his imitable perfections, expreſſed in the ten commands, which expreſs his image unto us, that appeared perfectly in the man Chriſt, walking exactly in every point, according to theſe ten commands, in their ſpirituality and extent.

2. By the blood of Chriſt in this matter, is not meant ſimply the blood that ran out of his veins in his circumciſion, the ſufferings of his life, and crucifixion; but Chriſt himſelf ſacrificed for us; which ſacrifice was begun from the moment of his incarnation, was continued all his life long, was perfected on the croſs and in the grave, and received its actual purifying efficacy in his reſurrection, as a ſacrifice fully offered, and accepted for the ends it was offered for: Tit. ii. 14. He ‘gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works.’ Rom. iv. 23. ‘Who was delivered for our offences, and was raiſed again for our juſtification.’ 1 Cor. vi. 11. ‘And ſuch were ſome of you: but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God.’ Hence we owe our ſanctification to the holineſs of his nature, and the righteouſneſs of his life, as well as to his death; the former being as eſſentially requiſite to make him an effectual ſacrifice for us, as the latter; ſince no ſacrifice could atone, but what was without natural and accidental blemiſh. But his blood is particularly named in the caſe,

1ſt, For that the life going away with the blood in all living creatures, and ſo in the man Chriſt, the ſhedding of his blood was the perfecting ſtroke in his ſacrificing himſelf for us: ſo that we are ſaid to be waſhed with his blood, as the priſoner is ſaid to be delivered by his cautioner's paying the utmoſt farthing of his debt. See Rom. i. 17. ‘For therein is the righteouſneſs of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The juſt ſhall live by faith.’ compared with Rom. iii. 25. ‘Whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs for remiſſion of ſins.’

2dly, For decency of expreſſion, the term *blood* being moſt agreeable to the term *waſhing*, which relates to ſome liquid. Agreeable hereto was it, that after Chriſt being born holy, had lived holy, and died on the croſs, his ſide was pierced, and there came forth blood and water fitted to waſh: the Holy Ghoſt thereby teaching, that the waſhing or ſanctifying of ſinners was to proceed from Chriſt, in his holy birth, life, and death; thence was the ſpring of purifying virtue from ſin.

3. As it is by applying of water to the unclean thing, that it is waſhed; ſo it is by applying to our ſouls, Chriſt ſacrificed for us, that we are ſanctified, and waſhed from ſin. A man may ſtand at a river ſide, bedaubed with mire and dirt, till he die; and yet be never a whit the cleaner of the river, if the water of it be not brought cloſe upon him: ſo Chriſt, in the purifying virtue of his blood, may be within reach of the ſinner's hand all his days, and yet he may die in his filth of ſin, and lie in it in hell for ever, if Chriſt and he never come cloſe together in a ſpiritual union. The blood of ſacrifices was firſt offered to God for atonement, and then it was ſprinkled on perſons or things for their purification: Heb. ix. 19. ‘For when Moſes had ſpoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and ſcarlet wool, and hyſſop, and ſprinkled both the book and all the people.’ compared with Exod. xxiv. 5.——8. ‘And Moſes ſent young men of the children of Iſrael which offered burnt-offerings, and ſacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the Lord. And Moſes took half of the blood, and put it in baſons; and half of the blood he ſprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they ſaid, All that the Lord hath ſaid, will we do, and be obedient. And Moſes took the blood, and ſprinkled it on the people, and ſaid, Behold, the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all theſe words.’ The offering of the blood of Chriſt to God is over, near ſeventeen hundred years ago: but the ſprinkling or application of it is ſtill going on: Heb. xii. 22. 24. ‘But ye are come——to Jeſus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of ſprinkling, that ſpeaketh better things than that of Abel.’ Where it is ſprinkled, they are cleanſed; where not, they lie ſtill in their filth, having no more

cleanſing from ſin by it, than if it had never been ſhed.

2. It is not every water that will waſh clean; but there is a cleanſing virtue in ſome water, that is not in every water. I am not to enquire into the cauſe of that difference; but into the cauſe of the cleanſing virtue of the blood of Chriſt, whereby we are waſhed from ſin that is not in any other thing, though men have multiplied things for that end. If we enquire into the ſpring of the cleanſing virtue that is in Chriſt ſacrificed for us, and in no other things, we find theſe two.

1ſt, There is a real and proper merit of ſinners ſanctification in him. By his ſacrifice of himſelf he has merited at the hand of God the ſanctification of us, and waſhing us from our ſin, Eph. v. 25, 26. 'Chriſt loved 'the church, and gave himſelf for it; that he might 'ſanctify and cleanſe it with the waſhing of water by 'the word.' Chriſt as really merited our perſonal holineſs, and every good work we do, at the hand of God, as he merited the pardon of atheiſm and blaſphemy to us; ſo abſurd is the merit of our works, Tit. ii. 14. 'He gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from 'all iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar people, 'zealous of good works.' 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. 'Ye know 'that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as 'ſilver and gold, from your vain converſation received 'by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious 'blood of Chriſt, as of a lamb without blemiſh and without ſpot.' Now, there is no ſuch merit in any thing elſe, that they ſhould waſh.

Hence Chriſt being applied to the ſoul, or his blood ſprinkled on it, has a looſing efficacy, that the filth of ſin is looſed from the ſoul it ſtuck cloſe to before; even as the payment of the ranſom applied to the captive, actually looſes the bond of his captivity; ſo as a juſt judge can no more ſuffer him to be a captive, a priſoner. I ſhewed before, that it is guilt that is that bond. Wherefore, for perſons to pretend part with Chriſt, while yet their filth of ſin ſticks as cloſe to them, and they to it, as ever, is to blaſpheme the juſtice of the Father, or the merit of the Son; as if either the one did receive the ranſom, and yet not ſet the captive free; or elſe the other's merit was defective, and therefore ineffectual.

2dly, There is a fulneſs of the Spirit of holineſs in him or his blood. Hence he is ſaid, Rev. iii. 1. to *have the ſeven Spirits of God.* Chriſt ſacrificed for us, is the receptacle of the Spirit of ſanctification, as the animal ſpirits are in the blood while freſh and warm, as Chriſt's blood always is; that is, Chriſt himſelf as ſacrificed, Heb. x. 20. And that ſpirit of ſanctification is not in other things, not in Popiſh penances, not in the legal performances of prayers, tears, confeſſions, reſolutions, *&c.* which many Proteſtants uſe for waſhing themſelves. All theſe in this caſe are but dead water, congealed blood without ſpirits, that defile, but cannot waſh.

Hence Chriſt being applied to, or his blood ſprinkled on a ſoul, has a cleanſing efficacy, removing the filth of ſin, and cleaning and brightening the ſoul in likeneſs to God, 2 Cor. iii. 18. 'But we all with open face, be'holding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, are chan'ged into the ſame image, from glory to glory, even as 'by the Spirit of the Lord.' Thus Chriſt ſpeaking of that application of himſelf to ſinners, as by eating and drinking, which are moſt cloſe even to the incorporating the meat and drink with the feeder. John vi. 53, 54. 'Then Jeſus ſaid unto the Jews, Verily verily I ſay un'to you, Except ye eat the fleſh of the Son of man, and 'drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoſo eateth 'my fleſh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, 'and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day;' gives this as the reaſon of the efficacy, verſe 63. 'It is the ſpirit that 'quickeneth, the fleſh profiteth nothing: the words 'that I ſpeak unto you, they are ſpirit, and they are life.' As filthy ſores are waſhed and cleanſed with ſpirituous liquors, filthy ſouls are waſhed and cleanſed with the blood of Chriſt, full of the Spirit of holineſs.

Wherefore, to pretend to part with Chriſt, and yet ſtill to live in your ſins, without repentance or reformation and amendment, is to blaſpheme either the blood of Chriſt, or his ſpirit; as if either there were no Spirit of holineſs in his blood, or elſe that that Spirit of holineſs hath no efficacy to purge away the filth of ſin, and make holy.

5. Waſhing off of filth and making clean, is according to the degree of the application of the water with its cleanſing virtue. It is a very ſlight ſpot that will be quite waſhed off at the very firſt bruſh. There is virtue enough in the river, at once to waſh clean a filthy object; but the waſher applies it but by degrees, ſo that it may be long ere it be got perfectly clean: ſo there is virtue enough in Chriſt to waſh all whom he waſhes at all, perfectly clean at once, but that virtue is applied but by degrees, 2 Cor. iii. 18. forecited. Prov. iv. 18. 'The 'path of the juſt is as the ſhining light, that ſhineth 'more and more unto the perfect day.'

There is a threefold waſhing of ſinners, according to a threefold application of Chriſt's blood to them.

1ſt, A begun waſhing by a begun application thereof. This is done in the work of converſion, Tit. iii. 5. it is called *the waſhing of regeneration.* Here the ſoul that before all along was lying in wickedneſs together with the unclean world, being taken out from among them by effectual calling, and united to Chriſt by faith, and ſo having part with him, is waſhed from his filthineſs, by an application of the blood of Chriſt, that never touched him before, but now ſtreams over him in union with Chriſt, Ezek. xvi. 8, 9. *Now when I paſſed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold thy time was the time of love, and I ſpread my ſkirt over thee, and covered thy nakedneſs; yea, I ſware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, ſaith the Lord God, and thou becameſt mine. Then waſhed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly waſhed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil.*

Concerning the waſhing, the effect of this application, obſerve,

(1.) It is a waſhing all over: a waſhing of every part, though not quite clean in any part, 2 Cor. v. 17. 'If any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature: old 'things are paſt away, behold all things are become 'new.' Therefore it is called a *new birth*, Tit. iii. 5. 'Not by works of righteouſneſs, which we have done, 'but according to his mercy he ſaved us, by the waſh'ing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt.' John iii. 5. 'Except a man be born of water, and of 'the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' We do not ſay a child is born, when his head, or feet, or an arm are born; but when the whole child is brought forth. Some ſhew a head, that, with notions of the principles of religion in it, and a tongue to talk of them, ſeems to be waſhed; others ſhew feet, that by going in the road of outward reformation, and ſome external duties, ſeem to be waſhed. But it is not *the waſhing of regeneration;* for it goes not all over them; they are new in ſome things, but they are juſt what they were in other things. Trace them to their walk in their employments and relations, to the entertainment given to the beloved luſt, to the inner man, and ſet of their heart with reſpect to the purity of the holy law; and they are juſt the ſame with *the world lying in wickedneſs.* That is an evidence, that their waſhing is with their own nitre and ſoap, not with the blood of Chriſt.

(2.) It is a waſhing that puts one in a ſtate of cleanneſs, bringing him out of a ſtate of filthineſs, John xiii. 10. 'He that is waſhed, needeth not, ſave to waſh his feet, 'but is clean every whit.' There is a difference between one lying in a mire, and another that has dirtied his feet; though both need waſhing, the latter needs but to waſh his feet. Such is the caſe of the unregenerate and regenerate, Cant. vi. 10. 'who is ſhe that look'eth forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as 'the ſun, and terrible as an army with banners.' When the dawning is come, it is true, it is not broad day light, but yet it is day, not night. The moon has her ſpots, yet ſhe is not filthy, but fair.

(3.) That ſtate of cleanneſs can never be loſt, John

xiii. 10. forecited. Many ſeem to be brought to a ſtate of cleanneſs, but at length they turn apoſtates: that ſays, they were never out of the ſtate of filthineſs, and the church of God, was but beguiled with them, when they took them for perſons in a ſtate of cleanneſs. They that are once waſhed, will never apoſtatize, nor go back again to wallow in the mire: 1 John ii. 19. *They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifeſt, that they were not all of us.*

2*dly*, A continued and progreſſive waſhing, by a continued progreſſive application of Chriſt's blood to the ſoul. This is done and carried on all along from the firſt converſion of a ſinner, untill his death. Therefore though the elders were about the throne in white, yet there was a ſea of glaſs before it, Rev. iv. 4. 6. And the fountain ſtands opened for the houſe of David, as well as for the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, Zech. xiii. 1.; for ſaints as well as for ſinners. They that deeming themſelves once waſhed, find no need of waſhing more, proclaim themſelves not waſhed by Chriſt, as they do who betake themſelves for it to another laver. They that are come to Chriſt for waſhing, are ſtill coming, 1 Pet. ii 4.

Two things make this continued waſhing neceſſary.

(1.) Continued imperfection in the waſhing of the ſoul during this life, Phil. iii. 12. Believers are in no moment of time perfectly clean; in their moſt ſhining moments they are ſtill but as the moon, not without their ſpots. So that they never want matter of exerciſe, in purging-work, that they may arrive at a perfect purity: 1 John iii. 3. 'Every man that hath this hope in 'him, purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure.'

(2.) New defilements contracted continually. Tho' they never loſe the ſtate of cleanneſs, yet they are always needing to waſh their feet: John xiii. 10. 'He 'that is waſhed, needeth not, ſave to waſh his feet, but 'is clean every whit.' An alluſion to the prieſts in the temple-ſervice. They are all prieſts to God, and ſo waſhed; but while they go about, ſuch is the defiling world they walk in, the remains of defilement in them, that in every thing they contract ſome ſpot; James iii. 2. 'For in many things we offend all.' Their heart and life have ſo many remaining ſeeds of corruption, that they never want occaſion to pluck up weeds.

Now this continued waſhing is by the continued application of Chriſt's blood, and no other way: 1 John i. 7. *The blood of Chriſt cleanſeth us from all ſin.* For,

[1.] This is the way the ſaints have looked for it; as David, Pſal. li. 2. 7. *Waſh me throughly from my iniquity, and cleanſe me from my ſin. Purge me with hyſſop and I ſhall be clean; waſh me, and I ſhall be whiter than ſnow.* As the lepers could, by no art of their own, be ſo purified as to be admitted to ſociety, but by the prieſts ſprinkling them; ſo ſinners, by no art or endeavours of their own, can be purified ſo as to be admitted to fellowſhip with God, but by the ſprinkling of the blood of Chriſt upon them. Therefore the ſea of glaſs, which is the blood of Chriſt, ſtands before the throne, that whoſoever would have communion with God, may waſh there, and ſo be fitted for it.

[2.] There is no merit of holineſs, nor fulneſs of the Spirit in any thing elſe. The doings and ſufferings of ſaints are as free of merit, as thoſe of ſinners, Luke xvii. 10. 'So likewiſe ye, when ye ſhall have done all 'thoſe things which are commanded you, ſay, We are 'unprofitable ſervants: we have done that which was 'our duty to do.' Neither is there any thing of the Spirit in them, but ſo far as the blood of Chriſt is ſprinkled on them, rendering them acceptable, Rev. vii. 14. But in the blood of Chriſt there is a never-failing merit, a conſtant fulneſs of the Spirit, to which the ſoul may have continual recourſe, as to a fountain never dry.

3*dly*, A perfect waſhing, by a full application of the blood of Chriſt. And this takes place at death, Heb. xii. 23.——*To the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect.* Then believers waſhed in converſion, and who have been all along waſhed in the blood of Chriſt, are by the ſame means made quite clean and without ſpot: Eph. v. 25, 26, 27. 'Chriſt loved the church, and gave himſelf for 'it: that he might ſanctify and cleanſe it with the waſhing of water by the word, that he might preſent it to 'himſelf a glorious church, not having ſpot or wrinkle, 'or any ſuch thing; but that it ſhould be holy, and 'without blemiſh.' This lies in two things.

(1.) The doing away the remains of ſin wholly. The reigning power of ſin being broken by the firſt application, it is gradually removed by further application, and quite carried off by the full application at death. Not the leaſt ſtain, nor mark of it, will then be left on the believing ſoul. But the filth of ſin now carried off in part from the whole man, will then be wholly carried off from every part.

(2.) The perfecting of the image of God. 1 John iii. 2. 'Beloved, now are we the ſons of God, and it 'doth not yet appear what we ſhall be: but we know, 'that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him: for 'we ſhall ſee him as he is.' The ſeveral lineaments of it are indeed drawn now upon the believer, but mixed with corruption in every part: but then it ſhall be without mixture, every part getting the finiſhing ſtroke in that Image, 1 Cor. xiii. 10. 'But when that which is 'perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be 'done away. So ſhall they ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament, and as the ſtars for ever, Dan. xii. 3. 'The righteous ſhall ſhine forth as the ſun, in the kingdom of their Father, Matth. xiii. 43.

Now, it is by a full application of Chriſt's blood, that is, by a full participation of Chriſt crucified in his purifying virtue, that this waſhing is made: Rev. vii. 14, 15. *Theſe are they which came out of great tribulation, and have waſhed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne, and ſerve him day and night in his temple: and he that ſitteth on the throne, ſhall dwell among them.* The cleanſing virtue going out from him to the ſoul in ſome meaſure now, will then go out in full meaſure, as when a ſluice is opened, and carries all away before it: 2 Cor. iii. 18. 'But we all with open face, beholding as in a glaſs, 'the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the 'Lord.' The ſoul putting off the body, unites more cloſely with Chriſt than ever, and ſo partakes of his merit, and fulneſs of Spirit, to a pitch of perfection: Eph. iv. 13. *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt.*

Secondly, Chriſt waſhed ſinners by his Spirit, Tit. iii. 5. 'Not by works of righteouſneſs, which we have done, 'but according to his mercy, he ſaved us by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt.' 2 Theſſ. ii. 13. 'God hath from the beginning choſen 'you to ſalvation, through ſanctification of the Spirit, 'and belief of the truth.' And the Spirit of Chriſt has that place in waſhing defiled ſouls, that the hand of the waſher hath in waſhing the defiled body of another. The hand being the inſtrument of action with men, the Spirit of Chriſt is held forth under that notion, the whole work of the application of Chriſt's redemption to us being done by him, Acts xi. 21. 'And the hand of the 'Lord was with them: and a great number believed, 'and turned unto the Lord.' Iſa. liii. 1. 'Who hath 'believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the 'Lord revealed?' Matth. xii. 28. 'But if I caſt out devils by the Spirit of God then the kingdom of God is 'come unto you.' Compared with Luke xi. 20. 'But 'if I with the finger of God, caſt out devils, no doubt 'the kingdom of God is come upon you.' So Chriſt waſheth ſinners with his blood, by his Spirit, John iii. 5. 'Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, 'he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' 1 John v. 8. 'And there are three that bear witneſs in earth, 'the ſpirit, and the water, and the blood; and theſe 'three agree in one.' This the apoſtle very plainly teacheth, 1 *Cor.* vi. 11. ‘And ſuch were ſome of you: but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God.’ So Chriſt's hand has never come on that ſoul for waſhing, which is deſtitute of the Spirit of Chriſt, Rom. viii. 9. ‘If any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his.’

Now, of the work of the Spirit of Chriſt in the waſhing of a ſinner, we may take a view in the following particulars.

1. The Spirit of Chriſt diſcovers to the ſinner his pollution and defilement of ſoul, John xvi. 8. ‘And when he is come, he will reprove the world of ſin, and of righteouſneſs, and of judgment.’ He brightens the glaſs of the holy commandments of the word, and he opens the ſinners eyes, and determines him to look into that glaſs: and ſo the ſinner getting a new ſight of the holineſs and purity of God, Hab. i. 13. gets a new ſight of himſelf, that he cries out, with the leper, *Unclean, unclean*: and ſays, with the church, Iſa. lxiv. 6. ‘We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteouſneſſes are as filthy rags.’ Then he ſees that loathſomeneſs in ſin that he ſaw not before; the loathſomeneſs of his nature, heart, and life; not excepting thoſe ſins he looked on formerly as beauty ſpots, glorying in them, Philip. iii. 19. And he is filled with ſhame and confuſion before the Lord; like thoſe, Jer. iii. 22. ‘Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.’ verſe 25. ‘We lie down in our ſhame, and our confuſion covereth us: for we have ſinned againſt the Lord our God, we and our fathers from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God.’ And if ye have no experience of this, ye have no part with Chriſt.

2. He diſcovers to the ſinner the laver wherein he may be waſhed from that ſpiritual pollution, the fountain wherein he may be purified, *viz.* the blood of Chriſt, or Chriſt himſelf as crucified and ſacrificed for us, 1 Cor. ii. 12. ‘Now we have received not the ſpirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Here is the only effectual mean for purification, the only true purgatory, Jeſus Chriſt in the purifying virtue of his blood, Heb. i. 3. And the Spirit points it out to the ſinner. This is called *revealing of the Son*, Gal. i. 16. in our catechiſm, ‘enlightening our minds in the *knowledge* of Chriſt.’ Concerning which ye may note,

1ſt, That it is natural to men under a ſenſe of their filthineſs, to look to and run to lavers of their own for waſhing themſelves, however ineffectual they are: Hoſ. v. 13. ‘When Ephraim ſaw his ſickneſs, and Judah ſaw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Aſſyrian, and ſent to king Jareb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound.’ Hence the firſt queſtion, *What ſhall we do to be ſaved?* They have neither eyes to ſee, nor hearts for the blood of Chriſt, as the alone mean of waſhing from ſin. The whole ceremonial law pointed the Iſraelites to Chriſt as the only remedy for ſoul-pollution, yet they are as great ſtrangers to it, as if they had never heard of it. Hence we have theſe queſtions, with the Lord's anſwer, Mic. vi. 6, 7, 8. ‘Wherewith ſhall I come before the Lord, and bow myſelf before the high God? ſhall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? will the Lord be pleaſed with thouſands of rams, or with ten thouſands of rivers of oil? ſhall I give my firſt-born for my tranſgreſſion, the fruit of my body for the ſin of my ſoul? He hath ſhewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do juſtly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.’

2dly, It is the work of the Spirit alone to diſcover it, ſo as to bring the unclean ſoul to it. As Hagar ſaw not the well, though it was near her, till the Lord opened her eyes; ſo the ſinner ſees not the opened fountain for ſin and uncleanneſs, till the Spirit enlighten the mind: John xvi. 14. ‘He ſhall glorify me: for he ſhall receive of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you.’ And he ſhews it effectually to the ſinner, together with the ineffectualneſs of all things elſe for that purpoſe. And,

(1.) The Spirit ſhews the ineffectualneſs of all other, in the glaſs of the law in its ſpirituality and extent. There the ſinner beholds all that he can do or ſuffer needs itſelf to be waſhed, being polluted and defiled, and ſo that it can defile him, but not waſh him. Hence ſays the church, Iſa. lxiv. 6. *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteouſneſſes are as filthy rags, and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*

(2.) In the glaſs of the promiſe of the goſpel, he ſhews the true laver, Chriſt Jeſus: John iii. 16. ‘For God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.’ The Spirit brings home the promiſe of the goſpel, and demonſtrates it to the ſinner, 1 Cor. ii. 4. And he demonſtrates,

[1.] The infallible efficacy of it to cleanſe from ſin: 1 Theſſ. i. 5. ‘For our goſpel came not unto you in word only, but alſo in power, and in the Holy Ghoſt, and in much aſſurance.’ Notwithſtanding of all that the word ſaith of the efficacy of Chriſt's blood to waſh from ſin, that myſtery is but folly to carnal men, till the demonſtration of the Spirit come: 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. ‘But we preach Chriſt crucified, unto the Jews a ſtumbling block, and unto the Greeks fooliſhneſs; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Chriſt the power of God, and the wiſdom of God.’ Then the ſoul ſays, as Matth. ix. 21. ‘If I may but touch his garment, I ſhall be whole.’

[2.] The ſinner's acceſs to it in particular; that the fountain is not only open, but open for him, 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5. If this be not, the ſinner can never apply it to himſelf by faith. And this the Spirit doth by opening the general warrant of the word, and applying it particularly to the ſinner.

3. He brings the ſinner into the laver, puts him into the water, as it were. We are naturally in the caſe of that man at the pool, who ſaid, John v. 7. ‘I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool.’ Though the laver of Chriſt's blood be near by us, we cannot put in ourſelves for waſhing. Now, the Spirit does the ſinner this good office: and he does it by uniting him to Chriſt, whereby the unclean ſoul is plunged into the fountain opened for ſin: 1 Cor. xii. 13. ‘For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body: and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.’ And the Spirit brings the ſinner into the laver,

1ſt, Paſſively, entering into the dead and defiled ſoul, whereby the ſoul is quickened, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. ‘And I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes, and ye ſhall keep my judgments, and do them.’ Rom. viii. 9. ‘But ye are not in the fleſh, but in the Spirit, if ſo be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his.’ Chriſt communicates the Spirit, which is his own Spirit dwelling in him, to the dead and defiled ſoul; and ſo the ſoul is paſſively united to Chriſt, and quickened. Thus Chriſt draws the ſinner to him for waſhing by the Spirit.

2dly, Actively, working faith in the ſinner, whereby he comes to Chriſt, and unites with him: Col. ii. 12. ‘Buried with him in baptiſm, wherein alſo you are riſen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raiſed him from the dead.’ compared with 2 Cor. iv. 13. ‘We having the ſame ſpirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I ſpoken: we alſo believe, and therefore ſpeak.’ Eph. iii. 17. ‘That Chriſt may dwell in your hearts by faith.’ The ſoul being drawn, runs; being united to Chriſt, unites with him; being put into the opened fountain, dips himſelf over head and ears in it, Rom. iii. 25. This actual believing the Spirit produces in the ſinner immediately out of the ſpiritual life given by the communication of himſelf to him: Philip. ii. 13. ‘For it is God ‘which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleaſure.’ John v. 25. ‘Verily, verily I ſay unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear ſhall live.’ compared with chap. i. 12, 13. ‘But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the ſons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of God.’

Now, the unclean ſinner thus brought to Chriſt, and united to him, is in the fountain, and cannot miſs to be waſhed from his ſins with the blood of Chriſt; and the only hand that brings him there, is the Spirit of Chriſt. Now, he has part with Chriſt, communion neceſſarily following upon the union.

4. *laſtly*, The Spirit waſheth the unclean ſoul in the laver, applying Chriſt to it in the purifying virtue of his blood; as one waſheth an unclean perſon in water, applying the water to him: 1 Pet. i. 2. ‘Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through ſanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt.’ And according to the degree of that application of Chriſt to the ſinner, in the purifying virtue of his blood, made by the Spirit, ſuch is the degree of the ſanctification or waſhing of the ſinner. For underſtanding of this myſtery, conſider,

1ſt, The ſoul being united to Chriſt, is clothed with his merit, as for juſtification, ſo for ſanctification alſo: Rev. iii. 18. ‘I counſel thee to buy of me white raiment that thou mayeſt be clothed, and that the ſhame of thy nakedneſs do not appear.’ Sanctification is a great privilege, and coſtly, bought with the Redeemer's blood: 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. ‘Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as ſilver and gold, from your vain converſation received from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Chriſt, as of a lamb without blemiſh and without ſpot.’ Tit. ii. 14. ‘Who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works.’ And the merit or righteouſneſs of Chriſt being on a man, by union with Chriſt, is the ground in law for his partaking of the benefit of ſanctification, as a benefit purchaſed for him: even as the guilt of Adam's firſt ſin on us, is the ground in law for God's denying us the ſanctification of our nature in our birth, upon which the corruption of nature is conveyed to us from Adam.

2dly, Sinners united to Jeſus Chriſt, have communion with him in his death and reſurrection; *i. e.* they have a common intereſt with him therein, they are in law-reckoning their death and reſurrection too: Col. ii. 12. ‘Buried with him in baptiſm, wherein alſo you are riſen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raiſed him from the dead.’ The reaſon is, becauſe Chriſt died and roſe again as a public perſon, their head, in their name: Rom. vi. 4. ‘Therefore we are buried with him by baptiſm into death: that like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life.’ And this communion with Chriſt in his death and reſurrection, is the ſpring of their ſanctification; it is that which ſets all the wheels in motion, that concur to the waſhing them from their ſins: Rom. vi. 3.——6. *Know ye not, that ſo many of us as were baptized into Jeſus Chriſt, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptiſm into death: that like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeneſs of his death; we ſhall be alſo in the likeneſs of his reſurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of ſin might be deſtroyed, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve ſin.*

3dly, Chriſt dying put off from himſelf the whole body of all our ſins, which before were upon him by imputation; and roſe, without ſin imputed, as he was ever without ſin inherent: Rom. vi. 10. *For in that he died, he died to ſin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth to God.* For he by his death having fully ſatisfied for ſins, the guilt of them whereby they clave to him, was diſſolved of courſe, and he ſhook them off as Paul did the viper into the fire, having no more power to cleave to him or hurt him. Which death and reſurrection being of a publick perſon, their head, hath, by the merit thereof, a power of conforming all his members thereto, in dying to ſin, and riſing to newneſs of life, even as there was a contrary power in Adam's ſin and death: Phil. iii. 10. ‘That I may know him, and the power of his reſurrection, and the fellowſhip of his ſufferings, being made conformable unto his death.’ compare Rom. vi. 5, 6.

4thly, Sinners having communion with Chriſt in his death and reſurrection, are in him legally dead to ſin, freed from it in point of right, and alive ſpiritually to God: Rom. vi. 10, 11. ‘For in that he died, he died to ſin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth to God. Likewiſe reckon ye alſo yourſelves dead indeed to ſin, but alive unto God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.’ The body of the ſins of the fleſh is legally put off them, and they are clean; even as the priſoner to whom is legally applied the paying of the debt by the cautioner, is, in the moment of that application, legally free, and no more a priſoner in point of right; though it may be ſome time ere he be brought freely out of the dungeon, and his priſon garments and fetters be taken off.

5thly, Upon this ground the Spirit applies Chriſt's death and reſurrection really to them, conforming them in their own perſons thereto: even as when the judge hath legally applied the payment of the ranſom to the captive, by ſuſtaining it as paid for him; a meſſenger applies it really by opening the priſon-doors, knocking off the chains, and bringing him out: Gal. vi. 14. ‘But God forbid that I ſhould glory, ſave in the croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.’ Phil. iii. 10. ‘That I may know him, and the power of his reſurrection, and the fellowſhip of his ſufferings, being made conformable unto his death.’ compared with 1 Pet. i. 2. ‘Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through ſanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt.’ So that by the Spirit they are changed into the image of Chriſt dead and riſen again: 2 Cor. iii. 18. *But we all with open face, beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* Rom. vi. 5. ‘For if we have been planted together in the likeneſs of his death; we ſhall be alſo in the likeneſs of his reſurrection.’

6thly, The Spirit applies Chriſt's blood, death, and reſurrection, to ſinners, really, by conveying from Chriſt the head, unto them as his members, a certain meaſure and degree of that all fulneſs of grace that is lodged in him, which he died to purchaſe, and roſe again to apply: Col. i. 19. ‘For it pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell.’ John i. 16. ‘And of his fulneſs have all we received, and grace for grace.’ compared with John xvi. 14, 15. ‘He ſhall glorify me: for he ſhall receive of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you. All things that the Father hath, are mine: therefore ſaid I, that he ſhall take of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you.’ All the grace that is in the ſaints in heaven or earth, or ever ſhall be, comes from the fulneſs of grace in the man Chriſt; as all the light of the world from the ſun: and the Spirit communicates it to them from him. Now, all graces are in Chriſt, and the Spirit communicates to his members of them all, John. i. 16.

7thly, Thus the blood of Chriſt applied by the Spirit penetrates or ſeeks in to the unclean ſoul, to the waſhing it from its filthineſs: Ezek. xxxvi. 25. ‘I will ſprinkle clean water upon you, and ye ſhall be clean: from all your filthineſs, from all your idols will I cleanſe you.’ For wherever that grace comes, it muſt needs have a twofold effect; (1.) To remove ſin according to its meaſure, and ſo to carry off ſpiritual filthineſs. Where humility comes, pride goes; where heavenlineſs of mind takes place, there ſenſuality and worldlineſs are diſlodged; and ſo of other graces. For grace and ſin are two contraries; whereof as the one gains, the other muſt needs loſe. (2.) To beautify and brighten the ſoul. Hence ſhe is, like ‘the King's daughter, all glorious ‘within; her cloathing is of wrought gold,’ Pſal. xlv. 13. For the more grace one has, the more he is like God. And this grace is immediately derived to us from Chriſt; who is *the image of the inviſible God*, and therefore *fairer than the children of men*, Pſal. xlv. 2.; that we being thereby rendered like Chriſt, may be rendered like God, in his imitable perfections.

8thly, This communication of grace by the Spirit, from Chriſt, to us being united to Chriſt, is the Spirit's applying Chriſt's blood to us; inaſmuch as the blood of Chriſt is as it were the vehicle of his grace, as the water is of the ſoap, that cleanſing thing, Mal. iii. 2. Chriſt is like *fuller's ſoap*. In this view is that prayer for ſanctification, Pſal. li. 2. ‘Waſh me thoroughly from ‘mine iniquity, and cleanſe me from my ſin.’ *Waſh me*, namely, as a fuller doth. In vain is the ſoap uſed without the water for waſhing; and in vain will we look for ſanctification by the grace of Chriſt, without the merit of his blood on us. It is in the ſtream of his blood going over our ſouls, that his grace is brought into and left in them, to the beautifying them in holineſs. By the the merit of it, it hath a double effect. One relative, and immediate, to our juſtification. Hence the apoſtle, Heb. xii. 24. ſpeaks of ‘coming to Jeſus the Mediator ‘of the new covenant, and to the blood of ſprinkling, ‘that ſpeaketh better things than that of Abel.’ Another effect it has, real, and mediate, to our ſanctification. Hence the apoſtle deſcribes Chriſtians as, 1 Pet. i. 2. ‘elect according to the foreknowledge of God the ‘Father, through ſanctification of the Spirit unto obe‘dience, and ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt.’ And this is effected through the grace of Chriſt that it brings down with it. It is the bruiſing of the bread-corn that fits it to be bread; the dying of the corn of wheat that brings forth more wheat; ſo it is the crucifying of Chriſt that fitted him to be a fountain of grace, whereof ſinners might drink; it is the blood or death of Chriſt that makes *Chriſtians*, *i. e.* men after his image, John xii. 24. Thus the Spirit's conveying of grace from Chriſt to us, is his ſprinkling us with the blood of Chriſt for our ſanctification, 1 Pet. i. 2. to be diſtinguiſhed, though not divided, from the ſprinkling for our juſtification, Heb. xii. 24.

Laſtly, According to the meaſure of the former, ſprinkling or application of the blood of Chriſt, ſo is the meaſure of our ſanctification, purification, and cleanſing from ſin. The other having only a relative and immediate effect, is not capable of degrees; ſo it is alike in all believers. But this having a real and mediate effect through the grace conveyed in it, is made in very different degrees and meaſures, as a ſpring or fountain running into a veſſel. And there are three degrees of this application of Chriſt's blood by the Spirit, as before obſerved.

1*ſt*, A begun application of it, in the ſoul's union with Chriſt at firſt in effectual calling. That moment the ſinner becomes a member of Chriſt, the Spirit begins the application of Chriſt's blood to him for his ſanctification, conveying real inherent grace to him from Chriſt his head, 2 Theſſ. ii. 13. compared with John xvi. 14. and i. 16. The ſluice of grace in Chriſt that was quite ſtopt before as to the ſinner, is then opened in a meaſure to run over him for his waſhing from ſin. And as to this meaſure,

1. It is ſome meaſure of all ſaving grace that is then communicated to the believer from Chriſt, his head, by the Spirit, John i. 16. ‘And of his fulneſs have all we ‘received, and grace for grace.’ As the wax receives every point in the ſeal, ſo the believer receives every grace in the man Chriſt. Hence the apoſtle, Eph. i. 13. ſpeaks of believers being *ſealed with the holy Spirit of promiſe*. As all ſaving graces are lodged in Chriſt without meaſure, John iii. 34. ſo a ſeed of them all is communicated to his members, 1 John iii. 9. of faith, love, repentance, or a ſet of heart turning God-ward, humility, meekneſs, &c. And though ſome graces may be more apparent and topping in a believer, than others; yet he wants none of them altogether, Heb. viii. 10. The effect of this is the habitual ſanctification of the believer, whereby the dominion of ſin is broken; the pollution and defilement by ſin is begun to be removed, and the ſoul is made habitually holy. More particularly, hereby,

1*ſt*, The believer's nature is renewed, Eph. iv. 23. He is renewed in the whole man, perſon, ſoul and body, 1 Theſſ. v. 23. There are quite new qualities derived from Chriſt, into his mind, will, and affections; habits of grace infuſed into them by the Spirit of Chriſt, which are the immediate principles of gracious actings, diſtinct from the new vital powers that go before faith. The body is renewed in communion with the renewed ſoul. Hence the apoſtle, Rom. vi. 13. ‘Neither yield ‘your members as inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs unto ‘ſin; but yield yourſelves to God, as thoſe that are a‘live from the dead; and your members inſtruments ‘of righteouſneſs unto God.’ So ſanctification is another thing than the bare amending of our lives; and holineſs another thing than moral virtue, which can never give us this new nature.

2dly, He becomes a new creature, 2 Cor. v. 17. not only a ſpiritually living creature, as in the quickening of the dead ſoul, John v. 27. before faith in effectual calling, called the firſt regeneration, John i. 12, 13. anſwering to the conception in natural generation; but a new creature in all its parts, by the work of ſanctification; a ſecond regeneration, following after faith, and anſwering to the forming of the conception into the diſtinct members in the womb, however ſmall, Tit. iii. 5. Hence there is not only a new head, feet, or life, in the caſe; but a new man, where all ſaving graces concur, as all the ſeveral members in a human body.

3dly, He is made over again in the image of God, bearing his image as a child of the father, Col. iii. 10. And this comes to paſs, in that the new creature being entirely ſprung of Chriſt, being made by receiving from him grace for grace in him, muſt needs be his image, Gal. iv. 19. And he is the image of God; therefore it muſt be the image of God too. Thus Eve was made after God's image, but mediately, being made after Adam's image, who was made immediately after God's, Gen. ii. 18. compared with 1 Cor. xi. 7, 8.

4thly, He becomes one ſpirit with Chriſt, which is the oneneſs with Chriſt that is the reſult of our uniting with him, 1 Cor. vi. 17. *He that is joined to the Lord, is one Spirit.* The Spirit is the principal, faith the inſtrumental cauſe; joining or uniting us to Chriſt; this is it whereby Chriſt and the believer formally coaleſce or go together into one ſpirit, i. e. one ſpiritual nature, Heb. ii. 11. even as Eve was one fleſh with Adam, being made of him, of his fleſh and bones; to which the apoſtle alludes, Eph. v. 30. *For we are members of his body, of his fleſh, and of his bones.* Suppoſe a tree had a virtue of changing the graft into its own nature, as Chriſt has; the gardiner ingrafts, the graff by his art unites with the ſtock; then the ſtock conveys of its juice into the graff, whereby the nature of the graff is changed; here is the oneneſs ariſing from the uniting, they are one tree, of one nature. So the Spirit puts the ſoul to Chriſt, by faith it unites cloſe with him; then Chriſt by his Spirit conveys of his graces to the ſoul, which change its nature into his own, and ſo they go into one ſpiritual or divine nature, partaking of it with him, and that from him. So they are his ſeed, Iſ. liii. 10.

Laſtly, He is put in a capacity for all acts of holy obedience, whether doing or ſuffering, Heb. viii. 10. the ſeed of the ſeveral ſaving graces derived from Chriſt, and implanted in him, tending of their own nature to ſpring according to their ſeveral kinds. If the ſeed of any grace were wanting in him, he would be in no capacity for acting that grace wanting. Likeas a dead man, who is not only quickened by a miracle, but is riſen and come out of the grave, is in a diſpoſition for the common actions of life, ſo in this caſe of ſanctification, the ſoul is not only quickened, as it is in effectual calling, but is in the neweſt capacity to walk what way the Lord calls, Rom. vi. 4. ‘Therefore we are buried with him by baptiſm unto death, that like as Chriſt was raiſed from the dead by the glory of the Father, even ſo we likewiſe ſhould walk in newneſs of life.’ In effectual calling, Chriſt ſays to the ſinner, Ariſe; in ſanctification he ſays, Looſe him, and let him go.

2. But it is not a full meaſure of any grace that is communicated from Chriſt by his Spirit to the believer: ‘For we know but in part,’ 1 Cor. xiii. 9. And ſays the apoſtle, Rom. vii. 23. ‘I ſee another law in my members warring againſt the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of ſin in my members.’ The believer has derived to him from Chriſt, the graces of faith, love, &c. but none of them in perfection: even as when the child is perfectly formed in the womb, there is head, eyes, &c. but none of them come to perfection. Now, ſo far as they go, they remove ſin with its pollution off the ſoul; but they cannot fill up the room in any part; therefore there are remains of corruption in every part, will, and affections, and the body in communion with the corrupt part.

Now, the conſequent of this is, an imperfection of ſanctification; the believer is ſanctified, but not perfectly ſanctified. More particularly, hence,

1ſt, There are two contrary principles in believers; fleſh and Spirit, the new and old man, the new nature derived to them from the *Second Adam*, the old nature from the *firſt Adam*: the one the old inhabitant, the other the new incomer upon it; like the houſe of Saul, and the houſe of David, in Iſrael. Hence believers are a myſtery to the world, yea to themſelves, Cant. vi. 13. ‘Return, return, O Shulamite, return, return, that we may look upon thee; what will ye ſee in the Shulamite? as it were the company of two armies.’ Rom. vii. 16. ‘If then I do that which I would not, I conſent unto the law, that it is good.’

2dly, There is a continual combat in them, between theſe two contrary principles, being together ſide for ſide as it were, in every part, Gal. v. 17. ‘The fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the fleſh: and theſe are contrary the one to the other; ſo that ye cannot do the things that ye would.’ Thus the believer is like Rebekah, *the children ſtruggling together within her*, and who was told by the Lord, upon her inquiring into the affair, that *two nations* were in her *womb, and two manner of people ſhould be ſeparated from* her *bowels*. The two armies war in the Shulamite. So that the believer's heart is often like a field of battle, where there is much confuſion and ſtruggle. There is ſomething like this found ſometimes in the unregenerate; but in them the ſtruggle is between the fleſh in one part luſting, and in another fearing, 2 Pet. ii. 15. In the ſaints it is between the fleſh and the ſpirit in one and the ſame part, receiving and refuſing the ſame ſpiritual truth or falſehood, willing and nilling the ſame good or evil, of its own proper motion, Rom. vii. 15.

3dly, Neither their good nor ill actions are carried to perfection. For the two contrary principles being thus yoked, neither of them get full ſwing. When grace prevails to carry the good point, corruption clogs it in ſome meaſure, and when corruption prevails, grace clogs it in ſome meaſure; Cant. iv. 2. ‘Thy teeth are like a flock of ſheep that are even ſhorn, which come up from the waſhing; whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them.’ Saints in heaven in good, and unregenerate men in evil, are like ſtrong men travelling in a calm day; ſaints on earth, in good or ill, are like men travelling with a ſtrong wind blowing in their face, that cannot make the way they otherwiſe would.

3. Howbeit, it is a predominant meaſure of grace that is conveyed by the Spirit from Chriſt to the ſoul: Rom. vi. 14. ‘For ſin ſhall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.’ Grace is put in the heart to rule, though in midſt of its enemies, which makes it difficult to maintain its ſuperiority. Not that it is predominant in every particular, event, and encounter: experience teſtifies the contrary. Rom. vii. 23. ‘I ſee another law in my members, warring againſt the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of ſin in my members.’ But it is fundamentally and habitually predominant; that is, it is more firmly rooted as an immortal ſeed againſt a mortal one, and generally ſpeaking it prevails. Hence,

1ſt, The dominion and reigning power of ſin is broken. It is turned off the throne it had before, and is put under the check of a ſuperior principle. 1 John iii. 9. ‘Whoſoever is born of God, doth not commit ſin; for his ſeed remaineth in him; and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God.’ Thus Chriſt delivers the ſoul from that enemy, to ſerve him. Hence ſays the prophet, Iſ. ix. 7. ‘Thou haſt broken the yoke of his burden, and the ſtaff of his ſhoulder, the rod of his oppreſſor, as in the day of Midian.’ Indwelling it may be for a time, and breed much diſturbance in the houſe: but it is no more maſter of the houſe. This was typified by the remains of the Canaanites, in the land, which Iſrael could not drive out, but yet brought them under tribute, Judg. i. 9. &c.

2dly, It ſhall be quite expelled at length, Rom. xvi. 23 ‘The God of peace ſhall bruiſe Satan under your feet ſhortly.’ Whatever particular battles it wins, the war ſhall end in its ruin, 1 John v. 4. ‘Whatſoever is born of God overcometh the world.’ When the true Iſraelite comes to the red ſea of death, theſe Egyptians ſhall be ſwallowed up there, and he ſhall ſee them all dead on the ſhore. Sin is crucified by the incoming of grace, and though the thief being on the croſs may rage and blaſpheme, yet ſhall he never come down till he breathe out his laſt.

2DLY, There is a continued application of the blood of Chriſt made to the believer by the Spirit, during his after continuing in the world. For the ſoul once united to Chriſt, his Spirit dwells in it ever after, never quits his dwelling. Hence Chriſt ſaid to his diſciples, John xiv. 16, 17. ‘I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, becauſe it ſeeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and ſhall be in you.’ And the Spirit continues that application to it from time to time till death, conveying freſh ſupplies of grace to it from Chriſt the head. Hence the grace of Chriſt conveyed to believers is held forth under the notion of a ſpring-well, John iv. 14. ‘But whoſoever drinketh of the water that I ſhall give him, ſhall never thirſt: but the water that I ſhall give him, ſhall be in him a well of water ſpringing up into everlaſting life;’ which is ſtill affording new water. The fulneſs of grace in Chriſt is the ſpring-head, Col. ii. 19. The receivers into which it runs, are believers, his members, that receives ſupplies of grace from him, as the branches ſupplies of juice from the ſtock, John xv. 5. ‘I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the ſame bringeth forth much fruit.’ And the conveyer of theſe ſupplies from the head to the members, Philip. i. 11, 18. is the Spirit. For clearing of this purpoſe, conſider,

1. Though one is renewed, and has the ſeed of all grace planted in him, in the begun application iſſuing in habitual ſanctification; yet he is not able of himſelf to exerciſe one grace, to waſh off one remaining ſpot, or add to himſelf one ſtroke of purity: but thereto is neceſſary a new ſupply by the Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 4, 5. Even of our gracious ſelves we can do nothing; can bring forth no fruit of grace, John xv. 5. even when furniſhed with gracious qualities. This is not ſo very ſtrange, if we conſider, that though we have the power of natural motion, yet we cannot move a finger without a common providential influence of the Spirit, Acts xvii. 28. ‘For in him we live, and move, and have our being.’ Tho' freſh ſeed be caſt into the earth, if the influence of the ſun and rain is with-held, it ſprings not up.

2. Hence every gracious act of ours is a fruit of the

Spirit produced by him in us, through theſe ſupplies of grace; as the ſpringing of the ſeed is by the warmth and moiſture it gets from the heavens, Gal. v. 22, 23. Hence the *Spirit* is ſaid to *luſt againſt the fleſh*, Gal. v. 17. as producing theſe luſtings in us; even as he is ſaid to *groan*, Rom. viii. 26. So every act of mortification is by the Spirit, Rom. viii. 13. 'If ye through the 'Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live.' And ſo alſo is every act of obedience, Phil. ii. 13. *For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleaſure.* So that take away the Spirit, and ye take away all true holineſs.

3. Theſe ſupplies of grace are given in ſuch a meaſure only, in the continued application, as in the begun application. There is ſome meaſure of every grace ſupplied, Col. ii. 19. Hence, (Eph. v. 9.) 'the fruit of the 'Spirit is in all goodneſs, and righteouſneſs, and truth.' But there is not a full meaſure of any grace: 1 Cor. xiii. 9. 'For we know *but* in part.' Yet there is a predominant meaſure, 2 Cor. xii. 9. Hence the imperfection of actual ſanctification; there are ſtill ſome ſpots to waſh off while here. Waſhing of foul cloaths will take time; there is much work for the hands there. But the waſhing of foul ſouls ordinarily takes more than the longeſt work of that kind. The Spirit could waſh us perfectly clean in an inſtant, by a full application of the blood; but it was otherwiſe ordered. The thief on the croſs was waſhed clean in a moment: but ordinarily the waſhing is gradual.

4. *laſtly*, Theſe continued ſupplies of grace continue the waſhing of the ſoul; inaſmuch as thereby,

1ſt, Inherent grace is preſerved, that it die not out, amidſt ſo many ſnares and temptations. It is but a created quality, and of itſelf would wither away and die out; and ſo leave the ſoul overwhelmed anew with the filth of ſin, if it were not fed. Hence the Lord ſays, If. xxvii. 3. 'I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every 'moment; leſt any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.' John xv. 5, 6. 'I am the vine, ye are the branches: 'He that abideth in me, and I in him, the ſame bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. 'If a man abide not in me, he is caſt forth as a branch, 'and is withered; and men gather them, and caſt them 'into the fire, and they are burned.' But the continued ſupplies from Chriſt by the Spirit, render it an abiding immortal ſeed, 1 Cor. i. 8, 9. See John xiv. 19.

2dly, Inherent grace is excited, that it lie not idle, Cant. v. 4. Sometimes it lies like fire under the aſhes; new ſupplies coming in by the Spirit, it is ſtirred up, and caſts abroad its light on the ſoul. Hence the Spirit is compared to the wind, Cant. iv. 16. Being excited to action, it removes ſin, as the ſpring works out mud.

3dly, It is increaſed and ſtrengthened, that it may act more vigorouſly, towards the expulſion of its enemy, Col. i. 10. As an addition of ſoap makes the waſhing go on more thoroughly, ſo the freſh ſupplies of grace from Chriſt carry on the waſhing of the ſoul, cauſing the ſtream run higher to the carrying off more of the filth of ſin, and beautifying the ſoul more.

3DLY, There is a full application of Chriſt's blood made to the ſoul at death. That moment the ſoul and body are ſeparated, the Spirit brings in a full ſtream of grace from Chriſt into the ſoul, Eph. iii. 19. The communication of grace which was before in part, is then made perfect. For clearing of this purpoſe, note, that,

1. The perfection of grace taking place in the ſouls of believers at death, comes from the ſame ſpring as at converſion, and after, till death. It is all communicated to them from Chriſt their head, with this difference only, that the ſtream of it that ran ſmall and ſcanty before, is then made to run full, as when a ſluice is fully opened. As, out of his fulneſs, they got grace for grace in Chriſt, in ſome meaſure, before; ſo then out of the ſame fulneſs, they get a fulneſs of grace for grace in him. For they grow to their perfection in him, as members of him, and therefore by communication from him, Eph. v. 13. The new creature is both formed and perfected the ſame way.

2. It is the ſame Spirit who conveys the perfection of grace from Chriſt to believers at death, that conveyed the firſt grace, and the ſupplies thereof; the ſame Spirit who forms, and nouriſhes the new creature, in the time of this life, brings it to its perfection and full growth at death, Phil. i. 6. Pſal. cxxxviii. 8. And as to the meaſure he then communicates,

1ſt, It is a full meaſure, ſuch as wholly renews them in every part, perfecting the image of Chriſt, and ſo of God, on them, and utterly aboliſhing all remains of ſin in them, 2 Cor. iv. 16. Thus they are waſhed perfectly clean, no ſpot is left in them, all being carried off by the full flood of grace conveyed from Chriſt to them, thus they are enabled to ſerve the Lord in perfection for ever.

2dly, Yet is it not ſuch a meaſure, as that they never need more; no, they will always be kept full, by the Spirit's communicating eternally to them full ſupplies of grace from Chriſt their head, Rev. vii. 17. 'For the 'Lamb which is in the midſt of the throne ſhall feed 'them, and ſhall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God ſhall wipe away all tears from their 'eyes.' John xvi. 14. 'He ſhall glorify me; for he 'ſhall receive of mine and ſhall ſhew it unto you.' There will be nothing any more to ſtop or retard the flowing of grace from Chriſt into them; but the fountain will empty of its fulneſs into them without interruption. That there ſhall be ſuch an eternal communication to them from Chriſt by the Spirit, is evident, in that they continue for ever members of Chriſt; and members cannot act but by continued communications of influences from their head, John xiv. 16, 17. *And I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, becauſe it ſeeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and ſhall be in you.* xv. 4, 5. 'Abide 'in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit 'of itſelf, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, 'except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the 'branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the 'ſame bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye 'can do nothing.'

From what is ſaid on this head, we may infer,

1. They are not waſhed from their filthineſs, that have never had a diſcovery of the filth of ſin made to them by the Spirit. Men may get a ſight of the guilt of ſin, that will fill them with fear and terror; that yet get no kindly ſight of the filth of ſin, filling them with ſhame and ſelf loathing before the Lord. But without this laſt, there is no ſanctification: Ezek. xxxvi. 31. *Then ſhall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and ſhall loath yourſelves in your own ſight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations.* Therefore never think ye have ſeen ſin aright, till ye ſee it in the moſt monſtrous filthineſs of it, as oppoſite to the holineſs of God: it is that only will turn one's ſtomach on it, and cauſe them to vomit it up by true repentance.

2. The filthineſs of the ſoul by ſin, is never duly ſeen, till it appear ſo ingrained as nothing but the blood of Chriſt can waſh it off. They have but ſlight thoughts of the filth of ſin, that think it can be carried off by prayers, confeſſions, tears, and outward reformation; therefore the Spirit carries the elect beyond all theſe to the laver of Chriſt's blood. Hence David prayed, Pſal. li. 2. 'Waſh me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanſe 'me from my ſin.' There only is their merit and efficacy ſufficient to waſh out the pollution.

2. Whoſoever truly come to Chriſt by faith, they come to him for ſanctification, as well as juſtification, that they may be waſhed from the filth of ſin by him, as well as freed from the guilt of ſin through him. Hence faith is a *coming to the waters*, and that to be waſhed in them, Zech xiii. 1. It is but falſe faith that looks to Chriſt for freedom from guilt and the wrath of God, and not for conformity to God in holineſs.

For to ſtand off from Chriſt, and uniting with him by believing on him, till one has made himſelf clean and fit for Chriſt, is the work of a falſe heart, marring the ſoul's waſhing; not the work of the Spirit, carrying on the waſhing of the ſoul. For it is the work of the Spirit to put the unclean ſoul in the laver, uniting it to Chriſt, that it may be made clean. Therefore let no pollution of ſin keep you back from Chriſt; but let the conſideration of it drive you forward to him; and the greater it is, ye have the more need to make ſpeed, and unite more cloſely with Chriſt.

5. Whoſoever are united to Chriſt by the Spirit, are ſanctified perſons, truly regenerate, new creatures: 2 Cor. v. 17. 'If any man be in Chriſt he is a new creature: 'old things are paſt away; behold, all things are become 'new.' In vain do men pretend to be members of Chriſt, while they remain unſanctified in their nature and life: Can one be united to Chriſt in whom the fulneſs of grace is lodged, and yet there be no communication of grace from him to them? or can there be ſuch a communication, and yet they not be renewed after his image? and if a new nature, muſt there not be a new life?

6. *laſtly*, True Chriſtianity is in its own nature a progreſſive thing, going towards perfection. Hence ſays the apoſtle, Phil. iii. 12. 'Not as though I had already at-'tained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, 'if that I may apprehend that for which alſo I am appre-'hended of Chriſt Jeſus.' It is a moſt diſmal ſign, where a perſon having, as he thinks, embraced Chriſt for ſalvation, and ſo ſecured himſelf for eternity, is no further careful to advance in practical religion, but continues eaſy, being at a ſtand; ſeeing 'the path of the juſt is as the 'ſhining light that ſhineth more and more unto the per-'fect day,' Prov. iv. 18. It is true, a real believer may not only be at a ſtand for a while, but may be going back: but it is of the nature of grace, as of a ſeed, or the morning light, to go forward and increaſe, till it come to perfection, John iv. 14. This is the reſult of the continued application of the blood of Chriſt to the believer by the Spirit. Therefore obſerve whether ye grow or not.

Thirdly, Chriſt waſheth ſinners through faith. Hence the apoſtle ſpeaks of 'purifying the heart by faith;' and of being 'ſent to open mens eyes, and to turn them from 'darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto 'God, that they may receive forgiveneſs of ſins, and in-'heritance among them which are ſanctified by faith that 'is in Chriſt.' And faith has that place in the waſhing of defiled ſouls, that the hand of the party waſhed hath in the waſhing of himſelf, under the management of the principal waſher. For faith is the hand of the ſoul, John i. 12. And in the ſpiritual waſhing it is active. The ſoul being firſt paſſively waſhed by the Spirit, waſheth itſelf by faith; being put into the laver by the Spirit, it applies the water by faith, 2 Cor. vii. 1. Yet Chriſt by his Spirit is ſtill the principal cauſe of the waſhing; foraſmuch as he both works faith in the ſoul, and then by new influences puts it in exercife: Phil. ii. 13. 'For it is God 'which worketh in us, both to will and to do of his good 'pleaſure.' And ſo faith is the inſtrumental cauſe of our waſhing from ſin, Acts xv. 9.

Now, the efficacy of faith in the waſhing of the ſoul lies in theſe following things, under theſe two heads.

1. It is the eye of the ſoul in that matter, and ſo it is an impulſive cauſe moving the ſinner to waſh away his ſin, Gal. ii. 16.; and is ſuppoſed in ſuch calls, as that, Iſa. i. 16. *Waſh ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well.* Now, by the eye of faith,

1ſt, The man diſcerns his pollution, that he is all over defiled and unlike God: Iſa. lxiv. 6. 'We are all as an 'unclean thing, and all our righteouſneſſes are as filthy 'rags, and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, 'like the wind, have taken us away.' He looks into the glaſs of the word, which is a repreſentation of God's holineſs, and ſo repreſents the ſinner as vile and loathſome. The man believes the repreſentation to be true, and ſo cries out, as Job xl. 4. 'Behold, I am vile, what ſhall I 'anſwer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.' This glaſs is held to the eyes of others; but being unbelievers, they ſee not their univerſal pollution for all it. But thus the believer ſees the need of waſhing.

2dly, He diſcerns the depth of the ſtain, that it can be waſhed out by no human art. Faith brings, from the teſtimony of the word, that report into the ſoul, Jer. ii. 22. 'For though thou waſh thee with nitre, and take thee 'much ſoap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, 'ſaith the Lord God.' Unbelievers are ruined in their pollution for want of this; they ſee not how deep their defilement lies; ſo they think their own nitre and ſoap will do their buſineſs, that Abana and Pharpar may cleanſe the leper, as well as any other water, Hoſ. v. 13. But faith ſees them all phyſicians of no value: and ſo the believer ſees the need of another laver than any of them.

3dly, He diſcerns the ill of his pollution on the one hand, and the good of waſhing on the other. By faith the man is perſuaded of the deſtructive nature of ſin, and its contrariety to God's nature and will; and he is perſuaded of the beauty and excellency of holineſs, or purification from ſin. The one he ſees in the glaſs of the law, its threatenings and commands; the other in the glaſs of the goſpel, in the face of Jeſus. And theſe are a ſpur to incite him to ſeek to be waſhed, Luke xv. 17, 18.

4thly, He diſcerns the laver, Chriſt crucified, Iſ. xlv. 22. By the help of the glaſs of the goſpel, he takes up Chriſt's blood, as the only laver for unclean ſouls. And by faith the unclean ſoul diſcerns Chriſt the laver.

(1.) As an efficacious laver in all caſes, 1 John i. 7. 'The blood of Jeſus Chriſt cleanſeth us from all ſin.' The man believes that Chriſt is able to waſh out the deepeſt ſtain, to make the filthieſt ſoul clean, Iſ. i. 18. 'Tho' 'your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as white as ſnow; 'though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wool.' This is neceſſary, as appears in the caſe of the blind men, Matth. xi. 28, 29. 'Jeſus ſaith unto them, Believe ye 'that I am able to do this? they ſaid unto him, Yea, 'Lord. Then touched he their eyes, ſaying, According 'to your faith be it unto you.'

(2.) As an open laver in its own caſe, Zech. xiii. 1. 'In that day, there ſhall be a fountain opened to the houſe 'of David, and to the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, for ſin 'and uncleanneſs.' Heb. xi. 6. 'But without faith it is 'impoſſible to pleaſe him: for he that cometh to God, 'muſt believe that he is.' This is believing the goſpel, one's warrant to come to Chriſt, without which none can come. For if one ſhould look on the fountain as open to all the world, but ſealed to him, this would mar his acceſs to it, Jer. ii. 25. *Thou ſaidſt, There is no hope. No, for I have loved ſtrangers, and after them will I go.* But faith ſays, Pſal. lxv. 3. *Iniquities prevail againſt me: as for our tranſgreſſions thou ſhalt purge them away.*

2. Faith is the hand of the ſoul in that matter, and ſo it is an inſtrumental cauſe of waſhing away ſin.

1ſt, The ſoul embraceth Chriſt, and unites with him: John i. 12. 'As many as received him, to them gave he 'power to become the ſons of God, even to them that 'believe on his name.' The ſoul, at its firſt union with Chriſt, being plunged into the laver by the Spirit, doth ſpread out itſelf therein: as one who having jumped into the water to ſwim, ſpreads out his body in it, and embraces the water as it were. Chriſt having apprehended the ſoul by his Spirit, and united it paſſively to himſelf; the ſoul again apprehends him by faith, and actively unites with him. Here faith brings in the application of his blood, the effect of which is ſanctification.

2dly, The ſoul cleaveth to Chriſt, and abideth in him, all along till death: Heb. x. 39. 'But we are not of them 'who draw back unto perdition: but of them that be-'lieve, to the ſaving of the ſoul.' It is never extinguiſhed again in the ſoul: though its gripe may be ſlacked, yet it never lets it quite go: Luke xxii. 32. 'But I have 'prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.' Hereby it brings in the continued application, for progreſſive ſanctification, John xv. 5. And the ſtronger its gripes are at any time, the more plentiful application is there of Chriſt's blood to the ſoul; as the ſtronger the child ſucks, he draws out the more milk, Iſa. lxvi. 11. Hence he that has the ſtrongeſt faith, hath the holieſt heart and life.

3dly, The ſoul cleaveth to Chriſt in death. When the body is falling down, the man ſtill cleaves to and abides in Chriſt, and ſo dying in faith, dies in the Lord, Heb. xi. 13. Faith keeps the grip of Chriſt, while the ſoul is loſing grip of the body; and as the body drops off, it brings in a full application of Chriſt's blood, which perfects ſanctification. So the ſoul drops the remains of ſin together with the body.

Now, the efficacy of faith for the waſhing of the ſoul, lies in truſt: and as it truſts it purifies; for therein lies its nature, and therefore its efficacy comes that way. And the object of that truſt is twofold.

(1.) The object of this truſt is *real, viz.* the word. Faith truſts or believes the word as firm and infallible truth. Hence the apoſtle ſpeaks of the *belief of the truth.* Faith truſts or believes particularly the word of the promiſe of the goſpel, holding out to ſinners the benefit of ſanctification as well as other benefits; ſuch as that promiſe, Ezek. xxxvi. 25. ‘I will ſprinkle clean water upon ‘you, and ye ſhall be clean: from all your filthineſs, and ‘from all your idols will I cleanſe you.’ This truſt of the word of the goſpel is our obedience to the truth, wherein the ſoul ſubjects itſelf wholly to the truth of God's word, believing it over the belly of all objections, ſaying, as Mic. vii. 19. *He will turn again, he will have compaſſion upon us: he will ſubdue our iniquities: and thou wilt caſt all their ſins into the depth of the ſea.*

(2.) The object of this truth is *perſonal, viz.* Chriſt himſelf. The ſoul truſts on Chriſt for the waſhing of it. Hence is that invitation, Iſa. xlv. 22. ‘Look unto me, ‘and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth: for I am ‘God, and there is none elſe.’ And hence is the language of faith, Pſal. lxv. 3. ‘Iniquities prevail againſt ‘me: as for our tranſgreſſions, thou ſhalt purge them ‘away.’ It is the very nature of faith, to renounce all confidence in other things, and to truſt to him alone for waſhing of the ſoul. Hence Paul ſaith, Phil. iii. 3. ‘We ‘are the circumciſion, which worſhip God in the ſpirit, ‘rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the ‘fleſh.’ In the word of promiſe he is held forth as ‘the ‘Lamb of God taking away the ſin of the world,’ as made ſanctification to us: and faith is a truſt or reliance on him as ſuch to us. But more particularly,

Faith's truſt on Chriſt is on him as crucified, 1 Cor. ii. 2. ‘I determined not to know any thing, ſave Jeſus Chriſt, ‘and him crucified.’ While we look on him ſimply as God, we ſee his juſtice flaming againſt ſin, and barring all ſanctifying influences: Heb. xii. 29. ‘For our God ‘is a conſuming fire.’ But looking on him as God-man, by his obedience and death making ſatisfaction for ſin, we have a fit object of truſt for our ſanctification: for there we ſee a fulneſs of merit for purging away ſin, Rom. vi. 6. ‘Knowing this, that our old man is cruci‘fied with him, that the body of ſin might be deſtroyed, ‘that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve ſin.’

Hence faith has an eye to the blood of Chriſt, in the point of ſanctification, as well as juſtification. Hence the apoſtle ſaith, Rom. iii. 25. ‘God hath ſet him forth ‘to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to de‘clare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins.’ Heb. ix. 14. ‘The blood of Chriſt, who, through the eternal ‘Spirit, offered himſelf without ſpot to God, ſhall purge ‘your conſcience from dead works to ſerve the living ‘God:’ that being the immediate cauſe of our waſhing, as the blood of his ſacrifice ſprinkled on us for our purification, Heb. xii. 24.

Now, this truſt for waſhing, placed on Chriſt held forth to us in the word of promiſe, which is that wherein the efficacy of faith for ſanctifying us inſtrumentally lies, may be taken up in theſe four things.

[1.] The ſoul's turning its eye of expectation of purification, from off all things elſe, and fixing it on Chriſt crucified, Iſa. xlv. 22. ‘Look unto me, and be ye ſav‘ed, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there ‘is none elſe.’ Secure ſinners, indifferent about holineſs, look no where for it; they deſire it not. Awakened ſinners look for it to phyſicians of no value, ſuch as their own endeavours, reſolutions, &c. But faith looks off from all creatures, unto Chriſt alone, for it, as the woman with the bloody iſſue did, Mark v. 25.——28. that virtue may come from him for purifying.

[2.] Applying the promiſe of ſpiritual waſhing to itſelf: 2 Cor. vii. 1. ‘Having theſe promiſes, let us cleanſe ‘ourſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, per‘fecting holineſs in the fear of God.’ The word holds forth the promiſe of cleanſing from ſin, to ſinners indefinitely, Ezek. xxxvi. 25. ‘I will ſprinkle clean water ‘upon you, and ye ſhall be clean: from all your filthineſs, ‘and from all your idols will I cleanſe you.’ Faith catches hold of it, and brings it home, Pſal. lxv. 3. ‘Ini‘quities prevail againſt me: as for our tranſgeſſions, ‘thou ſhalt purge them away.’ Mic. vii. 19. ‘He will ‘turn again, he will have compaſſion upon us: he will ‘ſubdue our iniquities: and thou wilt caſt all their ſins ‘into the depths of the ſea.’ It pleads the promiſe, and hangs by it. Particularly it appropriates the privilege of legal freedom, Rom. vi. 10, 11. ‘For in that he died, ‘he died unto ſin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth ‘unto God.’ Likewiſe reckon ye alſo yourſelves to be ‘dead indeed unto ſin; but alive unto God through ‘Jeſus Chriſt our Lord:’ ſo that thereby the ſoul looks on itſelf as dead to ſin, Rom. vi. 2. ‘How ſhall we that ‘are dead to ſin, live any longer therein?’

[3.] Relying on the merit of Chriſt for the out-making of the promiſe of ſanctification, Pſal. li. 7. ‘Purge me ‘with hyſſop, and I ſhall be clean: waſh me, and I ſhall ‘be whiter than ſnow.’ 1 John i. 7. ‘The blood of Jeſus ‘Chriſt cleanſeth us from all ſin.’ The ſoul ſees it is a great privilege as well as a duty, and looks that God will make it holy, for Chriſt's ſake, foraſmuch as he died for that very end, Tit. ii. 14. For true faith has the ſame reliance on Chriſt for ſanctification as for juſtification, knowing that the one is the purchaſe of the Redeemer's blood, even as the other.

[4.] *laſtly,* Acquieſcing in the faithfulneſs of God in his word. Faith receives the word of promiſe for ſanctification; and ſays, with Mary, Luke i. 38. ‘Be it un‘to me according to thy word.’ The purification of the ſoul from ſin has ſo many difficulties about it, that the ſinner truly ſenſible accounts it impoſſible in reſpect of all created power: but ſince God has ſaid it, the ſoul acquieſces in his word, judging him faithful who hath promiſed.

This faith or truſt purifies from ſin, according to the ſcripture, and the experience of the ſaints: Acts xv. 9. ‘Purifying their hearts by faith.’ Hereto agrees the Pſalmiſt's experience, Pſal. xxviii. 7. ‘The Lord is my ‘ſtrength and my ſhield, my heart truſted in him, and ‘I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth, and ‘with my ſong will I praiſe him.’ And ſo does that of thoſe to whom Peter wrote, 1 epiſt. i. 22. ‘Ye have pu‘rified your ſouls in obeying the truth through the Spi‘rit.’ Yea, by this truſt, joy is brought into the ſoul, ver. 8, 9. ‘Whom having not ſeen, ye love; in whom ‘though now ye ſee him not, yet believing, ye rejoice ‘with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory; receiving the ‘end of your faith, even the ſalvation of your ſouls.’ Rom. xv. 13. ‘Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and ‘peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope thro' the ‘power of the Holy Ghoſt.’ And that preſuppoſeth the purging of the ſoul from ſin, Iſa xxxiii. 24. ‘The inha‘bitant ſhall not ſay, I am ſick: the people that dwell ‘therein ſhall be forgiven their iniquity.’

Queſt. How has that truſt that efficacy? *Anſ.* By the appointment of God. How had the looking to the braſen ſerpent ſuch efficacy as to cure the ſtung Iſraelites, but by God's appointment? So is the caſe here: John iii. 14, 15. ‘As Moſes lifted up the ſerpent in the wilderneſs, ‘ſo muſt the Son of man be lifted up: that whoſoever ‘believeth on him, ſhould not periſh, but have eternal ‘life.’ The nature and efficacy of ſaving faith may be learned in part from that of the faith of miracles, they agreeing in one general kind, Matth. ix. 28, 29. ‘Jeſus ‘ſaith unto the blind men, Believe ye that I am able to ‘do this? they ſaid unto him, Yea Lord. Then touched ‘he their eyes, ſaying, According to your faith be it un‘to you.’ God has made choice of faith for that end, and given it a word of appointment, Mark xvi. 16. ‘He that believeth, ſhall be ſaved.’ And the appointment is, that the ſoul ſo truſting in Chriſt, ſhall be ſanctified by the Spirit with his blood, Gal. iii. 2. And there is a fitneſs in the appointment of this as a mean: for,

(1.) Faith truſts the word of God, and the faithfulneſs of God requires that it be accompliſhed to them that truſt it, Rom. ix. 33. ‘ Whoſoever believeth on him, ſhall not be aſhamed.’ If you would have a benefit from an honeſt man, you cannot take a more effectual way to obtain it, than having got his word for it, to truſt it, plead it, and hold him to it.

(2.) Chriſt himſelf with all his benefits, comes to us in the word. Rom. x. 6, 7, 8. ‘ The righteouſneſs which is of faith ſpeaketh on this wiſe, Say not in thine heart, who ſhall aſcend into heaven? (that is, to bring Chriſt down from above) or who ſhall deſcend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Chriſt again from the dead): but what ſaith it? The word is nigh to thee, even in thy mouth and in thine heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach.’ Truſting the word is the only way of receiving it farther than into the ears, at leaſt as it is a promiſe. Receiving the word by faith, we receive Chriſt, and conſequently the purifying virtue of his blood, with himſelf, 1 Theſſ. ii. 13. ‘ For this cauſe alſo thank we God, without ceaſing, becauſe when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as the word of God, which effectually worketh alſo in you that believe.’

(3.) There is nothing ſo adapted to the end of glorifying free grace, as this truſt of faith is; and that is the great end of the goſpel: Rom. iv. 16. ‘ Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace.’

I ſhall ſhut up this branch with a few inferences.

Inf. 1. It is not true faith that leaves the ſoul ſtill unholy, lying in the filth of ſin. Unwaſhed ſinners are unbelievers certainly: Tit. i. 15. ‘ Unto them that are defiled, and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and conſcience is defiled.’ In vain will ye pleaſe yourſelves with a conceit of your believing in Chriſt, while your pretended faith brings in no ſanctifying influences into your ſouls: James ii. 14. ‘ What doth it profit though a man ſay he hath faith, and hath not works? can faith ſave him?’ True faith hath a double effect.

1ſt, Within, faith purifies the heart, and makes it evangelically clean, Acts xv. 9. It breaks the reigning power of luſts within, maintains a combat againſt them, ſets the ſoul to approve itſelf to God in the inner man, where no eye ſees, and longs for and preſſeth toward perfection.

2dly, Without, faith works by love, in all duties of piety towards God, juſtice and mercy towards our neighbour, Gal. v. 6. ‘ For in Jeſus Chriſt, neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but faith which worketh by love.’ It is a principle within, that caſts abroad its cleanſing efficacy, purifying mens lives.

Inf. 2. Then whoſoever are really waſhed from their ſins, as they will uſe means of holineſs, yet they will be carried beyond them all to Chriſt for it. They will be conſcientious in the practice of holy duties, and ſo go beyond the careleſs; and yet they will not reſt in them, but quit them all in point of confidence, and ſo go beyond hypocrites: Philip. iii. 3. ‘ We are the circumciſion which worſhip God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the fleſh.’ The ſpouſe went this little further, and found her beloved, Cant. iii.

Inf. 3. *laſtly,* The only way to be holy, is to believe in Chriſt. In this way all the members of Chriſt are ſanctified; they are ſanctified through faith, Acts xxvi. 18. And there is no true holineſs in ſubjects capable of faith, without it, John xv. 5. ‘ Without me ye can do nothing.’ So if the ſoul be brought to faith in Chriſt, it will be made holy: if not, all other means will be but waſhing a blackmoor, that will never become white.

Thus far of thoſe things which Chriſt uſeth more immediately for waſhing of ſinners.

SECONDLY, There are other means which Chriſt uſeth for that purpoſe, more mediately: of which briefly.

Firſt, Chriſt waſheth ſinners by the word, John xv. 3. ‘ Now ye are clean through the word which I have ſpoken unto you.’ And hence he prays to his Father, John xvii. 17. ‘ Sanctify them through thy truth.’ The word written, read, and preached, is the great external mean of waſhing ſinners; and is effectual by the energy of the Spirit, being received by faith. The uſe of the word in this matter, lies in theſe things following.

1. It is the glaſs wherein the ſinner diſcerns his filthineſs. The word of the law is that glaſs: Rom. iii. 20. ‘ By the law is the knowledge of ſin.’ It repreſents to men their ſinful nature, hearts, and lives; and when Chriſt waſhes a ſinner, he holds that glaſs to his eyes to convince him of ſin, by the Spirit. The Pſalmiſt recommends it to young men, Pſal. cxix. 9. ‘ Wherewith ſhall a young man cleanſe his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.’ And they that look not into the word for this end, care not for waſhing.

2. It is a ſpur to waſhing, an external impulſive cauſe by the ſtrong motives whereby it preſſeth the ſinner to waſh. Here the law preſſeth him by its threatenings and curſes againſt the unclean; the goſpel preſſeth with the excellency and unſpeakable advantage of waſhing.

3. It is the key that ſets open the fountain ‘ opened to the houſe of David, and to the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, for ſin and for uncleanneſs. It is opened by the preaching of the goſpel; which ſhews ſinners, that whatever be their pollution, they are welcome to it. The voice of Jeſus Chriſt in the goſpel is, *Behold me,* Iſa. lxv. 1. *i. e.* ‘ Here I am.’ Thereby our Lord unlocks his treaſures, laying them open to the view of ſinners.

4. It is the vehicle of the blood and Spirit of Chriſt, whereby ſinners may be waſhed, receiving the word by faith, John vi. 63. ‘ It is the ſpirit that quickeneth, the fleſh profiteth nothing: the words that I ſpeak unto you, they are ſpirit, and they are life.’ The goſpel is called *the miniſtration of the Spirit, and righteouſneſs,* inaſmuch as thereby Chriſt communicates his Spirit to ſinners, and brings righteouſneſs to them. Hence receiving the word by faith, the ſoul is caſt into the mould of it, Rom. vi. 17.: for it is *able to ſave the ſoul,* Jam. i. 22. and *works effectually* in it, to the cleanſing of the ſoul, John xv. 3. *Now ye are clean thro' the word that I have ſpoken to you.*

I ſhall ſhut up this branch alſo with a few inferences.

Inf. 1. Saints and ſinners need the word; foraſmuch as they are both defiled, and need waſhing; the one to be begun on them, and the other to be carried on. And they that can live contented without it, are content to lie ſtill in their filthineſs; and will need no more to ruin them, but to get their will.

Inf. 2. They that have an enmity at the word, appearing in their averſion to, and neglect of it, are neither waſhed, nor deſire to be waſhed: Job xxi. 14. ‘ Therefore they ſay unto God, Depart from us; for we deſire not the knowledge of thy ways.’ The reaſon of their enmity againſt it, is their love to their luſts, to which it is an enemy: on the contrary, they whoſe hearts are turned againſt ſin, are turned towards the word, as a mean for purging it away: John iii. 20, 21. ‘ For every one that doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, leſt his deeds ſhould be reproved.’

Inf. 3. Their ſoul's caſe is very hopeleſs, who get no good of the word: and theſe are all ſuch who get no conviction by it, or are not ſtirred up by it to ſeek to be purged from their filthineſs, who are not pointed to Chriſt as the only laver, and never partake of his blood and Spirit, by it. Theſe are they on whom the great mean of waſhing from ſin is ineffectual; of whom the Lord ſays, Ezek. xxxiv. 13. ‘ In thy filthineſs is lewdneſs: becauſe I have purged thee, and thou waſt not purged, thou ſhalt not be purged from thy filthineſs any more, till I have cauſed my fury to reſt upon thee.’

Inf. 4. *laſtly,* They do not believe the word, who are not cleanſed in heart and life thereby, 1 Theſſ. ii. 13. ‘ When ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh alſo in you that believe.’ If the word were received by faith, it could not miſs to be ſanctifying; but beholding the unholineſs of men, we may cry out, as Iſa. liii. 1.

‘ Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?’ The word preached is not believed, therefore it brings not forth fruit.

Secondly, Chriſt waſheth ſinners by the ſacraments, Eph. v. 26. Hence baptiſm is ſaid to ſave us, 2 Pet. iii. 21. The ſacraments are external means of ſpiritual waſhing, and are made effectual by faith; but no otherwiſe in ſubjects capable of believing; for God hath not communicated the virtue of ſanctifying to the elements, as to natural cauſes which work neceſſarily, 1 Pet. iii. 21.

The uſe of the ſacraments to this purpoſe, lies here.

1. They point out the laver wherein we may be waſhed, as being repreſenting ſigns of Chriſt's ſanctifying blood. 1 Cor. xi. 16. ‘ The cup of bleſſing which we bleſs, is it not the communion of the blood of Chriſt? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Chriſt?’ They ſet the laver before our eyes, and call us to ſee our need of it. Therein Chriſt is held forth crucified for us, his blood ſhed for our waſhing.

2. They confirm our right in it, and our welcome to it, as ſeals. Hence the apoſtle ſaith of Abraham, Rom. iv. 11. ‘ He received the ſign of circumciſion, a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of the faith which he had yet being uncircumciſed: that he might be the father of all them that believe, although they be not circumciſed; that righteouſneſs might be imputed to them alſo. Chriſt's blood is moſt precious; but there is a grant of it made to us in the word, which the ſacraments ſeal. The word ſays, John iii. 16. ‘ God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have eternal life:’ the ſacraments ſeal it, that ſo we may be excited and encouraged to come boldly, and make uſe of it for our ſanctification.

3. They preſent, exhibit, and apply it to believers, 1 Cor. xi. 24. As by earth and ſtone delivered to a man upon a legal right, he is inſeft of the houſe or land; ſo, by the ſacraments received by faith, Chriſt and all his benefits are applied to us, for our cleanſing.

An inference ſhall ſhut up this branch.

Inf. Hence we may try, whether the ſacraments be effectual to us, or not; whether we have believingly received them or not. While people are never the more holy, for all the ſacraments they receive, their diſeaſe is the more confirmed, their filthineſs is the more fixed on them. But when they ſtir up the ſoul to an uſe-making of Chriſt for ſanctification, and men get a cubit added to their ſpiritual ſtature, it is a good ſign.

Thirdly and *Laſtly*, Chriſt waſheth ſinners by afflictions, Iſa. xxvii. 9. ‘ By this therefore ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his ſin.’ They alſo are but external means, and cannot of themſelves purify. But the Spirit makes uſe of them for cleanſing of ſinners. There are two ways of purging filthineſs, by water, and by fire; Iſa. iv. 4. ‘ When the Lord ſhall have waſhed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and ſhall have purged the blood of Jeruſalem from the midſt thereof, by the ſpirit of judgment, and by the ſpirit of burning.’ Afflictions are God's fire for that end. Their uſe in the waſhing is ſixfold.

1. Afflictions are memorials of our ſin, and ſo put us in mind to look back on our defilements; as they were to Joſeph's brethren, when they ſaid, Gen. xlii. 11. ‘ We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we ſaw the anguiſh of his ſoul, when he beſought us; and we would not hear: therefore is this diſtreſs come upon us.’ The proſperous ſinner wallows at eaſe in his filthineſs; but when God lays his afflicting hand on him, the ſharper it is, conſcience is readily the more awakened out of its ſleep. And it will readily read the ſin out of the puniſhment.

2. Afflictions are a glaſs, wherein one ſees the loathſomeneſs of ſin in the ſight of God. While the ſinner proſpers in his courſe, he cannot think that God is diſpleaſed at it; as the Lord himſelf ſaith to the ſinner, Pſal. l. 21. ‘ Theſe things haſt thou done, and I kept ſilence: thou thoughteſt that I was altogether ſuch a one as thyſelf.’ But affliction is ſuch a token of God's diſpleaſure againſt ſin, that when it comes, the ſinner alters his thoughts; ſees it loathſome before God, and therefore loathſome in itſelf; which makes him anxious to be waſhed.

3. Afflictions are a fire that melt the paint and fairding off the defiling objects in the world, Jer. ii. 36, 37. ‘ Why gaddeſt thou about ſo much to change thy way? thou alſo ſhalt be aſhamed of Egypt, as thou waſt aſhamed of Aſſyria. Yea, thou ſhalt go forth from him, and thine hands upon thine head: for the Lord hath rejected thy confidences, and thou ſhalt not proſper in them.’ Where was the excellency of the thirty pieces when God's hand was lifted up againſt Judas for them? The beauty of former luſts melts away, when a man is laid on a ſick bed: and the bewitching creature then loſes all its charms.

4. Afflictions are a bridle whereby men are reſtrained from defiling themſelves more, and are brought to a ſtand in a defiling courſe, Hoſ. ii. 6. *Behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that ſhe ſhall not find her paths.* They ſerve to take off the edge of corrupt affections, and make them languiſh: whereby the ſinner becomes more pliable to counſel from the word.

5. Afflictions are occaſional cauſes of ſinners thinking of, and going to the fountain to waſh, Hoſ. v. 15. ‘ I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and ſeek my face: in their affliction they will ſeek me early.’ How many are there to whom afflictions have been the bleſſed means of their turning ſerious? Such a rod they met with, or they had gone on like the wild aſs on the mountains, ſnuffing up the wind.

6. *laſtly*, Afflictions are a ſharp wind to blow up the fire of grace where it is, and particularly to excite faith, whereby the ſoul is waſhed. Hence the ſpouſe prayeth, Cant. iv. 16. *Awake, O north wind, and come, thou ſouth; blow upon my garden, that the ſpices thereof may flow out.* In their proſperity people can fetch in their comfort by ſenſe; but in affliction, when created ſtreams are dried up, they muſt fetch it in by faith, or elſe want it.

Two inferences ſhall conclude this branch.

Inf. 1. Let this cauſe us take afflictions kindly; ſince they are means by which Chriſt waſheth us. Though the water be cold, yet we endure it, that we may get our hands clean. Though medicines ſicken us, we blame not the phyſician, becauſe they are for our health. Why ſhould we be angry at our God afflicting us, ſince the fruit deſigned is to purge away ſin?

Inf. 2. Let us, in all our afflictions, ſeek purification from our ſin, and know they are not effectual unleſs they have a ſanctifying efficacy on us. They are indeed of the nature of fire, firſt cauſing the ſcum to come above, but next throwing it off. They diſcover much of the corruption of the heart, that otherwiſe would be latent: but if they humble the ſoul under a ſenſe of ſinfulneſs, and ſend it to Chriſt for purging, they are not in vain.

I now proceed to the ſecond general head, namely,

II. To conſider *the unwaſhed or unſanctified ſinner's having no part with Chriſt.*

In diſcuſſing this head, I ſhall ſhew,

1. What the unwaſhed ſinner's having no part with Chriſt ſuppoſeth; and,

2. Wherein it lies.

FIRST, We ſhall ſhew what the unwaſhed ſinner having no part with Chriſt ſuppoſeth. It ſuppoſeth,

1. That Chriſt himſelf is happy. He is not only happy as he is God, who is therefore ſtyled *God bleſſed forever*; but as he is Mediator, the head of the body, the church. Pſal. lxxii. 17. ‘ Men ſhall be bleſſed in him, all nations ſhall call him bleſſed.’ All mankind were brought to miſery and ruin by Adam's fall: but the man Chriſt was an exception from that rule. He was happy from the moment of the incarnation, all along, notwithſtanding what he ſuffered; and from his reſurrection and aſcenſion his happineſs was completed, Philip. ii. 19. Wherefore ‘ God alſo hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.’ Heb. x. 13. ‘ From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footſtool.’ There are two things wherein Chriſt is completely happy.

1*ſt*, In having fully done the work he undertook to do. John xvii. 4. ‘ I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finiſhed the work which thou gaveſt me to do.’ He had a great work to do, for his father's glory and the ſalvation of ſinner's. It was the hardeſt work that ever was taken in hand. All hardſhips from heaven, earth, and hell, met together upon him; and his work was to go through them all in a courſe of perfect obedience. And now it is done; he was born holy, lived righteous, ſatisfied completely by his death; now he is got to the joy ſet before him: Rom. vi. 9. 'Chriſt being raiſed from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.' Rev. iii. 21: 'To him that overcometh will I grant to ſit with me in my throne, even as I alſo overcame, and am ſet down with my Father in his throne.'

2dly, In having received the reward of his works. Our Lord, 'for the joy that was ſet before him, endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and is ſet down at the right hand of the throne of God.' Heb. xii. 2. Never was there ſuch a reward of work, as Chriſt has received; it bears proportion to the work, which was of infinite value. All the promiſes of the covenant, are now in his hand. They are won by him, and he is put in poſſeſſion of the things promiſed, which make an inexhauſtible treaſure. Hence the apoſtle ſpeaks of *the unſearchable riches of Chriſt*.

2. There is enough in him to make others happy too, Col. i. 19. 'For it pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell.' There is a fulneſs of a fountain in him, whereby others may be ſupplied from him, and yet he have no lack. The firſt Adam was a ſpring of ruin to all his poſterity; but the goſpel points out Chriſt the ſecond Adam as a ſpring of happineſs for wretched ſinners.

3. Sinners may have part with Chriſt in his fulneſs; it is lodged in him to be communicated. Matth. xi. 27, 28. *All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, ſave the Son, and he to whomſoever the Son will reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt.* He is the bowl on the top of the candleſtick, the immediate receptacle of the oil, from whence it is conveyed to the ſeven lamps. Joſeph was ſent to Egypt, and exalted there, to provide for Jacob's family in the dearth; ſo Chriſt is great Steward of heaven, for the behoof of poor ſinners; that having all in his hand, they may be happy in having part with him.

4. All that are ſanctified are happy in having part with Chriſt, Col. ii. 9, 10. 'For in him dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily.' They have part in his work, by imputation; even as they had part with Adam in his ſin, Rom. v. 19. 'For as by one man's diſobedience, many were made ſinners; ſo by the obedience of one ſhall many be made righteous.' They have part in his reward, by a real communication thereof to them; even as they had part with Adam in the corruption of his nature, John i. 26. 'And of his fulneſs, have all we received, and grace for grace.' 1 Cor. xv. 22. 'For as in Adam all die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive.' This is but imperfect as yet; but it is ſo begun that it will undoubtedly be perfected. But ſuch as it is, their ſanctification is not the cauſe of it, but it is the cauſe of their ſanctification. 1 John i. 3. 7. 'That which we have ſeen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye alſo may have fellowſhip with us: and truly our fellowſhip is with the Father and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowſhip one with another, and the blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son cleanſeth us from all ſin.'

5. *laſtly*, Unholy ſinners are miſerable in the want of part with Chriſt. They are 'without Chriſt, being aliens from the commonwealth of Iſrael, and ſtrangers from the covenants of promiſe, having no hope, and without God in the world,' Eph. ii. 12. Therefore this ſtruck Peter, when he ſaw how deep it drew: for he ſaid, Acts iv. 12. *Neither is there ſalvation in any other name under heaven given among men whereby we muſt be ſaved.* It is true, all that hear the goſpel are externally called to the fellowſhip of his Son; but moſt men love the fellowſhip of the world, and will not take part with Chriſt. So they are without it, though it lies open to them; and to each one of them may be ſaid, Acts viii. 21. 'Thou haſt neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right with God.' Mean while their unholineſs does not bar them from having part with Chriſt; but their want of part with Chriſt keeps them unholy.

SECONDLY, I ſhall ſhow wherein the unwaſhed ſinner's having no part with Chriſt does conſiſt. This will appear, in taking a view, 1. Of Chriſt's work; and, 2. Of his reward: in neither of which the unholy have part with him.

FIRST, Chriſt is happy, in that he has done out the work he undertook for the ſalvation of ſinners; and all that are his have part with him therein; it is imputed to them, as if they had done it, Gal. ii. 20. And,

1. He has been born holy, and anſwered the demand of the law for holineſs of nature, by his bringing a holy human nature into the world with him. Hence he is called *that holy thing born*. Heb. vii. 26. 'For ſuch an high prieſt became us, who is holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparated from ſinners.' So that demand of the law for ſalvation for all that are his, is anſwered, for they are ſaid to be *complete in him*, and to be *circumciſed in him*. The law cannot ſtop their ſalvation for want of a perfectly holy nature; for they have part in the holineſs of his nature, and that holy nature is communicated to them.

But unholy ſinners have no part with Chriſt in this matter: the holineſs of his nature is not imputed to them. There is a holy birth of the *Second Adam*, to take away the guilt of ſin that we are born in; but ſuch as are not waſhed by Chriſt, from their ſin, have no ſhare in it.

The evidence of this is, that whoſoever hath part in the holineſs of Chriſt's birth by imputation, are really born again in their own perſons; becauſe Chriſt's holy birth is the meritorious cauſe of the new birth of his members. 2 Cor. v. 17. 'If any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature: old things are paſt away: behold all things are become new.' Col. ii. 11. 'In whom alſo ye are circumciſed with the circumciſion made without hands, in putting off the body of the ſins of the fleſh, by the circumciſion of Chriſt.' Now the unholy are not born again: therefore they have no part with Chriſt's holy birth: and ſo they have nothing to anſwer the law's demands.

2. Chriſt has lived a righteous life, in perfect obedience to the law's commands, Philip. ii. 8. 'He became obedient unto death.' He did it as a publick perſon: and all his obey in Chriſt, as they ſinned in Adam, Rom. viii. 3, 4. 'For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the fleſh, God ſending his own Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin condemned ſin in the fleſh: that the righteouſneſs of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the fleſh but after the Spirit.' So the law's demands of obedience as the condition of life, is anſwered as to them; their part in Chriſt's obedience anſwers it fully.

But the unholy have no part with Chriſt in the obedience of his life. For Chriſt's obedience being meritorious of our ſanctification, the want of the latter is a plain evidence of no part of the former; and that upon the ground of juſtice, which requires the delivering of the thing purchaſed, upon the application of the price. If ye have obeyed legally in Chriſt, ye obey really in your own perſons; for Chriſt's obedience hath a conforming virtue, in thoſe to whom it is imputed, Rom. viii. 29. 'For whom he did foreknow, he alſo did predeſtinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.' 1 John ii. 6. 'He that ſaith he abideth in him, ought himſelf alſo to walk, even as he walked.' Inherent righteouſneſs follows imputed righteouſneſs. An unholy life argues no part in Chriſt: there is a bar between heaven and the unholy.

3. He has ſuffered, to the full ſatiſfaction of the law in its threatening for ſin, Phil. ii. 8. 'He humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto the death.' Gal. iii. 13. 'Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us; for it is written, Curſed is every one that hangeth on a tree.' And Chriſt ſuffering as a public perſon, all that are his ſuffered in him. They were legally crucified with him, died with him, and were buried with him. So the law's demand is anſwered for them, ſince they have part with Chriſt.

But the unholy have no part with Chriſt in his ſufferings. An evidence whereof is their not being *conformed to him in his death*, Phil. iii. 10. The death of Chriſt will infallibly prove the death of ſin, when one has part with Chriſt in it: Rom. vi. 6. 'Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of ſin might be deſtroyed, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve ſin.' Gal. v. 24. 'They that are Chriſt's, have crucified the fleſh, with the affections and luſts.' As ſure as Chriſt died for the ſins of the elect, they will die to ſin that have communion with him in it: for death made its way from the members to the head, till it laid him in the grave; ſo the merit of his death will make its way from the head to them to their ſanctification. So that demand of the law lies on their heads unanſwered.

4. He has brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs. In what he was, did, and ſuffered, he fully ſatisfied the law's demand, coming up to an exact conformity thereto. This is the righteouſneſs he has wrought, ſufficient to cover every ſinner in the ſight of God, and to render him righteous. All that are his, have part with him in it, Pſal. xlv. 13. So they have a righteouſneſs that is law-biding.

But the unholy have no part with him in it. For wherever righteouſneſs imputed is on any man, inherent holineſs is in him. By the former ſatisfying the law, the ſtrength of ſin is taken away: ſo that the man cannot be living in ſin as formerly, Rom. vi. 2. 'How ſhall we that are dead to ſin, live any longer therein?'

Secondly, Chriſt has received the reward of his work; and ſo he has an inexhauſtible treaſure: and all that are his have part with him in it.

1. Chriſt is riſen again from the dead. By the authority of the Father he is diſcharged from the grave; death is never to ſeize him more: Acts ii. 24. 'God raiſed him up, having looſed the pains of death: becauſe it was not poſſible that he ſhould be holden of it.' And all his have part with him in his reſurrection: Eph. ii. 6. 'God hath raiſed us up together, and made us ſit together in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus.' But the unholy have no part with him in his reſurrection. For,

1ſt, They are ſtill dead in their ſins, while they live in them. Where is their part then in Chriſt's reſurrection? They that have part with him are riſen with him, by virtue of his reſurrection, the power of the reſurrection of the head raiſing the members from death in ſin, Col. ii. 12. Alas! the grave-cloaths of the ſins of the fleſh, which ye are not putting off, but keeping on, and the ties whereof are ſtill as faſt upon you as ever, ſpeak you deſtitute of any part with Chriſt in this matter.

2dly, They are ſtill members of the congregation of the dead, Eph. ii. 1, 2, 3. When our Lord roſe, he left the congregation of the dead in their graves; yea, he converſed not with the world thereafter, as before his death. And ſo, whenever a ſoul gets part with Chriſt, it leaves the world lying in wickedneſs, comes out from among them, and walks no more according to the courſe of this world. Hence the apoſtle ſaith, Rom. vi. 4, 5. 'We are buried with him by baptiſm into death: that like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeneſs of his death; we ſhall be alſo in the likeneſs of his reſurrection.' What ground have they then to pretend to a part with him, that are not walking in newneſs of life, but according to the courſe of this world?

2. Chriſt is now aſcended up into glory, where he ſits at the Father's right hand. He aſcended into it, as a public perſon, to take poſſeſſion of it for us, Heb. vi. 20. And all his have part with him in it, as the members of the glory of the head: Eph. ii. 6. *God hath raiſed us up together, and made us ſit together in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus.*

But the unholy have no part with him in it. For,

1ſt, They are yet lying in the filth of their natural ſtate, through original and actual ſin, all over defiled, Tit. i. 15. They may have worldly glory, ſuch as ariſeth from bravery, wealth, and honour; yea they may glory in wickedneſs, that is their ſhame. But there is no heavenly glory on any, but by ſanctifying grace, that only makes a glorious inſide, Pſal. xlv. 13. in ſo far as thereby the purity of the divine image is on the ſoul.

2dly, Neither is their heart there, nor are they making forward to it. Our Lord tells us, that 'where the treaſure is, there will the heart be alſo.' And therefore the apoſtle urges, Col. iii. 1, 2. to 'ſeek thoſe things which are above, where Chriſt ſitteth at the right hand of God;' to 'ſet our affections on things above, not on things on the earth.' What part then have they with Chriſt in his glory, whoſe affections are not on things above, but on the earth, *who mind earthly things?* They carry themſelves as natives of the world, not as pilgrims in it. Their great aim is, to compaſs deſigns of worldly profits and pleaſures, but not to be fitted for glory, 1 John iii. 3.

3. Chriſt has the Spirit of life and holineſs dwelling in him, as the head of his body myſtical. So the Spirit of life is in him, to be communicated; and it is the purchaſe of his death, Rev. iii. 1. 'He hath the ſeven Spirits;' anſwerable to the ſeven golden candleſticks; enough to quicken and actuate them all. Hence he is ſaid to *quicken*, John v. 21. 26. And all his have part with him therein, Phil. ii. 1. The ſame Spirit that is in the head, is in the members too, inſomuch that 'the Spirit of God dwells in them; and if any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his.'

But the unholy have no part in his Spirit. For,

1ſt, He is the Holy Spirit, *the Spirit of holineſs*, ſo called not only from the work of ſanctification aſcribed peculiarly to him, but from the holineſs of his nature, in oppoſition to the unclean ſpirit, to atteſt all the works of God without himſelf, to be holy. So that in whomſoever he dwells, they muſt needs be made holy: Rom. viii. 2. 'For the law of the Spirit of life, in Chriſt Jeſus, hath made *them* free from the law of ſin and death.' Since then the unholy are under the law of ſin as the ſubjects thereof, and under the law of ſpiritual death, they have no part with Chriſt.

2dly, They have the ſpirit of the world in them, conforming them to the world, in their frame of heart, way, and walk. It is an unclean, unholy ſpirit, whereby they cannot reliſh nor ſavour the holy things of God; but things that are fleſhly, ſenſual, carnal, and earthly; not without a ſecret enmity at true holineſs, and cannot hold on in the way of God, as Caleb did, Numb. xiv. 24.

3dly, They live in the ſtate wherein Adam left them, without a ſaving change, 1 Cor. xv. 45. Adam was made *a living ſoul*, but Chriſt *a quickening ſpirit*. What men derive from *Adam*, they have; a natural life, a life of reaſon, gifts of knowledge, &c. But what men derive from *Chriſt*, they have not; they are not quickened by him with the Spirit of life unto God. But if they had part with Chriſt, they would be ſpiritually quickened ſouls; as having part with Adam, they are living ſouls.

4. There is a fulneſs of grace in the man Chriſt: Col. i. 19. 'For it pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell.' John i. 14. 'The word was full of grace and truth.' Grace is given him without meaſure, and all that are his partake with him in it, it being in him as in the ſtore houſe; it is ſo poured on him as the head, that it runs down to the ſkirts of his garments.

But the unholy have no part with him in his grace. For,

1ſt, They are not partakers of the divine nature, that new nature derived from Chriſt, by the communication of grace from him into his members, whereby they eſcape the corruption of the world. Inſtead of that, the old nature reigns in them, which is enmity againſt God. The old man with his deeds is ſtill in his vigour, has not as yet got his deadly wound.

2dly, Whatever good may ſeem to be in them, it is but in ſome few particulars. There are ſeveral *outs* in their religion: they never make thorough work of it, Pſal. cxix. 6. They *have* not *reſpect unto all* God's *commandments*. They are never made new creatures; all things never become new with them. An evidence that they have no part in the grace of Chriſt; for then ſhould they have grace for grace.

3dly, They do not bear Chriſt's image; they are not like him in their ſpirit and walk; 1 John ii. 6. ‘He that ſaith he abideth in him, ought himſelf alſo ſo to walk, even as he walked.’ They look like the old Adam, ſenſual, and averſe from God. How unlike the holy Jeſus, their own conſciences bear witneſs. But having part with Chriſt makes a perſon like him.

5. *laſtly*, Chriſt is anointed prophet, prieſt, and king of his church. Iſa. lxi. 1. ‘The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, becauſe the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he ſent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the priſon to them that are bound.’ And Peter ſays, Acts x. 38. ‘God anointed Jeſus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghoſt, and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppreſſed of the devil, for God was with him.’ This is the honour put on him, to bear theſe offices, ſignified by his names, *Meſſias* and *Chriſt*, *i. e. anointed.* And as he is Chriſt, all that are his are Chriſtians, anointed with the ſame Spirit, Pſal. xlv. having part with him in his offices.

1ſt, Chriſt is a prophet: and all that are his, have part with him in his prophetical office, Pſal. cv. 15. They are let into the knowledge of the things of God by the Spirit. 1 John ii. 20. 27. ‘But ye have an unction from the holy One, and ye know all things. But the anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: But, as the ſame anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and no lie: and even as it hath taught you, ye ſhall abide in him.’ They are on the ſecret of heaven: Pſal. xxv. 14. ‘The ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will ſhew them his covenant. And they teach them to others too: Pſal. li. 13. ‘I will teach tranſgreſſors thy ways, and ſinners ſhall be converted unto thee.’ Not only miniſters, but all Chriſtians have this office, the one in a public the other in a private capacity.

But the unholy have no part in his prophetical office.

(1.) They are not illuminated by the Spirit of holineſs, ſavingly to know the things of God. They may be taught by men, but not by God; they may know the literal ſenſe of the words of the goſpel; but the things thereof are hid from them. They never get into the ſecrets of religion, Matth. xi. 25.

(2.) Neither do they by the Spirit of holineſs enlighten the world. Being dark themſelves, they darken others by their ungodly lives. Moſt of them ſee no tie on them to be their brother's keeper. Such as teach others do it for their own glory, not for the glory of Chriſt. So they have no part in his prophetical office.

2dly, He is a prieſt; and all his have part in that office. They are prieſts unto God. They are conſecrated to ſerve him in his ſpiritual temple, in the robes of Chriſt's righteouſneſs and holineſs. They offer ſacrifices of thankſgiving to God, which are accepted through Chriſt. They offer to him themſelves, their ſervice in acts of worſhip and duty, and in ſuffering or bearing the croſs.

But the unholy have no part in his prieſtly office.

(1.) They are not of the line, nor deſcended from our great High Prieſt, as born of his Spirit. They were never truly conſecrated, they are deſtitute of imputed and implanted righteouſneſs; they are wholly polluted, as being of the world lying in wickedneſs: ſo if they pretend to the ſpiritual prieſthood, they will be, as polluted, put from it.

(2.) They cannot offer acceptable ſacrifices to God. They never offer themſelves to God as a ſacrifice, but to the world and their luſts. If they offer prayers to him, they never offer them on the right altar, Chriſt. Hence all they do, even their beſt things, are an abomination.

Laſtly, Chriſt is a king; and all his have part in that honourable office. They are kings unto God. They have the right of dominion over their ſpiritual enemies, the rule of their own ſpirits governing themſelves by the laws of Chriſt, and the lordſhip of the world, and they are heirs of the kingdom of heaven. They do not yet peaceably poſſeſs their kingdom; their open enemies are making conſtant wars againſt them: but they overcome, and ‘are more than conquerors through him that loved them.’

But the unholy have no part in his kingly office.

They are ſervants to Satan, and under his power, led captives at his will. They have no gracious management of their own ſpirits. They are the ſervants of corruption; they neither think nor do any ſervice acceptable to God.

The APPLICATION.

I ſhut up all with ſome practical *Inferences.*

Inf. 1. Holineſs is abſolutely neceſſary to happineſs; For ‘without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord.’ Ye may be either poor or rich, and yet be happy. But if ye be not holy, ye are miſerable; for ye have no part with Chriſt. It is aſtoniſhing to think, how eaſy many that hear the goſpel, are about holineſs; they are in no concern whether they be holy or not. They would not have people take them for ſaints; nay, holy people are a jeſt with them. There is no accounting for this any other way, but that holineſs is rare in the world, and they have no mind to be ſingular, nor to diſtinguiſh themſelves from the world lying in wickedneſs.

But conſider theſe four things.

1. God is holy. God that made you is holy by neceſſity of nature; he is ſo holy that he cannot be but holy. If God is neceſſarily holy, he cannot but love his own image, and hate what is contrary to it: therefore he cannot but hate your unholineſs, and for it hate you who are unholy. Now, conſider the miſery of being objects of God's hatred and averſion, and what makes you ſo; and ye will ſee the neceſſity of your being holy, 1 Pet. i. 6. ‘Be ye holy, (ſaith the Lord,) for I am holy.’

2. Chriſt our Saviour is holy. As he is God, he is *the holy One of Iſrael;* as he is man, he is *that holy thing*, Luke i. 35. Jeſus is called *the holy One;* the very devils owned him to be ſo, Mark i. 24. The very end of his being Jeſus, was to make men holy, Matth. i. 21. ‘Thou ſhalt call his name Jeſus: for he ſhall ſave his people from their ſins.’ He came to ‘deſtroy the works of the devil,’ he died to redeem ſinners from their ſins, Tit. ii. 14. What part then can ye poſſibly imagine yourſelves to have in him, while ye continue unholy?

3. The body of Chriſt is holy; the company of the ſaved, Eph. v. 25, 26. The devil *is the god of this world;* his ſubjects are *the world lying in wickedneſs.* Out of them Chriſt raiſes his kingdom, and his ſubjects are all holy. It is their diſtinguiſhing badge from thoſe that belong to Satan, that agrees to them, and to them only. So that if ye are not holy, ye are not Chriſt's, but Satan's.

4. Heaven is holy; it is a holy place, where no unholy thing can enter, Rev. xxi. 27. The dogs and ſwine will be without, that is, the unholy, who ‘go with the dog to the vomit, and with the ſow that was waſhed to the wallowing in the mire,’ ſhall be caſt out from the ſupper of the ſaints in glory into utter darkneſs.

Inf. 2. There is no true holineſs, but in communion with Chriſt. Men may have a ſhew and ſemblance of holineſs, without union and communion with Chriſt. But real holineſs acceptable to God, no man attains but in Chriſt, being ſanctified only with his blood, by his Spirit, through faith; made new creatures after his image, by participation of the all-fulneſs of grace in him, as at large declared, 1 Cor. i. 2.

And therefore holineſs is quite another thing, than,

1. *Common civility.* A man may be civil, diſcreet, and obliging in his converſation; and yet a ſtranger to holineſs. This was the caſe of the young man, of whom, ‘when Jeſus ſaw that he anſwered diſcreetly, he ſaid unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God,’ Mark xii. 34. There are ſome rude perſons that bear the devil's mark on their foreheads, who behave themſelves neither according to the rules of grace nor good manners; ſome profeſſors that affect and pride themſelves in rudeneſs, regarding no body, nor their offence, but only pleaſe themſelves. Such would do well to conſider, whether that be conſiſtent with real holineſs or not. The reaſon of the doubt, is the ſecond great command of the law, *Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf.* Howbeit civility is not holineſs, though a part of the matter of it.

2. *Morality*, whether we underſtand by it common honeſty in dealings in the world; or a conformity to the

letter of the law, which makes a blameleſs converſation, and goes under the name of *moral virtue*, but has no relation to Chriſt and his Spirit. Men may have all this, and not be holy, as had the Phariſee, who thanked God, that he was no extortioner, unjuſt, adulterer. This alſo was the caſe of Paul, Philip. iii. 6. ‘Concerning zeal, perſecuting the church; touching the righteouſneſs which is in the law, blameleſs.’ Theſe fruits are in many, like the apples of Sodom, which are fair to look at, but when handled fall to aſhes.

3. *A form of godlineſs*, 2 Tim. iii. 5. They may go the round of the external duties of religion, where there is no holineſs: for theſe may be done by them that are without Chriſt; though many place all their religion in theſe things, as if they pray, communicate, &c. to be concerned no more to be holy.

All theſe differ from true holineſs.

1*ſt*, In the original and ſpring of them. True holineſs ſprings from union with Chriſt, the Spirit applying the blood of Chriſt to the ſoul, received by faith, improving the word, ſacraments, and afflictions. The Spirit is the efficient cauſe, the blood the meritorious cauſe, and faith the inſtrumental cauſe of ſanctification. But theſe others have a far lower riſe. They are the effect of good education; of conſideration of their own worldly intereſt that oblige many to take up themſelves, and live regularly; of reſpect and reputation; and in ſome, conviction.

2*dly*, In the ſubject of them. Holineſs diffuſeth itſelf through the whole man, inward and outward. Theſe are mere plaiſterings of the outward man, while enmity againſt God and godlineſs, remains in its native force, and the old man bears full ſway within; as appears in the Phariſees. They make a new life, but they leave the old nature unhealed, unrenewed.

3*dly*, In the extent of them. Holineſs extends to all God's commands: for the whole law is written in the heart, and ſo they are holy in all manner of converſation. Theſe never take in more than ſome ſhreds of the law; ſuch men never ſet themſelves to conform to it in its ſpirituality. They quite neglect many of the duties thereof; they conſider them not; for they have no mind to take more than makes for their purpoſe.

Laſtly, In the nature and kind of them. True holineſs is a cluſter of the fruits of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22. ‘Love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, faith, meekneſs, temperance.’ They are acts of moral diſcipline, which have ſelf love in an unrenewed heart, not the love of God in a renewed heart, for their principle. The reaſon of them is not the will of God; for reaſons of their own they do ſo, but not becauſe God commands it. They do not their works in faith of the promiſe of aſſiſtance from heaven, nor of acceptance for Chriſt's ſake; but out of their own ſtock, little valuing whether they be accepted or no; or if they do, looking for acceptance on their intrinſic worth. Their end is not the glory of God, and to expreſs their gratitude; but as they come from ſelf, ſo they are ſwallowed up in ſelf.

Inf. 3. Vain are the pretences of the unholy to part with Chriſt; for no unwaſhed ſinner has part with the holy Jeſus. They do but deceive themſelves in their pretending thereto; and the deceit will out on them to their eternal confuſion, if they ſee it not timely. Conſider,

1. Who are unwaſhed ſinners; and,
2. The ſtate of unwaſhed ſinners, as having no part with Chriſt.

1. Conſider who are unwaſhed ſinners. In the general,

1*ſt*, Thoſe who have not yet eſcaped the pollutions of the world, but in the courſe of their lives are conform to *the world lying in wickedneſs*. How can they pretend to be waſhed, on whom the filth of ſin is ſtill lying, viſible in their life and converſation? Men may eſcape that, and yet be intangled again by apoſtacy. Let none ſuch pretend to part in Chriſt, for Chriſt will diſown them.

2*dly*, They that have no apparent beauty of holineſs on them. Men deceive themſelves in deſpiſing the appearance of holineſs, ſcorning to appear holy. That is but a piece of faſhionable contempt of religion, poured on it in complaiſance to an ungodly world: for wherever grace is in the heart, it will ſhine forth in the life. And tho' men may appear holy, who are not ſo; yet no man can be holy that has no appearance of it. If there is any religion at all in the world, it muſt be among them that have an appearance of it, not among thoſe that have not.

More particularly, they are yet unwaſhed by Chriſt.

1*ſt*, Who have never yet had the glaſs of the law held to their face, in a work of conviction of their ſinful heart and life. Chriſt waſhes none till he has diſcovered to them their pollution. Till then they will never ſee their need of waſhing. He waſheth by the word, as it convinceth of defilement, points out the cleanneſs to be aimed at, and ſets the ſoul aſtir to ſeek it.

2*dly*, Who have not yet got a view of the abominable nature of ſin. Mens conſciences may be fired with a ſenſe of the guilt of ſin; ſo as they may be brought to caſt it out as a coal that would burn them; that yet are blind to the filth of ſin, and ſee not how it defiles them. This appears, in that if they could be ſafe from wrath, they would never part with ſin.

3*dly*, Who have not been made willing to be made clean. None are waſhed againſt their will. And there is need of a day of power to make willing. Men naturally love to lie in their ſins, as the ſow to wallow in the mire. They are as loath to be brought away, as fiſhes to come out of the water. Nay, there is in every unregenerate man, a heart-enmity againſt holineſs. The heart ſpits its venom againſt it. A certain indication that they are void of it.

4*thly*, Who have never yet felt an abſolute need of Chriſt, his blood, and Spirit, for their ſanctification; and ſo have not yet come to Chriſt for it. There is no waſhing, but by Chriſt, therefore they who have not come to Chriſt for ſanctification, whatever pains they have been at to waſh themſelves, are yet unwaſhed.

2. Conſider the ſtate of unwaſhed ſinners as having no part with Chriſt. Having no part with Chriſt,

1*ſt*, They have no part in the favour of God. They are ‘without Chriſt, being aliens from the commonwealth of Iſrael, and ſtrangers from the covenants of promiſe, having no hope, and without God in the world.’ They are yet in a ſtate of enmity with God, for he only is our peace, and the only way to the Father. All their ſins, original and actual, in the guilt of them, do yet lie upon them: there is not one *item* blotted out of their account. For God gives no pardon to ſinners, but in Chriſt: they muſt be in him who would be pardoned or reconciled.

2*dly*, They are loathſome in God's ſight; his ſoul abhors them as abominable. No ſinner can be ſavoury in God's ſight, but by the ſweet-ſmelling ſavour of Chriſt's ſacrifice upon them. The ſmell of Jacob was ſweet to Iſaac, in the goodly raiment of his elder brother: and ſinners are ſavoury to God, only in Chriſt. While the ſinner has no part with Chriſt, the filth of all his ſins, original and actual, lies on him; and there is nothing on him to maſter the filthy ſavour ariſing therefrom.

3*dly*, They have no part with the family of God, but with *the world lying in wickedneſs*. Compare Eph. ii. 12. forecited. They have no right to the privileges of God's children; for none can have that, but in the right of Chriſt as his head. What is the ſtate of the world lying in wickedneſs, is their ſtate. They are under God's wrath and the curſe of the law.

Laſtly, They ſhall have no part with the ſaints in light, but their part will be with ſinners in outer darkneſs. One who has no part with Chriſt here, will have no part in heaven hereafter; for none can enter there, but in and through him. They will have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimſtone, Rev. xxi. 8.

Inf. 4. *laſtly*, The way to be waſhed from ſin, and made holy, is to get part with Chriſt by faith.

1. Think not that ye muſt firſt be holy, before ye can have part with Chriſt: but ye muſt firſt have part with Chriſt, ere ye can be holy, as appears from what is ſaid. The former is as abſurd as to ſay, the ſick muſt be cured ere he come to the phyſician, or the filthy waſhed ere he come to the waters. Hence your unholineſs cannot bar you from getting part with Chriſt,

2. This is a ſure way to holineſs; it cannot miſgive. For hereby the ſick are put in the hand of the phyſician, the filthy in the laver. The ſinner united to Chriſt, muſt needs partake of his blood and Spirit: as through our relation to Adam we are defiled, ſo by our relation to Chriſt, we come to be ſanctified.

3. *laſtly*, This is the only way, as being of God's appointment. The ſanctification of a ſinner is above the power of nature, not to be reached by natural endeavours; they have not that word of appointment.

The diſtinguiſhing Characters of real Chriſtians.

Being the Subſtance of ſeveral SERMONS.

PHILIP. iii. 3.

For we are the circumciſion, which worſhip God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the fleſh.

THE apoſtle here gives a reaſon why he had called thoſe falſe teachers, againſt whom he cautions the Philippians, *the conciſion; viz.* becauſe he and all true believers, and not they, had the beſt claim to circumciſion. In the words there are two things.

I. A poſition: *We are the circumciſion.*

II. The proof of it; taken from the deſcription of the true circumciſion, which agrees to believers only.

In the poſition we have,

1. The party to whom the honourable controverted character belongs: *We*. Which includes, (1.) The apoſtle himſelf, who was circumciſed in the fleſh. (2.) The Philippian church, to whom he ſpeaks, who being Gentiles, were not circumciſed in the fleſh; which was the great quarrel the ſalſe apoſtles had with them. Yet this character doth not comprehend all of the church of Philippi: but the ſaints among them, to whom the following deſcription agreed, and therefore all believers; that *worſhip God in the ſpirit, and rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the fleſh.*

2. That character itſelf; *the circumciſion*, i. e. the circumciſed people. Now, they were not the circumciſed in the fleſh; therefore it is meant of their circumciſion in the ſpirit. Rom. ii. 29. 'He is a Jew, which is one 'inwardly; and circumciſion is that of the heart, in the 'ſpirit, and not in the letter, whoſe praiſe is not of men, 'but of God.' They had the thing ſignified by circumciſion; while others that boaſted of circumciſion, had only the bare outward ſign. And as the thing is far better than the ſign of it, ſo they deſerved the name beſt.

Before we proceed farther, we may deduce a few doctrinal obſervations from this firſt part of the verſe.

Doct. 1. *The ſacraments of the Old and New Teſtament are in ſubſtance the ſame.* The Philippians, who were baptized with the Holy Ghoſt, as well as with water, are ſaid to be circumciſed. And ſo the apoſtle attributes our baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper after a ſort to the church of the Jews; 1 Cor. x. 1, 2, 3, 4. *Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye ſhould be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under a cloud, and all paſſed through the ſea; and were all baptized unto Moſes in the cloud, and in the ſea; and did all eat the ſame ſpiritual meat; and did all drink the ſame ſpiritual drink; (for they drank of that ſpiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Chriſt.)* As the covenant was always the ſame in ſubſtance, ſo the ſeals of it were the ſame too. I note this, to guard againſt the Popiſh errors in making the ſacraments of the Old Teſtament only ſhadow forth that grace which the ſacraments of the New do confer, according to them; and that they were not the ſame in efficacy.

Doct. 2. *The reality of that which ſeducers do pretend unto, will more readily be found in thoſe that conſcientiouſly oppoſe them.* Theſe men run down the apoſtle, and other believers, in the point of circumciſion; giving out themſelves only for the circumciſed ones. But the apoſtle proves they had a better claim to it, than thoſe that made all the noiſe about it. Thus the works of holineſs are to be found more with thoſe that preſs juſtification by faith, than with others who would be looked on as the great patrons of good works.

Uſe. Be not then deceived with fair ſpeeches, but examine matters to the bottom; for thoſe that have the higheſt pretences to right on their ſide, go fartheſt from it. And think it no uncouth thing, to find thoſe who have deſerted the principles of the Preſbyterian church of Scotland in their ſeparation, give out themſelves for the only adherents thereto.

Doct. 3. *The ſign in religion without the thing ſignified, is little worth.* They are but the *conciſion*, and deſerve no other name, that have only circumciſion in the fleſh. We are the *circumciſion* that have the thing ſignified thereby. To confirm this, conſider,

1. All it can do is but to give a name before men, which they loſe before God: Rom. ii. 28, 29. 'For he is 'not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumciſion, which is outward in the fleſh: but he is a 'Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumciſion is that 'of the heart, in the ſpirit, and not in the letter, whoſe 'praiſe is not of men, but of God.' *Chriſtians* we will be called among men, upon our receiving the ſign of it; but we will be but as the children of the Ethiopian before the Lord, if we have no more. It may give us an honourable title in the world, but it is but an empty title before God.

2. The ſign is but a mere external thing, on which nothing of weight for ſalvation can hang: it is too little to make any ſaving difference betwixt them that have it, and others that want it. And therefore when the Lord comes to judgment, he throws it down altogether, for he looks not to the outward appearance, but to the heart.

3. The ſign in religion without the thing ſignified, is but an inefficacious thing; as a body without a ſpirit. The ſacraments have each two parts, the ſign, and the thing ſignified. He that hath got the ſign only, hath only the half, and the meaneſt half too. Sacraments are ſeals of the covenant; but where there is no covenant, there can be no ſeal: and what avails a ſeal at a blank? They apply Chriſt to believers; but where there is no receiving, how can they apply?

4. As men may in Chriſt's livery abide in the devil's ſervice, ſo they may and will go with it into the place prepared for the devil and his angels, if they have not the thing ſignified. Thus our Lord tells us, that ſome ſhall ſay to him at the laſt day, 'We have eaten and drunk in 'thy preſence, and thou haſt taught in our ſtreets;' but that he ſhall ſay unto ſuch, 'I tell you, I know you not 'whence you are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.' Some are circumciſed, and yet are dogs, whoſe place is *without*. As to this privilege, avail it may to mens greater condemnation, but no further.

For *application*: Is the ſacramental ſign little worth without the thing ſignified thereby? then I would have you take a back-look of your baptiſm and communicating. For to change the word into that which the goſpel gives, we may ſay, We, and only we, are the baptized, the communicants, that ‘worſhip God in the ſpirit, rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the fleſh.’ For there are two great truths which plainly follow from this,

1. Baptiſm with water without being baptized by the Holy Ghoſt, is little worth. It is the dreadful ſin of the generation, that they never reflect ſeriouſly on their baptiſm. Hence are two great evils. (1.) They are children of Belial. They live as if they had never ſworn allegiance to the King of heaven, but were entirely their own. (2.) They will be the children of Belial. They will not renew their baptiſmal vows in the ſacrament of the ſupper, nor prepare themſelves thereto. They will come under any covenant or engagement to men, but they will not come under engagements to the Lord. They are obliged to their parents care in their infancy, that got them baptized; but if they had been yet unbaptized, and would act like themſelves, they would refuſe and ſlight baptiſm, as well as the other ſacrament. But let me lay home to the conſciences of baptized perſons, a few queries touching their baptiſm.

1ſt, In the general. It is true, ye are waſhed with water; but are ye baptized indeed? Ye have the ſign, but have ye got the thing ſignified? Baptized ye were with water, but were ye ever to this day baptized with the Holy Ghoſt and with fire? Alas! that univerſal coldneſs in the things of God in our affections, ſays, that as to moſt men, the fire of God's Spirit never came on them yet.

2dly, But more particularly, I would aſk you,

(1.) Haſt thou ever yet ſeen that univerſal defilement of thy whole man, how that Adam left thee lying in thy blood, and a child of wrath, Eph. ii. 3.? Haſt thou ever yet ſeen the filth of ſin ſo deep in thy nature and life, that no tears, prayers, &c. of thine, but only the blood and Spirit of Chriſt, could waſh thee? In baptiſm there is a profeſſion of all this. If thou haſt not ſeen this, what avails thy baptiſm? why waſt thou waſhed at all in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt?

(2.) Waſt thou ever yet made partaker of the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt; that is the thing ſignified by baptiſm. Alas! what avails the waſhing of the body with water, while Chriſt's blood has never been ſprinkled on the conſcience, nor the water of the Spirit of Chriſt poured on the filthy ſoul? Alas! I fear many may in this matter make that confeſſion of their faith, Acts xix. 2. ‘We have not ſo much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghoſt;’ and therefore I would ſay, ‘Unto what then were ye baptized?’ They know nothing about regeneration, nor the Spirit's work upon the ſoul.

(3.) Were ye ever cut off from the old ſtock of Adam, and ingrafted into Chriſt, 1 Cor. xii. 13.? Ye will then be knit to Chriſt by faith; ye will be branches of him, bringing forth the fruits of holineſs, living by faith. Ah! baptized in the name of Chriſt, and yet not in Chriſt, but without God in the world, makes ſad work.

(4.) Are luſts living and reigning; or are they dying, and your ſouls living a new life, Rom. vi. 4, 5.? The water was caſt on you indeed, as the earth on a dead corpſe; but what avails that if ye never yet died to ſin? Ye have got free of that water caſt on you at baptiſm, but what avails it if ye be dead in ſin, and alienated from the life of God? Ah! what are moſt of us but walking ghoſts?

2. Communicating in the Lord's Supper without the thing ſignified, is little worth. To be partakers of the bread of the Lord, without being partakers of the bread which is the Lord, will go but a ſmall length.

1ſt, Have ye indeed eaten Chriſt's fleſh and drank his blood by faith? Had ye an appetite after Chriſt, and have ye reliſhed the ſweetneſs of every part of Chriſt, as one does of the bread which he eats; and have your ſouls knit with him, and received life from him for your nouriſhment? Ah! what avails bread and wine without this?

2dly, Do you live by him, John vi. 57.? Is Chriſt the ſtaff and comfort of your ſouls? Have ye ſet on to live the new life of obedience? Is it from him ye draw influences for actuating of grace, and for your growth? Do ye *worſhip God in ſpirit, rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the fleſh?* then, and not otherwiſe, are ye the *circumciſion*.

Doct. 4. *ult. Believers in Chriſt are the true circumciſion.* They have that in the ſpirit, which the Jews by this ordinance had in the letter. To illuſtrate this, conſider,

1. Circumciſion was a token of God's covenant, Gen. xvii. 7. ‘And I will eſtabliſh my covenant between me and thee, and thy ſeed after thee, in their generations, for an everlaſting covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy ſeed after thee.’ This is the privilege of every believer; he is in covenant with God, God is his God. O what a privilege is this, to be confederate with Heaven, to have God himſelf to be ours, heirs of God; ſo that God is the heritage! ‘This honour have all the ſaints.’

2. Circumciſion diſtinguiſhed the Jews from others, as God's people from thoſe that were not his. So are believers God's Iſrael, his *peculiar people*, while the reſt of the world are but as his *outfield*. They have the ſpecial preſence of God with them, his peculiar care, protection, &c.; and are not numbered among the nations.

3. Circumciſion was the cutting off of a part of the fleſh: ſignifying that which believers have as their privilege as well as duty, the ‘putting off of the body of ſins,’ Col. ii. 11. Thus believers ‘have put off the old man with his deeds.’ This is begun in regeneration, and carried on in gradual ſanctification; their luſts are cut off, and caſt from them in ſome meaſure. Their hearts are circumciſed to love the Lord, ſo as they have new affections; their ears to hear his voice, which could not reach them before; and their lips to ſpeak holineſs for God.

4. Circumciſion was a bloody ordinance; witneſs Ziporah, who ‘took a ſharp ſtone, and cut off the foreſkin of her ſon, and ſaid, Surely a bloody huſband art thou to me; A bloody huſband thou art, becauſe of the circumciſion.’ So it is through the blood of the everlaſting covenant, that the elect become God's people. They come to all their privileges by the way of blood: ſo that they may write on the covenant, and all their privileges, from the greateſt ſeat in heaven, to the meaneſt drop of water on earth, *The price of blood.*

5. Hence it was a painful ordinance. So is the believer's mortification of his luſts. They are naturally addicted to the ways of the fleſh, as well as others; but they are helped with grace to cut off right hands, and right eyes, however unpleaſant it be to corrupt nature.

6. It was the fleſh of the foreſkin that was cut off, to teach them how ſin is propagated by ordinary generation; and in true believers, the axe of mortification is laid to the root of the tree; the true circumciſion reaching a ſtroke not only to particular luſts, but to the ſin of our nature, Gal. v. 24.

7. It was in a ſecret part of the body. So true circumciſion is *that of the heart*. They are not outſide Chriſtians only, but the hidden man of the heart is for God; and ‘the king's daughter is all glorious within.’

8. It ſealed the covenant of promiſes, particularly that of the righteouſneſs of faith, Rom. iv. and of Canaan's land. So they are heirs of the heavenly Canaan, and that righteouſneſs is theirs.

9. *laſtly*, It was an engagement to duty on them. ſo is God's grace on believers a ſingular engagement to duty.

Inf. 1. Then be among believers who will now, they ſhall for ever be cut off from among them that are not ſuch as they. Wo to the hypocritical profeſſor, who is not thus honoured.

2. Then believers are Abraham's ſeed, and heirs of the promiſe. They have all thoſe privileges in ſpirit and truth, that the Iſrael according to the fleſh had in the letter, which may help them comfortably to apply thoſe glorious things ſpoke of Iſrael in the Old Teſtament. Hence believers are called ‘a choſen generation, a royal prieſthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.’ 1 Pet. ii 9.

3. Let the ſaints keep at a diſtance from the profane

world. They whom God has diſtinguiſhed from others, ſhould not mix themſelves, with Ephraim, among the people. ‘ A companion of fools ſhall be deſtroyed.’

4. *laſtly*, Diſtinguiſh yourſelves from others by your holy life. Let it appear that ye are circumciſed in heart, lip and life, that ſin has got a root-ſtroke, and the luſts thereof cut off. And ſo I come to the

II. *Second* thing, the proof of the poſition, contained in a deſcription of the true circumciſion ; that is, of the true people of God. There are many diſputes concerning this : but the apoſtle lays down a rule for deciding the controverſy. He gives three diſtinguiſhing characters of God's people. 1. They worſhip God in the ſpirit : 2. they joy in Chriſt ; 3. They have no confidence in the fleſh. Whoſoever can make good his claim to theſe, is a true Chriſtian.

I. The firſt character of a ſaint is, he is one that worſhips God in the ſpirit. In which there are three things. 1. He is a worſhipper, and ſo is diſtinguiſhed from atheiſts. 2. The object of his worſhip is the true God; and ſo is diſtinguiſhed from idolaters. 3. The manner of it, in the ſpirit ; and ſo is diſtinguiſhed from hypocrites.

DOCT. *Theſe, and only theſe, are God's people, true ſaints, real Chriſtians, who worſhip God in the Spirit.*

In diſcourſing this doctrine, I ſhall ſhew,

I. What it is to worſhip God in the Spirit.

II. That this worſhipping of God in Spirit, is a diſtinguiſhing mark of a true Chriſtian.

III. *laſtly*, Apply.

I. I ſhall ſhew *what it is to worſhip God in the ſpirit.* It is, in a word, to give ſpiritual worſhip to God, to worſhip him, and be ſpiritual in the worſhip. Now, this reſpects two things.

Firſt, It reſpects the whole of our ſervice and obedience to God in our whole converſation. God hath given us a law ; in keeping of that law lies our ſervice to God. The parts of it are two ; holineſs, comprehending our duty to God ; righteouſneſs, comprehending love to our neighbour. We have both theſe in one ſcripture, viz. Luke i. 74, 75. ‘ That he would grant unto us, that we ‘ being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might ‘ ſerve him without fear, in holineſs and righteouſneſs ‘ before him all the days of our life.’ It is the ſame word as in our text, which is by ſome rendered, *that ſerve God in ſpirit, viz.* not only in the acts of immediate worſhip, but in the whole of their courſe. And the Chriſtian life is one continued act of worſhip, where all their actions meet in God : and is therefore called a ſerving of God day and night, in alluſion to the prieſts and Levites that were always about the temple, and no wonder, for they are prieſts unto God. Second table duties are turned by them into firſt ; James i. 27. ‘ Pure religion and ‘ and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To ‘ viſit the fatherleſs and widows in their affliction, and ‘ to keep himſelf unſpotted from the world.’ Heb. xiii. 16. ‘ But to do good, and to communicate forget not : ‘ for with ſuch ſacrifices God is well pleaſed.’ Now, the Chriſtian is ſpiritual in theſe things. We muſt preach as well as pray in the Spirit.

Secondly, It reſpects thoſe duties of religion, which are parts of worſhip properly ſo called, as prayer, praiſe, &c. A true Chriſtian will make conſcience of theſe ; he will worſhip God, and that in the ſpirit. If he pray, he will pray in the Spirit, praiſe and hear in the Spirit. Now the worſhipping of God in ſpirit lies in theſe two.

1. The true Chriſtian worſhips God with his ſoul and ſpirit, and not with his body only. Hence Paul ſays, that he ‘ ſerved God with his ſpirit in the goſpel of his Son.’ The Jews in our Saviour's days had religion extremely ſunk among them ; it was turned into mere bodily exerciſe, for the moſt part ; therefore Chriſt tells them, ‘ God ‘ is a Spirit, and they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him ‘ in ſpirit and in truth.’ This implies theſe things.

1ſt, The true Chriſtian is an internal worſhipper of God. There is an external worſhip called for in the ſecond commandment, ſuch as hearing, praying with the voice, &c. There is alſo an internal worſhip called for by the firſt commandment. In outward worſhip the body acts its part, in the inward the ſoul only acts. This lies in the ſoul's depending on God, which is the life of practical godlineſs. The true Chriſtian's ſoul is the temple of God ; and in the Chriſtian's heart, and there only, is God thus worſhipped. They may make din enough in the outer court with worſhip to God, who never worſhip God there ; while ſelf and luſts, as the abomination of deſolation, ſtand in the holy place.

2dly, The true Chriſtian joins inward to outward worſhip, and ſo body and ſpirit go on jointly. Hence Paul exhorts, ‘ to glorify God in the body and in the ſpirit, ‘ which are God's.’ As the body without the ſoul, ſo outward without inward worſhip, is but a lifeleſs lump. It is not praying, but *praying in the ſpirit*, that is the diſtinguiſhing character of a Chriſtian. Then do men worſhip God in ſpirit, when their hearts go with their bodies before the Lord, when with the lifting up of the hands, the affections are lifted towards the Lord. What avails the moving of the lips, while no moving of agreeable affections ; hearing of the word with the ear, while the ſoul is like a deaf adder, petitions of good things, without ſincere deſires of them from the heart ; confeſſions of ſin, without hatred of it ; It is but lip labour.

3dly, The true Chriſtian aims at, and in ſome meaſure attains the ſpirituality of worſhip. The ſpirit of the Chriſtian, in worſhipping God, is employed in that part whereof it alone is capable ; not only to do the thing, but to do it in a right manner. As we worſhip God with our bodies, not only uſing them in his ſervice, but compoſing them to an allowable outward geſture ; ſo we worſhip God in our ſpirits, while they are not only employed in converſing with God, but alſo acting thoſe things in the manner preſcribed by himſelf. There are four things that belong to the worſhipping God in ſpirit, without which the very motions of our ſpirit, though good in themſelves, would be carnal. So the apoſtle calls his old obeying of the law *fleſh*, Philip. iii. 6. with verſe 4.

(1.) The true Chriſtian diſcerns the commandment, and acts in worſhipping God from a ſenſe of it. For ‘ Whatſoever is not of faith is ſin.’ He believes ſo and ſo, becauſe God has ſaid it ; and does ſo and ſo, becauſe God has bid it. The will of God, to a Chriſtian, will not only be the rule, but the reaſon of his worſhip ; hence the hardeſt piece of it is not neglected ; as we find in the caſe of Abraham's offering up Iſaac, Gen. xxii.

(2.) The true Chriſtian worſhips the Lord out of love to him : Heb. vi. 10. ‘ God is not unrighteous to forget ‘ your work and labour of love, which ye have ſhewed ‘ toward his name,’ &c. Hence the whole of our ſervice to God comes under the name of *love* in the ſum of the commandments. If the domineering principle of our worſhip be ſelf love, or ſlaviſh fear, it is not worſhipping God in ſpirit, 2 Tim. i. 7. ‘ For God hath not given us ‘ the ſpirit of fear ; but of love, and of a ſound mind.’

(3.) The true Chriſtian worſhips God with good will. Eph. vi. 7. ‘ With good will they do ſervice, as to the ‘ Lord and not to men.’ And ſays the church, ‘ Thou ‘ meeteſt him that rejoiceth and worketh righteouſneſs.’ If the heart be away from the work, and it be done grudgingly, doubtleſs it is ſpiritleſs work.

(4.) The true Chriſtian worſhips God for his honour and glory, as his chief end. 1 Cor. x. 31. ‘ Whether ‘ ye eat or drink, or whatſoever ye do, do all to the glo‘ ry of God :’ and Chriſtians aim at it accordingly, Philip. i. 21. ‘ For to me to live is Chriſt, and to die is gain.’ If ſelf get up higheſt here, it is not ſpiritual worſhip.

2. The true Chriſtian worſhips God by the influence of the Spirit. Eph. vi. 18. ‘ Praying always with all ‘ prayer and ſupplication in the Spirit.’ Jude verſe 20. ‘ But ye, beloved praying in the Holy Ghoſt,’ &c. And this aſſiſtance is given two ways.

1ſt, The Spirit gives habitual grace to make the man capable of ſpiritual worſhip, 1 Tim. i. 5. ‘ Now the end ‘ of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, ‘ and of a good conſcience, and of faith unfeigned.’ The carnal heart which the regenerating Spirit has never changed, is not capable of this worſhip.

2dly, He gives actual grace, influences to ſtir up grace, Rom. viii. 26. For 'the Spirit helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itſelf maketh interceſſion for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.' He blows on the ſoul, and makes the ſpices ſend forth their pleaſant ſmell. It is through him they mortify the deeds of the body, and by him they ſerve the Lord, for they live out of themſelves, by the Spirit of Chriſt.

II. I ſhall ſhew *that this worſhipping of God in ſpirit is a diſtinguiſhing mark of a true Chriſtian.*

1. All true Chriſtians capable of worſhipping God have it. It is not the attainment of the firſt three only; the higheſt and loweſt in Chriſt's ſchool, the ſtrongeſt and weakeſt of Chriſt's family, have it, though in different degrees. For,

1ſt, All of them are ſpiritual, becauſe born of the Spirit; and every thing that brings forth, brings forth its like. As ſoon as they are born, they are fitted for ſpiritual actions. And ſeeing every thing acts according to its nature, the new nature will make people ſerve the Lord in 'newneſs of the Spirit, not in the oldneſs of the letter.'

2dly, All of them have the Spirit of God dwelling in them, ſo that 'they are not in the fleſh, but in the Spirit.' Now, the Spirit is given to help our infirmities, and to help us to worſhip God in the right manner. And he will never leave his people altogether carnal.

3dly, That worſhip which is merely outward is but the carcaſe of duties, unacceptable to God; and they that never perform more than this, are but hypocrites. Matth. xv. 7, 8. 'Ye hypocrites, well did Eſaias propheſy of you, ſaying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, but their heart is far from me.'

4thly, External worſhip is but the means of worſhip; all outward ordinances, as prayer, hearing, &c. tend to the promoting of love; and the enjoyment of God can never be found but in worſhipping him in ſpirit. So that unleſs we will ſay a man may be a true Chriſtian, and never enjoy God in any duty, it is plain all Chriſtians muſt worſhip God in the ſpirit.

2. That none but true Chriſtians have this privilege is plain from this, that none other are ſpiritual; they are in the fleſh, and cannot pleaſe God; they are ſenſual, not having the Spirit, Jude 19. What they do, is at beſt but the product of their own ſpirits; which may carry the length of moral ſeriouſneſs. None but true Chriſtians can ever attain the ſpirituality of worſhip.

The APPLICATION.

Inf. 1. Then there are many in the church that are none of God's people. This caſts,

1. All thoſe that do not worſhip God. There is a generation that call not upon God at all, in ſecret or in families. Such are practical Atheiſts. Is there a God, and will not ye worſhip him? Remember that God will not acknowledge you that acknowledge not him.

2. Thoſe that halve their worſhip. As, (1.) Thoſe who will worſhip God in public, but in their families and cloſets not at all. (2.) Thoſe who perform outward duties, but never internal worſhip; it is the leaſt half ye do.

3. Thoſe whoſe religion is confined to their approaches to God, but have nothing of it in their ordinary converſation: whereas the Chriſtian's life is one continued act of worſhip; he is *in the fear of the Lord all the day long.*

4. Thoſe who worſhip not God in ſpirit. And,

(1.) Thoſe whoſe worſhip is bodily exerciſe, who may ſhew a great deal of devotion in their outward carriage, but have nothing of ſoul devotion with it.

(2.) Thoſe whoſe worſhip is only the exerciſe of their own ſpirits by themſelves, not by the Spirit of the Lord, and are ſtrangers to the aſſiſtance of the holy Spirit. Without this our worſhip is but carnal.

Inf. 2. Then all that worſhip God in ſpirit, may conclude, that they are real Chriſtians. Spiritual worſhippers are ſpiritual Chriſtians, *whoſe praiſe is not of men, but of God*, and ſhall be gathered amongſt the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, when carnal worſhippers ſhall be led forth with the workers of iniquity. Now, for ridding of marches here, I offer ſome marks to diſtinguiſh thoſe that worſhip God in ſpirit from others.

1. The ſpiritual worſhipper's ſoul goes along with his body in the worſhip of God; his heart is in ſome meaſure brought up to the duty. Pſal. cxix. 58. 'I entreated thy favour with my whole heart.' His tongue and other members of his body employed in worſhip, are faithful interpreters of his mind, Lam. iii. 41. 'Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens.' 1 Tim. ii. 8. 'I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.' The affections of the mind anſwer the actions of the body. 1 Cor. xiv. 14. 'My ſpirit prayeth, but my underſtanding is unfruitful. A man's ſpirit prayeth (1.) when he knows what he wants and ſeeks; (2.) when he has affections anſwerable to his petitions.

But ah! what ſhall we ſay of that worſhip, where the heart joins not with the body? His body prays, but his ſpirit does not; his ears hear, but his heart is ſtopped; his mouth eats and drinks bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, but his ſoul feeds not on Chriſt. Nay, this is not ſpiritual, but carnal worſhip. There are three ways how the ſoul joins not in the worſhip.

1ſt, Sometimes the man's ſpirit leaves him in duty quite, unleſs it be juſt as far as to keep him from ſpeaking nonſenſe; and oft times it leaves ſo far, that indeed he ſpeaks he knows not what before the Lord. The man is active enough about buſineſs till he come to his knees, and then he expires as it were; the heart leaves him at the foot of the mount of God, and he never finds it till he come down again from the mount of duties.

2dly, Sometimes the heart is intent on the carcaſe of the worſhip, but neglects the life and ſoul of it, 1 Cor. xiii. 1. 'Though I ſpeak with the tongues of men, and angels, and have not charity, I am become as ſounding braſs, or a tinkling cymbal.' The man has a naughty heart, like a potſherd covered with ſilver droſs. A garb of devotion appears on him outwardly; there is never a wrong word in the prayer, and yet never one right affection, or true concern about the thing. This takes place eſpecially in duties before others, where the eyes and ears of men are on them; which the falſe heart is more concerned to pleaſe than the heart ſearching God. Hence are men very lively to appearance in publick, and yet as dead and flat in ſecret as ever: for the fire goes out, when men want the breathe of applauſe to blow it up.

3dly, Sometimes the heart is ſo far from joining in the worſhip, that there are particulars which it enters its diſſent againſt. "Lord, make me holy; kill this luſt, let me never turn to it again," ſays the man. If the man truly conſider what he ſays, the heart ſtarts back from this petition, being glued to that luſt; and he would think that he had but a ſorry off-come, if God ſhould take him at his word, he would ſay, as Peter in another caſe, *Thou ſhalt never waſh my feet*: and with the Iſraelites, Jer. ii. 25. 'I have loved ſtrangers, and after them will I go.'

But are your hearts in good earneſt in your worſhip? Do you labour to bring your heart to duty, and to fix it on the life and ſoul, and not on the outward carcaſe of duty? Are your ſouls reconciled to the promiſes, which are the rule of prayers, particularly to thoſe of univerſal ſanctification, ſo that you have no petitions againſt which the heart diſſents; your ſpirit goes along with your body in worſhip, and ſo ye are worſhippers in ſpirit? To clear further this mark, I ſhall here ſpeak to two queſtions.

Queſt. 1. *May not the heart of a hypocrite, in worſhipping of God, be intent upon the thing he is about, and have earneſt affections to obtain it?* I anſwer, he may. Felix's mind was not only fixed on Paul's words, but on the things preached by him, otherwiſe he had not trembled ſo as he did. The ſtony-ground hearers wanted not affection to the word; nor the fooliſh virgins in their prayer, Matth. xxv. 11. 'Lord, Lord, open to us;' no doubt they were in earneſt in it. But all this amounts to no more than moral ſeriouſneſs, Job ii. 4. 'Skin for ſkin, yea, all that man hath will he give for his life;' which is far different from ſpiritual ſincerity. Principles of ſelf-love may tie a man's heart to thoſe things which he thinks neceſſary to his ſafety. And ſo all thoſe affections of hypocrites to ſpiritual things, are but carnal affections, proceeding on a comparative judgment; that is to ſay, the man would rather part with his ſin than go to hell for it; but otherwiſe he would be as loath to part with his luſt as with a limb: in which caſe, though the man hold out his leg to the ſurgeon to be cut off, his heart is far from going along with the action; as the Lord afflicts his people *not willingly*, Lam. iii. 33. But the gracious ſoul goes alongſt with it on an abſolute judgment, as the priſoner holds out his leg to one that would take off the fetters, with which the heart goes alongſt.

Queſt. 2. *May not a ſincere ſoul, in worſhip, fall into thoſe things whereby we have ſaid the ſoul joins not with the body in worſhip? Anſw.* 1. in the general, Every godly ſoul does not at all times worſhip God in ſpirit, Cant. iii. 1. 'By night on my bed I ſought him whom my ſoul loveth; I ſought him, but I found him not.' Sometimes their ſpirits are taken napping, and their worſhip would be a very ſorry evidence of their ſtate. The fleſh gets above the ſpirit, and they will be very dead and formal. But that is not their way, but their wandering off their way, which they have been on, and certainly will come again to. 2. More particularly, I would ſay, (1.) Though their hearts may be apt to wander, yet when they are awake, they will ſtruggle to bring them to the duty. And though they cannot hinder the birds to fly about their heads, yet they will endeavour that they do not neſtle in their hair, by entertaining of them. (2.) So far as theſe prevail, or a greater intenſeneſs on the carcaſe than life of duties, ſo far will the ſpiritual worſhipper be diſſatisfied with himſelf, and with the duty, and reckon it loſt with reſpect to the ends of worſhip; which muſt humble him, and make him groan as under a burden he longs to be rid of. (3.) In ſo far as there is fleſh in him, there will be a diſſent from the petitions of the Spirit, and its actings in worſhip; but in ſo far as there is Spirit in in him, there will be an anſwer to that diſſent of the fleſh, and a proteſtation of adherence to the petition, notwithſtanding the diſſent of the fleſh, 'The Spirit [luſteth] againſt the fleſh.'

2. The ſpiritual worſhipper aims at the enjoyment of God himſelf in duties. Pſal. xxvii. 4. 'One thing have I deſired of the Lord, that will I ſeek after, that I may dwell in the houſe of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.' Pſal. lxiii. 1, 2. 'O God, thou art my God, early will I ſeek thee: my ſoul thirſteth for thee, my fleſh longeth for thee in a dry and thirſty land, where no water is: to ſee thy power and thy glory, ſo as I have ſeen thee in the ſanctuary.' He comes to the galleries of ordinances, becauſe the king is held there; goes through the ſtreets and broad ways of duties to find his ſoul's beloved. Thus as God in Chriſt is the object, ſo he is the end of their worſhip. For clearing of this, I offer four things.

1ſt, The ſpiritual worſhipper has a ſpiritual aim in worſhipping of God. It is a heavenly trade he is driving by divine ordinances, a trade with another world, to be enriched with the product thereof. Philip. iii. 20. 'Our converſation is in heaven, from whence alſo we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.' He is carried above the carnal deſigns that many narrow ſouls have in their religion, as that of a name, or ſome other carnal intereſt, as thoſe who followed Chriſt for the loaves, and many others who make religion a lacquey to intereſt.

2dly, The ſpiritual worſhipper aims at ſomething in duties above ſelf, even the enjoyment of God. It is ſad to think how many duties to God are performed, ſo as they run all as Jordan into the dead ſea of ſelf in the end. Moſt men ſeek themſelves, their ſecurity from wrath by duties, rather than God. But when the heart is ſpiritualized, it is unſelfed; God himſelf becomes man's chief end, the centre of the ſoul, to which it tends by virtue of the new nature, which is a grace called godlineſs.

3dly, The ſpiritual worſhipper aims at himſelf, as well as his benefits, in his worſhip. They come to ſeek him in his worſhip, not only as a maſter who muſt get work, and ſo will give wages; but as a huſband who gives himſelf to his ſpouſe, who gives herſelf to him. It is in the duties of his worſhip that the ſoul comes to be united more and more to God in this world; and they are appointed for that end, and uſed for it by ſaints.

4thly, The ſpiritual worſhipper aims at the being partaker of the divine nature in his worſhip. For as the iron is laid in the fire that it may be all fired; ſo the ſpiritual worſhipper lays himſelf before the Lord, that he may be transformed into his image. And this is moſt properly the enjoyment of God; while the ſoul being knit to him by faith, his Spirit changes it, 1 John iii. 2. 'We know, that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him; for we ſhall ſee him as he is.' And this is a diſtinguiſhing character of a ſpiritual worſhipper; for ſeeing the carnal mind is enmity againſt God, and all the attributes of God are not any thing diſtinct from him, the heart of the moſt refined hypocrite can no more be reconciled to his perfections, than light to darkneſs. Wherefore the ſoul ſeeking to enjoy God in his communicable perfections, ſeeks the enjoyment of God himſelf, and is a ſpiritual worſhipper. Thus ye ſee the nature of this mark. And hence two things may fairly be inferred.

(1.) That ſpiritual worſhippers look on external duties only as means to communion with God, and therefore will not reſt in the work done. They are but the way to communion with God, and therefore are valuable only as means. They that look for no more of duties, but to get them done and by hand, are carnal worſhippers, that take up with the grave cloaths, while the Lord is not there. Have over by this ſermon, prayer, &c. will the ſaint ſay; for he is not as he who is to ſail for pleaſure, and therefore ſeeks not to go over but as a paſſenger.

(2.) That ſpiritual worſhippers will not be ſatisfied with duties, unleſs they enjoy God in them; Cant. iii. 2. 4. 'I will riſe now, and go about the city in the ſtreets, and in the broad ways I will ſeek him whom my ſoul loveth: I ſought him, but I found him not. It was but a little that I paſſed from them, but I found him whom my ſoul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's houſe, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.' What avail the galleries, while the King is not ſeen walking in them? And if this be ſo, few worſhip God in ſpirit, ſeeing ſo many can tarry without grief of heart at Jeruſalem, come to ſermons, and never ſee the King's face.

3. Spiritual worſhippers act in their worſhip from a higher principle than their own ſpirits, even the Spirit of the Lord. Spiritual worſhip is a ſupernatural action, which carnal men are incapable of; and therefore there muſt be a ſupernatural principle of it. The moſt refined hypocrite doth but exerciſe a gift in worſhipping of the Lord, and is deſtitute of the ſanctifying Spirit's influences; their own ſpirits at beſt do but exert their natural powers in the beſt duties by them performed; carnal men are called *ſenſual*, whoſe own ſouls are their higheſt principles; *they have not the Spirit*, which is neceſſary to ſpiritualize a ſoul. And ſo in oppoſition to theſe they are bid *pray in the Holy Ghoſt*. And the performing of ſpiritual worſhip thus, ſays,

1ſt, The ſpiritual worſhipper looks not and lippens not to his ſtock within him for the performance of duties, but comes to duty under a ſenſe of wants and weakneſs, 2 Cor. iii. 5. 'We are not ſufficient of ourſelves to think any thing as of ourſelves; but our ſufficiency is of God.' He dare not adventure on the Lord's work in his own ſtrength; whereas the conceity hypocrite lippens to and works the duty out of the ſtock within him; for he is never *poor in ſpirit*, Matth. v. 3.

2dly, He looks to the Lord for the influences of his Spirit, crying and ſpreading out his ſails for a gale from above; as did the ſpouſe, Cant. iv. *ult.* 'Awake, O north-wind, and come, thou ſouth, blow upon my garden, that the ſpices thereof may flow out.' He ſtretcheth out the withered hand to Chriſt. 'Here is the word, Lord, ſend the Spirit to make it effectual,' &c. And this is the exerciſe of faith abſolutely neceſſary to ſpiritual worſhip; for its work is to fetch the fire of the Spirit from Chriſt our altar, to ſet to the incenſe we offer. It is that which travels for ability for duty betwixt Chriſt's fulneſs and the creature's emptineſs, ſetting down the blind and lame at Chriſt's door.

The worſhipping of God thus by the Spirit is ſo neceſſary, that no worſhip is pleaſing to God but what is thus performed. Chriſt will not put in his cenſer of interceſſion, but what is the product of his own Spirit, Eph. ii. 18. ‘ Through Chriſt we both have an acceſs by one ‘ Spirit unto the Father.’ And it is the *inwrought prayer* that availeth. And a groan thus delivered, is better than a prayer from our own ſpirits, merely adorned with all the flowers of oratory.

Here a grave queſtion comes to be handled, viz. *How we may diſtinguiſh betwixt exerciſing of a gift in duty, and acting from the influences of the Spirit?* Enlargement will not do it; for nature has its own enlargements, and there may be a ſtraitening in a gift and enlargement in it too, as well as in grace. Thus God both enlarged and ſtraitened Saul in his gift of wiſdom, conduct, and courage. Delight in the duty will not do it either. Other folks gifts may greatly delight us in the exerciſe of them, and an eaſy and neat exerciſe of a man's own gift, may be very pleaſant melody in the man's own carnal ears. But,

1. All the influences of the Spirit are humbling; and always the more of them, the more humble and vile they make the man in his own eyes. This may be ſeen in the angels, who though they are without ſin, yet being under the moſt abundant influences of the Spirit, do caſt vile man a copy of humility, Iſa. vi. 2, 3. ‘ And cried unto ‘ one another, and ſaid, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of ‘ hoſts, the whole earth is full of his glory.’ Behold it in the man Chriſt, to whom the Spirit was given without meaſure, who was moſt exemplary in humility, Matth. xi. 29. ‘ Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.’ And it may be obſerved of all the ſaints of God, that the more of the influence of the Spirit they had, they were always the more humble; as we may ſee in Abraham, Job, and Iſaiah. Paul after he was rapt up to the third heavens, was in his own eyes *nothing*, 2 Cor. xii. 11. And the reaſon is plain, for the influences of the Spirit do always carry up the ſoul to whence they came; as the waters of the deluge, the more they increaſed, they carried the ark nearer to heaven; and the nearer we come to the light of God's countenance, our nothingneſs muſt ſtill appear the more.

On the other hand, the exerciſe of a gift merely, leaves always the ſoul in the ſame unhumbled ſtate it found it. For it is impoſſible nature ſhould work the ſoul into a gracious diſpoſition; and nature's force is too weak to beat down the natural pride of the heart. Nature will build up nature; and the better the gift is exereiſed, it will ſwell the heart the more: hence publicans and harlots enter into the kingdom of heaven before Phariſees, Iſa. lviii. 3. ‘ Wherefore have we faſted, ſay they, and ‘ thou ſeeſt not? Wherefore have we afflicted our ſoul, ‘ and thon takeſt no knowledge?’ And thus many ſwell with the little gift they get, till they burſt all bonds.

2. The Spirit's influences in duty fill the ſoul with a reverential fear of God in duty, Heb. xii. 28. which is excellent ballaſt to a light and frothy heart; and always the more of it, the more reverence of God. The reaſon is, becauſe the Spirit is the Spirit of adoption, and ſo will work a child like diſpoſition in the ſoul towards God, as towards a heavenly father: ſo that the greateſt familiarity with God will not work out, but work forward this reverence, Pſal. xlv. 9.—‘ Upon thy right hand did ſtand the ‘ queen in gold of Ophir.’

But the mere exerciſe of a gift can never impreſs this holy reverence of God on the ſoul; witneſs that frothineſs of heart which men bring with them from duty. Gifts exerciſed without the Spirit, raiſe a cloud in the ſoul: are light in the inſide, dark in the outſide; whereby the more they ſee of themſelves, the leſs they ſee of God; and ſo their deluded ſpirits ſeem to be on an equal level with him. To clear this further, I ſhall propoſe and reſolve ſome queſtions: As,

Queſt. 1. *May not a hypocrite have in duty a great fear of God on his ſpirit? Anſw.* A ſlaviſh fear of God a man may have, as Felix had in hearing Paul; but this filial reverential fear of God he cannot have, ſeeing he has not the Spirit of adoption: whoſe work it is to knit the ſaints hearts to God as a friend and Father, and to draw them after him, with ſuch child-like affections, as makes them delight in his commands and providences, 2 Tim. i. 7. ‘ God hath not given us the ſpirit of fear, but of power, ‘ and of love, and of a ſound mind.’

Queſt. 2. *But can ſaints have no ſuch ſlaviſh fear of God? Anſw.* As all the graces of the Spirit are imperfect and mixed in the ſaints, ſo is their fear of God not without a mixture of that ſlaviſhneſs. Matth. viii. 26. ‘ Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?’ It is true, God never again gives them the ſpirit of bondage; but they may through unbelief, take up a ſpirit of bondage again. But ſeeing they can never again loſe the Spirit of adoption, neither can they loſe that grace of filial reverential fear altogether: ſo that there is ſtill as much difference betwixt them and hypocrites, as betwixt the malefactor fearing the judge, and a ſon's fearing his father; who appears enraged againſt him, and about to put him out of his houſe; which yet will not kill natural affection.

Queſt. 3. *But how can the ſaints fear God as a Father, when they are not aſſured they are his children? Anſw.* The Spirit's operations depend not on our ſenſe and knowledge of them, Eccl. xi. 5. ‘ As thou knoweſt not what ‘ is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in ‘ the womb of her that is with child: even ſo thou knoweſt not the works of God who maketh all.’ But as the Spirit ſanctifies the ſaints whether they know it or not, ſo he works that filial fear of God in them, whether they know it or not. God's children are like thoſe infants, who though they know not their father, yet by their features do father themſelves.

3. The influences of the Spirit are always ſanctifying, as well as aſſiſting to duty, Zech. xii. 10. ‘ I will pour ‘ (ſaith the Lord) upon the houſe of David, and upon the ‘ inhabitants of Jeruſalem, the ſpirit of grace and of ſupplications.’ They are, as the Baptiſt was, *a burning and ſhining light*. When the Spirit was poured out, there appeared cloven tongues, as of fire. Behold the nature of the Spirit's influences. (1.) They give a man a new tongue to ſpeak of and to God. It is a dumb devil, that makes men tongue tied in prayers to and praiſes of God. (2.) They are ſanctifying, burning up corruption in the heart and life, as tongues of fire. For as at Babel languages were confounded, and the holy tongue in which people were taught, remained but with a few, the world loſt the knowledge of God, and grew moſt corrupt in their lives, ſo when God was about to remedy this with the gift of tongues, theſe appeared as of fire, becauſe of the droſs of the world that was to be burnt up therewith. Thus the Spirit's influences ſtill tend to make the man more holy, ſet him more at odds with ſin, and purſue holineſs with vigour. Pſal. vi. 8, 9. ‘ Depart from me, all ‘ ye workers of iniquity; for the Lord hath heard my ‘ ſupplications; the Lord will receive my prayer.’

But the exerciſe of a gift leaves the man ſtill as unholy as before, as we learn from the caſe of thoſe of whom Chriſt ſays, Matth. vii. 22, 23. ‘ Many will ſay to me, in ‘ that day, Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy ‘ name? and in thy name have caſt out devils, and done ‘ many wonderful works? And then I will profeſs unto ‘ them, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work ‘ iniquity.’ Truth is priſoner in their heads.

And ſo much for the marks of ſpiritual worſhippers. I come now to

Inf. 3. Learn from this not to think of gifts for duty above what is meet. Gifts for duty is abuſed by two ſorts of perſons, the proud hypocrite, and the weak Chriſtian. From this doctrine I have a word to both.

1. To the proud hypocrite. And,

1ſt, Are thoſe true Chriſtians, who worſhip God in the ſpirit? then ye miſs the mark, when ye are more careful to get the gift than the grace of duty; Gifts come from God indeed; but there is leſs of God in them than grace, and that makes them deſirable to a corrupt heart.

2dly, Be not proud of the gifts for duty that ye have. If ye have a gift of prayer, judgment, or memory, or utterance, &c. think not much of it. If we had nothing more of the helliſh gift of diſcerning our own attainments and excellencies, than of other gifts from the Lord, we would not be ſo conceity. It is a bad thing for a man to be puffed up with his gifts. It is like the light that appears before a man's eyes when he gets ſuch a ſtroke on the head as blinds him. But conſider,

(1.) They are God's gifts indeed; but they are but left hand ones. They are of that ſort that are common to Chriſt's ſheep and the devil's goats. Grace is of another nature, a right hand gift, which is without repentance.

(2.) They can help you to the outſide of duty; but can reach no farther; and what for ſerves the carcaſe of duty? Ye may worſhip God with a gift; but that is not worſhipping in ſpirit. The weak Chriſtian that would think ſhame to ſpeak before you now, ſhall be brought in, when the door of heaven ſhall be caſt in your face for ever, if ye have no more.

(3.) Your gifts may be uſeful to others; but they are uſeleſs to you as to any ſpiritual profit. Hence ſays the apoſtle, 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2, 3. ‘Though I ſpeak with the ‘tongue of men and angels, and have not charity; I am ‘become as ſounding braſs, or a tinkling cymbal.’ And ‘though I have all gifts and all knowledge, and have not ‘charity, it profiteth me nothing. All is yours, whether ‘Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or ‘death.’ O believers, even hypocrites gifts are yours; they are given them, not for their own ſakes, but the ſake of others. The carpenters that built the ark, the profit of their gift came to Noah, not to them, for they periſhed in the deluge. Your gifts may be means to ſave others, while ye periſh yourſelves.

(4.) You may go to hell for all your gifts. Light without ſerves only to ſhow the way to the place where there is heat without light, i. e. to outer darkneſs. Gifts without grace are like a ſhip without ballaſt, that will eaſily periſh; or like a bag of gold on a drowning man, precious in itſelf, but will only help to ſink him the deeper. The devil has greater gifts than the beſt in the world; and ſome have thought that it was his pride of endowments that ruined him; however, it is certain, he was ruined notwithſtanding his gifts.

2. Some weak Chriſtians may be diſcouraged becauſe they want thoſe gifts for duty that they ſee others have, and from thence may be ready to conclude they have neither the gift nor grace of duty. To ſuch I ſay,

1*ſt*, Your concluſion is raſh: grace may be where there is but a very ſmall meaſure of gifts, 1 Cor. i. 26.—28. ‘For ye ſee your calling, brethren, how that not many ‘wiſe men after the fleſh, not many mighty, not many ‘noble are called. But God hath choſen the fooliſh things ‘of the world, to confound the wiſe; and God hath ‘choſen the weak things of the world, to confound the ‘things which are mighty: and baſe things of the world, ‘and things which are deſpiſed, hath God choſen, yea, ‘and things which are not, to bring to nought things ‘that are.’ It was the *plain man Jacob* who was the prevailer with God; and ‘the Spirit helps our infirmities ‘with groanings which cannot be uttered.’

2*dly*, It is not the gift of duty, but the grace of it, that is acceptable with God. Grace with little gifts will go far, even to the throne of God, Rom. viii. 26, 27. ‘Likewiſe the Spirit alſo helpeth our infirmities; for we ‘know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought: but ‘the Spirit itſelf maketh interceſſion for us with groanings ‘which cannot be uttered. And he that ſearcheth the ‘hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, becauſe ‘he maketh interceſſion for the ſaints according to the ‘will of God.’ As a father loves the liſping ſpeeches of his child better than empty well-worded compliments of another, ſo doth the Lord the duties of his own people. The glory of the ſecond houſe was to be greater than the firſt, but more grace, even Chriſt, in the ſecond. So if Chriſt be in thy ſoul, there will be much grace, however little of gifts. If a beggar come to you, ye do not wait till he ſhow his parts, but till he ſhow his needs; and if he ſhow you his ſores, though ye ſpeak very ill, it is enough, he is a needy beggar, he muſt be ſerved.

3*dly*, Great gifts had need of a great meaſure of grace to be ballaſt to them. And it is God's goodneſs to ſome, that they have no great gifts, they have ſo little grace to guide them with. God does with them as a wiſe father with his ſon that has but a little ſtock; he ſets him down in a little farm, leſt too much in hand ſhould maſter him. It may be obſerved, that the men of greateſt parts, have uſually got ſharp exerciſes to be ballaſt to their gifts, leſt their heads turning over heavy for their hearts, ſhould truſs them up. And ye ſee how it did in Solomon's caſe, the wiſeſt of men; his gifts maſtered his grace, and made him a fool to a degree. And how it broke his bones, ſee in his penitentials. Take for inſtance Heman, a man of vaſt parts, 1 Kings iv. 31. compare with Pſal. lxxxviii. Job was an oracle for wit among his neighbours, Paul the only ſcholar among the apoſtles. Let the Chriſtian be thankful for what he has.

4*thly*, Thou haſt the thing that is better, that is, grace; a little gold is better than a lump of lead. Doſt thou come with thy heart to God in duty? then though thy gifts are very ſmall, thou worſhippeſt in ſpirit. Good meat never taſtes the worſe that it is ſerved up in a wooden diſh; it is as good as in a golden platter, though the laſt makes the greateſt daſh in the eyes of ſpectators. If thy affections to God in duty be fervent, though your words be not very fine, they will never be caſt in heaven for this.

I diſcharge them that are poſſeſſed with the dumb devil, to meddle with this I have been ſaying. They will not bow a knee to God, becauſe, forſooth, they cannot pray. They will not open a mouth for God, becauſe they have not the gift that others have; they will not ſpeak of ſpiritual things, and care as little to hear them ſpoken of. They are groſsly ignorant of the principles of religion; but they are at as little pains to get knowledge, and will not. But now ſay they, we have not the gift, but God knows our hearts. But I tell you that are ſuch, ye have neither the gift nor the grace of duty. God's children may be ſtammerers in ſpeaking to or of him, but none of them are dumb like you. Their want of gifts is not ſuch as to make them neglect the very matter of external duty as ye do. And what they have not, they deſire to have, that they may glorify God with it.

Inf. 4. Learn from this not to think much of the performance of duties. We have need to have our thoughts of duties corrected. And this doctrine affords,

1. A confounding leſſon to formal hypocrites anent their duties; and that is, That all the duties they have been working at all their days, is naught in the ſight of God, becauſe they were never ſpiritual worſhippers. Perhaps ye will be counting ye have ſerved God ſo many years; ye pray twice, &c. and be ready to value yourſelves on this. But dreadfully will the count come down when God looks on it; it will turn to nothing at all in point of duty. Nay, ye will find them all ſet down in the count of your works of iniquity, where they will make ſo many black *items*. O how will the man's heart fail him to hear what juſtice has to lay to his charge! *Imprimis*, unbelief, not believing in the Son of God; *item*, God's name taken in vain in ſo many pretended prayers; *item*, ſo many ſermons heard without faith, love, and practice; *item*, ſo often bread and wine eaten at God's table, while there was no feeding on a crucified Chriſt, &c. Matth. vii. 22, 23. ‘Many will ſay to me, in that ‘day, Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name? ‘and in thy name have caſt out devils? and in thy name ‘done many wonderful works? And then will I profeſs ‘unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, all ye ‘workers of iniquity.’ Whence obſerve, the wonderful works they did for Chriſt, which themſelves and others wondered at, are in Chriſt's account *works of iniquity*. We make a tripartite diviſion of people in the viſible church. (1.) Some that ſerve God ſincerely. (2.) Some that ſerve him hypocritically. (3.) Some that ſerve him not at all. God makes but two ſorts, caſting the two laſt into one, Mal. iii. 18. ‘Then ſhall ye return and diſcern ‘between the righteous and the wicked; between him ‘that ſerveth God, and him that ſerveth him not.’ Whence

learn, (1.) The righteous only ſerve God; as for others, whatever be the difference among them, they agree in that, both profane folk and hypocrites, that they ſerve not God. (2.) A man who is not a child of God, can perform no ſervice to God in his account; ſlaves ſervice is no ſervice, Hoſ. vii. 14. The Lord's people are the children that ſerve him as a Father.

2. This doctrine affords a humbling leſſon to the godly anent their duties. Many of your duties are naught in the ſight of God. If only ſpiritual worſhippers be real ſaints, ye act not as ſaints in any duties but thoſe that are done in the ſpirit. If this be ſo, it will do two things.

1ſt, It will bring your great number of duties down to very few, ſo that all ye have done for God may be ſoon told. Since ye were acquainted with Chriſt, ye durſt never perhaps riſe up nor lie down without praying: but when theſe things come before the Lord, it will be found there has been many a day and week ye have prayed none at all; many a ſweet portion of ſcripture ye never read to this day, though ye have gone over and over it again.

2dly, It will make many a long duty of yours very ſhort. Let that be taken off the duty that was not done in the ſpirit, and off it muſt go, many a long prayer and ſermon will be brought to a very few ſentences that ye have heard or prayed; and many a ſentence broken off in the midſt where the heart left the man. I trow the dung of your ſacrifices burnt without the camp, will bulk more than all the fleſh that has come on God's altar.

3. It affords a neceſſary leſſon to both, namely, Ye need Chriſt. O how does the profane world need Chriſt! But, O ſirs, ye need him as really when going to your prayers, as the man that is going to his cups and his drunken companions needs him; ye need him as really when ye are going to the ſermon on the Lord's day, as he who caſts contempt on God's ordinances, by loitering at home. Ye need him when ye are mourning over your ſins, as well as others, when they are revelling, and going the broad gate with tabret and pipe.

1ſt, Ye need himſelf. Sinners, ye need himſelf, to be united to him, to be one ſpirit with him. John xv. 6. 'If a man abide not in me, he is caſt forth as a branch 'and is withered; and men gather them, and caſt them 'into the fire, and they are burned.' If he would give you never ſo many gifts, if ye get not himſelf, ye can do nothing. There is nothing can make up his room. An eternal barrenneſs will lie on your ſouls; the heavens will be as braſs, and the earth as iron, if ye get not himſelf. And the axe of God's judgments will hew you down with your wild grapes, as well as others that have no ſhew of fruit, if ye get not himſelf. If ye grow on your own root, though ye ſhould water it every day with your tears, yea tears of your blood, if ye get not Chriſt, your 'root ſhall be as rottenneſs, and your bloſſom ſhall 'go up as duſt.' Root and fruit ſhall be deſtroyed for ever from the preſence of the Lord.

Saints, ye need himſelf, to be more and more cloſely united to him, to be *growing up into him*. According to your faith ſo will it be unto you, not only in point of privilege, but in point of duty. Ye have come to Chriſt, but ye muſt be always coming to him. Mind to whom that was ſaid, John xv. 4, 5. 'Abide in me, and I in you. 'As the branch cannot bear fruit of itſelf, except it abide 'in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I 'am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in 'me, and I in him, the ſame bringeth forth much fruit: 'for without me ye can do nothing.' Ye need him for 'wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption.' Ye need him for all.

2dly, Ye need his blood. Sinners, ye need it to make your perſons accepted, to conſecrate you for ſervants to the Lord, to be prieſts unto God: and without the ſprinkling of that blood on you, God will no more regard your ſervices, than a ſacrifice by one who was never conſecrated a prieſt; for all ſpiritual worſhippers are made prieſts. Ye need it to take away the guilt of your dead works of duties, which, till it be removed from your conſcience, utterly unfits you to ſerve God; as they which are defiled with the touch of a dead body might not come into the tabernacle; to which the apoſtle alludes, Heb. ix. 14.

Saints, ye need his blood. It is true, ye are waſhed in that blood already, but new defilements require new waſhings. There is an alluſion there to the prieſts under the law, who were to bathe their whole bodies in the morning, but notwithſtanding at every new ſervice through the day they were to waſh their hands and feet ere they approached the altar. Now, ye are waſhed in reſpect of your ſtate, that continues; but ye muſt ſtill be waſhing for the iniquities of your heels, that are compaſſing you about. Therefore the ſea of glaſs ſtands betwixt the ſaints and the throne, Rev. iv. 6.

3dly, Ye need his Spirit. Sinners ye need him; there is no worſhipping in ſpirit without the Spirit. They are but lifeleſs carcaſes of duty that are performed without the Spirit. That which died of itſelf was utterly unfit for a ſacrifice; and ſuch are your beſt performances without the Spirit. Now, it is from him the Spirit comes.

Saints alſo need the Spirit; for it is not enough to ſpiritual worſhip that the Spirit dwells in us, but that the Spirit influence us to duty. The Spirit helps our infirmities, ſtirring up the fire within us, putting grace in exerciſe, otherwiſe our performances will be but bodily exerciſe.

Inf. 5. *laſtly*, To ſhut up this, be exhorted and warned to take heed how ye worſhip God; in what manner ye perform every duty; labouring to be ſpiritual in all. And there are two things ye would in this endeavour to ſtudy.

1. To get the heart brought up to every duty. Pray, confeſs, from the heart, Col. iii. 23. 'Whatſoever ye do, 'do it heartily.' Gold is fetched out of the bowels of the earth, and pearls out of the bottom of the ſea; and ſpiritual worſhip comes from *the hidden man of the heart*, while external duties, like common ſtones, are found lying every where on the ſurface of the earth. We ſhould be fervent, ſerving the Lord.

2. To go out of yourſelves for ability to duty. This was Joſhua's intent when he told the people that had engaged to duty, Joſh. xxiv. 19. 'Ye cannot ſerve the Lord, 'for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God, he will 'not forgive your tranſgreſſions, nor your ſins.' When we go to our duties we ſhould do as Elijah did, lay the ſacrifice on the altar, and then look to the Lord for fire from heaven to conſume it. The Spirit of the Lord is that fire from heaven which burns our ſacrifices of duties, and makes the ſmoke of them aſcend towards heaven, for a ſweet ſmelling ſavour. And as no ſacrifice was accepted but what was burnt by that fire from heaven, ſo no duty is accepted but what is by the influence of the Spirit. When then we go to duty, here is the ſacrifice; but where is the fire? if it be ſtruck out of our own ſpirits, it will make an offenſive ſmoke; but an acceptable flame, if from heaven we fetch it by the looks of faith.

1ſt, God is a Spirit, and therefore muſt be worſhipped in ſpirit, John iv. 24. How unſuitable is mere bodily exerciſe in religion to the nature of God! Were we to ſerve dead idols, a dead formal worſhip might ſerve. But the living God muſt have lively ſervice, Rev. iii. 19.—'Be zealous therefore, and repent.'

2dly, God takes ſpecial notice how duties are done. God will have his ſervice well done, as well as done, yea, he reckons it ſo neceſſary, that the want of it alters the very nature of duty, and turns it to ſin.

3dly, Your duties are the touchſtone of your faith, ye have much need to take heed to them. Spiritual worſhip is the mark of a child of God; ſo that by your worſhip ye will prove either that ye are real ſaints, or that ye are but hypocrites.

And ſo much for the firſt character of a ſaint, namely, that he is one that *worſhips God in the ſpirit*.

II. We come now to the ſecond character of a real ſaint. He is one that *rejoiceth in Chriſt Jeſus*. In the firſt character a ſaint is repreſented as a great worker, in good works and ſervice to God, going with his heart into the heart, marrow, and ſoul of duties; and therein going beyond hypocrites, that never go farther in than the outward court with their duties, their duties being like themſelves, having not the Spirit, while the ſincere perſon works in duties, as if he minded to win heaven by them.

It would then be expected, that thoſe duties ſhould be the joy, comfort, and life of his ſoul. Sure, they that have much leſs reaſon, make that uſe of their duties; but the ſaints do not ſo. Though they do more, they truſt leſs in what they do than others. Nay, they overlook them as to any confidence in them before the Lord; and though they worſhip in ſpirit, they rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus. Tho' they bring their hearts to duty, yet that is not the thing that keeps up their hearts before the Lord, but Chriſt, in him they rejoice, or, as the original hath it, *they glory*, which is more than ſimply to rejoice. It imports a glorying or boaſting with a ſtrutting out of the neck, and caſting up of the head in a boaſting way. It is the ſoul's acquieſcing with joy in Chriſt as its only hope againſt all that might harm it, not being aſhamed to profeſs it.

Doct. *That is the real Chriſtian, who though he worſhip God in ſpirit, yet rejoiceth in Chriſt Jeſus.*

In handling of this doctrine, I ſhall ſhew *what it is to rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus*, and *in what ſenſe the true Chriſtian rejoices in him*. And ye would notice this as a mark of a true ſaint.

But there is an *objection* meets us here, that muſt be removed. It is this: *If joy in Chriſt be a mark of a gracious ſtate, what ſhall come of poor doubting trembling Chriſtians, who go mourning without the ſun, that ſtand moſt in need of marks that they may rejoice moſt in Chriſt; while others that can rejoice in Chriſt, do already ſee their intereſt?* *Anſw.* The mark in the text is given by the infallible Spirit, and therefore doubtleſs is conſiſtent with what he elſewhere teacheth in his word, and muſt be ſo underſtood as not to exclude the mournful worſhipper in ſpirit. But to clear the point, I offer theſe two things.

1. There is a *radical* or *habitual* joy in Chriſt; which is a diſpoſition of ſoul inclining and bending the ſoul towards Chriſt as the ſpring and object of its joy before the Lord: for as when God made Adam, with a frame of ſoul inclining to the will of God, this diſpoſition did denominate him *righteous* before he had done *one righteous act*; ſo when, in the new creation, the Lord puts this diſpoſition in the ſoul, it may denominate him *a rejoicer in Chriſt*, even before he *actually* rejoice in him. Then there is an actual joy or rejoicing in Chriſt, wherein the ſoul ſolaceth itſelf in the Lord in greater or leſſer meaſure. Upon this I ſay,

1ſt, Every believer, even in his darkeſt hours, has this *radical* and *habitual* joy in Chriſt: Pſal. xcvii. 11. 'Light 'is ſown for the righteous, and gladneſs for the upright 'in heart.' As there is a worm of ſorrow at the root of every gourd under which the wicked doth rejoice; ſo there is a ſeed of joy even in the ſaints mournings, that will get above the clods in due time. There are always ſome pieces of heaven in their hotteſt hells. There are everlaſting arms underneath, which for the time are only keeping the ſoul from ſinking: but we may ſay of them, as Naomi of Boaz, when he had given Ruth ſix meaſures of barley to help them to live a while, 'The man will 'not be in reſt, untill he have finiſhed the thing this day,' till you be miſtreſs of all he has. So theſe will not reſt till they have lifted up the ſoul to a fulneſs of joy in God.

2dly, Though the believer does not always rejoice actually before the Lord, more than he does always act faith, which ſometimes is not in exerciſe even in the beſt; yet when he does rejoice before the Lord, he rejoices in Chriſt; Gal. vi. 14. 'God forbid, that I ſhould glory ſave in the 'croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.' If the believer's feaſt-day come but ſeldom about, yet when it comes, he keeps it in the white raiment of Chriſt's righteouſneſs. And he will not lay off his blacks or mournings, till Chriſt ſend him other garments, Iſa. lxi. 1.—3.

2. There is *actual* joy; which is twofold. (1.) There is a *ſenſible* joy, Luke i. 47. 'My ſpirit hath rejoiced in 'God my Saviour.' And this God's people ſometimes get in Chriſt, ſo as their ſouls are made to leap within them, while they wonder at his love, and rejoice and wonder. So much are we addicted to ſenſe while in this body, that we will ſcarce allow any thing but this to be called joy. But that is a miſtake: for, (2.) There is a *rational* joy: which is the ſatisfaction the reaſonable ſoul has in what it loves and deſires. We ſee this in the man Chriſt, who being *a man of ſorrows*, had little of that ſenſible joy while in the world. It is remarked of him that he had one hour of it, Luke x. 21. 'In that hour Jeſus 'rejoiced in ſpirit;' clearly teaching it was not his ordinary. Notwithſtanding, Chriſt had an abiding joy, (John xv. 11. 'Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you, that my 'joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be 'full,') to wit, a ſolid ſatisfaction in the welfare of his diſciples. The original words in theſe places clear this difference; the former being the ſame with that Luke i. 47. the other importing nothing of exultation, but a joy in things proſpering with a perſon.

Now, although the believer may but ſeldom have this ſenſible joy in Chriſt; and I know not but the ſpirit of heavineſs may ſo ſit down on ſome, that they may never taſte of this ſenſible joy till they be in heaven, yet every believer habitually and ordinarily, as they are in the exerciſe of other graces, have this rational joy in Chriſt: for if 'the kingdom of God be righteouſneſs, and peace, 'and joy in the holy Ghoſt,' wherever it comes, theſe muſt be there too. And this I take to be the joy aimed at in the text, as appears by its being oppoſed to hypocrites confidence in the fleſh, which ſpeaks forth rather a rational complacency than any ſenſible joy.

The ſoul's union with Chriſt is often held forth in the ſcripture under the notion of a marriage; and we read of a twofold joy in this. 1. The joy wherewith the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, Iſa. lxii. 5. 2. The joy wherewith a huſband, in the continuance of his married ſtate, rejoiceth over his wife, Prov. v. 18. The former is an emblem of that ſenſible joy which believers ſometimes have in Chriſt, and particularly at the time of their firſt receiving of Chriſt, while they are yet but young converts, and are fed with lumps of ſenſe. An inſtance of it we have in the eunuch, of whom it is ſaid, that *he went on his way rejoicing*, Acts viii. 39. But although, that ſenſible joy do not laſte, yet there is an habitual rational joy, which remains with the people of God, whereof the latter is a good reſemblance. For as they that have made a good choice, continue to have a ſolid rational joy in one another, though it be not ſo violent as the other, yet is more ſtrong and fixed; ſo it is here. This is here given as a mark of a true ſaint. And in regard hypocrites may have a great ſenſible joy, whatever ſenſible joy any pretend to muſt be examined by this, for this is the root on which all true ſenſible joy grows; and theſe joyful flaſhes of hypocrites will be found to ſpring from another root.

Now, this rejoicing in Christ lies in four things.

1. A holy complacency in Chriſt.
2. A rolling of the ſoul over on Chriſt for all.
3. A reſt of the heart in him as a fit match for the ſoul.
4. A confeſſion of him unto ſalvation.

First, There is in this rejoicing in Chriſt, *a holy complacency in him*. The believer has got a view and trial of Chriſt, and he is well pleaſed with him. There is a mutual joy of the parties in the ſpiritual marriage. Where the ſoul is Beulah, *married to the Lord*, it is alſo Hephzibah, *the Lord has a complacency in it*, Iſa. lxii. 4. And ſo have they in him, Mal. iii. 1.—'The Lord whom 'ye ſeek, ſhall ſuddenly come to his temple: even the 'meſſenger of the covenant, whom ye *delight in*.' All the Jews profeſſed this as God's people, and the godly among them really had it. Though they are eagle eyed ones in ſpiritual things, in compariſon of the blind world; yet they ſpy no fault in the myſtery of Chriſt, but are well pleaſed with the grand device of ſalvation through Chriſt. The Father made choice of him, carved out every piece of his work to him, in the matter of ſinners redemption; and he is well pleaſed with his choice, and it is unanimouſly approved in every point by the multitude of the *called, and choſen, and faithful*; who all, with one voice cry, *Grace, grace to it*. Sirs, ſince men loſt the way to happineſs, but not the deſire of it, they have choſen new gods and guides, ſome one, ſome another; and *every man will walk in the name of his god*. God the Father has made a choice for them of a captain of ſalvation; the goſpel pleads the excellency of this choice, and puts the trying vote to the world, *Approve or not?* The plurality has always voted, *Not approve;* but believers have with their ſouls approved the choice. And if ye be amongſt the approvers, take his word for it, ye are his, Matth. xi. 6. *Bleſſed is he whoſoever ſhall not be offended in me.*

Now, we cannot be well pleaſed with any thing, unleſs we ſee a ſuitableneſs in it to us. When a man has made his choice, if afterwards he finds it unſuitable to him, it kills his joy in it: for when he made the choice, it was upon its ſuppoſed ſuitableneſs. Accordingly the believer rejoicing in Chriſt, beholds his ſuitableneſs to that for which he has made choice of him. And there is a threefold ſuitableneſs of Chriſt here to be noticed.

Firſt, There is a ſuitableneſs of Chriſt to the divine perfections or attributes concerned in the ſalvation of ſinners, diſcerned by every believer, 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. *We preach Chriſt crucified unto them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Chriſt the power of God, and the wiſdom of God.* There is no man that has got that matter of ſalvation laid cloſe home to his heart, but will know well on what he will venture his ſoul before ſuch a holy God. They will ſee, that the holineſs, juſtice of God, are ſuch fixed rocks, as they will never expect they ſhall be removed for them; and therefore will deſpair of ſalvation in any way inconſiſtent with God's perfections. Hence it follows, that the ſoul which rejoiceth in Chriſt, hath ſeen Chriſt's ſuitableneſs to the divine perfections. Bleſſed are ye, O believers; for ye acquieſce in this way of ſalvation, as ſuitable in that reſpect. And that this character may have the more weight with all the ſaints, and the naughtineſs of others may be diſcovered, conſider,

1. As there is a ſpecial illumination that believers get, and to which the moſt refined hypocrite is a ſtranger, Chriſt's differencing the ſincere and hypocrite as wiſe and fooliſh; ſo there is an illumination in the knowledge of the myſtery of Chriſt, ſuitable to the divine perfections, that is peculiar to his ſaints. And therefore the whole of the work of grace comes under the name of the revealing of Chriſt in a ſoul. And what is the ruin of many that get convictions and reform, but the want of this ſaving diſcovery of Chriſt? So that all their religion ends in a legal Chriſtleſs turn given to their lives.

2. How few dig ſo deep in the ſins of their hearts and lives, as once to put it to the queſtion, whether their ſalvation be conſiſtent with the honour of God, or not? Unto ſome men, God, Chriſt, and ſin, are vailed; they never get a true view of any of them; and ſo whatever they do in religion, is juſt a leap at random, and their believing is but a venturing of their ſouls on they know not what. And as for many others that have had ſome exerciſe about their ſoul's ſtate on their ſpirits, they were never brought ſo low, but they thought if ever they could mourn for ſin enough, reform, and believe in Chriſt, without any eye to his atoning blood, all would be well. They were never ſo low as to ſee ſalvation ſo far above them as the honour of God has ſet it, never to be brought down but upon a juſt ſatisfaction to the honour of God and that a ſatisfaction beyond the reach of their ſuffering or reforming. To which were they brought, they would rejoice in Chriſt as ſuited to that work, the repairing the honour of the divine perfections, which ſtand betwixt ſalvation and them, 1 John i. 7. 'And the blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son cleanſeth us from all ſin.' But how can they rejoice in a ſalve for a ſore under which they never ſmarted? Rom. v. 11.

3. Conſider, all the ſons of the firſt Adam are ſons of pride, who ſee no glory but in the way of the firſt covenant; which is, that God ſhould have his honour from them whom he ſaves. And becauſe man, by the breaking of that covenant, loſt his eyes, which are never under it reſtored, therefore they have but low thoughts of the honour of God. Hence we find Adam ſtaying in Paradiſe till God drove him out. And while they have ſuch low thoughts of it, it is no wonder they think little may ſerve to repair it. And the pride of the heart being unſubdued, they can ſee as little glory in Chriſt crucified his repairing it, as a proud bankrupt would ſee in his being declared unable to pay his debt, and one paying it for him, while he thinks he might have paid it himſelf, or it was not ſo much but it might have been forgiven.

Secondly, There is a ſuitableneſs of Chriſt to the caſe of the ſoul, which the believer ſees, and acquieſceth in Chriſt as thus ſuited to his caſe. Unleſs the believer ſaw this, he could never rejoice in him. If ye would lodge a ſtarving man in a palace, and fill his pockets with gold, behold he is near death for lack of meat, and what good can theſe do him, they are not meat; and ſo not ſuitable to his caſe? Now, the child of God has ſeen his caſe, and Chriſt's ſuitableneſs to it every way, and approves of him as ſuch. Every ſoul feels a want of ſomething; and ſince Adam turned himſelf and all his poſterity beggars, they are wandering among the creatures ſeeking ſupply for their wants. Now, whatever they can purchaſe among them, though it promiſes fair afar off, yet when they come near it they find it unſuitable. And this makes the heart ſecretly ſigh, while it is attacked with a new diſſatisfaction on every new diſappointment; though they are ſo beſotted, that when they are wearied in the greatneſs of their way; yet ſay they not, There is no hope; but go out again to beg at theſe doors, where they have got a thouſand nayſays before. Now, while the elect ſoul is thus wandering among the reſt, the Lord opens its eyes, as he did Hagar's to ſee the well, and Chriſt is diſcovered to the ſoul; and the ſurpriſed ſoul cries, John i. 45. 'I have found him of whom Moſes in the law, and the prophets did write.' Now, ſays the ſoul, 'this is my reſt, and here I will ſtay. Matth. xiii. 45, 46. 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man, ſeeking goodly pearls: who when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and ſold all, and bought it.'

An excellent emblem of this ye have in that, Mark v. 25.——34. concerning the woman which had an iſſue of blood twelve years. Where notice, 1. She never tries Chriſt till ſhe had tried others one after another, and found all phyſicians of no value. 2. When ſhe hears of Chriſt, ſhe believes, and by faith concludes, there was a phyſician now ſuited to her caſe. 3. There was a great multitude about Chriſt that ſtood as much in need of him as ſhe: but ſhe ſaw his ſuitableneſs to her caſe, while they ſaw not how ſuitable he was to theirs; therefore ſhe only gets the touch of faith. 4. She thruſts forward, leaves all her other phyſicians, and takes him for and inſtead of all, as fully and only ſuited to her caſe.

Now, amongſt all thoſe things in which the ſaints ſee Chriſt's ſuitableneſs, I ſhall only inſtance in theſe two.

1. They ſee a glorious ſuitableneſs to their caſe in the perſon of Chriſt, God-man: that the Mediator as ſuch is a contrivance to them of infinite wiſdom, anſwering the honour of God, and the ſinners neceſſities; in which the child of God heartily acquieſceth. The man ſees himſelf by nature in a ſad caſe, which the whole creation cannot help. There is a breach betwixt God and the ſinner; what man, what angel, can be dayſman, able to lay hands upon both? Here is one ſo high, that he is the Father's fellow; yet ſo low, that he is bone of our bones, and fleſh of our fleſh. The ſinner is ſeparate from God, that is hell begun on earth; how ſhall the ſinner be reunited to God? Will the ſinner attempt immediately to unite with God? God's juſtice and holineſs ſtaves him off; they will not cleave together, as iron is not mixed with clay. Can angels unite them? Nay, they needed another themſelves to be a bond of continuance, though not of beginning or making their own union with God. Behold in the perſon of Chriſt how it may be done. Man's nature is united already to the divine nature in the perſon of Chriſt. Here is an union for a foundation of the myſtical union which the ſoul is ſeeking. Here is a ſuitable meeting place betwixt God and ſinners, where they may unite again with the ſafety of the divine honour; 'The fulneſs of the Godhead dwells in him bodily; God is in Chriſt, reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them;' and in the fleſh of Chriſt the ſinner may meet God with ſafety of his life: and ſo both unite in him. The ſinner has fallen, like Lucifer, as a ſtar from heaven? how can he get up again? behold

Chriſt as the ladder reaching betwixt heaven and earth, ſet as low as the ſinner could wiſh in his human nature, and reaching as high as he can deſire in his divine nature. O glorious perſon ſuited to ſinners caſe!

2. The ſaints ſee a glorious ſuitableneſs to their caſe in the *offices* of Chriſt, and ſuch a ſuitableneſs as makes them acquieſce in him.

1*ſt*, He is a *Prophet*, the interpreter of the Father's mind, who was in the Father's boſom from eternity, and is privy to all his counſels; and ſent of the Father to be *the light of the world.* He is juſt ſuch an one as the ſoul wants, Luke ii. 32. 'A light to lighten the Gentiles.' The ſoul looks within itſelf, and ſees itſelf a maſs of confuſion, at every turn ready to miſtake the way; and walking thro' a wilderneſs full of pits of deſtruction, cannot but deſpair of ever falling on the right way, or coming ſafe to the end of their journey, if they get not a guide. Now, the ſoul ſees Chriſt as 'the ſun of righteouſneſs, the wiſdom of God, and the power of God;' and ſo acquieſceth in him; knowing, that as there is darkneſs in them, there is light in him; to whom they may go with all their doubts, and fears, and get their ravelled caſes redd, and learn from him the caſe they cannot name themſelves.

2*dly*, He is a *Prieſt*, who has made the atonement *by the ſacrifice of himſelf*, and is gone in now within the vail to preſent to the Father his own blood, and thereupon to *intercede* for ſinners, and *ever liveth* for that end, Rom. viii. 34. 'It is Chriſt that died, yea rather, that is riſen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who alſo maketh interceſſion for us.' How ſuitable is this in the ſaints eyes to a ſinner's caſe! When ſin and guilt is laid home to a man's conſcience, there will be many queſtions in the heart. O, ſays the ſoul, 'wherewithal ſhall I come before the Lord?' How ſhall I get the demands of this law that has me by the throat ſatisfied, while they run ſo high above all I can do or ſuffer? What is able to quench this fire of wrath that has gone out againſt me for my ſins? But Chriſt being diſcovered to the ſoul in the glory of his prieſtly office, it ceaſeth. For in him he ſees all the demands of juſtice and the law anſwered to the full; an everlaſting righteouſneſs brought in, in which a ſinner may ſtand before the Lord; atoning, peace making blood, that is able to quench the fire of God's wrath, waſh out the deepeſt dyed guilt, and to purge the conſcience from dead works. And thus the ſoul acquieſceth in him as the only refuge.

And then for his interceſſion, the ſoul beholds a glorious ſuitableneſs to its caſe therein; which makes them rejoice and glory in him. They have much buſineſs in the court of heaven, and they cannot manage it: O how ſweet to have a friend at court, through whoſe interceſſion the purchaſe of his blood comes to be applied to the ſoul! John xvii. 20, 21. *Neither pray I for theſe alone, but for them alſo which ſhall believe on me through their word: that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they alſo may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou haſt ſent me.* They are offending every day; but in him they have a conſtant reſident at the court of heaven to take up emergent differences, ſo that it cannot come to a total rupture betwixt God and them, Heb. ix. 24. 'For Chriſt is entered into heaven, now to appear in the preſence of God for us.' But how ſhall guilty creatures have acceſs to the King's preſence? Why, through him; for he is the Father's favourite, the great Secretary of heaven, who leads by the hand the ſupplicants into the preſence chamber. They dare not preſent their petitions in their own name; then he preſents them, and the Father hears them out of his mouth; and ſo they cannot but come ſpeed, when he offers them with the incenſe of his interceſſion.

3*dly*, He is a *King*, *againſt whom there is no riſing up.* He is *the King of glory.* Even *the Lord ſtrong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle*, Pſal. xxiv. 8. Sure I am, looking to the white ſide of this diſplayed glory, every ſoul that has a ſpunk of grace, will ſay, Then he is juſt whom my ſoul deſires. O ſuitable King of glory! The ſoul ſees it muſt fight, and will fight; but O weak in battle is it. It is not man enough for the corrupt nature, no not to turn away the face of one of the leaſt of that helliſh maſter's captains; unable to grapple with the leaſt luſt in its own ſtrength, more than a child can grapple with a giant. Satan is too hard for them; the world too ſore, eſpecially having friends within them ready to ſide with theſe enemies. O what a glorious figure muſt this King of glory make in their eyes in this caſe? What rejoicing of heart muſt the appearance of the Captain of the Lord's hoſt bring to them? Iſa. xxxiii. 22. 'The Lord is our King, he will ſave us.' In him will the ſaints acquieſce, and look no where elſe for help, but be content to go at his back againſt all the powers of hell, though they have but ſtones of the brook for the attack, and adventure on the walls of the curſed Jericho, though they can do nothing but walk about them, and give the ſhout; for, 'In the Lord have they righteouſneſs and ſtrength.'

O Sirs, have ye ever ſeen this ſuitableneſs of Chriſt to your caſe? and do your ſouls acquieſce in him as only and fully ſuitable to it? Is he in your eyes the party fit for you in your caſe? Ye are they then that rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus. But ah; it is to be feared, that Chriſt is a vailed beauty to many of us, and there are not a few in whoſe eyes there are other things as ſuitable for them, than Chriſt, in whom the ſaints ſee this heart attracting glory: Cant. v, 9. 'What is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou doſt ſo charge us.' Conſider,

1. There is a generation whoſe hopes of pardon and ſalvation are built on the foundation of the mercy of an abſolute, unatoned God. They ſee no need of the Lord Jeſus; they know him not as the only mean of conveyance of ſaving mercy to ſinners. Do theſe rejoice in Chriſt? No, they cannot, nor never will, till their hearts be wounded with an arrow they have not yet felt. Know ye, that the earth ſhall ſooner be forſaken, and the rocks ſhall ſooner be removed from you, than ye ſhall ever taſte of mercy to ſalvation but through Chriſt. If ye be out of Chriſt, mercy cannot ſave you, ſeeing it cannot act in prejudice of juſtice, and God cannot deny himſelf, Acts iv, 12. 'Neither is there ſalvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we muſt be ſaved.' If thou rejoice in Chriſt, and haſt ſeen his ſuitableneſs, the ſight of an abſolute God will be a terror to thee, and thou wilt deſire to know no God but *the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, Eph. i. 3. nor wilt thou dare to look to God, but through the vail of the fleſh of Chriſt. Thou wilt expect no pardon, but through the blood of the Mediator, nor no embraces from the Lord, but with arms dyed red in his precious blood; nor a ſmile of his face, but through his wounds. It is the character of Chriſt's church and people, 1 Theſſ. i. 1. they are *in God the Father and in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, whereby is not only ſignified their union with both, but they are diſtinguiſhed from the now rejected ſynagogue, which worſhip the Father, but kill his Son, and therefore pleaſe not God, for 'he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath ſent him.'

2. There is a generation who, like Moab, have been at eaſe from their youth. They confeſs they are ſinners; who denies that? but they have hitherto ſtood proof againſt convictions of their ſin and miſery. Conſequently they never ſaw Chriſt ſo ſuitable to their caſe, as earthly ſupplies; for the joy in the remedy cannot riſe higher than the apprehenſion of the evil of the diſeaſe. And among thoſe who have had their convictions, there are not a few with whom that axe never went to the root of the tree, but their trouble has riſen only from their actual ſins; but the ſin of the nature has ſtill lain out of their ſight; and therefore watchings againſt and mourning over theſe, have ſtill appeared more ſuitable to their caſe, than the ſanctifying Spirit of Chriſt, who alone can change our nature. But if thou art a rejoicer in Chriſt, thou haſt got the beſt view of his glorious ſuitableneſs to thy caſe out of the depths of the corruption of thy nature, Rom. vii. 24, 25. 'O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death! I thank God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.' See how the Lord raiſed Eliſha's credit amongſt the people of Jericho, that they might own him for the prophet of the Lord; it was by healing of

their waters. As for the waters that were in their veſſels in their houſes, they might ſeveral ways correct the unwholeſomeneſs of it themſelves; and if nothing would do, they could have caſt it to the door; and if Eliſha had gone through all their houſes and healed their waters they had fetched in their veſſels, it would have been but a ſhort-lived kindneſs to them; for when that had been ſpent, they would juſt have been where they were before; but Eliſha goes to the ſpring, caſts in the ſalt there, and miraculouſly heals it; and this ſets him on high in their eſteem. The application is very eaſy, to Chriſt's healing of our corrupt natures.

3. There is a generation who are very eaſily diverted from the purſuit of an intereſt in Chriſt. If they can get it with eaſe, well and good, but if not, they will let it go, Prov. xxi. 25. Hence when conſcience is awakened, they will cry for an intereſt in Chriſt; they will follow religion with vigour for a time, but not finding that ſweetneſs in religion they expected, their tired ſouls fall aſleep in the lap of their luſts. As when the Lord brought his people out of Egypt, there was *a mixed multitude*, that were not Iſraelites; they would ſtay no longer in Fgypt, but away with that people to the land flowing with milk and honey. But when they came to the wilderneſs, and found not what they expected, they *fell a luſting*. Their heat for Canaan was cooled, and many a rueful look they gave back to Egypt again. The fiſh, leeks, and onions of Egypt, that they had eaten there, were ſweeter to them than the milk and honey of Canaan, which they thought they were never like to taſte; as appears from the complaints which the Iſraelites learned from the Egyptian rabble. Such cannot rejoice in Chriſt; he is not ſuitable to them. But if thou rejoiceſt in Chriſt, thou haſt, like Caleb and Joſhua, *another Spirit, to follow the Lord fully.* Such will leave no mean uneſſayed to get an intereſt in Chriſt. It is a matter of the greateſt weight, and neceſſity has no law. If they muſt die, they will die at Chriſt's door, knowing that if they go back, the famine will kill them, and therefore they will put on Ruth's generous reſolution, Ruth i. 16. ‘Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return ‘from following after thee; for whether thou goeſt, I ‘will go, and where thou lodgeſt, I will lodge: thy people ‘ſhall be my people, and thy God my God;’ being as ſhe, *ſtedfaſtly minded*, to wit, againſt all diſcouragements, and temptations ſhe had to go back.

4. There is a generation that was never brought to be content to have Chriſt on any terms. There is ſtill ſome idol that is dearer to them than to part with at any rate. Such a one was that young man, Mark x. 21, 22. *Then Jeſus beholding him, loved him, and ſaid unto him, One thing thou lackeſt: go thy way, ſell whatſoever thou haſt, and give to the poor; and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven; and come, take up the croſs, and follow me. And he was ſad at that ſaying, and went away grieved: for he had great poſſeſſions.* He loved eternal life well, and therefore went away *ſorrowful;* but he loved the world better, and therefore he *went away.* Theſe cannot rejoice in Chriſt as only and fully ſuited to their caſe. If ye ſaw a man prigging in a market, and reſolved not to have the commodity at the rate propoſed, ye would conclude, that that man either can want it, or he knows how to get his want ſupplied another way. In that John vi. 66. we find ſome going away from Chriſt: hereupon Chriſt puts the queſtion to the twelve, ver. 67. ‘Will ye alſo go away?’ Mark Peter's anſwer, ver. 68. ‘Lord, to whom ſhall we ‘go? thou haſt the words of eternal life.’ As if he had ſaid, Lord, it ſeems thoſe that have gone away think they can fend without thee: but as for us, how can we go away? for if we abide not with thee, we know of no other door to go to, and therefore go who will, we muſt abide. Now, when a man is brought to this, he muſt needs put a blank in Chriſt's hand, as Paul, Acts ix. 6. ‘Lord, ‘what wilt thou have me to do?’ He will be ready to part with all with heart and good will. If he rejoice in Chriſt as the *treaſure hid in the field*, for joy thereof he will ſell all, that the field and treaſure may be his, Matth. xiii. 44. From which it appears, that there are but few who have got this view of Chriſt as ſuitable to their caſe. But happy are they who have got it. ‘The election hath ‘obtained it, but the reſt were blinded.’

Thirdly, Chriſt is ſuited to the ſaints *mind*. And if it were not ſo, they could not rejoice in him. Chriſt is ſuitable to the *caſe* of every unbeliever, but, alas! he is not ſuited to their minds; and therefore they cannot rejoice in him, more than a child in the cutting off of a leg or arm, which yet may be very ſuitable to its caſe. Give a natural man his idols, the drunkard his cups, the covetous man his riches, theſe are ſuitable to his mind; but as unſuitable to his caſe, as a ſword for a madman's hand, or poiſon for a ſick man. But Chriſt is not only ſuited to the believer's caſe, but to his mind; for he is by grace made a partaker of the divine nature. Though diſallowed of men, he is choſen of God, and precious. There is not a child of God but Chriſt anſwers the deſires of their ſouls in breadth and in length, Pſal. lxxiii. 25. ‘Whom ‘have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth ‘that I deſire beſides thee.’ There is none beſide him, none like him, none after him to the believer. [I have read a ſtory of the king of Armenia's ſon, whoſe wife being taken captive by Cyrus, was aſked by the conqueror what ranſom he would give for her. Truly, ſays he, I would redeem her with my own life. She being ſet free, and they all come home in peace, ſome commended Cyrus for one thing, ſome for another, all admiring him. The king's ſon aſks his wife, what ſhe thought of him. Truly, ſays ſhe, I did not ſo much as look on him. Whom looked you on then? ſays he. On him, replied ſhe, who ſaid he would redeem me with his own life. Thus Chriſt becomes a covering of the eyes unto thoſe who behold his glory by faith.] He is the perſon their ſoul deſireth: for to them he is altogether lovely: he is moſt deſirable, every thing in or about him is deſirable to them. I ſhall point at three things wherein Chriſt is ſuited to the minds of the ſaints, and to none others.

1. They are pleaſed at the heart, that he ſhould build the temple of the Lord, and bear the glory. The great deſign of the goſpel is, to exalt free grace in Chriſt; and grace runs through every vein of this contrivance; and as nature is contrary to it, ſo grace caſts the ſoul into the ſame mould, Matth. xi. 5. ‘The poor have the goſpel ‘preached to them.’ The goſpel comes to their ears, and goes down to their hearts, and changes them into the ſame image; even as melted metal caſt into moulds, comes out with the impreſſion and figure on it. Alluding to that which David ſaid to Solomon, 1 Chron. xxii. 8, 9. I may ſay, the ſaints think it not meet that the firſt Adam ſhould build the temple of the Lord, becauſe he has murdered himſelf and his poſterity, and has had great wars with heaven; but they agree that the temple be built by that ſon of his, the man Chriſt typified by Solomon, who was the only man of reſt among all the ſons of Adam, ſince he put them out of their reſt in God; and who can give peace and quietneſs to Iſrael. Pſal. lxxxix. 2. ‘Mercy ſhall be built, ſaid I.’ There is no merit of men in this building; it is a building of pure mercy; and the building ſhall go on ſtill, by laying one mercy above another. It pleaſes the ſaints to be proclaimed dyvors to raiſe the glory of the Redeemer's love, to be drowned in the debt of free grace, and to have the advantage of an eternity to acknowledge it in; to be ſtepping ſtones to his glory, and that on which he may mount his throne; to be nothing, that Chriſt may be all. This ſuits not the minds of natural men. He is the ſtone which the builders diſallowed: they were ſo far from allowing him to be the chief corner ſtone, that they laid him by as a ſtone unfit to have ſo much as the leaſt place in it. He is a ſtone of ſtumbling, and rock of offence to the diſobedient, and all natural men are ſuch. Yea, Chriſt himſelf pronounces themſelves bleſſed, who having him in their offer, are not offended in him, do not ſee ſomething in him that they cannot away with, Matth. xi. 6. ‘Bleſſed is he ‘whoſoever ſhall not be offended in me.’ And therefore let men deceive themſelves as they will, Let God be true and every man a liar. None but the ſaints are thus pleaſed with him, as will appear by what I ſhall offer next.

2. They are pleaſed at the heart with his laws. They

rejoice in him as a Lawgiver, Iſa. xxxiii. 22. ‘ The Lord ‘ is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, he will ſave us.’ All the ſaints would vote the government to be laid on his ſhoulders, on whom the Father has laid their help. Chriſt makes ſuch a propoſal to ſinners as Jephthah did to the Gileadites, Judg. xi. 9. ‘ If I fight for you, and ‘ prevail, ſhall I be your head ?’ and all whoſe hearts the Lord has touched, will acquieſce therein, to wit, that Chriſt being their hand to ſave them, he be alſo their head to rule them. Chriſt's yoke is welcome to them in every part of it; his law is ſuitable to their minds, becauſe their minds are ſuited to the law, Pſal. cxix. 128. ‘ I eſteem ‘ all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and ‘ I hate every falſe way:’ for the law is written in their hearts, Heb. viii. 10. there are gracious inclinations wrought in their ſouls towards that purity and holineſs which is required by the law. For as the law is a ſort of tranſcript of the nature of God; ſo they are made partakers of the divine nature. But becauſe this partaking of the divine nature is but imperfect in this preſent ſtate, and there is in ſaints an unregenerate part as well as a regenerate, therefore the ſin that dwelleth in them, will have its reluctancy againſt the yoke of Chriſt: but it is only partial, not total; ſeeing there is a principle of grace within them likewiſe, that approves the law as holy, juſt, and good, Rom. vii. 12. But this is far from the wicked, even the moſt refined hypocrite, who always find in Chriſt ſome ſtone of ſtumbling, and rock of offence; ſome part of holineſs, that their hearts are never reconciled with: otherwiſe the Pſalmiſt had laid an unſure ground of comfort to himſelf in that, Pſal. cxix. 6. ‘ Then ſhall I not be ‘ aſhamed, when I have reſpect unto all thy command- ‘ ments.’ Both the godly and ungodly man have ſome ſin which the heart cleaveth to by others, which is like Eli's, 1 Sam. iii. 13. *the iniquity which he knoweth.* Let the trial be made herein, and it will be found, that the luſt, and not the law, is ſuited to the minds of moſt men; and that they would beſtow the blood of their bodies to blot out that luſt croſſing command out of the law, rather than find the efficacy of Chriſt's blood killing that law-croſſing luſt; deſiring rather to have the law brought down to them, than themſelves brought up to the law. And it will be found contrariwiſe, in thoſe that rejoice in Chriſt, to whom his laws that directly fly in the face of thoſe luſts that do ſo eaſily encompaſs them, are as chains of gold about their neck, which they love, whereas they are as iron fetters to others.

3. They are well pleaſed with that fulneſs of the Spirit of ſanctification that dwells in him to be communicated; and that the Father has appointed him to be the head of influences. And they rejoice more in the grace of God without them in Chriſt, than the grace of God within them: as he whoſe own the well is rejoiceth more in the ſpring than all his veſſels full of it; though a ſtranger will rejoice more in the fulneſs of the veſſel given him, than the fulneſs of the fountain which is not his, ‘ Thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of upright- ‘ neſs,’ Pſal. cxliii. 10. The Spirit is good in the ſaints eyes, and it is good that the fulneſs of the Spirit is lodged *in him.* To whom ſin is hateful, the Spirit of holineſs will be precious; where the power and ſtain of ſin are loathſome, the water that came out of Chriſt's ſide, will be ſuited to their minds as well as the blood. Where the love of God dwells, they will be ‘ changed into the ſame ‘ image from glory to glory.’ And as the Father hath appointed him head of influences, ſo do they chuſe him as ſuch to them, Hoſ. i. 28. ‘ Then ſhall the children ‘ of Judah and the children of Iſrael be gathered together, ‘ and appoint themſelves one head, and they ſhall come ‘ up out of the land.’ But ſeeing in others the Spirit of the world reigns, the Spirit of holineſs is not ſuited to their minds: for ‘ what agreement hath light with dark- ‘ neſs ?’ or what pleaſure can they whoſe hearts are glued to ſin, take in that which is deſtructive thereto ? Yea, and that ſeeming holineſs which ſome natural men attain to is but the product of nature, aſſiſted with external revelation, and the common operations of the Spirit, while they remain eſtranged from the life of God through Jeſus Chriſt, who is the life of the ſaints. It is not among nature's inclinations to go out of itſelf for ſanctification; but nature's way here is for a man to go in to himſelf for it. The way of goſpel ſanctification, as well as juſtification, is a ſtumbling block in the way of unbelievers, John vi. 63. ‘ It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the fleſh profit- ‘ eth nothing; the words that I ſpeak unto you, they ‘ are ſpirit, and they are life.’ But mark how they ſtumbled at it, ver. 60, 66. ‘ Many therefore of his diſciples, ‘ when they had heard this, ſaid, This an hard ſaying, ‘ who can hear it ? From that time many of his diſciples ‘ went back, and walked no more with him.’ That ſoul whoſe choice is the humble dependent life on Chriſt as the head of influences, going out of itſelf for ſanctification to Chriſt, in the way of believing, is a happy ſoul. See how the text joins theſe together, *worſhipping God in Spirit*, and *rejoicing in Chriſt Jeſus*, as the altar of burnt offering where the fire continually burns, which they may fetch to ſet to the incenſe of their duties. And ſo much for the firſt thing in this rejoicing, which is the main thing. I ſhall be more brief in the reſt, which do of courſe follow on this holy complacency of the ſoul in Chriſt, and the myſtery of Chriſt.

SECONDLY, Then there is in this rejoicing in Chriſt, *a rolling of the ſoul over on him for all.* The child of God beholding him ſuited to the divine perfections, embraceth him accordingly, laying the whole ſtreſs of his ſoul upon him, taking him joyfully for his caſe. This is intimated to us in the parable of the *treaſure hid in a field*, Matth. xiii. 44. The goſpel is that field, and Chriſt is the treaſure. Obſerve (1.) To whomſoever the goſpel comes, they may have Chriſt, if they will, he offers himſelf in it. For the treaſure is in the field, and both are to be ſold. (2) Few ſee the glory of Chriſt held forth in the goſpel, therefore he and his goſpel are ſlighted. Many go over the field of the goſpel, but find no treaſure in it, and therefore ſay, What is that field more than another, *that beloved more than another beloved ?* (3.) Whenſoever the glory of Chriſt is diſcovered to a ſoul, that ſoul beholds him as an upmaking portion; ſo as to conclude, that if he had him, he would have enough in him. For he joys on the diſcovery of him, and is willing to part with all for it. (4.) That ſoul will not reſt till Chriſt be his. (5.) That ſoul quits the gripe of all others to live on Chriſt, to take him for and inſtead of all; he lays his all upon the treaſure; if it hold good, he has all; if it ſhould fail, he has nothing. Happy the ſoul that thus rejoiceth in Chriſt. That is the wiſe man, who digs till he comes to the rock and then with joy builds on it The ſoul finds it has a heavy weight of wants and weakneſs which it can neither bear nor throw off; but finding that Chriſt is every way ſuitable to ſuch a one's caſe, and hearing his comfortable voice in the goſpel, the ſoul heartily complies with the offer, and caſts all its burdens on Chriſt for time and eternity, Pſal. lv. 22. and eſpecially theſe two.

1. Their weight of guilt. 2. their weight of duties.

Firſt, Their weight of *guilt* is laid over on him *through faith in his blood*, Rom. iii. 25. Guilt is a heavy load, able to ſink the ſoul into the loweſt hell; but the ſoul lays its hand on the head of the ſacrifice, caſting over this weight on a crucified Chriſt. They come with their polluted ſouls to the *blood of ſprinkling*, Heb. xii. 24. Chriſt is the *city of refuge*, and thither they go, as the only place ſuitable for them to dwell in. All without this city of refuge is under the dominion of the law; there death reigns; juſtice is ready to do execution; there the heavens are black, the windows of heaven opened, and a broken law without intermiſſion raining curſes on their guilty heads. Wherefore the ſoul at firſt makes haſte to eſcape, and throwing itſelf into Chriſt as the city of refuge, carefully abides there, and dare not ſet out its head without the gates for ever, Pſal. xci. 1. ‘ He that dwelleth in the ſe- ‘ cret place of the moſt High, ſhall abide under the ſha- ‘ dow of the Almighty.’ verſe 2. ‘ I will ſay of the Lord, ‘ He is my refuge.’ I have ſaid, and will ſay it, that he is my refuge, under whoſe protection I may be ſafe. And thus Chriſt himſelf holds out that ſafe covert of his righteouſneſs and grace, which he offers to ſinners in the goſpel, Matth. xxiii. 37. ‘ How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her ‘ chickens under her wings!’ They are weak, and in hazard of being made a prey; but under the wings of his grace they may find ſafety, and therefore they come to truſt *under his wings*. His blood is the only propitiation, his righteouſneſs their only cover, his ſatisfaction their only plea for mercy, his payment of the debt their only plea for their diſcharge; for they have had the ſentence of death in themſelves, that they might truſt in him who raiſeth the dead, while others keep up their confidence in the fleſh. Such the Lord pronounceth bleſſed, Matth. v. 3. ‘ Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit.’

Secondly, Their weight of *duties* is laid over on him.

1. For *performance*. Chriſt lays his yoke upon the believer, and he lays himſelf and it over on Chriſt again as the fountain of ſtrength: Matth. xi. 29. ‘ Take my ‘ yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and ‘ lowly in heart; and ye ſhall find reſt unto your ſouls.’ Pſal. cxvi. 9, 10. ‘ I will walk before the Lord in the land ‘ of the living. I believed, therefore have I ſpoken.’ Hence it becomes a eaſy yoke, which before was unſupportable. How can that be? Why, duties are indeed a dead weight while laid on by the hand of the law, and borne by virtue of the remains of that ſtrength which Adam left us; which is but mere weakneſs, and cannot make us bear it more than a child can bear a mountain, John xv. 5. ‘ Without ‘ me ye can do nothing.’ But as for the yoke of Chriſt, it is laid on with a promiſe of ſtrength, and with it is laid into the heart a principle of rolling over the ſoul and it on Chriſt again: Gal. ii. 20. *I am crucified with Chriſt: Nevertheleſs I live; yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.* And ſo he bears the heavy end of his own yoke, and bears them and their burden too. Thus the believer has a kind of derived omnipotency, Phil. iv. 13. ‘I can do all things ‘ through Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth me. For it is God ‘ which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good ‘ pleaſure.’ He works the will for the work, and the work for us when he has wrought the will for it. A vaſt weight may be on a little ſtone in a building, without its ſinking, when it, and all that is on it, lies upon a rock. Hence, Heb. xi. is ſpent in ſhewing the mighty things the ſaints have done and ſuffered by faith. For in a believer there is a moſt ſuitable match, ſufficiency joined with inſufficiency, ſtrength with weakneſs, all fulneſs with wants and poverty; even the *mighty God* with *worm Jacob*. And thus the believer goes out of himſelf for performance of duties, while the hypocrite goes in to himſelf. For it is a plain truth, that the way and manner of working follows the manner of being and living, and every man will act as he lives. Now, the believer lives by Chriſt, and therefore muſt act by him; and will endeavour to hold off lippening to his own ſtrength, as to his own righteouſneſs; and to take Chriſt for ſanctification, as well as for righteouſneſs, God having made him both to his people. Natural men are *without Chriſt*, and ſo are trees by themſelves, having their own root in the ground: and hence for the fruit of duty all the natural powers of their ſouls are called together as in a ſolemn day: but becauſe their root is rottenneſs, their bloſſom goes up as duſt; and their fruits are like the apples of Sodom, which are very pleaſant to the eye, but being cut up, are nothing but a heap of loathſome matter; and no wonder, ſeeing they grow by the dead ſea of ſelf. But the godly are branches whoſe fruit depends on influence from Chriſt, as the true vine into which they are ingrafted; hence the bent of the believer's ſoul lies that way, not to truſt his natural powers, nor inherent graces; ſeeing theſe depend on Chriſt, as light on the ſun, and are but rays, not the fountain of light, but to go out of himſelf, in the way of believing, Phil. iv. 13. ‘ I can do all things through Chriſt which ‘ ſtrengtheneth me.’ And therefore, while others like common boatmen ſerve themſelves with their oars, ſeeing they never go out of the barren region of ſelf; they will depend on Chriſt for the blowings of his Spirit, having a mind for Immanuel's land.

2. For *acceptance* of their duties, Heb. xi. 4. ‘ By faith ‘ Abel offered unto God a more excellent ſacrifice than ‘ Cain.’ God in Chriſt is the alone object of the ſaints worſhip. The ſaints labour in duties which is accepted, is a *labour of love*, Heb. vi. 10. Our love to God is but the reflex of God's love to us. God's ſpecial love to us darts it beams unto us no other way but through the veil of the fleſh of Chriſt; and it muſt be through the ſame veil that our love returns to him, and itſelf and its fruits accepted. Duties done acceptably, are the returns of influences from heaven; which are communicated through Chriſt, who lies at the fountain-head, as the great mean of communion betwixt God and the ſaints; and as influences come from God by him, ſo the duty is directed to God through him. As God will not accept, ſo the ſaints dare not offer for acceptance, prayer, or praiſe, but thro' him; nor any good work, though it were a ſacrifice of their own blood, but as *waſhed in the blood of the Lamb*, Rev. vii. 14. They will not expect any of their ſacrifices to be accepted, but ſuch as are laid on the altar Chriſt, which ſanctifies the gift. Here the ſtreſs is laid for acceptance by the ſaints; to which the view they have of God's holineſs, the naughtineſs of their beſt duties, their complacency in God's method of grace, and contrivance of ſalvation through Chriſt, and that goſpel turn that grace has given their hearts, do determine them; while the natural man is a ſtranger to all theſe, and ſo ruſhes forward to the throne with his duties, not honouring the Son, and thereby diſhonouring the Father; for worſhipping in the name of Chriſt, is no leſs than faith in his blood.

THIRDLY, In this rejoicing in Chriſt there is *a reſt of the heart in him as a fit match for the ſoul.* For as in marriage there is a view of ſuch a perſon as a fit match, whereupon follows the choice and acceptance; and in caſe the perſon choſen anſwer the expectation, there ariſeth from thence a reſt of the heart in ſuch a perſon, which is the ſolid joy of that lot: ſo when the ſoul is pleaſed with Chriſt as every way ſuitable, it rolls itſelf over on him, and reſts in him as a fit match. Our firſt Adam did us two ill turns. He led us off the path of life; and ſo left us with a conſcience full of guilt. He led us away from the living God, and ſo left us with a heart full of unſatisfied deſires. Hence the ſons of Adam quickly finding themſelves like the *horſe leech having two daughters*, crying, *Give, give*; a reſtleſs conſcience, and a reſtleſs heart; to each of which they muſt needs ſay, ‘ Shall I not ſeek reſt for thee, that ‘ it may be well with thee?’ And ſo the ſoul ſets to work: and the firſt way it goes, is, *through dry places, ſeeking reſt*, as the devil when he goes out of a man. And,

1. For the *conſcience*; the natural man goes through the dry and barren region of the law, ſeeking reſt to it, *going about to eſtabliſh his own righteouſneſs*, Rom. x. 3. The ſun is gone down on them, and therefore they light their candles, and compaſs themſelves about with their own ſparks. And in what meaſure that reſtleſſneſs has ſeized their conſciences, ſo far do they go the round of law-obedience to ſtill it. The conſciences of ſome are eaſily lulled aſleep; a few coldriſe wiſhes will do it with ſome; others can get no reſt till they go the round of all the external duties of religion; nay, ſo reſtleſs are the conſciences of ſome, that it will coſt them to do many things, with Herod, to remove many beloved luſts that keep the conſcience unquiet, to water the couch with tears, to bind it down with vows, and engagements of reformation, and after all carefully to watch againſt thoſe things that diſturbed it before. And yet for all this, becauſe it is not ſprinkled with blood, it can get no ſolid reſt; it gets but an unſound nap, out of which it will have a fearful awakening. It is ſtill but ‘ as he that lieth down in the midſt ‘ of the ſea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a maſt,’ Prov. xxiii. 34. Now, Chriſt finds his elect in this ſame caſe, ſeeking reſt to their conſciences in the law: and whatever reſt they may ſometimes find in it, he doth at length draw that pillow from under their head, till he make them effectually deſpair of finding reſt there to their conſciences, whoſe wounds ſpurn all remedy from their beſt and moſt ſerious duties; and then diſcovers to them the blood of ſprinkling, the only conſcience-purging re-

medy : And here the ſoul finds reſt to the conſcience : Heb. ix. 14. ‘ How much more ſhall the blood of Chriſt, ‘ who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himſelf with- ‘ out ſpot to God, purge your conſcience from dead works ‘ to ſerve the living God ?’ The conſcience reſts in him ; of which before in the ſecond head. But that which I aim at here, is,

2. The reſt of the *heart* : which the natural man and the Chriſtian both ſeek : but the ſoul out of Chriſt never finds it ; only they that are in Chriſt find it in him. For clearing of which conſider,

1*ſt*, Our hearts naturally are full of deſires of happineſs, which crave ſatisfaction. Even when deſire fails, theſe are ſtill freſh and vigorous ; and a man ſhall as ſoon ceaſe to be a man, as ceaſe to deſire to be a happy man. The heart of a man is an empty craving thing, of a large capacity. And wants are ſo interwoven with our nature, and deſires of the ſupply of theſe wants, that man ſeems to be little elſe but a compound of wants and deſires, which are enlarged as the ocean. Heap together unto Chriſtleſs hearts all perfections that are to be found in all the men of the earth, increaſe the heap to them with all that is to be found in other creatures, all would be overwhelmed with a vaſt infinite maſs of wants, as a filing of gold under a mountain ; and their deſires after all remain as wide as the ſea, ſeeing the ſoul is capable of an infinite good. Ye ſhall as ſoon tell the motes that appear flying through a new-ſweeped houſe, where the beams of the ſun are let in, number the ſtars, and tell to the laſt grain of ſand by the ſea-ſhore, as ye ſhall come to the laſt deſire of a man's heart, if you keep off an infinite good. Behold, with what a wide mouth the heart of man appears ! ſatisfied it muſt be, but where will it find an anſwerable fulneſs ? Peace and reſt they would have ; but, *the way of peace they have not known ; there is none that ſeeketh after God*, though *their throat is an open ſepulchre*, ſtanding always open, crying, *Give, give*, and never ſaying, *It is enough*, Prov. xxx. 16. Hence,

2*dly*, The natural man goeth through the dry places of the creation, but findeth none. They are bewildered travellers, that have loſt their way ; they wander in the wilderneſs, but find no city to dwell in : ſo Solomon hits their miſerable caſe, Eccleſ. xi. 15. ‘ The labour of ‘ the fooliſh wearieth every one of them, becauſe he knoweth not how to go to the city.’ The man goes about extracting the ſweet of every created thing he can reach to for ſatisfaction ; but they will not, cannot anſwer his expectation. They are like the Sodomites at Lot's houſe, when ſtruck with blindneſs, where all were for the door, but never one of them could find it. Some fix on the profits of the world, and drink greedily at theſe broken ciſterns. And the cream and ſtrength of their affections are ſpent on theſe ; till they find they are but ſpending their labour for that which is not bread, Iſa. lv. 2. Some hang at the breaſts of the world's pleaſures ; and often preſs ſo hard for ſatisfaction in theſe, that they wring out blood inſtead of milk ; and as men hammering at a flinty rock for water, bring forth fire from it flaſhing in their faces. The man is like the hungry beaſt, which, if it abide within the hedge, rives all up to the red earth ; neither doth that ſatisfy, but they break over the hedge, if the forbidden fruit can afford them that ſatisfaction, which the allowed cannot. Some purſue the luſt of the eye, that is never ſatisfied with ſeeing ; ſome the luſt of the fleſh, that is never gratified ; and ſome, the pride of life that can never be ſatisfied. Some ſoar a little above the common gang, and they ſeem to eſpy in knowledge what is not to be found in other things, and their ſouls fly out in eager purſuit after that, which indeed bids faireſt to it among all created things ; but what comes it to at length ? The ſoul finds the way to it ſore travel ; and after they have travelled far and ſore for it, their hearts are ſtung with theſe queſtions, Job xxviii. 20. ‘ Whence ‘ then cometh wiſdom ? and where is the place of under- ‘ ſtanding ? ſeeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, ‘ and kept cloſe from the fowls of the air.’ And what ſcraps of it are gathered here and there, are far from giving the promiſed reſt to the heart, Eccleſ. i. ult. ‘ For ‘ in much wiſdom is much grief : and he that increaſeth ‘ knowledge, increaſeth ſorrow.’ The world is like the air in a ſummer-day full of inſects ; and natural men are like a company of fooliſh children, one running to catch one, another to catch another : and when all is done, none of them can fill the hand. How humbling is it to think, that after the heart is diſappointed in real enjoyments, it goes about to feed itſelf with mere fancies ; ſo that the imagination is let looſe, and runs hither and thither, forms to itſelf a thouſand airy nothings, traverſes the world, and turns the man into a thouſand fine ſhapes, giving the man a multitude of poſſeſſions, if not of the hand, yet of the heart ; as if the fooliſh heart, when it had tried all other means in vain, would ſtrive to dream itſelf full and happy ? But when that wandering of the ſoul ceaſeth, he awaketh and his ſoul is faint. But will the tired ſoul reſt after all ? No ; but goes back again to the ſame door where it has got a hundred refuſals. O, thinks the man, if I had ſuch a thing, I would be well. May be he gets it ; but he finds for as big as it was afar off, it will not fill his hand, when he gripes it ; hence new labour to bring forth new diſappointments without end.

3*dly*, Chriſt finds the elect ſoul, in the day of converting grace, ſeeking reſt among the blinded world, brings it to deſpair of ever finding it there, and diſcovers himſelf to it as the fountain of ſatisfaction. And then the man hears a voice ſaying, as Pſal. lxxxi. 10. ‘ Open thy mouth ‘ wide, and I will fill it.’ “ Many a time you have open- “ ed your mouth wide enough to your idols ; but now “ open it to me, I will fill it. Lay the mouth of your “ ſoul on the breaſts of my conſolations, and they ſhall “ flow abundantly.” The word for believing comes from a root that ſignifies *to nurſe*, as if faith were nothing elſe but the laying of the ſoul on the breaſts of Chriſt's conſolations, in whom dwells all the fulneſs of the Godhead. And truly the ſoul is like the hungry infant, that gapes, and ſucks every thing that comes near its mouth ; yet is reſtleſs, till the mother ſet it to the breaſt ; and then it reſts ; and ſo doth the believing ſoul in Chriſt. The heaven born ſoul is ſeeking a match for itſelf, but cannot find it among all the creatures, there is ſomething wanting to ſatisfaction in every thing the ſoul meets with, till it come to Chriſt ; and there the ſoul finds a match for it in its enlarged deſires, and ſo takes up its everlaſting reſt in him ; for coming to him, they come to the utmoſt of their deſires. Ye may take up the reſt of the heart in Chriſt in theſe two particulars.

1. The deſires of the ſoul centering and meeting in Chriſt. The heart naturally is as it were in a thouſand pieces, each of them following ſome one or another vanity ; and the deſires of the heart, like a flock of hungry fowls, are ſcattered on the face of the earth, catching what they can get, till Chriſt is diſcovered by an eye of faith ; and then where the carcaſe is, there will the eagles be gathered together, and as the ſcattered rays of the ſun contracted in the burning-glaſs, fix on one thing, ſo the deſires of the ſoul are brought to meet in one point, even in him. The heart is never right till it come to this ; for while the natural man's heart is in queſt of happineſs, and his deſires are ſent out to bring it in from all quarters, no wonder ſome of them ſtumble on Chriſt : ſeeing they have a double heart, why may not Chriſt get one, while the world and luſts keep another ? But that is not the reſt of the heart in Chriſt, but parted between him and others. As Jacob found his marriage with Leah and Rachel both, not a reſt but a rack to his heart ; ſo ſhall the divided heart ever be found a reſtleſs heart.

“ But, alas ! may ſome ſay, I find indeed deſires in “ my heart going out after Chriſt ; but as true it is there “ are many deſires in it going another way. Can ſuch a “ heart be ſaid to rejoice and reſt in Chriſt ?” For anſwer to this, conſider, that as faith is not perfected in this life, ſo neither is the believer's rejoicing and reſting in Chriſt. The fleſh hath its deſires as well as the Spirit, Gal. v. 17. ‘ The fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, and ‘ the Spirit againſt the fleſh.’ And therefore though they that believe do enter into reſt, yet there remains a reſt to the people of God, which they ſhall get in heaven.

1ſt, In what channel runs the main ſtream of thy deſires? Though a river may on each ſide have its ſmall ſtrands that run irregularly, yet we account the main ſtream and channel that wherein the ſeveral brooks that make it up do meet. And thus in the child of God, though there may be many irregular deſires, yet the main ſtream of deſire in them goes Chriſt-ward. The Pſalmiſt wanted not deſires of the fleſh; yet, ſays he, ‘ One ‘ thing have I deſired of the Lord, that will I ſeek after, ‘ that I may dwell in the houſe of the Lord all the days ‘ of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to ‘ enquire in his temple,’ Pſal. xxvii. 4. In the natural man it is quite contrary; his main deſires are after the world and his luſts, the ſtrength of his affections are ſpent on theſe, ſo that there is nothing left for Chriſt, but a few languiſhing deſires, that bear no proportion to his deſires after other things, more than a little ſide ſtream to the main ſtream of the water. Thus the Pſalmiſt diſtinguiſhes himſelf from natural men, Pſal. iv. 6. ‘ There be ‘ many that ſay, Who will ſhew us any good? Lord, ‘ lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.’ But remember I am now ſpeaking of deſires after Chriſt as a reſt to the heart, not as a reſt to the conſcience: for, ſeeing ‘ ſkin for ſkin all that a man hath will he give for his ‘ life:’ the terrors of a reſtleſs conſcience may make the chief ſtream of deſire go after Chriſt for reſt to the conſcience, as the fooliſh virgins when they ſaw their lamps gone out, and the bridegroom coming, left all their other trafficking wherein they had ſpent their former time, and went to buy oil, Matth. xxv. 1. to the 13.

2dly, Conſider whether or not thine abſolute deſires do centre in Chriſt. If you were left this day to your free choice, never to be called to an account for it whatever way ye made it, either Chriſt or luſts, where would your deſires center? Is there ſo much fulneſs for heart ſatisfaction ſeen by you in Chriſt, as would draw your deſires after him? ye are the virgins whoſe heart Chriſt has? Let the natural man's deſires after Chriſt be ever ſo ſtrong, I may well ſay, they do not ſo much deſire him becauſe they would have him, as becauſe they cannot want him: they do in this what they would not, and therefore it is not they that do it, but conſcience that dwelleth in them. And on the contrary, the ſaints have their deſires after luſts; but ſo complying with them, do what they would not: therefore it is not they but ſin that dwells in them.

3dly, Conſider what are thoſe deſires in thy heart that ſwallow up all other, as the ſea in which all the rivers do meet? If thou can ſay, it is deſire after Chriſt, thou art a real ſaint: Pſal. lxxiii. 25. ‘ Whom have I in heaven ‘ but thee? and there is none upon earth that I deſire be‘ ſides thee.’ In the heart of a ſaint there are other ſheaves beſides Chriſt, but all others muſt bow to his. Do thy deſires after Chriſt rebound on thy deſires after other things, towards the weakening and wearing them off? though ye ſee ye come but little ſpeed, it is a good ſign: Rom. vii. 22. ‘ For I delight in the law of God, after the ‘ inward man.’ The godly ſoul may have many woful deſires, but the heart would be content to deny itſelf of all of them, for Chriſt. But on the contrary, the natural man's deſire after other things than Chriſt, ſwallows up all other, like Pharaoh's lean kine eating up the fat ones, and yet ſtill lean. His deſires of Chriſt muſt yield to his deſires of luſts; ſeeing the hungry heart craves ſatisfaction, and they never yet found as much ſweetneſs in Chriſt, as in other things: and therefore would judge it but a ſorry bargain to ſell all for the one pearl; as was the caſe with the young man, Mark x. 21, 22.

2. The deſires of the heart *abiding on him for ſatisfaction.* The ſoul, after long wandering amongſt the creatures for ſatisfaction, beholds all vain and unſatisfactory; and beholding the fulneſs of Chriſt, lays hold on him, and reſts in him as an object adequate to the boundleſs deſires of the ſoul, and in whom it may be filled, Pſal. lxxiii. 25. forecited. And thus the ſoul is brought at length to the utmoſt of its deſires; there they terminate as on an object completely ſatisfactory. This is their reſt and here they will ſtay. Here is the treaſure hid, and here will they halt and dig for it. This is the city which they find to reſt in; there will they abide. This reſt of the heart in Chriſt, is ſometimes in ſome of God's children ſcrewed up far higher, when they are filled as with marrow and with fat, in the ſenſible enjoyment of him; yea and have as much as they can hold in this frail ſtate, when they are filled with joy in believing, even joy unſpeakable and full of glory; beholding the unſearchable boundleſs riches of Chriſt, and aſſuredly know that all is theirs, then they can ſay, ‘ I have all and abound.’ But this is too high to be a mark of a ſaint, and would leave moſt part of them out of the roll of ſaints. But he whoſe deſires abide on Chriſt for ſatisfaction, has taken up his reſt in him; for he can ſay with David, ‘ This is all my ‘ deſire, although he make it not to grow,’ 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. The heart could be content with Chriſt alone, but nothing can content it without him. And this does ſo far dry up the devouring deeps of carnal deſires, wherewith the ſoul was before plagued, that the ſoul never goes abroad for ſatisfaction among the creatures in ſuch manner as it was wont. Chriſt becomes to the ſoul a covering of the eyes, as Abraham was to Sarah: and a draught of the water of life quenches that ſcorching thirſt they had before after creature-ſweetneſs. They give over the trade of begging at the creatures door, ſeeing their hearts are perſuaded there is bread enough in their Father's houſe, and to ſpare, Luke xv. 17. When the ſoul comes to Chriſt, it takes up its reſt in him, ſaying, upon the diſcovery of him, as one was wont to ſay when riſing from prayer, “ Be cloſed now, O mine eyes, be cloſed; for “ henceforth ſhall ye never ſee a more lovely object.”

1ſt, The gracious ſoul can be content with Chriſt alone. This is plainly the attainment of all that attain to Chriſt. Every man that finds the treaſure hid in the field, ſells all he hath with joy to purchaſe it; which he could not do, if he could not be contented with the treaſure alone. And by the want of this diſpoſition of ſoul Chriſt diſcovered the hypocriſy of that young man ſpoke of, Mark x. 21. For certainly that heart is divided that can have no contentment in Chriſt, unleſs it turn aſide by the flocks of his companions alſo: it loves him not as a ſuitable match to the ſoul, ſeeing the heart cannot reſt in him. Wherefore the gracious ſoul ſees that ſatisfaction in Chriſt, that it can live on him without its former luſts; yea though all things in the world be gone from him, while his God is not gone, his reſt and rejoicing will be to the fore.

2dly, Nothing can fill Chriſt's room with them, have what they will; the want of him ſqueezes the ſap out of all other enjoyments to them. As if a thouſand ciphers were ſet together without a figure, the total will ſtill be naught; ſo unto the gracious ſoul all without Chriſt is naught, becauſe he is the reſt of their hearts, Philip. iii. 8. ‘ Yea ‘ doubtleſs, and I count all things but loſs, for the excel‘ lency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord: for ‘ whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and do count ‘ them but dung that I may win Chriſt.’ The worldly man's indefinite wiſh ſays, he is too eaſily pleaſed; it is *any good*, but the godly man's wiſh is very particular, *the light of thy countenance*; it is the Lord he ſeeks it of; the favour of God in Chriſt, or nothing. As the raven ſent out of the ark miſſed not the ark while there was carrion enough to feed on; ſo give natural men whereon to feed their luſts, and ſomething to appeaſe their conſcience, they will reign as kings without Chriſt. Theſe are their good things, Luke xvi. 25. But the heart of the child of God will ſay, Lord, what wilt thou give me, if I go without thyſelf the chief good?

Queſt. But doth the heart of a ſaint always thus reſt in Chriſt? *Anſw.* There is no doubt but ſometimes one that has taken up his heart's reſt in Chriſt, may fall off his reſt, that his ſoul may return to his true reſt again. Saints may ſometimes take up their reſt under ſome created ſhadow, but they will not dwell there. *Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd*, chap. iv. 6. But even in this caſe there will be found a twofold difference betwixt them and natural men.

1. The ſaints never get ſuch a kindly reſt as the natural man in theſe things. The reaſon is plain; the natural man is in his own element in that caſe, the ſaint is

not. The natural man is as one who is at home in his own bed, the other is as one abroad. This is clear from the caſe of the ſpouſe, Cant. v. 2. She is aſleep, but it is very unkindly reſt ſhe gets. We may noitce three things that make it ſo. (1.) There is a thorn of ſelf condemnation in the conſcience: *I ſleep;* I am out of order, this is not the caſe I ſhould be in. The ſoul is accuſed of ingratitude to Chriſt. Chriſt is at the door, he knocks, and has ſtood over-long. *Is this thy kindneſs to thy friend?* ſays conſcience. *Have I been a wilderneſs unto Iſrael? a land of darkneſs?* ſays the Lord, Jer. ii. 31. And the man is ſpeechleſs like Jonah; of whom it may be obſerved, that he anſwered not again. (2.) There is a wound of ſelf-diſſatisfaction in the heart, *My heart waketh.* There is a ſecret diſcontent with his condition, becauſe the enjoyment of Chriſt is not in it. Such perſons would be glad of Chriſt's return, though their ſouls are fettered that they cannot go after him, till he put in his hand by the hole of the lock. (3.) There is a faint moving of the affections after him. *It is the voice of my beloved.* Although the ſoul has written the bill of divorce, in fond affections to another, yet ſhe would not ſign it for ten thouſand worlds. Though ſhe is not able to riſe to let him in, ſhe cannot think of his going quite away. It is another ſort of reſt the natural man has in theſe things; where there is but one principle, to wit, that of corruption, ſo that whatever diſquiet conſcience may give him at a time, yet it is but a carnal defiled conſcience, and cannot diſturb the hearts reſt in luſts; as Balaam's conſcience left his heart ſtill in love with the wages of iniquity, though his conſcience ſtood in his way of winning them. And though the heart of the natural man cannot be free of diſquiet, yet it is not becauſe Chriſt is not in that caſe of his for the reſt of his heart, but becauſe the creature cannot anſwer his hungry appetite; yet though one cannot, he hopes another may, and ſo all that it amounts to, is, the ſluggard turning him on his bed. Which brings me to a

2. Thing, namely, The Lord does always at length hunt the ſaint out of his ſtarting holes, till his ſoul return to its reſt. Hoſ. ii. 6, 7. 'Therefore behold, I will hedge 'up her way with thorns, and make a wall, that ſhe ſhall 'not find her paths. Then ſhall ſhe ſay, I will go and 'return to my firſt huſband, for then was it better with 'me than now.' As the needle in the compaſs touched with a good load-ſtone, reſts not till it turn towards the north; ſo the man who is partaker of the divine nature, will get no kindly reſt with his affections on the earth; till they be ſet above. The ſaint for his heart's reſt goes to God from the creatures, the natural man for his goes from one creature to another; being conjured as it were within the circle of created things. For why, the curſe of the ſerpent is on ſuch perſons; and though they may change their particular place, their holes of the earth, yet duſt is their meat, and on their belly they muſt go. They want the ſeraphims wings, which grace gives the ſaints, and ſo never mount heaven-ward. We do not read of one among all the ſaints more like a bird that wandereth from his neſt than Solomon. His father had warned him, to *ſerve the Lord with a perfect heart*, that is a heart reſting in God, not falling in pieces, and gauding after idols; *and with a willing mind*, a mind taking delight in God. But when Solomon grew old, his heart was not perfect with the Lord, He fell off his reſt in God, and went after idols. And many a door he went to while he travelled through the creation, but he was repulſed at them all, and at length brought back again to God, with that report, *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.* For though a ſon may vague a while, yet ſeeing his Father has a houſe, he will grow wiſe at length, and return to it, Pſal. xc. 1. 'Lord, thou haſt been our dwelling place in all genera'tions;' though ſometimes they are not at home, but lodge elſewhere. But the common beggar muſt be ſtill going from houſe to houſe, and ſo ſpend the time of his life, becauſe he has no certain dwelling place.

LASTLY, In this rejoicing in Chriſt there is *a confeſſion of him unto ſalvation*, Rom. x. 10. 'With the heart man 'believeth unto righteouſneſs, and with the mouth con'feſſion is made unto ſalvation.' And as the image of God that was impreſſed on man's ſoul in his creation did ſhine through his body, as the candle through the lantern, ſo that reſt of the heart in Chriſt, that in itſelf is a hidden thing, will nevertheleſs ſhine forth in the ſaints outward converſation. Some hypocrites have ſuch a dexterity in aping God's children, that it will be very difficult to know what to ſay in this point; which I would rather hear of than ſpeak of. But as the text intimates a difference, I dare not quite paſs it; hoping the Lord that has laid it in the way, will give ſomething that may be uſeful; though I would not have people to lay the main ſtreſs of the evidence of their ſtate here, but to uſe it as a help to let them ſee what lies more inwardly. I ſhall conſider this holy glorying in Chriſt, and confeſſion of him, with reſpect to mens ordinary converſation, and with reſpect to their converſation in ſuffering times, and I think the text looks to both.

Firſt, With reſpect to the ſoul's ordinaty converſation.

1. This inward rejoicing in Chriſt wears off that air of pride that is ſeen about many profeſſors, vainly puffed up with their fleſhly mind. They will not only have humbleneſs of mind, but *be clothed with humility*. Whatever may be attributed to the temper of any, it is hard to think a ſaint will ſhew ſuch an air of vanity about him, as to make him loathſome to diſcerning Chriſtians.

2. Grace will circumciſe the ſelf-condemning lips. Boaſters are enrolled with thoſe that have but a form of godlineſs. They that rejoice in Chriſt, feel ſuch a weight of corruption in the heart, that it will be an embargo on their tongue, to keep them from proclaiming their own goodneſs, as moſt men do. But it is ſad to think of the ſtrain of many profeſſors diſcourſe, of their conditions, abilities, attaloments, &c. where is not wanting a fat ſacrifice to ſelf, notwithſtanding of acknowledgments of God's goodneſs in beſtowing theſe on them: like the Phariſee; who ſaid 'God I thank thee, that I am not as 'other men are, extortioners, unjuſt, adulterers,' &c.

3. Gracious ſouls will readily diſcover in their converſe a tendency in the ſtrain of their diſcourſe towards the corruption of nature, and the riches of God's grace in Chriſt. There is ſomething charming in theſe things to them that rejoice in Chriſt. Grief and love are two paſſions that mightily fix the mind on their objects. And the one is their greateſt burden, the other their greateſt ſupport. And how can it be otherwiſe, ſeeing the great deſign of the goſpel is to exalt Chriſt and free grace, to make Chriſt all, and the creature nothing. But there are ſome to whom theſe things are taſteleſs as the white of an egg. And in converſation they are knocked in the head with them; and are ſo far from entertaining others with theſe matters, that they cannot entertain them from others, unleſs it be by ſome general expreſſions, that it may be known they are not ignorant of theſe things. I think I obſerve in Paul's epiſtles a more than ordinary elevation of his ſpirit when he comes on theſe points. It is quite contrary in many profeſſors, whoſe tongues are ready interpreters of the mind in matters of controverſy, this and the other opinion, enlargement, attainment, &c. but when theſe come, they ſtumble and faulter, becauſe the heart runs not that way.

4. They will readily be found to be no ſtrangers to heart exerciſe about their ſtate, and will diſcover ſomething of their experience that way; or if they do not, ſuch converſe as hits theſe things they will be ready to make welcome, for they rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, their life is in the light of his countenance; but it does not always ſhine on them. And therefore the queſtion of the heart will be, *Saw ye him whom my ſoul loveth?* But there are many who have no changes, and therefore they fear not God; they are *rich and increaſed with goods, and ſtand in need of nothing* that way. They have had a reel among their affections ſometime; and now they think they believe, and keep up the practice of religious duties, and there is an end of it. But the vital part of religion is not their ſtudy; yea, the hearing of it grates upon their ears.

5. Rejoicing in Chriſt Jeſus will make men tender of other Chriſtians, in judging of them. Gal. vi. 2. 'Bre'thren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, reſtore ſuch an

one in the ſpirit of meekneſs; conſidering thyſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted.’ The man that finds his own ſore running on him, which leaves him no glorying but in Chriſt, will be fair to handle the ſores of his brethren with a ſpirit of meekneſs. But that diſpoſition of many, which makes them conclude people's hypocriſy from particular ſlips in their way, appears to be the product of ſelf confidence. And as they thus trample on thoſe that are fallen below them, it will be found they very little honour or value thoſe that are above them in ſpiritual experience of religion, as if all were to be cut off that are beyond their meaſure; and where the power of godlineſs ſhines moſt, their carnal hearts riſe againſt it; and in ſuch a caſe will readily pitch on their ſores, and ſlightingly ſay, ‘Is Saul alſo among the prophets?’ 1 Sam. x. 11. It is but very few that will ſay, ‘And who is their Father?’ acknowledging the free grace of God, that gives to every one as he will, and loving the Lord's image wherever they ſee it.

6. Such as rejoice in Chriſt will be found to have a peculiar converſe with the word, and reliſh of it on their ſpirits, according to Iſa. lix. 21. ‘As for me, this is my covenant with them, ſaith the Lord, My ſpirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, ſhall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy ſeed, nor out of the mouth of thy ſeed's ſeed, ſaith the Lord, from henceforth and forever.’ The Bible being the diſcovery of Chriſt's heart towards ſinners, the word on which he cauſeth them to hope, it is not to be doubted, but they will ſhew a peculiar reſpect to it as ſuch. And it will be their book above all others: their book for heart holineſs and not for head knowledge; their book by which they deſire to walk, and not only whereof they may talk. And thoſe places which diſcover the naughtineſs of man's nature will be prized; and the name of Chriſt in it, the ointment that perfumes all.

7. *Laſtly*, They will be found to have a peculiar reſpect to his ordinances. If men rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus in their hearts, it is not to be ſuppoſed but that in their converſation, their will ſhine a peculiar reſpect to the place where he records his name, Pſal. lxiii. 1, 2. ‘O God, thou art my God, early will I ſeek thee: my ſoul thirſteth for thee, my fleſh longeth for thee in a dry and thirſty land, where no water is: to ſee thy power and thy glory, ſo as I have ſeen thee in the ſanctuary.’ And becauſe they have buſineſs there for eternity, there will be ſomething in their converſation there ſhewing them them more kindly gueſts than others. It is an open confeſſion of Chriſt to worſhip him in the aſſemblies of his ſaints. I know not how they ſatisfy themſelves that they rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, that rejoice not when it is ſaid to them, ‘Let us go up to the houſe of the Lord;’ how they ſatisfy themſelves that they have an intereſt in the treaſure, while they ſo little value the opening of the field to diſcover the treaſure. The ſlighting of the ordinances will be found not to be the ſpot of God's people, according to the ſcriptures. And as for you that do not ordinarily attend publick ordinances, be your impediment what it will, if it be not your affliction, and not your choice, ye are ſlighters of the treaſure and the field both; as men may punctually attend all ordinances, and yet be far from rejoicing in the Lord of ordinances. It is not every one that gathers the manna there, though it fall at the tent-doors of all alike. But that ſtill remains a truth in the worſt of times, that ‘God's words do good to him that walketh uprightly,’ Micah ii. 7. And it fares with goſpel hearers, as it did with Jonathan's ſervant, 1 Sam. xx. 38, 39. ‘And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make ſpeed, haſte, ſtay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his maſter. But the lad knew not any thing; only Jonathan and David knew the matter.’

Secondly, With reſpect to the gracious ſoul's converſation in a ſuffering time, the man's glorying in Chriſt with reſpect to the croſs; our Lord has a weighty word, Mark viii. 38. ‘Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and ſinful generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.’ In oppoſition to this, we muſt glory in Chriſt even at ſuch a time, if we would evidence ourſelves true Chriſtians.

1. The ſaints will keep on Chriſt's ſide, though it may be loweſt; as better with the croſs, than the world's ſide with the crown. There is never a ſoul engaged with Chriſt aright, but is reconciled to the croſs of Chriſt; and in the day of its cloſing with him, lays down its all at his feet, taking them up again at his command, to hold them as his, and to uſe them for him, ay and till he call for them: and ſo is content to run all hazards with him, and will not be boaſted away from him: ‘For love is ſtrong as death, jealouſy cruel as the grave,’ Cant. viii. 6. In a time of proſperity Chriſt gets ſuch a backing as Gideon with his thirty-two thouſand men: but whenever the ſtorm ariſes, there goes off a large multitude; and when they are particularly brought down to the waters of ſuffering, there goes off another party, till few do remain. But they to whom the kingdom is appointed, will continue with him in the trial. But it ſeems ſelf is ſuch a ſalamander as can live in the fire; and that though men, by denying Chriſt to ſhift the croſs, may prove themſelves naught, yet even ſuffering for Chriſt will not prove one to be a ſaint: 2 Cor. xi. 13. ‘For ſuch are falſe prophets, deceitful workers, transforming themſelves into the apoſtles of Chriſt.’ Conſider then,

2. The ſaints will carry in this matter humbly, however boldly, as knowing the ſnare, and their own weakneſs to reſiſt; and not from a Roman courage, or natural ſtiffneſs and briſkneſs of ſpirit, which being from proud ſelf, will never make the man act humbly or ſuffer ſo. Hence is that exhortation, 1 Pet. iii. 13. ‘Be ready always to give an anſwer to every man that aſketh you a reaſon of the hope that is in you, with meekneſs and fear.’ They will glory in Chriſt, not only as he for whom, but alſo as he by whom they ſuffer. Often has it been obſerved, that the humble man, whoſe ſoul has trembled within him for fear of diſhonouring the Lord, by his fainting in time of trial, has been the ſound hearted ſufferer; while the briſk, fearleſs profeſſor has made a ſad account of himſelf, when it came to the point of ſuffering in earneſt: Iſa. xl. 29, 30, 31. *The Lord giveth power to the faint; to them that have no might, he increaſeth ſtrength. Even the youths ſhall faint and be weary, and the young men ſhall utterly fail. But they that wait upon the Lord, ſhall renew their ſtrength: they ſhall mount up with wings as eagles, they ſhall run and not be weary, and they ſhall walk and not faint.*

3. *laſtly*, Though the ſaints will glory in the croſs of Chriſt before the world, yet they will glory more in himſelf even before them, but before God no glorying but in Chriſt. But it will be found, that if men do ſuffer for Chriſt that have no intereſt in him, they will glory more in his croſs than himſelf; I mean, the croſs they bear for his cauſe, not the ſufferings of Chriſt. It appears, that thoſe ſeducers that diſturbed the churches, gloried much in their ſufferings for Chriſt; but in our text, the apoſtle, to difference himſelf and other believers from them, ſays, ‘We are the circumciſion, that—rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus.’ Thus far of the *ſecond* character of a gracious ſoul, which I may ſum up in the words of the apoſtle, Rom. x. 9, 10. ‘If thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved.’ I ſhall ſtraightway proceed to the

III. *Third* and *laſt* character of a real ſaint, *And have no confidence in the fleſh.* This is an inference from the ſecond character, and follows thereupon; for if our rejoicing be in Chriſt, it will not be in another. The fixing of the ſoul on him, is the removing of it from all other confidences. And therefore I ſhall endeavour briefly to diſpatch it. I ſhall not trouble you with the various acceptation of this word *fleſh* in the ſcripture. It is taken here for any created thing whatſoever, without Chriſt, that is to ſay, which is not in Chriſt, on which men confide in whole or in part, to commend them to God, whether they be external things or internal. Thus the ſaints *have no confidence in the fleſh*; or they *confide not in the fleſh.* The expreſſions are much the ſame; only it muſt be conſidered, that this character is given to them, not in the eye of the law, but in the eye of the goſpel, as may afterwards appear. He who placeth his confidence for ſalvation, either in whole or in part, *in any thing whatſoever, which is not Chriſt, or in Chriſt*, certainly confides not in Chriſt, nor glories in him; and therefore is none of the circumciſion, nor born of the Spirit. That this is the true ſenſe of the words, appears from the oppoſition, in the text, betwixt rejoicing in Chriſt and confidence in the fleſh; as from the apoſtle's own explication, ver. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.; where he ſhews what he meant by the *fleſh*, not only external, but internal things, drawing off his confidences from all things without Chriſt, and centering the ſame on Chriſt alone. This is the character of a believer, but not as the former two, a poſitive mark of a ſaint; it is only a negative mark. The man that is not thus qualified is no ſaint; yet a man's being thus qualified, will not of itſelf prove him a ſaint; as is clear from the caſe of Judas, and all deſpairing perſons, who have confidence in nothing, and ſo no confidence in the fleſh. And ſo it is to be taken in conjunction with the former.

Doct. *He is the real Chriſtian, who rejoicing in Chriſt Jeſus, hath no confidence in any thing, that is not Chriſt, nor in Chriſt, in the matter of ſalvation.*

There are two things which men's confidence in the matter of ſalvation doth reſpect; God's favour to them, and their duty to God. All know they cannot be happy without the favour of God, and that there is no attaining to ſalvation but in the way of duty, though moſt men bring it down to believing and repenting at the hour of death. Accordingly we ſay, 1. The real Chriſtian hath no confidence but in Chriſt in the point of juſtification, the pardon of his ſin, and acceptance into favour with God. 2. He hath no confidence but in Chriſt for ſanctification, and with reſpect to his duty. And both theſe the text aims at; and ſanctification is not to be excluded, ſeeing the Chriſtian worſhips God in ſpirit, and rejoices in Chriſt Jeſus. Theſe two points I ſhall clear,

I. The true Chriſtian hath no confidence in any thing but Chriſt in point of juſtification. He dare not place his confidence in any thing elſe, to commend him to God's favour. Chriſt's blood is the ſaints life, his righteouſneſs his only covering, Philip. iii. 7, 8. 'What things 'were gain to me, thoſe I counted loſs for Chriſt. Yea, 'doubtleſs, and I count all things loſs, for the excellency 'of the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt my Lord: for whom 'I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and do count them 'but dung, that I may win Chriſt.' The ſaints beſt things are of no value in this matter; he accounts all his righteouſneſs but as filthy rags. He renounces all pleas before the Lord, but the plea of Chriſt's ſatisfaction; turns his back on all other refuges, and runs to the horns of the altar, and holds there. He acknowledges himſelf a juſt object of vengeance, but throws himſelf into the arms of the mediator, and looks not for a ſmile but through the Redeemer's wounds, nor a pardon but what is ſealed with Chriſt's blood. Happy is the man that ſo doth; He is of the circumciſion; for he rejoiceth in Chriſt, having had his confidence cut off from thoſe things in which many place their confidence, to the ruin of their ſouls. It is not to be expected we can reckon up the falſe confidences that the heart out of Chriſt hath. The ignorant, the profane, the formaliſt, the natural man awakened, have their ſeveral confidences, whereby they hope to do well enough without Chriſt, or at leaſt not to be obliged to him for all. I ſhall hint at ſome of theſe, whereby ye may judge of the reſt accordingly. I have already ſhown, that the ſaints have no confidence in the mercy of God out of Chriſt; and yet that is the ſtrong confidence of many. But there are two things, beſides, on which many build their confidence, to wit, external things, and internal things; ſome things without them, and ſome things within them.

Firſt, The ſaints have no confidence in external things, and will be loath to lay their weight on them; whether they be man's externals or God's externals.

1. The ſaints have no confidence in man's externals. I call thoſe things ſo, which God never made duty, but men make ſo. Theſe are not only vain confidences, but vain worſhip and ſervice, that is loathſome to God. Men are apt to cut the law ſhort enough, but mens nature has a wonderful itching after making additions of their own to it. Hence a cloud of ſuperſtition has darkened ſome churches, and the ſimplicity of goſpel-worſhip is deſpiſed; mens inventions are brought in inſtead of divine inſtitutions: and when God has taken off the yoke of ceremonies inſtituted by himſelf, which the church was not able to bear, men have deviſed out of their own hearts a yoke of ceremonies in the worſhip of God, to tempt God, and bind it on the neck of the churches. But though they ſhould be bound on with the tie of antiquity, there is no preſcription againſt the law of God, with the tie of church authority, the church 'can do nothing againſt 'the truth, but rather for the truth,' 2 Cor. xiii. 8.; or with the tie of civil government, as Hoſ. v. 11.; ſeeing it cannot be ſet home on the conſcience with *Thus ſaith the Lord*, it is to be rejected, and by no means complied with. For it is from Satan, and not from God: 2 Cor. xi. 2, 3. 'For I am jealous over you with godly 'jealouſy: for I have eſpouſed you to one huſband, that 'I may preſent you as a chaſte virgin to Chriſt. But 'I fear leſt by any means, as the ſerpent beguiled Eve 'through his ſubtilty, ſo your minds ſhould be corrupted from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt.' Hence alſo flows a crowd of opinions and practices not found in the word, but contrary to it, which men zealouſly ſtick to as certain duties, becauſe nature is always fond of its own brats. If men once take in theſe things, very readily will they highly value themſelves upon them, as is plain from the caſe of the Phariſees, and of others who tread in their ſteps: for it may be obſerved, according as theſe things do riſe, the very doctrine of free grace falls accordingly, and men will be found more zealous for a trifling ceremony, than for the vitals of Chriſtianity. As all goſpel truths and inſtitutions have a tendency towards the life of faith, and center in Jeſus Chriſt, ſo it will be found, that all unſcriptural inſtitutions, opinions, and practices, under whatever pretences of holineſs they be advanced, have a tendency to weaken the life of faith, to carry men off from Chriſt, and are ſubſervient to ſelf, to high and towering imaginations againſt Chriſt. There is no error in the head, but has ſome corruption in the heart, to which it is allied, and will ſtrive to advance. But do others as they will, the ſaints will rejoice in Chriſt, and not make mens externals their confidence. And no wonder; for,

2. The ſaints have no confidence in God's externals; by which I underſtand thoſe external things that are laid before us by God himſelf, which nevertheleſs have a mighty ſtreſs laid upon them by carnal men. And,

1ſt, They have no confidence in their external condition in the world. Whatever it be, they will not look on it as a thing that may commend them to God. If a man be poor in the world, he thinks that is ſufficient to ſecure him againſt eternal poverty; and concludes thence, that God will have him to ſuffer all his miſery here, as if it could not conſiſt with the juſtice of God, to make him miſerable here and hereafter too. If he be rich and honourable, that ſwells him with conceit of himſelf, and his riches are his ſtrong tower. As he is ſet before others in the world, he looks to come before others in another world too. Let the word ſay to him what it will, he keeps his confidence, ſaying, Hoſ. xii. 8. 'Yet I am become 'rich, I have found me out ſubſtance: in all my labours 'they ſhall find none iniquity in me that were ſin.' And if a man meet with ſome ſignal favourable providences as to his outward condition, he looks upon himſelf as the only darling of heaven. But the ſaints will not place their confidence there: 'For the kingdom of God is not 'meat and drink, but righteouſneſs, and peace, and 'joy in the Holy Ghoſt.' Rom. xiv. 17. They cannot ſo much as be evidences far leſs confidences. Hence ſays Solomon, Eccleſ. ix. 1, 2. 'For all this I conſidered in 'my heart even to declare all this, that the righteous 'and the wiſe and their works are in the hand of God:

no man knoweth love or hatred, by all that is before them. All things come alike to all, there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked,’ &c. Ye may be poor here, and miſerable through eternity. Ye may fare ſumptuouſly every day, and yet in hell lift up your eyes. And though like Saul ſeeking aſſes, ye found a kingdom, ye may be rejected of God as he was.

2dly, The ſaints have no confidence in their external privileges. The falſe apoſtles boaſted much of their being Abraham’s ſeed, of their circumciſion, and the like. But, ſays the apoſtle, ‘We have no confidence in the fleſh.’ He renounces all confidence in theſe things, 2 Cor. v. 16. ‘Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the fleſh: yea, though we have known Chriſt after the fleſh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.’ We reckon no more on our being the brethren of Chriſt himſelf by nation. But where will the confidence of many be, if theſe be removed, that they are partakers of all church-privileges, and in ſociety with Chriſt’s party in the world? But razed it is in the ſaints, and razed it muſt be in others now, or it will be done, when there will be no occaſion of getting another foundation of confidence laid: Luke xiii. 26, 27. ‘Then ſhall ye begin to ſay, We have eaten and drunk in thy preſence, and thou haſt taught in our ſtreets. But he ſhall ſay, I tell you, I know you not whence you are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.’ When the children of the kingdom are ſhut out, their caſe of all men will be moſt ſad.

3dly, The ſaints have no confidence in their external attainments; as was the caſe with the apoſtle, Phil. iii. 6. 7. who, ‘concerning zeal, perſecuted the church; touching the righteouſneſs which is in the law, was blameleſs. But what things were gain to him, thoſe he counted loſs for Chriſt.’ Great confidence have ſome in their negative holineſs, they can hold up their face to heaven, and ſay, ‘God I thank thee, that I am not as other men are,’ &c. They have lived honeſtly all their days, never wronged their neighbours; they are not profane, they are neither drunkards, ſwearers, nor unclean perſons, and have obſerved the commands of God better than many. And indeed they have been going to hell without letting the world hear the ſound of their feet. Or perhaps, tho’ they have been profane, yet that was but in the folly of youth; but now they have taken up themſelves, they are not what they were: and therefore doubt not of God’s favour. Sirs, this is not the ſpot of God’s people; they will as ſoon venture to ſea, in a bottomleſs boat, as venture their ſouls on this, that know ought of God or of his law. There are in hell this day, who have had all that to truſt in; and if ye renounce it not, and get Chriſt in you the hope of glory, ye ſhall never ſee heaven, Matth. v. 20. ‘For except your righteouſneſs ſhall exceed the righteouſneſs of the ſcribes and Phariſees, ye ſhall in no caſe enter into the kingdom of heaven.’

4thly, The ſaints have no confidence in their external duties; they have renounced their confidence in what they do or have done. ‘Yea doubtleſs, and I count all things but loſs, for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord: for whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Chriſt.’ By doing they never think to ſee heaven. There are two ſorts of men oppoſite to the Chriſtian in this.

(1.) There is a rude ignorant generation, who do little in the way of external duties, and yet they ſay, they ſerve God as well as they can; or though they have no ſtrength in themſelves, they do as well as God will give them grace; yea ſome will ſay, they do as well as God will give them leave. All this is the filthy vomit of a proud and rebellious heart againſt God, by which they very plainly lay the blame on God that they do not better. But dare ſuch ſay before a heart ſearching God, that they have done all they could have done? Could ye not have holden in raſh words that ye have ſpoken? But ſuppoſe, O man, thou hadſt done all thou couldſt, God’s law is the rule of thy duty, and not thy ſtrength; and if thou get not in to Chriſt, God’s curſe ſhall lie on thee through eternity, becauſe thou ‘continueſt not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them,’ Gal. iii. 10. The devils have no ſtrength to do good, nor will God give them grace; and yet their damnation is juſt: ſo will thine be. Thou haſt grace in thine offer, which he is not obliged to give thee; but thou art a deſpiſer and rejecter of grace, John v. 40. ‘Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.’ Read your doom, Matth. xxv. 30. ‘Caſt the unprofitable ſervant into outer darkneſs: there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.’

(2.) There is another ſort who do indeed go the round of external duties; they attend public ordinances, worſhip God in ſecret and in their families; and as men can quarrel nothing in their outward duties, ſo they neglect not their external duties of righteouſneſs and mercy toward others. They have the outward form of godlineſs. But, alas! in the mean time, they reſt on theſe external things. They put them in Chriſt’s room. But theſe things are ſo unfit to be confidences, that they cannot be evidences; for there is nothing in all the form of godlineſs beyond the reach of a hypocrite; and as they are mere external duties, they are an abomination to the Lord. And will ye make them your confidence? Thy doing ſo demonſtrates, that thou knoweſt neither the law of God, nor the goſpel of Chriſt, which overturns all theſe confidences before the Lord. ‘The Lord hath rejected thy confidences, and thou ſhalt not proſper in them.’ Jer. ii. 37. Sure the ſaints dare have no confidence in them, nor will they venture before the Lord in them.

Laſtly, The ſaints have no confidence in their external ſufferings. Paul was a great ſufferer, but yet he ſuffered the loſs of all things for Chriſt, and ſo ſuffered the loſs of his ſufferings in point of confidence, among the reſt. There were ſome whoſe garments had been rolled in their own blood for the cauſe of Chriſt; but durſt they appear before the Lord in them? No; they *waſhed them in the blood of the Lamb*, and *therefore they are before the throne*, otherwiſe they had gone from the ſcaffold for Chriſt, into the pit of hell from the preſence of the Lord. And far leſs will they have confidence in their other ſufferings, of what ſort ſoever they be. Few can ſuffer for Chriſt; but there are yet fewer, who can ſuffer, and not have confidence in their ſufferings. It is hard to lay our goods, and gear, liberty and life, on the cauſe of Chriſt, and after all to think Chriſt is nothing at all in our debt. The unhumbled ſufferer may read his heart in that murmuring complaint of the labourers, Matth. xx. 12. ‘Theſe laſt have wrought but one hour, and thou haſt made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.’ But if mens confidence be not cut off from their ſufferings, ſad and dreadful will the doom be at laſt; ‘Take that thine is, and go thy way, I will give unto this laſt, even as unto thee.’ If they be lippened to in whole or in part, what is given to them is robbed from the ſufferings of Chriſt; and they will prove a broken reed, that will not only fail but pierce the heart through with ſorrow. There is alſo a rude ignorant generation, who think if they ſuffer what is laid on them by common providence, all will be well with them in the world to come: and women dying in child-birth are accounted happy on this very account, for they ſay, theſe pains are, of all pains hereaway, likeſt the pains of hell. O brutiſh ignorance; to take the curſe for a confidence in the matter of obtaining the bleſſing! The apoſtle gives a comfort to godly women in the pains of child birth, that ‘they ſhall be ſaved in child bearing, if they continue in faith,’ but ſays not they ſhall be ſaved whether they believe or not. Let men or womens hell be as hot as it will in the wotld, if they renounce not all confidence in their ſufferings, and betake themſelves to the ſufferings of Chriſt allenarly, they ſhall aſſuredly, when they die, go out of one hell into another.

Secondly, The ſaints have no confidence in internals, in any thing within them. I have one exception to make here; and that is, ‘Chriſt in you, the hope of glory,’ Col. i. 27. There are precious things in the ſaints, that make them *all glorious within*, but nothing but Chriſt that can be confidences for God’s favour; though ſome of them may indeed be evidences.

1. The ſaints have no confidence in their internal diſpoſitions. The diſpoſitions of their hearts are none of their confidences before the Lord. Many have a deal of confidence in thoſe good hearts they have towards God, as they ſpeak. Satan has ſo blinded them with ſelf love, that they cannot believe an ill tale of their hearts. This is not the ſpot of God's people. There is little goodneſs of heart in the world; but the beſt heart is always worſt looked on, and no wonder; for they believe God's teſtimony of it, Jer. xvii. 9. ‘ The heart is deceitful above ‘ all things, and deſperately wicked.’ Again, men wiſh they were better, and find a diſpoſition in their hearts to do and ſuffer much for Chriſt, and a great averſion to many ill things they ſee in the world. And indeed people may draw evidences of their ſtate from the diſpoſitions of their hearts; but they had need to examine them well, ſeeing all theſe may be in hypocrites. But at beſt they can be no confidences, ſeeing there is always ſuch a mixture of evil diſpoſitions with them, as might ruin them.

2. The ſaints have no confidence in their internal exerciſes upon their ſpirits. Hypocrites may be troubled about their ſoul's ſtate, as was Felix. They may have great inward ſtruggles betwixt corruption and an enlightened conſcience, as in the caſe of Pilate, about the condemning of Chriſt; yea, ſo as the temptation may be reſiſted in the end, as in Balaam's caſe. What reſtleſſneſs of ſpirit, ſelf-indignation, was in Judas's caſe? The ſaints have more kindly exerciſes. But one difference among many betwixt the two, is, that the exerciſes of the godly iſſue ſtill in driving them further out of themſelves, and conſequently out of any confidence in their exerciſes; while the other are either by theirs driven out of all hope, as Judas, or driven more into themſelves, as thoſe, Rom. x. 3. who ‘ being ignorant of God's righteouſneſs, and ‘ going about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, have ‘ not ſubmitted themſelves unto the righteouſneſs of God.’

3. The ſaints have no confidence in their internal attainments. Hypocrites may have great gifts, enlargements in the exerciſe of theſe gifts, by a common operation of the Spirit. They may taſte of the heavenly gift, and the powers of the world to come. But although theſe cannot be evidences, they make them confidences, and ruin themſelves thereby. So many build their confidence on the like of theſe things; and whereas they ſhould lead them to Chriſt, they are carried the farther from Chriſt by them. But miſerable comforters will they find them all at length. The ſaints have far higher attainments than theſe. The leaſt meaſure of ſaving knowledge, the leaſt groan from a heart touched with goſpel grace, is better than all thoſe bulky attainments of the hypocrite. Yet becauſe they are not in Chriſt, but in themſelves, though from Chriſt, they dare not make them their confidences for the Lord's favour. They know God to be holy, themſelves impure veſſels, into which nothing can be poured, be it never ſo good, but it will be tinctured with impurity. And therefore Paul, who was caught up into the third heavens, yet abhors to glory in any thing but the ſufferings of Chriſt.

4. *Laſtly*, The ſaints have no confidence in their inherent graces. Grace is precious, and makes the ſoul in ſome meaſure like God. Every believer has the image of God on him, *grace for grace* that is in Chriſt, as the wax has on it the print of the ſeal. But this I confidently ſay, it is the grace of God in Chriſt, not the grace of God in the ſaints, that they confide in before the Lord. However precious inherent grace is, it is not Chriſt; it is but a created quality in a ſinner. Let it be ſcrewed up to its higheſt pitch, it cannot anſwer the demands of the law, being mixed with corruption; and being lippened unto that way, wonld prove but an arm of fleſh. It is gold indeed; but not ſuch as will abide the fiery trial of the law's furnace: it is white raiment indeed; but it is not pure, but ſtained white, which is no fit garment for a criminal to ſtand in for favour at the court of heaven; and therefore Chriſt offers ſinners tried gold, unſtained white raiment, of his own ſufferings and righteouſneſs, Rev. iii. 18. And ſo the ſaints renounce all without them and within them for it, Philip. iii. 8, 9. ‘ Yea doubtleſs, and ‘ I count all things but loſs, for the excellency of the ‘ knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord; for whom I have ‘ ſuffered the loſs of all things, and do count them but ‘ dung that I may win Chriſt, and be found in him, not ‘ having mine own righteouſneſs, which is of the law, ‘ but that which is through the faith of Chriſt, the righ‘ teouſneſs which is of God by faith.’

I ſhall inſtance in theſe two, which are *in effigie* moſt abuſed by carnal men, and ſet up againſt Chriſt.

1ſt, The grace of repentance. There is an ignorant generation, aſk them how they think to be ſaved? they will tell you, they repent of their ſins day and night. This they will ſay whom their ſoul's hazard never kept from an hour's ſleep all their days. The matter is, they rue many things they do; and no wonder, for they cannot be fond of deſtruction. And thus they know not what ſin is, nor what repentance is indeed. O what needed Chriſt to have come, and died on a croſs, if people may be ſaved this way? Lippen to this as ye will, ye will repent in hell that ever ye ſhould have made it either evidence or confidence. But there are ſome that ſpin a more fine thread of ſoul-deception of themſelves. They have legal qualms of conſcience, and their guilt cuts them to the heart, and they go to God and confeſs their ſin, reſolved never to do the like again; and ſo build their confidence here, eſpecially if they get tears for it; and they think they can give ſcripture for this confidence of theirs, as Prov. xxviii. 13. ‘ Whoſo confeſſeth and for‘ ſaketh his ſins, ſhall have mercy.’ Sirs, Judas repented as bitterly as ever ye did, Pharaoh and Saul confeſſed and had their reſolutions to forſake, and Eſau his tears. But what law or goſpel allows you to make this your confidence? Will your confeſſion, prayers, tears, forſaking of ſin, anſwer the demands of the law? Will theſe ſhield you from the ſtrokes of juſtice? Remember it is *ſhedding of blood*, not pouring out of water, that can purchaſe *remiſſion*. Many times where water goes out, wind enters in, and makes tears ſo abominable as they cannot come into the Lord's bottle. Curſed be thoſe tears that blind the ſoul ſo as it cannot ſee the neceſſity of Chriſt's blood, that are not brought to the fountain of Chriſt's blood, and waſhed there, leſt they make the ſoul abominable in the ſight of a holy God. If you think the goſpel gives you ground, ſure it is not the goſpel of Chriſt does it; for Chriſt's goſpel eſtabliſhes the law. The truth is, in this way ye reject both the true law and goſpel, and treat with God in the way of a baſtard-covenant of works of your own making, which God will never agree to: nor does he agree to it by thoſe promiſes made to them that confeſs, and them that mourn. Conſider, they muſt either be promiſes of the covenant of works, or of the covenant of grace. Promiſes of the covenant of works they are not; for that is expreſs, Gal. iii. 10. ‘ Curſed is every ‘ one that continueth not in all things which are written ‘ in the book of the law to do them.’ If they be promiſes of the covenant of grace, how come ye to plead them without firſt laying hold by faith on him in whom they are all yea and Amen? Now, this ye cannot do, unleſs ye have no confidence in any thing that is not Chriſt, or in Chriſt. Do ye think that the Spirit of God makes a promiſe of mercy from an unatoned God, or directs to a confeſſion not put in the hand of the *Advocate Jeſus Chriſt the righteous*, No; *God heareth not ſinners*, but thoſe petitions that are preſented by him, he grants them to ſinners for his ſake. And that promiſe, ‘ Bleſſed are they ‘ that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted,’ is it to all mourners think ye? is it to Eſau's tears, and Judas's groans? It is to goſpel mourners: and therefore that men might have no ground to miſtake theſe bleſſings, our Lord fixeth that point in the front of the bleſſings, to be carried through all the reſt. ‘ Bleſſed are the poor in ſpi‘ rit.’ And ſuch are all true penitents; and therefore will never make their repenting and mourning their confidence before the Lord. They are diſſatisfied with all they do, becauſe upon a review of their repentance, they ſee ſuch defects in it, as needs a cover of blood; their tears clear their eyes to ſee the neceſſity of the Mediator's blood the better: Pſal. li. 7. ‘ Purge me with hyſſop;’

that is, with the blood of the everlaſting covenant, typified by the blood of the ſacrifices ſprinkled with hyſſop on the people; and by the blood of a bird ſprinkled with hyſſop on the leper, when he was to be cleanſed, and reſtored to ſociety. 'Waſh me,' to wit, as a fuller waſheth cloth to make it pure white. It ſeems he thought his own plunging himſelf in his tears could not whiten the ſtained ſoul. Nay, the true penitent is free grace's debtor for all, and will acknowledge it is free grace that he is not ſhut out from the preſence of God, after he has bathed himſelf in his tears, Pſal. li. 11. 'Caſt me not 'away from thy preſence; and take not thy holy Spirit 'from me.' Here he acknowledgeth, he might juſtly get Cain and Saul's meaſure. 'Caſt me not away from 'thy preſence,' as thou didſt Cain the firſt murderer; 'Take not thy Holy Spirit from me,' as thou didſt to Saul the firſt king of Iſrael for his diſobedience.

2dly, The grace of faith. There is an ignorant generation that ſay they believe in Chriſt; but their faith cannot be called *knowledge*, for they are full of darkneſs in their minds, they know not what faith is, nor how they came by it; their faith grew up with them, and it will die with them. They have a ſtrong confidence of mercy; which is but groſs preſumption, ſeeing it neither purifies heart nor life; and therefore *ſhall be rooted out of* their *tabernacle, and it ſhall bring* them *to the king of terrors*, Job xviii. 14. And there are others who came not ſo eaſily by the faith they have; yet it is not *faith unfeigned*, 1 Tim. i. 5. but they make it their confidence. There are many things that men call faith, among ignorant and known folk too, who are yet in the ſtate of nature. The revelation of the abſolute neceſſity of faith to ſalvation is ſo clear, that hardly can a perſon be a hearer of the goſpel, and not know it; and every man naturally has a principle of ſelf preſervation: hence upon the hearing this, and eſpecially upon awakenings of conſcience, nature will make ſome efforts for believing. But faith being produced only by the *working of God's mighty power*, and not by the power of nature, the reſult of all nature's efforts this way, is but ſome miſ-ſhapen brat inſtead of faith. Hence we read of Simon's *believing*, Acts viii. 13.; and *many believing in his name*, whom yet Chriſt knew to be naught: and ſome *ſtaying themſelves upon the God of Iſrael, but not in truth and righteouſneſs*, Iſa. xlviii. 1, 2. I am here to enter on the ſeveral ſorts of feigned faith: but with relation to our purpoſe, there is one thing to be noticed concerning them all, and that is, they never carry a man out of himſelf to Jeſus Chriſt for all, as true faith doth. That miſ-ſhapen faith is not the ſoul's going out of itſelf to Chriſt to live by him; but is the ſoul's going out of itſelf to Chriſt, as a ſervant to a maſter. For nature cannot act but in the way of the firſt covenant: and to a natural man, the goſpel-way of ſalvation differs not in kind from the way of Adam's covenant, but only in the meaſure and degree of obedience; for to them it is ſtill, *Do this, and live; Do this*, not do perfect obedience, they know they cannot reach that; but repent, believe, reform, *Do this*. Now, the natural man accordingly does this; and ſo the work of faith is to him the fulfilling of the condition of this new covenant, and turns his confidence before the Lord for his favour, as Adam's perfect obedience to the law would have been his confidence. This was the confidence of Iſrael when they had *caſt off the thing that was good*, Hoſ. viii. 2. *Iſrael ſhall cry unto me, My God, we know thee;* and of the fooliſh virgins, *Lord, Lord, open to us*, us virgins. Thus may ye ſee how their faith is their folly, as being put in the room of Chriſt; and ſo they have but rags for righteouſneſs. But the ſaints have a faith of the operation of God; yet do they not reſt in it, but by it reſt and confide on Jeſus Chriſt. It carries the ſaint out of himſelf, even his gracious ſelf. True faith is not a burden-bearer, but an onlayer of burdens. It is not a leaning ſtock, but an act of leaning. It purifies indeed, but no other way but as it lays open the ſoul to Chriſt, that a ſtream of blood may run through it. The hyſſop and ſcarlet wool were no doubt a blithe ſight to the people, and particularly to the poor lepers under the law: but had the *dry* hyſſop and wool been ſhaken never ſo oft over them, what would they have availed? but they are dipt in the blood, and the people ſprinkled with that blood from off the hyſſop and ſcarlet wool. And when the blood fell, the people were ceremonially purged, and the leper cleanſed. And ſo it is in the caſe of believing. Thus ye ſee the ſaints have no confidence in point of juſtification, in any thing that is not Chriſt, or in Chriſt.

II. The ſaints have no confidence in point of ſanctification, or with reſpect to duty, in any thing that is not Chriſt, nor in Chriſt. As they have taken him alone for juſtification, ſo they take him alone for ſanctification; for he is *made unto us ſanctification*, as well as *righteouſneſs*, 1 Cor. i. 30. The Father has conſtituted him the head of influences for duty; and from that *head all the body having nouriſhment miniſtered, increaſeth with the increaſe of God*, Col. ii. 19. And this is that life of faith for ſanctification that the ſaints live: John vi. 57. 'As the living 'Father hath ſent me, and I live by the Father: ſo he 'that eateth me, even he ſhall live by me.' Gal. ii. 20. 'I am crucified with Chriſt: Nevertheleſs I live; yet not 'I, but Chriſt liveth in me: and the life which I now 'live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, 'who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.' There are here alſo many things men make their confidences, which I cannot particularly name; but, in the general, there are ſeven things I ſhall touch at, which are but arms of fleſh when lippened to, in the matter of ſanctification.

1. The ſaints have no confidence in their ſtock of natural and acquired abilities, in the point of ſanctification, 2 Cor. iii. 5. 'We are not ſufficient of ourſelves to think 'any thing as of ourſelves.' This is the confidence of many in their religious duties; and upon it they can venture on duty undaunted, their work being rather to be filled with the thoughts of their own ſtrength, than to be emptied of themſelves; to muſter up their own forces, than to be looking to the Lord for ſtrength from above. Thus a gift of knowledge, utterance, and ſuch like, are by natural men put in Chriſt's room; and on theſe they confide for performing of duties, and bearing out againſt temptations. And upon this foundation have ſtately buildings of morality been reared up, and very glorious forms of godlineſs, which beholders have bleſſed, while God has curſed them, Jer. xvii. 5. 'Thus ſaith the Lord, 'Curſed be the man that truſteth in man, and maketh 'fleſh his arm, and whoſe heart departeth from the Lord.' But this is not the way of the ſaints: Pſal. xliv. 5, 6. 'Through thee will we puſh down our enemies, through 'thy name will we tread them down that riſe up againſt 'us. For I will not truſt in my bow, neither ſhall my 'ſword ſave me.' Natural men are repreſented as youths full of vigour, ſtrength, and activity, who will do their work by themſelves, and *wait* not *upon the Lord*. But the godly are diſtinguiſhed from them as men who ſee their ſtrength failed, and not to be lippened to; and hence look without themſelves for it, and roll their way on the Lord, as being themſelves unable for the burden.

2. The ſaints have no confidence in the means of ſanctification, as the word, ſacraments, prayer, and the like; knowing that it is the ſpirit that quickeneth, and that they are only means through which influences are conveyed from Chriſt to the ſouls of his people. None look with ſuch an affectionate eye on the ordinances as they, but none look ſo far above them either, for the natural man either tramples on them, or idolizeth them, being ſatisfied with the chair of ſtate, though empty. Many are ruined with their confidence this way: they reſt in the work done, as if that would heal their ſores; they place that confidence in means or inſtruments, which they ſhould place in Chriſt himſelf; and hence are 'like the heath 'in the wilderneſs, that ſeeth not when good cometh,' and that 'inhabiteth the parched places in the wilderneſs, 'in a ſalt land, and not inhabited,' Jer. xvii. 6. There is a voice they hear within them, ſtirring them up to holineſs of life; but upon the hearing of it, they do as young Samuel, who, when the Lord called him, went to Eli, ſo they go to this and the other mean of ſanctification, but never look beyond them to the fountain of ſanctifica-

tion in the Mediator: or as the woman labouring under the iſſue of blood, ſpent all her means on the phyſicians ere ſhe came to Chriſt.

3. The ſaints have no confidence in their purpoſes and reſolutions for holineſs. Pſal. cxvi. 9, 10. ‘I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living. I believed, therefore have I ſpoken.’ He had reſolved, but his confidence was in the Lord, in whom he had believed. 2 Tim. i. 12. ‘I know whom I have believed, and I am perſuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him againſt that day.’ O how venturous is nature, being once fleſhed with vigorous purpoſes and reſolves! but when the temptation comes, they fall down like the walls of Jericho, at the ſounding of rams horns. Their bent bow in which they truſted, quickly miſgives; the fine edge ſoon wears off the ſpirit that is not ſtaid on the Lord. How many ſtrong reſolutions come to nought, becauſe in taking them up men look not to the Lord as the fountain of ſtrength, but to themſelves; and when they are made, there is more weight laid on them than they can bear? Hence the root being rottenneſs, the bloſſom flies up as duſt; as was the caſe with the young man, who when an whore ‘with her much fair ſpeech cauſed him to yield, and with the flattering of her lips forced him, went after her as an ox to the ſlaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the ſtocks.’

4. The ſaints have no confidence in their vows to holineſs, or any particular duty; knowing that theſe are too weak bands for an ill heart, which nothing but the power of the Spirit of Chriſt can hedge in. Every ſaint is devoted to the Lord with his own deliberate conſent, having given away himſelf wholly to Chriſt, to be diſpoſed of as he will, and will look on his ſoul and body as conſecrated things, and no more his own but the Lord's, to do and ſuffer for him, according to his will. But while the ſaints take on theſe ſolemn bands, and come under theſe engagements to duty, their confidence is not in the bands, but in him to whom they bind themſelves as to the fountain of ſtrength: Iſa. xlv. 23, 25. ‘I have ſworn by myſelf, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteouſneſs, and ſhall not return, that unto me every knee ſhall bow, every tongue ſhall ſwear. Surely, ſhall one ſay, in the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength.’ But, alas! the vows of many are in effect a vowing themſelves away from Chriſt. Sometimes the man will bind a yoke on himſelf that the word never bound on him, and inſnare himſelf with a vow to abſtain from ſuch a thing altogether, when his conſcience gets up on him for his running to ſome monſtrous exceſs in it. Or if it be a duty he has wofully ſlighted, he will come under a vow, not only to ſet about it, but ſo often, and at ſuch and ſuch times particularly, which yet is not determined in the word. And when he has been carried off into courſes abſolutely condemned by the word, and in which his natural conſcience will give him no reſt, there ſhall be a violent ſally of the ſoul againſt them, ending in a ſolemn promiſe and vow to the Lord, never to do ſo any more, without an eye to the corruption of nature, or to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, without whom we can do nothing. And thus the poor blinded ſoul thinks it is fenced, and in this mud-wall of vows is its confidence. But what is the end of it? The man is even like one that has a brook running through his ground, which often ſpoils it with its outbreakings, and he builds a call to ſtop it; but is not ſo wiſe as turn the ſtream another way, where it could not do ſuch harm; and ſo in a little time the water gathers, and breaks down the call, running out with more violence than ever. And ſo the vows go like Samſon's green withs, when he heard the Philiſtines were on him.

5. The ſaints have no confidence in their own endeavours after holineſs, Pſal. cxxvii. 1. ‘Except the Lord build the houſe, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.’ It is the proſperity of a ſaint, to work as diligently as if he had none to help, but to overlook his work as if he had not put hand to it at all: 1 Cor. xv. 10. ‘I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.’ O, there is much to be done for the advancing of holineſs; but none have ſo much confidence in what is done for that end, as thoſe that do leaſt that way. A man may do very much to win over ſome luſts, and to attain ſuch a ſort of life as his conſcience tells him is neceſſary for heaven, and yet be naught, as working from himſelf, and reſting in himſelf. It is a difficult thing indeed, for a man to be purſuing a good life, and to win over troubleſome luſts, and in purſuit thereof to pray often, for the caſting out of ſome devils, to ſtruggle againſt them, watch againſt them, and to keep at a diſtance from the occaſions of temptation: but it is far more difficult to be denied to all theſe when they are done, and to have no confidence in them, but to truſt in him that raiſeth the dead. Men under the law's tutory may do the former; for ‘ſkin for ſkin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life:’ but grace is neceſſary to the latter, as that which can only carry a man out of himſelf to Chriſt.

6. The ſaints have no confidence in the good diſpoſition of their hearts; that is to ſay, in actual grace. A good frame is a moſt deſirable thing, and makes a great facility in the way of God while it laſts. It is a precious ointment that refreſhes the traveller; but it is no good ſtaff to lean on, it is a lamp that will quickly go out, if it be not fed with freſh oil from the fountain of grace. Remarkable is that petition of David for the people, when they were in an excellent frame, 1 Chron. xxix. 17, 18. ‘As for me, in the uprightneſs of mine heart I have willingly offered all theſe things; and now have I ſeen with joy thy people which are preſent here, to offer willingly unto thee. O Lord God of Abraham, Iſaac, and of Iſrael, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee.’ He ſaw it was not to be made a confidence, and therefore lays the weight of all, and even of preſerving that frame, upon the Lord himſelf. But many though their frame is no actual grace, but the product of ſome common operations on their ſpirits, make them their confidence, and in the ſtrength thereof go out to their duties: but aſſuredly they ſhall not ſee when good cometh, who thus put their frame in the room of Chriſt; and oftentimes for that cauſe, in the juſt judgment of God, it fails them, that they may ſee it is not Chriſt, but a broken reed.

7. *laſtly*, The ſaints have no confidence in habitual grace. Paul durſt not venture to live on it, Gal. ii. 20. ‘I am crucified with Chriſt, nevertheleſs I live; yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.’ As I ſaid in the point of juſtification, ſo in the point of ſanctification, it is not the grace within them which they confide in, but the grace in Jeſus Chriſt. The grace within the ſaints is a well whoſe ſprings are oft ſtopped, but the grace without them, in Chriſt, is an ever-flowing fountain. Where were the life and fruit of the branch, it it were left to the ſap within itſelf, which would quickly wither? but it is the ſap in the ſtock that keeps the branch living; and ſo it is the grace in Chriſt that keeps the believer living. But, alas! there not a few who have neither repentance, faith, nor other graces in truth, but the ſhadows of them, who yet make what they have, their confidence in point of ſanctification: who, when they would make the faſhion of believing, look into themſelves for it, but look not up to Chriſt; whereas the path way of the ſaints, is to mount up with wings as eagles, and then to fall down on the prey. Thus ye ſee the ſaints have no confidence in the fleſh, no confidence in any thing without them or within them; that is not in Chriſt. And whatever it is which men make their confidence before the Lord, to ſet it in the room of Chriſt, or to ſet it beſide him, ſo far as it is made a confidence, be it for ever exterminated and rooted out, Jer. xvii. 5, 6. ‘Thus ſaith the Lord, Curſed be the man that truſteth in man, and maketh fleſh his arm, and whoſe heart departeth from the Lord. For he ſhall be like the heath in the deſart, and ſhall not ſee when good cometh, but ſhall inhabit parched places in the wilderneſs, in a ſalt land and not inhabited.’

Queſt. *Is it ſo that every ſaint is altogether free of thoſe falſe confidences, and no ways tainted in that ſort? Anſw.* I told you when entering on this clauſe, that this is not underſtood of the ſaints as if they were pure from it in the eye of the law, but in the eye of the goſpel. There is a great and weighty truth ſuppoſed as the foundation of this deſcription of the true Chriſtian, and that is, That corrupt nature is quite oppoſite to Chriſt, and to the contrivance of ſalvation by him. The way of the covenant of works is natural to men. Now, ſeeing that the beſt are but in part renewed, it is evident that there are in the greateſt ſaints remains of a legal temper, and that nature now and then has in them its flings againſt the goſpel way, and towards curſed ſelf, both in the point of obtaining God's favour, as in the caſe of Peter, Matth. xix. 27. who ſaid unto Jeſus, 'Behold, we have forſaken all, and 'followed thee; what ſhall we have therefore?' and in the point of duty, as in the caſe of James and John the ſons of Zebedee, who, after Jeſus had put the queſtion to them, 'Are ye able to drink of the cup that I ſhall 'drink of, and to be baptized with the baptiſm that I 'ſhall be baptized with?' ſaid unto him 'we are able.'

1. Every ſaint in his cloſing with Chriſt has been carried out of himſelf to Chriſt, though ſelf has not been carried fully out of him, Pſal. cx. 3. 'Thy people ſhall be 'willing in the day of thy power.' They ſhall pour out their hearts to him like water that comes freely away, though the veſſel is not preſently dry, but ſomething of the water ſtill cleaves to it for a time. Where the ſoul comes to Chriſt, there is a digging deep in that ſoul, that looſes the confidence in the fleſh at the root; ſo that the ſaints heart is looſed from it, and lays itſelf naked and bare at Chriſt's feet, without any thing to commend it to him, but for all ventures into the arms of free grace. But the hypocrite never comes freely out of himſelf to Chriſt, his cloſing with Chriſt is but forced; as Adonijah ran to the horns of the altar when in hazard of his life, who cared very little for it otherwiſe; and as the Iſraelites, Pſal. lxxviii. 34. 36, 37. 'When he ſlew them, then they 'ſought him: and they returned and enquired early after 'God. Nevertheleſs, they did flatter him with their 'mouth, and they lyed unto him with their tongues. 'For their heart was not right with him, neither were 'they ſtedfaſt in his covenant.' Nor does the hypocrite ever come to the market of free grace without money in his hand; the proud heart has ſtill ſomething in itſelf whereupon to challenge welcome.

2. Every ſaint habitually walks in the way of renouncing all confidence in the fleſh; the habitual bent and ſet of their ſouls lies out of themſelves to Chriſt, though, through the prevailings of corruption, they want not often the riſings of ſelf in them. And God reckons of his people according to what they habitually are, and not according to what ſtarting aſide their corruption does often occaſion. So they are ſaid to *live by him*; though they are ſometimes ſet down at another table, where, by their feeding on the wind, ſome falſe fleſh grows on them, which grace makes afterward to fall; and they return with that in their mouths, Jer. iii. 22, 23. 'Behold, we come 'unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God. Truly in 'the Lord our God is the ſalvation of Iſrael.' But the hypocrites habitual confidence is in the fleſh, ſeeing they were never ſpiritually circumciſed, nor their hearts truly cut off from it.

3. The ſaints have ſtruggles againſt this ſelfiſh diſpoſition, as againſt other members of the old man. Self denial is the leſſon Chriſt puts firſt in the hands of his people, and it ſerves them to be learning it all their days. The ſaints have a double work with their hearts about duties; firſt, to get them up to them; ſecondly, to hold them down in them, that they get not up in point of confidence in them. Many ſee not this diſpoſition in their hearts, therefore it is not their work to mortify it; but though the tares may grow while men ſleep, they are not plucked up, but when men are awake. If there be hurtful weeds growing in a garden, and the gardiner knew nothing of plucking them up, it would be a ſign they were there ſtill.

4. *laſtly*, When the godly do their duties beſt, they are fartheſt from confidence in the fleſh; with others it is not ſo. Nature always builds up nature; but the more grace and nearneſs to God, the more vile is the ſaint in his own eyes. And it is confirmed by the experience of the ſaints, that when they have had greateſt help in duties, they have afterwards been ſo treated by providence, that in that caſe they have got ſuch ballaſt, as has made them ſee the neceſſity of the blood of Chriſt.

Uſe. I exhort you from this to rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and to have no confidence in the fleſh. What is already ſaid, may ſerve for evidences to convince you of this curſed confidence. But I ſhall inſiſt no further on it.

Thus I have gone through the characters of a perſon in the ſtate of grace; and inſiſted the longer on them, that I might diſcover to you your ſtate before the Lord. Let me now in a few words ſum up the evidence of the text. A ſaint is one that works as if he were to win heaven by his working. He worſhips God in ſpirit, his heart is at the work; yet he overlooks it all, as if he had done nothing. His confidence is in Chriſt, for juſtification: and for ſanctification he looks to the Spirit to carry him through duties. The defects of his beſt ſervices ſend him to Chriſt, and raiſe his eſtimation of imputed righteouſneſs; Chriſt is his life; duty is his work; but he dies to his duties, that he may live to Chriſt. He is not a faithleſs worker, but a working believer.

And now, Sirs, to conclude, I beſeech you in the bowels of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye will conſider what I have ſaid, and impartially try your ſtate by it. It was with fear and trembling I entered upon, and went through theſe words, becauſe of the exceeding weightineſs of the matter, as determining the ſtate of ſouls before the Lord; and therefore I did not chuſe to heap up many particulars, but to ſpeak largely to a few, that the evidences might be plain, uſeful, ſearching, and ſafe. For I reckon, that as giving of marks of true ſaints is one of the moſt difficult parts of preaching, ſo marks overly propoſed, and not followed out, are to the moſt part of hearers either uſeleſs or hurtful. I hope they have been confirming to ſome; I wiſh they might reach their deſign in others, yet ſtrangers to Chriſt. Let it be acknowledged to the good hand of God, that falling to be delivered in the winter, (in which I have ſomething to remark for myſelf with thankfulneſs,) the ſeaſon has been ſo very good, that ye have not been hindered, by the badneſs ot the weather, from attending, as uſually in that time of the year; though, alas for it! ſummer and winter are much alike, in that reſpect, to ſeveral careleſs periſhing ſouls among you. Sirs, according to the ſtate of your ſouls now, ſo will it be with you through eternity. Examine yourſelves therefore now, whether Chriſt be in you or not; whether ye be yet in the black ſtate of nature, or whether ye be in the ſtate of grace. Ye have heard the characters, let conſcience make the application; and judge yourſelves, that ye be not judged and condemned with the world. See now on what ground ye ſtand; for as ye ſtand in the world, ſo ſhall ye ſtand before the tribunal of God. Deceive not yourſelves: religion is a myſtery to moſt hearers of the goſpel; and as ſome have no ſhadow of it, many embrace the ſhadow of it inſtead of the ſubſtance, and pleaſe themſelves with thoſe things that will not abide trial by the word here, and will evaniſh as a dream when they are ſifted before the tribunal of Chriſt. If your ſtate be found right upon an impartial trial, it will be an unſpeakable comfort: if it be found wrong, it is not the trial that makes it ſo, it only diſcovers it to be what it is; and there is yet time to get wrongs righted, and to lay a new foundation, which may laſte for the eternal welfare of your ſouls. Conſider what I have ſaid, and the Lord give you underſtanding in all things.

The CHRISTIAN WARFARE; Or, The Good FIGHT of FAITH.

Several SERMONS, preached at Etterick, in the Year 1723.

1 Tim. vi. 12.

Fight the good fight of faith.

THE apoſtle having given Timothy an exhortation to ſeveral particular duties, here gives him an exhortation to the Chriſtian life in general. Wherein we have two things.

1. A deſcription of the Chriſtian life. It is not an eaſy, idle, life; but 1. A *fight*, for there are many enemies ſet to keep us out of the promiſed land. 2. A *good* fight. The men of the world have many fights and ſquabbles about this world, the honours, and advantages, and pleaſures of it, not worth the fighting for. But it is a good and worthy fight, wherein true valour and magnanimity appears. 3. A fight of *faith*. Some underſtand this of the doctrine of faith, as that which is to be fought for. I underſtand it rather of the grace of faith, by which the fight is to be managed. This comprehends the former; and is more agreeable to the practical directions, ver. 11. and the *laying hold on eternal life*, which is done by the grace of faith. It is a fight to be managed by believing.

2. The word of command given: *Fight the good fight of faith.* Timothy was engaged already in the fight; but ſtill he was in the field of battle, and the enemy not yet off the field: therefore it is ſaid to him, *Fight*. Paul was going off the field, and he ſays, ‘I have fought a good ‘fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith.’ Timothy was come on the field, and to him it is ſaid, *Fight*.

DOCT. *The Chriſtian life is the good fight of faith, that muſt be fought by all that would ſee heaven.*

In diſcourſing this doctrine, we ſhall ſhew,

I. In what reſpects the Chriſtian life is the fight of faith.
II. In what reſpects it is a good fight.
III. Why the Chriſtian life is made a fight.
IV. Why a fight of faith.
V. Touch at ſome particular fights of faith the Chriſtian may have in his courſe heavenward.

I. We ſhall ſhew *in what reſpects the Chriſtian life is the fight of faith*. I take up this in theſe ſeven things.

1. There are enemies of our ſalvation, and there muſt be faith in the ſoul to ſet againſt them. Where there are not two parties, there can be no fight. There is no fighting in heaven, for there are no enemies there. There is none of this fighting in the unbelieving world neither; for the enemies have all there alone, and there is no faith to ſet againſt them. Unbelief carries the man over to the enemy's ſide; it is the evil ſpy, that ſays it is needleſs to think on the fight. This fight is only found where faith and its oppoſites meet; and that is in the Chriſtian's heart. ‘What will ye ſee in the Shulamite? as it were the com‘pany of two armies.’ So the combatant is the only man that has given up his name to Chriſt and liſted with him.

2. The enemy will not be at quiet; he will make an attack on the believer ſetting heaven-ward. 1 Pet. v. 8. ‘Be ſober, be vigilant; becauſe your adverſary the devil, ‘as a roaring lion, walketh about ſeeking whom he may ‘devour.’ Satan may rock his own children, and labour to keep all quiet; the more ſecure, they are in the leſs hazard to break away from him. But God's children muſt not look for ſuch treatment; their faces are awayward from his kingdom; and therefore the enemy's face will be ſet againſt them, as a prize.

3. God's people muſt reſiſt; 1 Pet. v. 9. ‘Whom re‘ſiſt, ſtedfaſt in the faith.’ They muſt ſet themſelves to ſtand their ground againſt all oppoſition, in their way to heaven. They muſt be denied to their ſoft beds of eaſe, and take the field, and endure hardneſs, 2 Tim. ii. 3.

4. They muſt reſiſt by faith. Faith is the mouth of the ſoul, that muſt give the ſhout in this battle, the hands the men of might muſt find in it, the weapon they muſt wield in it, both in the offenſive and defenſive part of it; Eph. vi. 16. ‘Above all, taking the ſhield of faith, where‘with ye ſhall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the ‘wicked.’ So one muſt not only have the grace of faith, but he muſt have it in exerciſe.

5. They muſt continue in that reſiſtance, and hold on in it, Eph. vi. 13. ‘Take unto you the whole armour of ‘of God, that ye may be able to withſtand in the evil day, ‘and having done all to ſtand.’ The Chriſtian life is a fight, and that denotes a continuance. Many think they have no more ado, but whenever an enemy ſtarts up, to lay at him with a ſtroke, and ſtrike him down; and ſo they perplex themſelves with doubts of the love of God, becauſe it is otherwiſe with them, the enemy being ſtill freſh and vigorous. But conſider, that that may be ſtriking indeed, but not a fight, being of no long continuance.

6. They muſt lay their account with getting as well as giving wounds in the encounter. Pſal. xxx. 7. ‘Lord, by ‘thy favour thou haſt made my mountain to ſtand ſtrong; ‘thou didſt hide thy face, and I was troubled.’ Prevailing Jacob halted in his thigh, after his ſtruggle with the angel. To be abſolute maſters over the enemy, would not be the fight but the triumph of faith, which is reſerved for heaven. In the fight of faith, the Chriſtian may be ſet to his knees, but muſt not give over: yea, tho' the enemy ſhould lay him on his back, he muſt ſay, ‘Rejoice ‘not againſt me, O mine enemy, when I fall, I ſhall a‘riſe;’ and ſo bend to his feet again.

7. *laſtly*, Faith has the chief intereſt in this fight. In it there will be uſe for all the graces, the doing and ſuffering graces; yet the fight has its name from faith, as that which has the chief hand in it. For,

1ſt, It is faith's poſſeſſion that the plea is about. Life and ſalvation in Chriſt Jeſus is held forth to the ſinner; and the ſinner believing in Chriſt, appropriates and takes poſſeſſion of it by faith, 1 John v. 11, 12. ‘This is the ‘record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this ‘life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life: and ‘he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.’ If the man will quit his plea for life and ſalvation by Chriſt, the fight is at an end; the enemy has his deſign. But if not, the alarm is ſounded, and the fight forces him from it.

2dly, It is faith that holds faſt the poſſeſſion which the enemy would force from the man. For it is that which unites the ſoul to Chriſt and eternal life: Heb. x. 28. ‘Caſt not away your confidence, which hath great re‘compence of reward.’ Believing, we cleave to the Lord, and hold faſt what we have. The ſecurities and rights to the heavenly inheritance are the promiſes; faith gripes them, and ſo keeps poſſeſſion.

3dly, It is faith that is the main actor in this fight. Thoſe worthies in Heb. xi. had need of all the graces of the Spirit. There was much of other graces in their ſuffering ſo great things; but all is aſcribed to faith. Faith is the captain of all the graces; it leads them out, puts an edge upon them, and makes them active. And therefore, the word that is given from heaven is, ‘Above all, ‘taking the ſhield of faith, wherewith ye ſhall be able to ‘quench all the fiery darts of the wicked,’ Eph. vi. 16.

Queſt. How is it that faith has the preference of the other graces in this fight? *Anſw.* On theſe accounts.

(1.) It is the grace that is firſt on the field of battle, and all the reſt follow it. It is the mother grace, out of whoſe womb they all come forth, the grace that knits the ſoul to Chriſt; the fountain of fulneſs. So the way to get love, repentance, patience, is to believe. Thus it furniſhes the field of battle with fighters on Chriſt's ſide.

(2.) It ſtrengthens them according to its meaſure; ‘According to thy faith, be it unto thee.’ According as it is weak or ſtrong, ſo are they: for it is not only the mother grace, but the nurſing grace. Faith lies neareſt the fountain, and it is the channel of conveyance of ſupply: ſo as it gets in, they get out for their nouriſhment.

(2.) It brings the healing they get to their wounds. Many a time the Chriſtian's love is foundered in this fight, by an arrow of jealouſy of God ſhot into their breaſt. Faith gives the combatant a ſight of the glory of God; and ſo pulls out the arrow. Their patience is wounded, that it can no longer ſtand; faith brings the promiſe, Hab. ii. 3. 'Though it tarry, wait for it, becauſe it will 'ſurely come, it will not tarry,' and ſo ſets patience to its feet again. It brings the leaves of the tree of life, which heals the wounds; and ſo the fight is renewed.

(4.) It carries on the fight, and obtains the victory: 1 John v. 4. 'This is the victory that overcometh the 'world, even our faith.' It is by faith the enemy is put to flight, that partial victories are obtained during this life, and that the total victory is obtained at death. Thus by faith the martyrs ſwimmed through a ſea of blood, to the other ſide. And hence,

4thly, The great deſign of the enemy is to weaken faith, and to wreſt it out of the combatant's hand. It was by unbelief of the threatening of the firſt covenant, that Satan ruined the world at firſt: and his great buſineſs is, to keep men from believing the promiſe of the ſecond covenant. He knows their ſtrength lies there: and take away that, they ſhall be as other men, that he may do with them what he will.

Laſtly, The great deſign of a holy God, in that fight, is the trial of faith, 1 Pet. i. 6, 7. 'Wherein ye greatly 'rejoice, though now for a ſeaſon (if need be) ye are in 'heavineſs through manifold temptations: That the trial 'of your faith being much more precious than of gold 'that periſheth, though it be tried with fire, might be 'found unto praiſe, and honour, and glory, at the ap'pearing of Jeſus Chriſt.' Faith acts in truſting an unſeen God, living upon the credit of the promiſe. Thus the Lord will have his people to go through the wilderneſs of this world, *walking by faith, not by ſight*. When they come to heaven, the trial of faith is over: ſo there is no more fight.

II. The ſecond thing is, to ſhew *in what reſpects it is a good fight*.

1. The cauſe is good. Many fight to carry their ill cauſe by force, and their fightings proceed from an eager deſire to ſatisfy their luſts. But here is a good fight for a good cauſe, cleaving to the Lord over the belly of difficulties; laying hold of eternal life. It is the cauſe of Chriſt, the cauſe of the ſinner's eternal ſalvation, which cannot be but a good cauſe, to endeavour the maintenance of it againſt all oppoſers.

2. It is an honourable fight, worthy of a man of true valour and magnanimity. The men of the world boaſt themſelves of their ſtrength in making their part good againſt worms like themſelves. In the mean time they are ſlaves to their luſts, and have neither heart nor hand to reſiſt them, but are captives at pleaſure. But the believer in his fight encounters more formidable enemies: Eph. vi. 12. 'We wreſtle not againſt fleſh and blood, 'but againſt principalities, againſt powers, againſt the ru'lers of the darkneſs of this world, againſt ſpiritual wick'edneſs, in high places.'

3. There is a good captain in this fight, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, under whoſe ſtandard the believer fights. He went on the head of all the fighting company, and overcame; and he calls his people to make their way through an army which he has already broken: Rev. iii. 21. 'To 'him that overcometh will I grant to ſit with me in my 'throne, even as I alſo overcame, and am ſet down with 'my Father in his throne.' He is ever at their hand, and the cauſe is his; it muſt therefore be a good fight.

4. In regard of the good that is got even of the partial victories; the believers being helped to ſtand ſhocks, tho' the war be not ended, Rom. v. 3, 4, 5. 'We glory in 'tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 'and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and 'hope maketh not aſhamed.' The ſharp trials of faith are hard in a time; but a review of bypaſt dangers, in the time of the combat, gives an exquiſite pleaſure: ſo that the man comes to ſay, 'It is good that I was afflicted.'

5. *laſtly*, In regard the final and complete victory in the end is ſure, Rom. vi. 20. 'The God of peace ſhall 'bruiſe Satan under your feet ſhortly.' Many a battle the believer may loſe in the courſe of the war; but tho' the enemy prevail ſo far, yet the believer ſhall always be the conqueror at the end. The men of Ai got an advantage againſt Joſhua's men; but they got a complete victory at length over the men of Ai.

III. *Why is the Chriſtian life, in the diſpoſal of holy providence, made a fight?* No doubt the Lord could have given his people a conſtant ſun-ſhine as well on this ſide as the other ſide of death, and cleared the way of thoſe armed adverſaries that are ready to attack them.

1. That the members may be conformed to their head in their paſſage through the world. The life that our Lord Jeſus had in the world, was a fighting life all along, till he entered into his glory. It is very agreeable that his followers ſhould find it ſo, and ſo be conformed to their head in ſuffering as well as in reigning: Rom. viii. 17. 'If ſo be that we ſuffer with him, that we may be al'ſo glorified together.'

2. That the nothingneſs, and utter unworthineſs of the creature may convincingly appear; ſo as they themſelves and all others may ſee it is owing purely to free grace, not to them. We find the Lord uſually laid thoſe very low whom he minded to raiſe up on high; as in the caſe of Joſeph, Moſes, and David: and this to ſtain the pride of all glory, that they might ſee that it was wholly of free grace, and owing to no merit of theirs. The Lord accordingly minding to bring a ſelect company into heaven, in the firſt place brings them into the wilderneſs. There they are ſtung with ſerpents, &c. whereby much corruption and weakneſs appears in them, and afterwards they are brought unto a wealthy place.

3. For the greater confuſion of the grand adverſary, whom he cauſeth poor weak creatures to triumph over after they have maintained a fight with him; Rom. xvi. 20. 'The God of peace ſhall bruiſe Satan under your 'feet ſhortly.' Our Lord Jeſus overcame and baffled Satan's temptations in the wilderneſs. He triumphed over him on the croſs, Col ii. 15. 'Having ſpoiled prin'cipalities and powers, he made a ſhew of them openly, 'triumphing over them in it.' Satan renews the battle againſt his members on earth: and what is the iſſue? The ſtripling David, with his ſling and ſtone, lays Goliah on the green. The weak believer, through faith, confounds the united wit and force of men and devils, which tends to the greater confuſion of the enemy.

4. For the greater glory of the Captain of their ſalvation, the more full diſplay of the freedom and efficacy of his blood and Spirit. (1.) Every wound the believer gets in this fight, puts a new jewel in Chriſt's crown. That is a new item for the believer in the debt book of free grace, and ſo puts him more in free-grace's debt. (2.) Every wound the believer gives in this fight, conſidering his weakneſs, and the ſtrength of the enemy, does the ſame.

5. For that they may have a greater variety of experiences: Rom. 1. 4. 'Patience worketh experience; and 'experience, hope.' The exerciſed Chriſtian is the man of moſt experience. There is a great variety of promiſes in the covenant, for the various caſes the children of God may be in: and that his people may have experience of the reliſh of theſe promiſes, he brings them into the caſes to which theſe promiſes are adapted. Who find the ſap of that promiſe, Iſa. xxxiii. 16. 'Bread ſhall be given 'him, his waters ſhall be ſure,' like thoſe that are put to a fight of faith for their daily bread; or of that, Deut. xxxii. 36. 'For the Lord ſhall judge his people, and re'pent himſelf for his ſervants; when he ſeeth that their 'power is gone, and there is none ſhut up, or left,' like thoſe whoſe caſe is brought to an extremity in point of hopeleſſneſs?

6. *laſtly*, That heaven may be the more ſweet to them, when they come to it. It is in this reſpect that heaven

is called *a place of comfort.* None will find reſt ſo ſweet as the wearied man. A child of God come to his journey's end, after many ups and downs, will ſing the ſong of Moſes and the Lamb in a higher ſtrain, than if he had never been in danger from his firſt ſetting out.

IV. The fourth thing is, to ſhew *why their fight is called a fight of faith.* The reaſon is, becauſe by that means all the glory of the victories obtained redounds to free grace; Rom. iv. 16. 'It is of faith, that it might 'be by grace.' The Lord is jealous of his own glory, and ſinful man is very apt to aſcribe ſomething to himſelf; therefore faith is pitched upon, for its activity lies in theſe two.

1. In carrying the ſinner quite out of himſelf. Hence, Believers are ſaid to *have no confidence in the fleſh.* The unbeliever's great ſtrength lies in ſummoning together all his natural abilities, and in confidence thereof trying the battle. But faith makes a man to be denied to all his own abilities, and not to lean to himſelf. And therefore as fire burns keeneſt in ſharp froſt, ſo faith acts moſt vigorouſly, when ſentence of death is paſſed on all probable means, as Abraham's faith.

2. In leaning upon the Lord for all. Faith goes out to the battle in the name of the Lord, holding by his promiſe, truſting that he will make it out: and ſo it is the mouth of the ſoul that ſucks the ſap of the promiſe, by a fiducial application of it.

V. I will *touch at ſome particular fights of faith, the Chriſtian may have in his courſe heavenward,* ſuch as,

1. In a call to ſome more than ordinary work or duty. 2. In deſertion. 3. In temptations from Satan. 4. In afflictions. 5. With this preſent evil world. 6. With ſin. 7. With death.

FIRST, There is a fight of faith, in *a call to ſome more than ordinary work or duty.* Thus Abraham was called out to this field, Gen. xxii. 1.; Moſes to bring the children of Iſrael out of Egypt, Exod. iii.; and Jonah, to preach to the Ninevites.

Here the believer gets as much as he is able to wreſtle with; yea, and ſometimes as much as lays him by, his faith failing. Thus Jonah was ſo put to it in this fight, that he goes to fly towards Tarſhiſh, to ſhift the duty.

Now, what makes the difficulty here, are, (1.) The hardneſs of the work in itſelf. (2.) A deep ſenſe of our inability for it. For ſometimes it is that which the Chriſtian ſeems of all things to be moſt unfit for (3.) The greater danger there may be in it, ſo that the Chriſtian muſt run a riſk in ſetting about it. Sometimes he muſt riſk his reputation, as in Jonah's caſe; ſometimes he muſt riſk even his ſafety or life. Here there is a particular fight of faith to be fought. And therein faith is to be exerted.

1. In complying with God's call in the faith of the promiſe of ſtrength for it. Philip. iv. 13. 'I can do all 'things through Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth me.' God never calls his people to any duty, but what they have ground to expect furniture for from himſelf. 'No man 'goeth a warfare on his own charges. The way of the 'Lord is ſtrength to the upright.' And God ſuits the back to the burden. It is much alike then whether it be little work and little ſtrength, or great work and ſtrength conform thereto.

2. In following the duty, in the faith of divine protection, as far as he ſees good. Faith truſts God with one's ſafety in the way of duty, according to the promiſe, Pſal. xci. 11. 'He ſhall give his angels charge over thee, 'to keep thee in all thy ways.' As long as one is found in the way where God bids him go, he may be ſure God will ſet a hedge about him, and make all work for his good.

SECONDLY, There is a fight of faith *in deſertion.* Here the believer is on the dark mountains in a ſpecial manner, the Lord in a depth of ſovereign wiſdom withdraws. And in this caſe there may be ſeveral things very heavy.

1. Darkneſs covering the believer's ſpirit, whereby he *goes mourning without the ſun.* Their former light is taken away, and miſts ariſe, ſo that they miſs their way.

2. Indiſpoſition for duty, proceeding from a liſtleſſneſs to communion with God, or from the extremity of trouble. So that the ſoul is not more unfit for duty, than when there is moſt need.

3. An army of doubts and fears attacking them, doubting of their love to God, and God's love to them.

4. The terrors of God ſet in battle array againſt them. They *remember God, and are troubled.* The man is carried captive from Sion to Sinai; and the law bends a proceſs againſt him. God appears as an enemy.

Now, faith's part here in this fight is,

1*ſt*, To juſtify God in the diſpenſation, and to ſubmit to ſovereignty, believing he doth all things well. The man has to do with him whoſe will is the law, and ſo muſt not adventure to call him to an account.

2*dly*, To cleave to Chriſt by a faith of adherence; ſaying, 'Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him.' He muſt reſolutely adhere, over the belly of diſcouragements.

3*dly*, To believe an outgate in due time; Mic. vii. 8. 'When I fall, I ſhall ariſe; when I ſit in darkneſs, the 'Lord ſhall be a light unto me.' Iſa. l. 10. 'Who is 'among you that feareth the Lord, that walketh in darkneſs, and hath no light? let him truſt in the name of 'the Lord, and ſtay upon his God.'

4*thly*, To hold the concluſion of our intereſt, notwithſtanding of the arguments drawn from the divine diſpenſation to prove us naught. Job xxvii. 6. 'My righteouſneſs I hold faſt, and will not let it go: my heart ſhall 'not reproach me ſo long as I live.'

5*thly*, Continuing in the way of duty notwithſtanding; as Job did, Job. i. 20, 21. who, notwithſtanding all the calamities that befel him, ſtill bleſſed God.

THIRDLY, There is a fight of faith in *temptations from Satan.* Natural men he tempts to ſin, to get them kept the ſurer in his gripes; the godly, that he may mar their communion with God, and make their lives bitter, if he cannot get them back entirely to his ſervice; both, that he may get God diſhonoured by them. The temptations are too many to be reckoned up particularly; but I ſhall take notice of theſe eight things following, in which ye would ſet yourſelves to fight the fight of faith.

1. Temptations to ſin, after ſome ſeeming or real enjoyment of God in ordinances. Nothing is more ordinary than a ſubtle or furious attack of the devil on a perſon brought into a better caſe than ordinary. Satan is a proud, envious ſpirit. The better it is with a ſoul, the more likely is the honour of God to be advanced, and their own ſalvation. Neither of theſe can Satan endure. In this caſe, faith is to manage a fight, by,

1*ſt*, Believing the ſcripture warnings and inſtances of this: Luke xxii. 31. And the Lord ſaid, Simon, Simon, 'behold, Satan hath deſired to have you, that he may ſift 'you as wheat.' Compare with 2 Cor. xii. 7. Hereby the ſoul will be ſet to watch before the temptation come, and when it is come, will ſee that it is no more than what God's people have met with.

2*dly*, Reſiſting, not in confidence of vows and reſolutions, but in confidence of the grace that is in Chriſt, 2 Cor. xii. 9. 'My grace is ſufficient for thee: for my 'ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs.' 2 Tim. ii. 1. 'Thou therefore, my ſon, be ſtrong in the grace that is 'in Chriſt Jeſus.' It is confidence in what we have in ourſelves that mars all.

2. Temptations to the ſin that one is moſt eaſily led aſide unto, Heb. xii. 1. 'Let us lay aſide every weight 'and the ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet us.' Satan will be ſure to attack you on the weak ſide, where he is moſt likely to prevail. He knows what is the ſin of one's conſtitution, age, calling, and the like, and there to ſet on where the wall is weakeſt. But he that minds for heaven, muſt reſiſt, and fight againſt him, and that in faith.

1*ſt*, Believing the neceſſity of overcoming, even in that particular, Matth. v. 29. 'If thy right eye offend 'thee, pluck it off and caſt it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members ſhould periſh, 'and not that thy whole body ſhould be caſt into hell.' Men would do well to remember that there the one thing lacking, which ruins all, may lie. And if the devil can get the man kept under the dominion of any one luſt, it will ſerve his purpoſe for that man's ruin, though he have many good things about him.

2dly, Believing that ſuch temptations may be overcome and got maſtered, Luke xvii. 6. ' If ye had faith as a ' grain of muſtard ſeed, ye might ſay unto this ſycamine ' tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the ſea; and it ſhould obey you.' Theſe temptations men do ſo naturally incline to comply with, that they think it is in vain to reſiſt them; for it will not do, Jer. ii. 25. ' Thou ſaidſt there is no hope. No, for I ' have loved ſtrangers, and after them will I go.' This is the language of unbelief, which faith muſt contradict.

3dly, Believing, that, in the uſe of means, ye ſhall overcome, through grace and ſtrength from the Lord: Mark xi. 24. ' What things ſoever ye deſire when ye ' pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye ſhall have ' them.' This faith makes the ſoul in this caſe like a giant refreſhed with wine, oppoſing Chriſt's ſtrength to its own weakneſs: and ſo brings it off victorious.

3. Temptations to the groſſeſt ſins. No body is out of hazard of theſe, while in this world, 1 Cor. x. 12. ' Let him that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall.' Satan makes great helliſh gain by theſe; he defiles the conſcience, gets God diſhonoured, and religion expoſed to reproach by them. He gets the maſk pulled off many hypocrite; and gets ſincere Chriſtians ſometimes to go halting to the grave by them. They that would ſee heaven muſt reſiſt, and reſiſt in faith.

1ſt, Believing that they are ſnares for ſoul-ruin, according to Prov. vi. 27, 28. ' Can a man take fire in ' his boſom, and his clothes not be burnt? Can one go ' upon hot coals and his feet not be burnt?' It is the work of faith to diſcern, by the glaſs of the word, Satan's devices, and art of deſtruction; that the ſoul, ſeeing them ſo, may conceive a horror of them. ' Abhor what is evil.'

2dly, Believing that it is not the temptation, but the yielding to it, that will provoke God againſt you. I own that ſuch temptations are often ſent as a puniſhment for other ſins, as Judas's covetouſneſs was puniſhed with a temptation to betray Chriſt for money; and by ſuch means God often ſhakes himſelf looſe of hypocrites, and ſpues them out of his mouth, Rev. iii. 16. And it is often the thought of ſerious ſouls, that temptations to ſins ſo very groſs are a ſign of the Lord's hatred againſt them; yet that is a plain miſtake; for what ſin is there ſo groſs but a child of God may be tempted to it? Aſaph was tempted to deny a providence, Pſal. lxxiii. 13. Job was tempted to blaſpheme and curſe God, Job i. 11, 12. Chriſt himſelf was tempted to diſtruſt, ſelf-murder, and worſhipping of the devil, Matth. iv. The faith of theſe things will be ſtrengthening under ſuch horrid temptations.

3dly, Believing the word condemning and forbidding theſe ſins, and ſo oppoſing heaven's word of command and threatening unto the temptation. This is faith's wielding the ſword of the Spirit againſt the tempter, which is fitted to awe the heart with the authority of God, and fill it with abhorrence of the temptation. Whenever the temptation is given, there ſhould preſently be ſome apt ſcripture to oppoſe to it by faith; and as oft as temptation is repeated, do ye repeat the word in faith; and Satan will fly at length.

4thly, Believing the promiſes ſuited to the caſe. There is no temptation any can be in, but there is a promiſe ſuited for it in the word, which is the armour faith muſt wield in order to overcome. James iv. 7. ' Reſiſt the ' devil, and he will flee from you.' And in the faith of the promiſe make reſiſtance, not doubting but it ſhall be accompliſhed in your caſe; and according to your faith ſo ſhall it be; as with Peter on the water.

4. Temptations artfully ſuited to one's circumſtances. Satan has a helliſh art of framing his temptations to people's circumſtances, wherein they are moſt likely to take with them. Thus Chriſt being hungered, the devil tempted him to diſtruſt, Matth. iv. 3. Job was tempted to deſpair under his afflictions; and Achan to ſteal. Thus he has his temptations ſuited to the aged and the young, the poor and the rich. He knows that in ſuch a caſe he rows with the ſtream. But reſiſt ye in faith.

1ſt, Believing that Satan watcheth all opportunities againſt you, 1 Pet. v. 8. ' Be ſober, be vigilant; for the ' devil as a roaring lion, walketh about, ſeeking whom ' he may devour.' This will make you watch againſt him, when he has ſuch an advantage againſt you, that he will not let ſlip. They had not need to ſleep who were within the enemy's gunſhot.

2dly, Believing that the Lord has you upon your trials in that particular, to which ye are ſo tempted, Gen. xxxix. 9. ' How can I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt ' God?' Men think, when an occaſion of ſinning lies before them, that now is the time to gratify the luſt: but happy were they could they think, Now, here is a trial for me, and God is looking on to ſee how I will behave.

3dly, Believing that as the devil ſuits his temptations, ſo Chriſt ſuits his aſſiſtance, to the circumſtances of poor ſinners; ſo that reſolving to reſiſt you may ſay, There are more with us than againſt us. Whatever way the ſtream runs with the temptation, ſtretch out your hands to ſwim againſt it, in faith of the promiſe, Iſ. xl. 28, 29.

5. Temptations from one ſin to another. Satan knows that one ſin makes way for another. So Eve's luſtful look to the forbidden fruit, made way for her taking and eating it and that for giving to her huſband and his eating; and ſo the whole world's ruin was completed. Thus it is uſual for Satan to prevail with thoſe that have yielded to him in one temptation, to lie for covering it again. Some ſins natively lead to others; thus drunkenneſs make men an eaſy prey to uncleanneſs. And ſome, when once the devil has got them to be harlots, the temptation from that and from their credit, has made them murderers; ſome murdering their children after they are born, and ſome before; the latter as well as the former guilty of innocent blood in a degree beyond Onan, whom the Lord himſelf ſlew as a murderer. But happy they who reſiſt the beginnings of ſin, while in the bud; but where ye are fallen into the ſnare, fight againſt the temptation to add ſin to ſin, or cover one ſin with another.

1ſt, Believing, that there is mercy for penitents, but none for thoſe who harden themſelves in their wickedneſs: Prov. xxviii. 13. ' He that covereth his ſins, ſhall not ' proſper: but whoſo confeſſeth and forſaketh them, ſhall ' have mercy.' Nay, there is not a more ready way under heaven to expoſe ſinners to the arrows of God's wrath, than to be hardened in wickedneſs.

2dly, Believing that the deſign of the temptation to one ſin from another, is plainly the ruin of the ſoul. Thus he drove Judas from the betraying of Chriſt, into an attack againſt his own life. For thus the one ſin becomes a need-nail to the other, ſhutting up the ſoul under the guilt of it, not to be removed, but by a miracle of mercy.

3dly, Believing that all the miſery that can follow in the world, upon one ſin, is not to be laid in the balance with the wrath of God, that is kindled by running into another ſin becauſe he has been guilty of one. This all ſuch as ſo do will find, either in this world or in hell, when God ſhall make all their ſins together lie on their own heads. For ſooner or later ſin will find out the guilty.

4thly, Believing the promiſe of pardon through the Redeemer's blood, however atrocious and heinous the ſin is. Some are led on from one ſin to another, becauſe they have no ſenſe of the ill and danger of it to their ſouls: the faith of God's teſtimony to their ſin would cure this, and make them cry out, Undone. Others have a ſecret deſpair of finding mercy, and ſo they proceed from evil to worſe; but the faith of the promiſe of pardon would cure that: Iſa. i. 18. ' Come now, and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord: though your ſins be as ſcarlet, ' they ſhall be white as ſnow; though they be red like ' crimſon, they ſhall be as wool.'

5thly, Believing the promiſe of renewed ſtrength even to thoſe that have ſlighted it before. They who have been foiled by one temptation, may get victory over another. They may have taken a large ſtep on the devil's ground, who yet looking to Chriſt by faith, may ſtop and go no further.

6. Temptations ſuddenly caſt in, and reſolutely continued. This is a furious aſſault of the devil, which he often makes uſe of in blaſphemous injections into the minds of poor ſinners; where the ſoul is in no better caſe

than one, who defending a thatched houſe, no ſooner gets one fire-ball quenched, but another is thrown in on him. If at any time this be your caſe, reſiſt vigorouſly in faith.

1ſt, Believing, that theſe are your affliction, but no further your ſin than you yield or conſent to them. This is clear from the ſuggeſtions made to our Saviour, while yet there was no ſin in him. Satan does with theſe as harlots laying their brats at the door of honeſt matrons, ſo confounding the poor ſinner, that he takes the voice of Satan for his own voice. But unleſs ye yield to them, and embrace them, Satan only ſhall account for them.

2dly, Adhering reſolutely by faith to the Lord Jeſus, as your Lord and Saviour did. John xii. 27. ‘ Now is ‘ my ſoul troubled; and what ſhall I ſay? Father, ſave ‘ me from this hour; but for this cauſe came I unto this ‘ hour.’ If ever that reſolute adherence is neceſſary, it is neceſſary at ſuch a time. The great end and deſign of the tempter by theſe furious attacks, is to drive the poor toſſed tempted creature from his hold of Chriſt: but we ſhould be like the traveller in a windy day, that holds his cloak the faſter the harder it blows.

3dly, Believing that there is no ſafety in parleying with the tempter, but the temptation is to be rejected with abhorrence. It was Eve's parley with the tempter, that laid the foundation of the ruin of the world. Setting on the Second Adam, he got a refuſal immediately, Mat. iv. Theſe ſuggeſtions are not ſo far to be liſtened to, as that one ſhould think with himſelf whether he ſhould comply or no. *The Lord rebuke thee*, is the ſafeſt anſwer.

4thly, Believingly oppoſing the Lord's word to them, which condemns and forbids the thing tempted to. In thoſe temptations our Saviour met with, which were ſhocking even to the light of nature, it is remarkable he ſtill oppoſes ſcripture to them, Matth. iv. 7, 10. For that is a divine ordinance for repelling of temptation, to be reiterated in faith as often as Satan repeats his temptation.

5thly, Believing, that there is grace in Chriſt Jeſus ſufficient for repelling theſe violent temptations, and that it is ſufficient for you in particular. 2 Cor. xii. 9. ‘ My ‘ grace is ſufficient for thee; for my ſtrength is made ‘ perfect in weakneſs.’ If Satan prevail ſo far as to cauſe the tempted to think, that the violence of the temptation is ſo great that they cannot ſtand againſt it; this is ſuch a weakning of faith, that the breach can hardly miſs to be made there, as a breaking forth of an high wall in an inſtant. And Satan cannot obtain it of the tempted, but by turning of his eyes from Chriſt into himſelf. Therefore, in that hour of darkneſs, let the tempted keep his eye on the fulneſs of ſtrength in Chriſt: 2 Tim. ii. 1. ‘ Therefore be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus.’

6thly, Believing the promiſe of victory to the ſtruggler with temptation, James iv. 7. ‘ Reſiſt the devil, and he ‘ will flee from you.’ The faith of the victory animates the tempted to continue the ſtruggle, and will make him be like a giant refreſhed with wine, and bring him off victorious. ‘ According to thy faith, be it unto thee.’

7. Temptations ſtriking at the foundation of religion, ſuch as againſt the being of a God, and the divine authority of the ſcriptures. Theſe are what the devil cannot himſelf believe; though he fain would, yet he cannot be an infidel as to the ſcriptures. But he ſometimes would palm theſe atheiſtical principles even on ſaints of God, who want not an atheiſtical principle in them to work upon. If at any time Satan attack you with ſuch temptations, ye muſt reſiſt them.

1ſt, Believing that they are the ſpawn of the old ſerpent in the corrupt heart, Pſal. xiv. 1. ‘ The fool hath ſaid in ‘ his heart, There is no God.’ It is ſaid of the beaſt in Rev. xiii. 6. that ‘ he opened his mouth in blaſphemy a‘ gainſt God, to blaſpheme his name, and his tabernacle, ‘ and them that dwell in heaven.’ This is the reception they ſhould get immediately, faith diſcerning the cloven foot in them, at their firſt appearance. Whether they come from the devil, or the corrupt heart moved by him, it is all a caſe in this point; believe them to be deviliſh, and treat them with abhorrence. And the ſooner ye oppoſe them, the victory will be the more eaſy.

2dly, Reſolutely believing the foundation principles which the temptation ſtrikes againſt, over the belly of the devil's objections againſt them, though ye cannot anſwer them: Heb. xi. 6. ‘ He that cometh to God, muſt be‘ lieve that he is.’ 2 Tim. iii. 16. ‘ All ſcripture is giv‘ en by inſpiration of God.’ Hence is that exhortation of the apoſtle, Eph. vi. 16. ‘ Take the ſhield of faith, ‘ wherewith ye ſhall quench the fiery darts of the wicked.’

There is not wanting ſtore of reaſons to ſupport the great foundation principles of religion; and nothing but ſophiſtry can be brought againſt them, which reaſon ſufficiently enlightened may diſcover. There are arguments for the being of God, and the authority of the ſcriptures, to convince atheiſts. When you are aſſaulted with theſe temptations, I dare not adviſe you to the bringing reaſons for theſe principles againſt him, but to a reſolute holding the truth over the belly of his objections; becauſe,

(1.) They are firſt principles, and ye are not obliged to diſpute them with any, unleſs it were to keep an oppoſer from ruin, as in the caſe of atheiſts. But this has no place in a combat with the devil, of whom there is no hope.

(2.) Becauſe the devil is a ſpirit with whom we are not to commune without a ſpecial call. Our Lord, could have reaſoned the devil out of it, yet oppoſes to his temptations the teſtimony of ſcripture. It is the ſafeſt way for us, whatever we have to ſay in temptation, to ſay it to God, rather than to the devil.

(3.) Becauſe the devil is a diſputant too ſubtle for us, and in the way of reaſon may quickly over-reach us. I make no queſtion but the devil is a philoſopher beyond our greateſt ſcholars: and men may expect from him moſt ſubtle turns of wit to elude their arguments, and to ſtart objections not eaſy to anſwer. And therefore it is not ſafe to engage in a diſpute with him.

But do ye reſolutely believe the principles you have received on divine authority, which ye have no reaſon to quit on the devil's contrary teſtimony, ſince he is known to be a liar. And this method of holding the concluſion reſolutely, is recommended to us by the practice of the ſaints, Matth. xv. 25. Therefore, while Satan caſts in theſe temptations, enter your proteſt againſt them, you do believe, and will through his grace believe theſe foundations, and will not quit them.

3dly, Believing and applying the promiſe of ſaving illumination and teaching of the Spirit. Light from the Lord will diſpel the miſts that Satan raiſes in the corrupt heart. Hence ſays our Lord to Peter, Matth. xvi. 17. ‘ Bleſſed art thou Simon Bar-jona: for fleſh and blood ‘ hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father which is in ‘ heaven.’ And this light is brought in, by faith's applying the promiſes ſuited to the caſe. And the tempted ſhould lift his eyes unto the Lord, that he may ſhine into his ſoul, and diſpel the darkneſs, according to his promiſe.

4thly, Believing the ſcripture accounts of the myſteries of providence from whence Satan raiſeth theſe temptations. Satan ſometimes obſerves the ſpirits of ſaints fretted with ſore afflictions, the wicked proſpering, and they in great diſtreſs: here he plants his cannon, to beat down the foundations of all religion. And the believer reſiſts him by believing the ſcripture account of theſe myſteries of providence. This is the way to undermine Satan's battery, to raſe the foundation on which he builds.

What will that malicious ſpirit make of the long diſtreſſes of God's people, and the proſperity of the wicked, againſt the being of God, and the certainty of his word? The ſun may hide his head in winter, but will any ſay therefore there is no ſun? Is not one day with the Lord as a thouſand years, and a thouſand years as one day? Doth not the ſcripture ſhew, that there is a judgment to come, and a long eternity to ſhew God's good pleaſure in the veſſels of his mercy, and his wrath againſt the veſſels of his wrath, though neither the godly have two ſummers, nor the wicked two winters in one year? Have not prayers lain over, that have got an anſwer at length?

Thus believing is the method of reſiſting in theſe temptations. Howbeit, when ye are free of temptation in theſe matters, it would confirm your faith of the foundation principles of religion, with all the reaſons and arguments ye can draw together for them.

8. *laſtly*, Temptations of deluſion. This is a kind of temptation moſt hard to reſiſt, Satan therein preſſing to ſin under the notion of duty. It is a great trial of faith, and has always a lamentable upſhot, according to the nature thereof, Iſ. i. ult. But ye muſt reſiſt in faith.

1ſt, Believing your own weakneſs and darkneſs, together with the diligence of Satan, according to the ſcripture, 2 Cor. iii. 5. ' We are not ſufficient of ourſelves, to think any thing as of ourſelves: but our ſufficiency is of God.' 1 Pet. v. 8. ' Be ſober, be vigilant, becauſe your adverſary, the devil, goeth about as a roaring lion, ſeeking whom he may devour.' It is ſelf conceit that betrays men into the ſnare: for theſe are in little fear of his wiles, and ſo are the more eaſily catched.

2dly, Believing the ſcripture to be the only rule of faith and manners, and to improve it ſo: Iſ. viii. 20. There is an itch in the nature of man, to be wiſe above what is written; and ſometimes Satan has made his gain thereof, by viſions, impreſſions, &c. But in ſuch caſes, take heed to yourſelves, and examine it by the written word. Therefore what is of God will abide the trial of the word, and the more cloſely it is brought to it, it will appear the more clear: what is not ſo, will loſe all its luſtre there, as ill wares when they are brought out to the light of the ſun. And therefore thoſe who are under deluſion, are loath to examine by the word. 1 John iv. 1. ' Beloved, believe not every Spirit, but try the ſpirits whether they are of God; becauſe many falſe prophets are gone out into the world,' 2 Pet. i. 19. ' We have alſo the word of prophecy more ſure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that ſhineth in a dark place, till the day dawn, and the day ſtar ariſe in your hearts.' The ſcripture is the way of communication betwixt heaven and us: it is from the Holy Spirit, and he cannot contradict himſelf. Therefore ' though we, or an angel from heaven preach any other goſpel unto you, than that ye have received, let him be accurſed.'

Laſtly, Believing the promiſe of guidance into all truth, John xvi. 13. ' Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth.' Pſal. xxv. 9. ' The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.' The ſoul thus emptied of itſelf, and leaning to the Lord Chriſt for his teaching, will not want teaching in the uſe of means. Pſal. xxviii, 7. ' The Lord is my ſtrength and ſhield; my heart truſted in him, and I am helped.' Our Lord Jeſus is the appointed guide of his people. He is given ' for a light of the people.' Divine manifeſtations are always ſanctifying and humbling; deluſions puff up, and leave the ſoul as unholy as they found it. And even when duty is preſſed in deluſion, it will readily be found either out of ſeaſon, or not the duty of one's ſtation, or to have ſome ſuch flaw in it or other.

FOURTHLY, There is a fight of faith in *afflictions*: Heb. x. 32. ' Call to remembrance the former days, in which after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions.' One may as well think to travel without the flies annoying him in a hot ſummer's day, as to go through the world without meeting with afflictions. They are common to good and bad. In the Lord's way one cannot miſs them; Acts xiv. 22. ' We muſt through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.' In the way of ſin one will meet them too: Eccleſ. x. 8. ' He that diggeth a pit, ſhall fall into it.' Sovereigntv diſtributes them, to ſome more, to others leſs; but to all ſome. The native effect of afflictions on the guilty creature, is to drive it away from God. So that it is owing to ſomething elſe that they do good to ſinners. And that,

1. To a word of divine appointment. Afflictions are an ordinance of God for good to ſinners: Iſa. xxvii. 9. ' By this therefore ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his ſin.' And a divine appointment will alter the nature and operation of a thing. The ſavour of burnt fleſh is very unpleaſant, but the ordinance made it a ſweet ſavour, Gen. viii. 21. Clay laid on one's eyes is a mean natively to make one blind: yet, by a divine ordinance, it cured blindneſs, John ix. 6, 7. So afflictions natively drive away the ſoul from God, but, by a divine ordinance, lead it to him.

2. To a receiving of them in faith: 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. ' For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' Whoever would profit by a divine ordinance, muſt receive it in faith. For to every divine ordinance there is a promiſe annexed to be believed: and the promiſe being believed, the ordinance has its effect. So that we ſee afflictions do good to ſome, to others no good, but ill: It is faith and unbelief that make the difference.

Wherefore ye muſt fight in faith againſt the tendency of afflictions in themſelves. And if ye aſk, What is that tendency in afflictions on the guilty creature, which he muſt fight againſt? and, How muſt one fight againſt it? I anſwer in the ſix following particulars. It is,

1. To impreſs the perſon with the apprehenſion that God is his enemy, and that he is ſeeking his ruin. Even Job himſelf was carried away with his hard thoughts of God, Job xxxiii. 10. ' Behold, he findeth occaſions againſt me, he counteth me for his enemy.' Guilt lying on the conſcience, makes it full of hard thoughts of God. Whenever the guilty ſoul hears from heaven by affliction, it is ready to ſtrike in his mind, Now this is for my ſin, and God is proclaiming war from heaven againſt me. Hence affliction is ſeveral times the means of awakening the ſecure ſinner; though he can never come to God till he believe.

Now, ye muſt fight againſt this in faith.

1ſt, Believing, that though all afflictions are ſigns of God's hatred of ſin, and his ſeeking the ruin of it; yet no affliction on you in this world can be ſuch a ſign of God's hatred of your perſon, and his ſeeking your ruin. God's deareſt children may have as heavy afflictions on their backs, as any other perſons in the world. And no wonder, ſince God's only begotten Son had the heavieſt burden of afflictions that ever was on the back of a man.

2dly, Believing, that afflictions are God's ordinance for good to the afflicted, even as the preaching of the word to them: Prov. xxix. 15. ' The rod and reproof give wiſdom.' They are the diſcipline of God's houſe, as the word is the doctrine of it: Heb. xii. 6. ' For whom the Lord loveth he chaſteneth, and ſcourgeth every ſon whom he receiveth.' So the deſign of the rod is your good, as the deſign of phyſic is the health of the patient; though, one, by miſguiding under it, may indeed kill himſelf; even as one, by not complying with the deſign of the affliction, may wound his own ſoul. It is certain, that afflictions have a word of divine appointment for good; but how can ye ſhare of it, if ye do not believe them to be an ordinance of God for good?

3dly, Believing, that God is ſeeking your good, as uſing towards you the very ſame means that he does towards his own children: 2 Pet. iii. 9. ' The Lord is not ſlack concerning his promiſe, but is long ſuffering to us-ward, not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance.' Should a phyſician give you the very ſame remedy that he gives to his own child, ſick of your diſeaſe: what but unreaſonable jealouſy ſhould make you think he deſigns ill to you? And what but unbelief can make you think, God ſeeks your ruin by affliction, with which he works the cure of his own?

4thly, Believing the promiſe annexed to that ordinance, That your affliction ſhall do you good: Iſa. xxvii. 9. ' By this therefore ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his ſin.' Zeph. iii. 12, 13. ' I will alſo leave in the midſt of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they ſhall truſt in the name of the Lord.' This is the way to partake of the efficacy of affliction; and it is the faith of it that makes the ſaints welcome the rod, to be patient under it, and to comply with the deſign of it; while thoſe that expect no good of them, get as little many times.

2. To take all heart and hand from him in his approaches to God, Pſal. lxxvii. 3. ' I remembered God, and was troubled; I complained, and my ſpirit was overwhelmed.' The guilty conſcience takes up the affliction, and juſt knocks him down with it, before the

Lord. He is filled with conſternation before an angry God, and can look for no good at the Lord's hand. The affliction lies ſo heavy upon the ſinner, that he cannot think there is any hope of God's hearing his prayers, or making him welcome to the throne of grace. Job ix. 16. 'If I had called, and he had anſwered me; yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice.' But ye muſt fight againſt this in faith,

1ſt, Believing, that there are bowels of compaſſion in God, while nothing but frowns appear in his countenance. And it is faith's work, to take up theſe bowels of mercy in an afflicting God. *Queſt.* What way ſhall one perceive them? *Anſw.* While ye behold his anger in his providences, ye muſt look to his word by faith, and there ye will ſee theſe bowels of mercy: Iſa. xlix. 14 —— 16. 'But Zion ſaid, The Lord hath forſaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her ſucking child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the ſon of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me.' chap. lxiii. 9. 'In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his preſence ſaved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.' And ye may be helped hereto, by conſidering the heart of a father ſmiting his own child; where in a ſenſe, the heart goes not along with the hand. Thus the church prays, but in faith: Iſa. lxiii. 15, 16. 'Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy glory; where is thy zeal and thy ſtrength, the ſounding of thy bowels, and of thy mercies towards me, are they reſtrained? Doubtleſs thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Iſrael acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer, thy name is from everlaſting.' And this the church doth on good grounds: Lam. iii. 33. 'For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.'

2dly, Believing the teſtimony of God's word, as to inſtances of perſons that have had God's heart towards them, while his hand has been lying heavy on them. Thus it was with Job; he was moſt dear to God, yet he was given up unto the power of Satan to afflict him. Theſe things are written, that ye through patience and comfort of the ſcriptures, might have hope.

3dly, Believing the promiſe of hearing the prayers of the afflicted, Pſal. l. 15. 'Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorify me.' Oppoſe this promiſe in faith, to the operation of the affliction on you before the Lord: take this cordial when ye begin to faint in your approaches to God. 'Lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees.' Is there a ſecret whiſper, that you are ſo afflicted that you need not pray? It is unbelief. Say ye, ſince I am ſo afflicted, I am called to pray, James v. 13. and there is a particular encouragement in Pſal. cii. 17. 'He will regard the prayer of the deſtitute.'

3. To fright the ſinner away from God. Our firſt parents ſaw they were naked, and fled to hide themſelves from the Lord. When the conſcience is fired with guilt under affliction, its natural motion is to run away from God. Hence the ſorrow of the world is ſaid to *work death*, becauſe the more deep one is drenched in it, the farther he goes from God. Satan knows this very well, and therefore he is eager to have ſinners afflicted, and to make their lives bitter; though he is ſometimes outſhot in his own bow, as in Job's caſe. But ye muſt fight againſt this in faith.

1ſt, Believing that God ſends afflictions, not to fright the ſinner from him, but to bring him to him, Hoſ. v. 1. 'Hear ye this, O prieſts, and hearken ye houſe of Iſrael, and give ear, O houſe of the king; for judgment is toward you, becauſe ye have been a ſnare on Mizpah, and a net ſpread upon Tabor.' It is God's ordinary method to bring home runaways and backſliders: Hoſ. ii. 7. 'And ſhe ſhall follow after her lovers, but ſhe ſhall not overtake them; and ſhe ſhall ſeek them, but ſhall not find them; then ſhall ſhe ſay, I will go and return to my firſt huſband, for then was it better with me than now.' Satan's deſign is one thing and God's is another: and though Satan row with the ſtream, a touch from the hand of God will carry his purpoſe.

2dly, Believing that none can better their caſe by running away from the Lord: however hard their caſe may ſeem with him, they can never mend themſelves by going to another hand. Hence Peter ſaid to Chriſt, John vi. 68. 'Lord, to whom ſhall we go? thou haſt the words of eternal life.' The ſinner under affliction is like Hagar, flying from the face of her miſtreſs Sarai; but the beſt courſe the angel of the Lord directed her unto, was, to return to her miſtreſs, and ſubmit herſelf under her hands. Jonah fled from the preſence of the Lord, and ſhunning the journey to Nineveh, caſt himſelf into a whale's belly. And thoſe that take that courſe in their affliction will not ſpeed better.

3dly, Believing your reconciliation with an offended God through Chriſt, 2 Cor. v. 19. 'God was in Chriſt, reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them: and hath committed to us the word of reconciliation.' God was never ſo angry with any of Adam's children, but he was ready to lay by his anger for the ſake of Chriſt, apprehended by faith. The whole tenor of the goſpel holds out this truth: and the law is ſuffered to laſh the ſinner, and afflictions are laid on him to the end he may improve it for his reconciliation with God.

4. To bring the ſinner to caſt off religion, and lay aſide the duties of it. Matth. xiii. 21. 'When tribulation, or perſecution ariſeth becauſe of the word, by and by they are offended.' Thus we find a profane generation arguing the vanity of religion, and the duties of it, from their afflicted and low circumſtances, Mal. iii. 14. 'Ye have ſaid it is in vain to ſerve God: and what profit is it, that we have kept his ordinances, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hoſts?' No leſs a man than Aſaph was near turning Atheiſt on this very ſcore, under a ſtrong temptation, Pſal. lxxiii. 12, 13, 14. 'Behold, theſe are the ungodly, who proſper in the world, they increaſe in riches. Verily I have cleanſed my heart in vain, and waſhed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chaſtened every morning.' And ſo it has fared with many, who in their proſperity have kept up a form of religion, that have been quite ſoured as to religion in adverſity, and they have viſibly given up with it; like the mixt multitude in the wilderneſs.

Here is great need to fight the fight of faith,

1ſt, Believing that proſperity is not tied to religion, nor yet to irreligion: but whatever of the ways one takes, affliction will meet him in the world: Eccleſ. ix. 2. 'All things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked,' &c. If men take up religion for worldly proſperity, no wonder they lay it aſide again upon the diſappointment. But their laying it aſide will not ſecure them from affliction. Therefore men ſhould look ſo to religion itſelf, as to be wedded to it for its intrinſic value. But in the way of religion men may find a good conſcience under affliction, while they find an ill conſcience in the way of caſting it off.

2dly, Believing, that the advantage of religion is to be repeated after the time of trial is over, Rev. ii. 10. 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' Now is our ſeed-time; and the ſowing muſt be in tears, where the reaping time of joy is to follow. The harveſt of glory in heaven comes moſt full after a wet ſeed-time.

3dly, Believing, that there is an advantage in religion for bearing of afflictions, 2 Cor. i. 12. 'Our rejoicing is this, the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our converſation in the world.' Promiſes applied by faith, are full of comfort to the afflicted. The Lord's word is full of light as to the nature and ends of them: ſo that the Bible is the beſt company for thoſe in affliction. This well is deep, and faith muſt draw.

4thly, Believing, that the promiſes with reſpect to affliction, both as to the iſſue of them in another world, and as to ſupport under them in this, ſhall be made out to you, Pſal. lxxiii. 24. ‘Thou ſhalt guide me with thy counſel, and afterward receive me to glory.’ It is the faith of the upper Canaan, and of proviſion in the wilderneſs-world, that fits for the wilderneſs life.

4. To provoke the ſinner againſt God, to cauſe him to murmur againſt him, and arraign and condemn in his heart, the conduct of holy providence in the ordering of his lot: 1 Cor. x. 10. ‘Neither murmur ye, as ſome of them alſo murmured, and were deſtroyed of the deſtroyer.’ Hard affliction laid on a man in whom dwelleth a corrupt heart, is apt to raiſe the black band of murmurings and practical blaſphemy againſt God: like a ſtick ſtirring up a muddy pool, or an ant's neſt. It made even Job to curſe the day of his birth. Job was much overcome with his affliction, when he ſaid, chap. xxx. 21. ‘Thou art become cruel to me: with thy ſtrong hand thou oppoſeſt thyſelf againſt me.’ Fight againſt this tendency of affliction in faith,

1ſt, Believing, that God is your Sovereign Lord, having all power over you. There may be myſteries of providence in his dealing with us, which we cannot account for: but there can be no unjuſt ſtep in his procedure with us: Deut. xxxii. 4. ‘He is the rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity, juſt and right is he,’ Jer. xii. 1. ‘Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee.’ We are his own by creation, and have forfeited our mercies by ſin; let faith view him in the throne of ſovereignty, and ſilence us, Matth. xx. 15. ‘Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?’

2dly, Believing, that you are debtors to mercy for that it is not worſe with you than it is; Lam. iii. 22. ‘It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not conſumed, becauſe his compaſſions fail not.’ However hard any one's affliction is in this world, it is certain they deſerve worſe, Ezra ix. 13. ‘Thou our God has puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities deſerve;’ and that, Pſal. xc. 11. ‘who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, ſo is thy wrath.’ This will make one to give thanks for what is kept off, rather than murmur for what is laid on.

3dly, Believing, that there is certainly need for all you meet with, 1 Pet. i. 6. ‘Wherein ye greatly rejoice, tho' now for a ſeaſon (if need be) ye are in heavineſs through manifold temptations.’ A holy wiſe God ‘doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.’ Nay, he gives all by weight and meaſure, and will not put in one grain beyond what the caſe requires. What though ye cannot ſee it? ye have yet ground to believe it from the word, and may ſee it in the glaſs of God's infinite wiſdom, the contrivance of which your lot is. So that whatſoever he doth to you, is not only well done, but beſt done in your circumſtances.

4thly, Believing, that, through the grace of our Lord Jeſus, all you meet with ſhall work for your good, Rom. viii. 28. ‘We know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpoſe.’ God can carry on the good of a perſon, by that which he is apt to think is for his ruin; as was the caſe with Jacob, when he ſaid unto his ſons, Gen. xliii. 36. ‘Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joſeph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all theſe things are againſt me.’ And though the good of them may be long ere it appear, yet where it is believed, it will come at length. Now, this and all other promiſes are held forth to you in Chriſt to be believed and applied to yourſelves.

6. *laſtly*, To cauſe the ſinner harden himſelf in ſorrow. So we render that expreſſion of Job's, Job vi. 10. ‘I would harden myſelf in ſorrow:’ but it is not the ſenſe of that place. Affliction had this good effect on Jacob, who, when ‘all his ſons, and all his daughters roſe up to comfort him’ concerning the loſs of his ſon, ‘refuſed to be comforted; and ſaid, For I will go down into the grave unto my ſon mourning.’ It had alſo this bad effect on Aſaph, Pſal. lxxvii. 2. ‘In the day of my trouble I ſought the Lord, my ſore ran in the night, and ceaſed not: my ſoul refuſed to be comforted.’ Under affliction the caſe ſometimes appears ſo hopeleſs, that the afflicted ſtaves off comfort, when offered. They bid farewell to joy and comfort, and draw the curtains of ſorrow about themſelves: they have no comfortable proſpect, they look for none, and reſolve to hold there. This is dangerous. Fight againſt it in faith,

1ſt, Believing the promiſe of a comfortable outgate at length. This hardening one's ſelf in ſorrow, whatever it is founded on, is the fruit of unbelief, and caſts diſcredit on the promiſes of God, Lam. iii. 32. ‘But though he cauſe grief, yet will he have compaſſion according to the multitude of his mercies.’ It is faith's work to believe the accompliſhment of them, tho' one ſees not how.

2dly, Believing the promiſe of a comfortable mixture in the affliction while it laſtes. Pſal. xxxvii. 24. ‘Tho' he fall, he ſhall not be utterly caſt down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.’ And they had the experience of the outmaking thereof, 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9. ‘We are troubled on every ſide, but not diſtreſſed; we are perplexed, but not in deſpair; perſecuted, but not forſaken; caſt down, but not deſtroyed.’ God has given a promiſe of ſtrengthening believers to bear their trials, Iſ. xl. 29, 30, 31. ‘He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might, he increaſeth ſtrength. Even the youths ſhall faint and be weary, and the young men ſhall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord, ſhall renew their ſtrength: they ſhall mount up with wings as eagles, they ſhall run and not be weary, they ſhall walk, and not be faint.’ The Pſalmiſt experienced the accompliſhment of this promiſe, Pſal. cxxxviii. 3. ‘In the day when I cried, thou anſweredſt me, and ſtrengthenedſt me with ſtrength in my ſoul.’ God has given a promiſe of cordials now and then to ſupport them, Hoſ. ii. 14. ‘Therefore, behold I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderneſs, and ſpeak comfortably unto her.’ Micah vii. 8. ‘Rejoice not againſt me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I ſhall ariſe.’

3dly, Believing that your patient ſuffering of affliction is as acceptable to God through Chriſt, as your doing for God: 2 Tim. ii. 12. ‘It is a faithful ſaying, If we ſuffer, we ſhall alſo reign with him.’ God has ſeveral pieces of work that he puts into the hands of his people: ſome he calls to do great things, others to ſuffer great things. Whatever it is the Lord carves out to you, ply that; God will accept it at thy hand through the Mediator. Suffering is as really ſervice to God, as doing is.

Thus we have ſeen the evil tendency of afflictions in themſelves, and how we are to fight againſt it by faith. But there are three ſpecial caſes wherein that force of affliction is greater than ordinary, and requires a ſtrong faith to ſtand the ſhock.

1. When a ſtroke from the hand of the Lord comes on a man in the way of his duty, which he is doing in God's command. This is apt to make a man ſtagger, eſpecially when it is a duty others have an ill eye on: for by it God ſeems to give ſentence againſt the man and his work. When people are going on in an ill way, it is no wonder Heaven works againſt them; but when the Lord meets a man as an enemy in the way of duty, that is a great trial. It is apt to make one leave duty.

Here is great need to fight in faith.

1ſt, Believing, that that is no ſign that the way you are in is diſpleaſing to God. It has been the trial of the Lord's people, when they have been called upon ſignal pieces of ſervice to God. We are to obſerve providences, but not to make a Bible of them. Jonah ſeemed to be favoured by providence when he ſet his face to go to Tarſhiſh, yet he was wrong. Jacob had God's call to return to his own country, and a promiſe of the Lord's being with him. But what a train of troubles met he with in his way thither? ſuch as his meeting with Eſau, his thigh put out of joint in wreſtling with the angel, &c. And you may read the trials Moſes met with in his going down to Egypt at God's command to redeem the Iſraelites.

2dly, Believing, that God has holy deſigns in the matter, becoming his infinite wiſdom, which ye may afterwards come to ſee, if ye ſee them not in the time; tho' in the mean time he is pleaſed with your way, John xiii. 7. ‘ What I do thou knoweſt not now ; but thou ſhalt know hereafter.’ Sometimes he deſigns to correct for ſome miſmanagement about the duty, as in Moſes's caſe for not circumciſing his ſon; ſometimes to hide pride from mens eyes, as was the apoſtle's caſe, and as in the caſe of the children of Iſrael their being foiled by the children of Benjamin. And this he doth always for the trial of his people's faith, regard to duty, &c. So Satan may be permitted to act againſt them for their trial; and ſure he will be the more eager, the more important the duty is.

3dly, Believing, that there is no ſafety in leaving the road of duty, meet with what they will in it, Prov. x. 9. ‘ He that walketh uprightly, walketh ſurely : but he that perverteth his ways, ſhall be known.’ A rebuke in the way of duty is ſweeter than a warm ſun ſhine in the way of ſin; *Moſes eſteemed the reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures in Egypt*. There is communion with God to be had in ſuch providences, and they furniſh men with uſeful experiences for their after life.

2. When the affliction is extraordinary, ſo that it draws the eyes of beholders to notice it. When people's afflictions are no more than what is ordinary, they are more eaſily borne ; but when God ſeems to point out one to others, by ſome unordinary ſtroke, how hard is it to keep off concluding that God has a particular hatred againſt us ? There is need to fight in faith here,

1ſt, Believing, that it has been often the lot of God's children, to meet with ſuch kind of trials as would ſeem to have imported a particular hatred of them, Heb. x. 33. ‘ Ye were made a gazing-ſtock, both by reproaches and afflictions,’ 1 Cor. iv. 9. ‘ I think that God hath ſet forth us the apoſtles laſt, as it were appointed to death. For we are made a ſpectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.’ This was the lot of Chriſt himſelf, Pſal. xxii. 6. ‘ I am a worm, and no man, a reproach of men, and deſpiſed of the people.’ How was Job's heart pierced with that queſtion, Job v. 1. ‘ Call now, if there be any that will anſwer thee ; and to which of the ſaints wilt thou turn ?’ It is very rare, that any of God's children have ſomething more than ordinary about them to the advantage, but they get ſomething more than ordinary to try them. Of all the patriarchs there was not one that had more divine manifeſtations than Jacob, nor ſo many and great afflictions neither. Of all the ſons of Jacob, there was none that was raiſed ſo high as Joſeph, and none ſo afflicted. Heman was a man of more than ordinary reach, and ſo of afflictions, Pſal. lxxxviii. 15. ‘ I am afflicted and ready to die, from my youth up : while I ſuffer thy terrors, I am diſtracted.’ Moſes was the meekeſt man in the earth, and never a man had more ado with it ; Job was the mirror of patience, and none ſuffered more.

2dly, Believing the illimited power of ſovereignty, which requires abſolute reſignation : Matth. xx. 15. ‘ Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?’ It is a ſilencing query, Rom. ix. 20. ‘ Nay but, O man, who art thou that replieſt againſt God ?’ Sovereignty takes one piece of clay, and ſets it on a throne ; another, and ſets it on a dunghill ; reaches to ſome the ordinary meal of affliction, but makes another's meſs five times as much. And who will ſet bounds to ſovereignty ?

3dly, Believing, that theſe different aſpects of providence, are but for the time of trial ; and they will ſoon be at an end : Job 23.——26. ‘ One dieth in his full ſtrength, being wholly at eaſe and quiet. His breaſts are full of milk, and his bones are moiſtened with marrow. And another dieth in the bitterneſs of his ſoul, and never eateth with pleaſure. They ſhall lie down alike in the duſt, and the worms ſhall cover them.’ It is no matter whether one be king or fool on the ſtage ; for in a little they get behind the curtains, and each one appears as he really is. Ordinary and unordinary afflictions will ſoon have an end ; and they that bear their own part right, happy will they be.

3. When the affliction is of long continuance. Some afflictions are like a ſummer-ſhower, heavy in their time, but ſoon over, but the moſt trying are the continuing afflictions, that are like a ſtormy winter, that blows hard. Many times deliverance is looked for, but it comes not. Any promiſing ſigns that appear miſgive ; and the ſtorm grows ever the longer the more hopeleſs. Here is a ſore ſhock to abide, which requires to fight in faith,

1ſt, Believing, that this is a part of the diſcipline of God's houſe, whereby he exerciſes his own children. Jer. viii. 20. ‘ The harveſt is paſt, the ſummer is ended, and we are not ſaved.’ David complains of his being weary of his crying, of his throat's being dried ; of his eyes failing while he waited for his God. The church was ſo long continued in affliction, that ſhe forgot proſperity. Many of the Lord's people have been ſo long under the hatches, that they have hung up their harps on the willows, and yet have been delivered.

2dly, Believing, that the longeſt night will have a morning, and that though the affliction continue long, it will not always. Pſal. ciii. 9. ‘ The Lord will not always chide : neither will he keep his anger for ever.’ If the queſtion be, ‘ Watchman, what of the night ? watchman, what of the night ?’ the anſwer is, ‘ The morning cometh, and alſo the night : if ye will inquire, inquire ye ; return, come.’ The ſky that has long loured may clear ere night : the wound may be looked on as incurable, that yet will be fairly healed. And if it ſhould not be removed in time, yet the faith of a bleſſed eternity may keep up the heart, when ‘ God ſhall wipe away all tears from the eyes ; and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain,’ Rev. xxi. 4.

2dly, Believing, that God knows the fitteſt ſeaſon for removing affliction, and not we. John vii. 6. ‘ My time is not yet come ; but your time is always ready.’ He keeps times and ſeaſons in his own hand, and at the fit time he will remove it, but not before, if it is to be removed in mercy. Mens hearts muſt abide much hewing, and God may have much ado with an affliction that is not ſoon done. The affliction is too ſoon over, that is removed ere the deſign of it be anſwered. None blames the huſbandman, that he ſows not his ſeed, before the ground be fit to receive it.

Laſtly, Believing, that the more we are reſigned to the the Lord we lie the fairer for deliverance, Pſal. x. 17. ‘ Lord, thou haſt heard the deſire of the humble : thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cauſe thine ear to hear.’ Man's extremity is God's opportunity. Witneſs Abraham on the mount, the diſciples at ſea, the Iſraelites at the Red ſea. Happy they who leaving the deliverance on the Lord, make it their care to anſwer the calls of providence by the affliction while it is continued.

FIFTHLY, There is a fight of faith with this *preſent evil world*, 1 John v. 4. ‘ Whatſoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.’ This preſent evil world is a party oppoſite to God in Chriſt, and on the devil's ſide, inſomuch that he that is a friend to it, is an enemy to God. And therefore we muſt either fight againſt it, or be ruined by it. And there are two particulars in the world, that we muſt fight the fight of faith againſt : 1. The things. 2. The men of the world.

1ſt, The things of the world are dangerous enemies, becauſe of the corruption of our hearts. 1 John ii. 15. ‘ Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.’ O the fearful havock of ſouls that is made thereby! By them many ſaints have been caſt down, and many ſinners have been ſlain thereby. The things of the world ſet out three bands againſt us, whom we muſt either overcome by faith, or be ruined by.

1. The white band of the world's ſmiles.
2. The black band of the world's frowns.
3. The mixed band of the world's cares.

Firſt, The things of the world ſet out the white band of the world's ſmiles. And they are ſtained with the blood of many ſouls ; Prov. i. 32. ‘ For the turning away of the ſimple ſhall ſlay them, and the proſperity of ‘fools ſhall deſtroy them.’ The ſmiling world does with the ſons of men, as the panther is ſaid to do with other beaſts. He draws them after him with the ſweet ſmell of his breath, and then devours them. The white band fight againſt ſouls with two kinds of weapons.

1. Profits of the world. Thus it ſet upon Judas with thirty pieces of ſilver, and ſo ſlew him. The Pſalmiſt obſerves the ſnare in theſe, and therefore gives the watch-word, Pſal. lvii. 10. ‘Truſt not in oppreſſion, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increaſe, ſet not your hearts on them.’ Many a man, who has ſtood his ground againſt the black band of the world's frowns, has been overcome with the white, like the man in the fable with the ſun and the wind.

2. Pleaſures of the world, viz. the luſt of the fleſh, and the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life. Theſe are the ſilken cords, with which ſouls are drawn to deſtruction; wherewith men are bound, as with iron fetters; the breaking of which will coſt a flood of tears. Hence prays the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. li. 8. ‘Make me to hear joy and gladneſs; that the bones, which thou haſt broken, may rejoice.’ With many they end in a judicial upgiving to vile affections. Theſe weapons are wielded two ways.

(1.) In expectation. It is the natural deſire of all men, ‘Who will ſhew us any good?’ Pſal. iv. 6. The world ſteps in and makes ſuch an offer as Satan did to Chriſt, Matth. iv. 8, 9. And when once the hope of expectation of its profits and pleaſures is greedily embraced by an inordinate affection, the ſoul is ſet on fire therewith, and the poor creature runs to its ruin on its own feet. And ſays the apoſtle, 1 Tim. vi. 9. ‘They that will be rich, fall into a ſnare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful luſts, which drown men in deſtruction and perdition.’

(2.) In fruition or enjoyment, Luke xviii. 24. ‘And when Jeſus ſaw that he was very ſorrowful, he ſaid, How hardly ſhall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!’ Such is the corruption of the heart in man, that it is ten to one if the world draw not the heart away from God. Men are apt to love the world inordinately, even when it gives them gall to drink: how hard muſt it be not to be overcome with it, when it courts men, and lays itſelf in their boſom, Deut. xxxii. 15. ‘But Jeſhurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatneſs, then he forſook God which made him, and lightly eſteemed the rock of his ſalvation.’

Ye muſt fight againſt the ſmiling world by faith, if ever ye would have the ſmiles of the Lord's countenance.

1ſt, Believing the danger that is in the world's ſmiles, to your ſouls. The danger is in the ſoul's being drawn to ſin againſt God, and ſo in end to be pierced with ſorrows. Agur ſaw this and believed it; and therefore prays thus, Prov. xxx. 8, 9. ‘Give me neither poverty, nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me; leſt I be full, and deny thee, and ſay, Who is the Lord?’—The ſmiling world is apt to betray men into a conceit of themſelves, forgetting God, giving up themſelves to corrupt luſts, and affections, &c. and ſo to work the ruin of the ſoul. Believe this on the teſtimony of God, and ſo ſhall ye watch againſt it.

2*dly*, Believing the vanity and inſufficiency that is in the world, and all the ſmiles thereof, Pſal. cxix. 96. ‘I have ſeen an end of all perfection, but thy commandment is exceeding broad.’ Eccleſ. i. 2. ‘Vanity of vanities, ſaith the preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity.’ What do they avail to one's eternal happineſs? They may quickly leave us, and will certainly leave us at length; we muſt go as we came, naked. They are inſufficient, they cannot give eaſe to the heart of a man; neither can they ſatisfy the ſoul; witneſs the diſappointment the rich man met with, Luke xii. 16.

3*dly*, Believing the tranſcendent profit and pleaſure, that is to be had in the favour of God, communion and fellowſhip with him through Jeſus Chriſt. Believe that ye may have it, yea, that ye ſhall have it, ſeeking it thro' Chriſt; and ye ſhall overcome the ſmiling world. Pſal. iv. 7. ‘Thou haſt put gladneſs in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and wine increaſed.’ Being thus lifted up in your affections to heaven, the earth, and all that is in it, will appear very little in your eyes. It is blindneſs to the things of a better world, that makes the preſent evil world ſo bulky with men.

4*thly*, Believing the ſufficiency of his grace to carry you above them, 2 Cor. xii. 9. ‘My grace is ſufficient for thee: for my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs.’ There is ſtrength in the Mediator for mens overcoming the world, believe the promiſe with application to yourſelves, and ye ſhall be more than conquerors. The promiſe brings ſalvation with it; and the faith of it looſed Zaccheus's heart from the world, Luke xix. 8.

Secondly, The things of the world ſet out the black band of the world's frowns. The world oft times brings up a train of croſſes againſt men, to fright them away from God. Men muſt lay their account with their ilk-days croſs; and ſometimes all goes wrong together with them; as in Job's caſe. Croſſes in worldly things do often much miſchief to the ſoul; they irritate corruptions, diſcompoſe them for duty to God, and lead them aſide into manifold temptations, Prov. xxx. 9.

Some have a fighting life with the world all their days, but, alas! it is not the fight of faith, but a faithleſs fight, that ruins the ſoul. Ye will know it by two things.

1. All their fight is to get ſomething of the world, not to be kept from the evil of it. The world does not proſper with them, as with others; and all their concern is to make a ſhift for throughbearing, which ſwallows up all other concerns with them. So they live as if the curſe of the ſerpent were lying on them, to lick the duſt all their days. The world flies from them; and yet they court it above all things. God croſſes them in it, to bring their hearts off it, yet it is their main purſuit.

2. Their fight with the world takes from them all ſavour of the word of God, and religion. An inſtance of this ye have, Exod. vi. 9. where, when Moſes had ſpoken to the children of Iſrael all the promiſes commanded him of God, mentioned in the preceding verſes, it is ſaid, ‘But they hearkened not unto Moſes, for anguiſh of ſpirit, and for cruel bondage.’ The fight of faith makes the goſpel ſavoury to men; but this carnal fight makes it taſteleſs; it rankles their ſpirits with reſpect to religion, that many think religion is for the wealthier ſort; but as for them, they have another thing ado. And thus the frowning world ruins them for time and eternity.

I would adviſe you to another ſort of fighting with the frowning world. Fight in faith againſt it.

1*ſt*, Believing, that the ordering of your lot is in the hand of a holy wiſe God, who knows beſt what is fit for you, whether proſperous or croſs. The faith of this would make you embrace the world's frowns, as well as proſperity, as Job did, who ſaid, ‘Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked ſhall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, bleſſed be the name of the Lord.’

2*dly*, Believing that the world's frowns, and ſmiles too, are but empty paſſing ſhews, which will be buried in forgetfulneſs. As the world's ſmiles appear more pleaſant than they are, ſo its frowns appear more terrible than they are really: Eccl. i. 2. *Vanity of vanities, ſaith the preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity.* The one and the other are like the foam on the water, appearing big, but ſoon paſs away. But look to them with an eye of faith, and ye will ſee they are but empty noiſe, which will quickly be laid. The longeſt term of their continuance is but a few years at moſt. When one comes to the grave, the rich and poor are alike there; the black and white band are both diſbanded there.

3*dly*, Believing, that ye have greater things to be taken up about, than either the world's ſmiles or frowns, Pſal. iv. 6, 7. ‘Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.’ The one cannot make you happy, nor the other miſerable. But the favour of God and his wrath are matters of weight; let it be your care to obtain the one, and eſcape the other. Theſe things are eternal, the other temporal; Slight not the ſubſtance, with concern for the ſhadow: Matth. xvi. 26. ‘For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and loſe his ſoul?

4thly, Believing, that you are unworthy of the leaſt ſmile of common providence, Gen. xxxii. 10. ‘I am ‘not worthy of the leaſt of all the mercies, and of all the ‘truth, which thou haſt ſhewed unto thy ſervant; for ‘with my ſtaff I paſſed over this Jordan, and now I am ‘become two bands.’ Lam. iii. 22. ‘It is of the Lord's ‘mercies we are not conſumed, becauſe his compaſſions ‘fail not.’ Why do croſſes in the world go ſo deep with men, but becauſe of the want of humiliation? whence is that want, but from unbelief? The humble ſoul fighting with the world will be ſurely be victorious, becauſe however it frowns on him, he takes it kindly out of the hand of the Lord, as not worthy of better.

5thly, Believing, that your ſouls are in hazard by the frowning world, as well as the ſouls of others by the fawning world, Prov. xxx. 8, 9. ‘Give me neither po‘verty, nor riches, feed me with food convenient for ‘me;——leſt I be poor, and ſteal, and take the name of ‘my God in vain.’ The devil holds ſome faſt in worldly adverſity, as well as he does others in proſperity. Some think, that becauſe they are poor in the world, they will ſurely be well in another world. O deceive not yourſelves. As God has no regard to mens riches, he has as little regard to their poverty: but be they poor or rich, if they be not in Chriſt, they will be ruined for ever.

6thly, Believing the great promiſe of the goſpel with application to yourſelves, Heb viii. 10. ‘This is the ‘covenant that I will make with the houſe of Iſrael after ‘thoſe days, ſaith the Lord;—I will be to them a God, ‘and they ſhall be unto me a people.’ Hoſ. ii. 19. ‘And ‘I will betrothe thee unto me forever; yea, I will betrothe ‘thee unto me in righteouſneſs, and in judgment, and ‘in loving-kindneſs, and in mercies.’ Your croſſes in the world may be taken by you for an alarm, ſaying, Depart, here is not your reſt. God is ſetting fire to the neſts you build among the things of the world; and holding out to you the great promiſe of the goſpel. O embrace it, and truſt him in it; and thus ſhall ye defeat the frowning world. Believing God to be your God in Chriſt, ye will be eaſy whether the world ſmile or frown.

Laſtly, Believing, that, through the grace of Chriſt, the frowns of the world ſhall be turned to your good: Rom. viii. 28. ‘We know, that all things work together for ‘good, to them that love God, to them that are called ‘according to his purpoſe.’ How often has honey been gotten out of the carcaſe of the lion, and much good within the thorn hedge of afflictions? The croſs has brought forth good fruit in them that have been exerciſed thereby: and God is kind to you, in that he makes the world ſo ſtrange to you, that ye may the more ſeek after acquaintance with him.

Thirdly, The things of the world ſet out the mixed band of the world's cares. There is none will be free of attacks from theſe: even a crown is lined with cares. Yea, we muſt needs care; our daily bread will not drop down into our mouths, nor will our neceſſary buſineſs be managed without thought. But men are in danger by lawful things, and not by unlawful only. And the cares of the world are often ruining unto the ſoul, they are apt to put the man on a rack, to ſtretch out one's mind as on tenter-pins, degenerating into a faithleſs anxiety, to ſwallow up all other concerns, and to render the Lord's word quite unprofitable. Fight in faith againſt them,

1ſt, Believing, that the ſucceſs of your affairs depends on the bleſſing of God on your endeavours, not on your anxious care about them: Pſal. cxxvii. 1. *Except the Lord build the houſe, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.* The vanity of our anxiety may be very plainly read in many experiments: Matth. vi. 27. ‘Which of ‘you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his ſta‘ture?’ In providence's management of the world how often is it ſeen ‘that the race is not to the ſwift, nor the ‘battle to the ſtrong, neither bread to the wiſe, nor rich‘es to men of underſtanding, but time and chance hap‘peneth to them all,’ Eccl. ix. 11.; How often does ſome unforeſeen event render a hopeful project vain? and, on the other hand, ſet right again what ſeemed to be quite marred?

2dly, Believing, that the beſt way to ſecure what is neceſſary for you in this world, is to be mainly taken up about the things of another life, Matth. vi. 33. ‘Seek ye ‘firſt the kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs, and all ‘theſe things ſhall be added unto you.’ They that are careful how to pleaſe God, God will ſee to them that they be provided. They whoſe main care is for the welfare of their ſouls, may expect, that, the temporal welfare of their bodies ſhall be ſeen to by heaven. This is the ſhorteſt and ſureſt way to proſper.

3dly, Truſting the Lord with all your concerns which require your care, depending on him as the ſovereign manager, and as ſure and ſafe for you, Pſal. xxxvii. 3. ‘Truſt in the Lord, and do good; ſo ſhalt thou live in ‘the land, and verily thou ſhalt be fed.’ And ye ſhould truſt him as to your own conduct, both for direction and proſpering: Prov. iii. 5, 6. *Truſt in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own underſtanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he ſhall direct thy paths.* This implies three things.

(1.) Laying your burden of care over on the Lord himſelf, believing that he will care for you; many an unbelieving lift we take of our own burden, and then complain we are not able to go under it: but Chriſt is appointed the great burden-bearer for ſinners, and they are called to caſt their burdens on him, Pſal. lv. 22. If they will needs take their burdens, and keep them on their ſhoulders, who can help it? But faith's work is to truſt him with all.

(2.) Believing, that he will do the beſt: Pſal. lxxxv. 12. ‘The Lord ſhall give that which is good.’ xxxiv. 10. ‘They that ſeek the Lord, ſhall not want any good.’ He knows what is beſt for us, we know it not: and we owe to him a faith ſo far implicit, as to believe whatever God doth is beſt done; and whatever way he leads us, that it is beſt for us to follow. It is the property of faith, thus to reſign all to the Lord, truſting, that whatſoever is truly beſt for us, he will bring it about.

(3.) Staying yourſelf upon the word of the promiſe, Gen. xxxii. 12. ‘I will ſurely do thee good.’ Thus faith is to be an anchor of the ſoul in doubtful events. While anxious care leaves a perſon nothing to fix on; faith fixeth on the promiſe of God, and renders the ſoul eaſy, come what will.

2dly, The men of the world are dangerous enemies alſo. There is an old enmity, which will not ceaſe to work in them. They are agents for the devil, factors for hell. No man will get to heaven without a ſtruggle with them; for they are oppoſite parties to all that really mind to be there, Pſal. xvii. 12, 14. ‘Deliver my ſoul ‘from the wicked, which is thy ſword: from men which ‘are thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world, which ‘have their portion in this life, and whoſe belly thou ‘filleſt with thy hide treaſure.’ And our Lord forewarns his diſciples of the world's hatred, John xv. 19. ‘If ye ‘were of the world, the world would love his own: but ‘becauſe ye are not of the world, but I have choſen you ‘out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.’ Now, the men of the world manage the battle three ways, viz. (1.) with the tongue, (2.) with their feet, (3.) with their hands; and ye muſt ſtill reſiſt them in faith.

1. The men of the world fight againſt God's children with the tongue. They are the ſeed of the ſerpent; and therefore it is no wonder to ſee them ſpit their venom againſt ſuch as go not their way. Hence we read of their being *continually gathered together for war*; of their having *ſharpened their tongues like a ſerpent*; of *adders poiſon* being *under their lips*, Pſal. cxl. 2, 3. Iſhmael's mocking Iſaac, is called perſecution. The trial of the Hebrews was the reproaches of ungodly men. See what was formed againſt Jeremiah, Jer. xviii. 18. ‘Come, ſaid ‘they, and let us deviſe devices againſt Jeremiah: for ‘the law ſhall not periſh from the prieſt, nor counſel ‘from the wiſe, nor the word from the prophet: come, ‘and let us ſmite him with the tongue, and let us not ‘give heed to any of his words. See what a ſecret conſultation was formed againſt David, Pſal. lxiv. 2, 3. ‘Hide

me from the ſecret counſel of the wicked ; from the inſurrection of the workers of iniquity : who whet their tongues like a ſword, and bend their bows to ſhoot their arrows, even bitter words.’ God’s people are to fight in faith in this caſe,

1ſt, Believing that our God is able to blunt the edge of their ſwords, and the points of their arrows, and will do it ſo far as he ſees meet, Job v. 21. ‘Thou ſhalt be hid from the ſcourge of the tongue.’ It is in their power to fling dirt upon God’s children ; but it is not in their power to cauſe it ſtick, unleſs the Lord has ſaid it for the trial of his people. God has the hearts of all men in his hands, and his people may confidently truſt him with the preſerving of their reputation while they keep his way.

2dly, Believing that all the dirt a miſchievous world flings on the Lord’s people, the day will come, that God will wipe it off them, and throw it back on them that caſt it : Iſ. li. 1. ‘For the moth ſhall eat them up like a garment, and the worm ſhall eat them like wool: but my righteouſneſs ſhall be for ever, and my ſalvation from generation to generation.’ A lying tongue is but for a moment, and will rebound upon them that uſe ſuch a helliſh weapon. God has ſecured by promiſe the taking away of reproaches from off God’s people, Pſal. xxxvii. 6. ‘And he ſhall bring forth thy righteouſneſs as the light, and thy judgment as the noon day.’ And ſo, in the faith of the promiſe, they may be very eaſy ; and conſidering the uſe God may have for them for their good, may find ſoul-refreſhment in them, Matth. v. 11. ‘Bleſſed are ye when men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all manner of evil againſt you falſely for my ſake.’ And the apoſtle ſays, 2 Cor. xii. 20. ‘I take pleaſure in reproaches, in perſecutions, in diſtreſſes for Chriſt’s ſake.’

2. The men of the world fight againſt God’s children with their feet ; that is, by the example of their unholy lives. And much miſchief they do by that means ; Hence ſays our Lord, Matth. xviii. 7. ‘Wo unto the world becauſe of offences ; for it muſt needs be that offences come : but wo to the man by whom the offence cometh.’ It is hard to bear up againſt the courſe of the world, conſidering the corruption of nature that is in the beſt. By the force of ill examples, many good men have been worſted, and many that had not the root of the matter in them have been ruined, Matth. xxiv. 12. ‘And becauſe iniquity ſhall abound, the love of many ſhall wax cold.’ Fight againſt it in faith,

1ſt, Believing, that the way of the world is the way to eternal ruin, Eph. ii. 2. ‘Wherein in time paſt ye walked according to the courſe of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the ſpirit that now worketh in the children of diſobedience.’ Are we not told, that the multitude is going in the way to deſtruction ? and that there be very few which are on the way to heaven ? So that whoever mind for heaven, muſt needs be world’s wonders, like Joſhua and his fellows.

2dly, Believing, that, through the grace of the Lord Jeſus, ye ſhall be enabled to ſtand the ſhock of the corrupt example of the world. The eye of faith will diſcern the greater ſtrength to be on the ſide of the wreſtler againſt ill example. 1 Kings vi. 16. ‘Fear not : for they that be with us, are more than they that be with them.’ And ſays the apoſtle, Rom. viii. 26. ‘If God be for us, who can be againſt us ?’ And for us he will be, if we truſt him for our upbearing againſt it. He *ſtrengthens the ſpoiled againſt the ſtrong :* and be the force of the current never ſo great, they *can do all things through Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth* them, Philip. iv. 13.

3. The men of the world fight againſt the children of God with their hands. There is never a wicked man in the world, but, by his natural make, is a perſecutor. And none is fit to travel the road to heaven, but they that are reſolute to hold on, notwithſtanding all the miſchief the world may do them, Luke xiv. 26. ‘If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and ſiſters, yea, and his own life alſo, he cannot be my diſciple.’ Sometimes indeed God binds their hands, that they can do nothing againſt his people ; but the perſecuting nature never leaves them, and according as providence looſeth the cord, ſo will they vent it. But reſiſt in faith,

1ſt, Believing, that it is little they can do, do their worſt. Luke xii. 4, 5. ‘Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that, have no more that they can do. But, fear him, who, after he hath killed, hath power to caſt into hell : yea, I ſay unto you, Fear him.’ The utmoſt reach of the moſt malicious and powerful perſecutors, is but to the body. And what is the body in compariſon of the ſoul ? The faith of this carried up the martyrs, and armed them with a holy contempt of the impotent rage of their perſecutors.

2dly, Believing that they are ever under the check and controul of a gracious God, engaged on the ſide of thoſe that keep his way, Pſal, lxxvi. 10. ‘Surely the wrath of man ſhall praiſe thee, the remainder of wrath ſhalt thou reſtrain.’ How ſpitefully did Laban purſue Jacob, and Saul David ? but God put a check on them. Faith will diſcover in this caſe an almighty power for protection, and man to be but a fading worm.

3dly, Believing the eternal reſt that remains for the people of God, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. ‘Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ; while we look not at the things which are ſeen, which are temporal ; but at the things which are not ſeen, which are eternal.’ It is but a ſhort time we are to remain among the inhabitants of this world : the firm faith of that would make us very eaſy whether we have their ſmiles or frowns. Our great concern is to fight our way to the better world, and reſolutely to cleave to the Lord, over the belly both of the things and men of this world.

SIXTHLY, There is a fight of faith with *ſin :* Heb. xii. 4. ‘Ye have not yet reſiſted unto blood, ſtriving againſt ſin.’ Of all things, there is nothing ſo oppoſite to God as ſin is. The devil brought it into the world at firſt : and fearful havock has it made, deſtroying the moſt part of Adam’s children, wounding and doing miſchief to all. And none can reach heaven, but thoſe who fight it, and overcome it : and there is no fighting againſt it, but in faith. And that ye may know what you have to fight againſt here,

1. There is the captain of this helliſh band ; that is, the ſin of our nature.

2. There is a ſwarm of helliſh luſts, as ſoldiers under the command of the ſin of our nature.

Firſt, There is the captain of this helliſh band ; that is, the ſin of our nature, called *the old man*. Sin is woven into our very natures ; our nature has got a wrong ſet by Adam’s fall. It is averſe to good, and prone to the wrong way. This corrupt diſpoſition is moſt active, and by its activity fights againſt the ſoul. And it exerts itſelf againſt the ſoul three ways.

1. With its guilt, whereby it binds over the ſoul out of Chriſt to his revenging wrath, and even the believing ſoul to fatherly anger and diſpleaſure, the conſcience feeling this band of ſin on it, is frightened and fired. The man ſees himſelf, by reaſon of the corruption of his nature, an object of God’s indignation, liable to the fearful ſtrokes of his hand : even as a ſerpent is liable to the ſtroke of a man’s hand wherever he meets with it. Now, if ever ye would break theſe bonds of guilt, fight againſt them in faith.

1ſt, Believing, that Jeſus Chriſt has made a complete ſatisfaction to the juſtice of God, for the ſin of our nature, Rom. vi. 6. ‘Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of ſin might be deſtroyed.’ In reſpect of the ſin of our nature we needed a Saviour ; and it was cleared by him, as well as our actual tranſgreſſions. So that there is a ſufficient remedy provided againſt the guilt of the ſin of our nature, in Jeſus Chriſt ; ſo that no man needs to deſpond in that caſe.

2dly, Believing the promiſe of remiſſion of ſin thro’ the blood of Chriſt : Eph. i. 7. ‘In him we have redemption through his blood ; the forgiveneſs of ſins, according to the riches of his grace.’ While the conſcience is fired with guilt, faith muſt diſcern the promiſe of remiſſion through Chriſt, held forth in the goſpel, and faith muſt embrace that promiſe, relying on it as the Lord's own promiſe: and ſo ſhall the guilt be removed, and the conſcience purged: your warrant is, Acts xiii. 38. 'Be it known unto you, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveneſs of ſins.'

3dly, Believing and pleading the perfect holineſs of Chriſt's birth and nature, as a public perſon. Thus faith may triumph over the ſin of one's nature, as to the guilt of it. While the law ſays, Thou haſt an unholy nature, and therefore muſt die the death: Yea, may the ſoul ſay, True, my nature is unholy in me; but Chriſt has ſatisfied for that guilt; and I have a holy nature in Chriſt, in him as a public perſon I was born holy, and retain the holineſs of nature: and therefore I muſt not die, but live.

Object. But, alas! I dare not apply Chriſt's perfect holineſs to me, for I fear I have not a right to it. *Anſw.* There is a twofold right. (1.) To a thing. (2.) In it. What right has a beggar to a penny which a man holds out to him, ſaying, Ha' there is a penny? He certainly has a right to that penny; he may lawfully take it out of that man's hand, and put it in his pocket. Such a right every one of you has to Chriſt's righteouſneſs. It is God's gift held out to you to be received by faith. If the beggar refuſe it, though he had a right to it, he is juſtly deprived of it; and the man may put it in his own pocket again: but if he do take it, then he has a right in it; it is his own in poſſeſſion, and cannot be taken from him again. Go then, and take the gift of righteouſneſs out of Chriſt's hand, verily believing that ye have a right to it.

2. With its motions and activity. It is an active principle, ſtill tending to corrupt the ſoul more, fighting for the throne in the heart, and to cauſe the ſoul obey it, in fulfilling its luſts. And it muſt be fought againſt: it is a reſtleſs enemy, preſent at all times, eſpecially active at ſome times, and particularly when one would do good; it is like a dunghill, ſtill ſending forth its filthy ſtreams. And as it ſtrives to ſtrengthen itſelf, ſo the Chriſtian muſt fight againſt it, to get it mortified, and ye muſt for this cauſe fight in faith againſt it.

1ſt, Believing, that it is your moſt dangerous enemy; for ſo indeed it is. Never did Paul cry out to be delivered from the moſt bloody men that were ſet againſt him, as from indwelling ſin, Rom. vii. 24. 'O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death!' It is a domeſtic enemy; an enemy more dangerous than all we have without, whether devils or the preſent evil world. Were it not for it, they would have a cold coal to blow at. But this furniſhes them with notable advantages againſt us.

2dly, Believing Chriſt to be the great ordinance of God for ſanctification, and looking for your ſanctification from him, on the credit of the promiſe, Iſa. xlv. 22. 'Look unto me and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none elſe.' Men have by nature's light been convinced of the neceſſity of ſanctification; ſome have thought one means proper to attain it, and others another. Pagans have thought the ſtudy of moral virtue, proper means for it, the Jews the obſervation of Moſes's law, moral, ceremonial, and judicial. The Papiſts have thought a multitude of uninſtituted ceremonies, faſtings, whippings, &c. all proper to ſanctify the unholy. Legaliſts look on their own faithleſs endeavours, their watchings, &c. as proper means to obtain it. But all in vain.

But God has appointed his own Son to be the great ordinance for ſanctification of the unholy, that the praiſe of our ſanctification may be his own. And he has lodged the fulneſs of the Spirit of holineſs in him, to be partaked of in the way of believing: look how the ſtung Iſraelites were cured, by looking to the brazen ſerpent, believing that by that means they ſhould be healed; ſo is an unholy ſinner made holy, looking unto Jeſus, for ſanctification. Hence the church, believing the promiſe of ſanctification, ſays, Mic. vii. 19. 'He will turn again, he will have compaſſion upon us: he will ſubdue our iniquities: and thou wilt caſt all their ſins into the depths of the ſea.'

3dly, Struggling againſt it in the faith of its having got its mortal wound, in the death and reſurrection of Chriſt. No wonder they be ſtill under the power of indwelling ſin, who ſtruggle againſt it, without an eye to the death of Chriſt. But the ſoul eyeing the death of Chriſt as the death of ſin, will be thereby animated to act againſt it. The ſins of all that are Chriſt's were imputed to him, and he having expiated the guilt of them, roſe again free of that guilt: ſo, in virtue of his death and reſurrection, it loſes its power over thoſe that are his. And by the faith of it we become partakers of it.

4thly, Believing that we ſhall get the victory over it through Jeſus Chriſt, Rom. vii. 24, 25. 'O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death! I thank God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.' They will fight well who are ſure of the victory; and it is faith's work to believe the victory over ſin, Rom. xvi. 20. 'The God of peace ſhall bruiſe Satan under your feet ſhortly.' This was included in the firſt promiſe, Gen. iii. 15. 'The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the head of the ſerpent;' which was propoſed to our firſt parents to be by them believed.

3. With its ſticking ſtill cloſe to the ſoul. It cleaves to us, like a ſtain that cannot be got fully waſhed off. It is like the fretting leproſy in the walls of the houſe, not to be quite removed till the houſe be pulled down. Notwithſtanding all the ſtruggles againſt it, it cannot be got to the door till death. Fight in faith againſt it,

1ſt, Making no truce with it, but ever ſeeking its ruin, in the faith of Chriſt's excellency. The eye of faith fixing on the glory of Chriſt has a transforming virtue. 2 Cor. iii. 18. 'We all with open face, beholding as in a glaſs, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' And thus the heart is ſeparated from ſin, while yet it cleaves to the ſoul. Like the houſe of David and the houſe of Saul: between whom the war continued, till the houſe of Saul was quite ſunk.

2dly, Believing that the victory will be at length full and complete. However it appear to be fixed with bands of iron and braſs, yet the breaking thereof, ſhall come ſuddenly, at an inſtant. As the walls of Jericho fell down on the ſeventh day, that were not moved while the Iſraelites compaſſed them the ſix days: ſo at death theſe walls will fall down, and be razed to the foundation.

Secondly, There is a ſwarm of helliſh luſts as ſoldiers under the command of the ſin of our nature. Theſe are the members of the old man, that war againſt the ſoul. They ſeek to drive the ſoul from God, they puſh on men to eat forbidden fruit, and at length drown the ſoul in deſtruction and perdition, where they get the final victory. Againſt theſe alſo ye muſt fight in faith, reſiſt them, deny them, weaken, mortify, and crucify them.

It is a difficult fight; but faith will help you out in it, as difficult as it is.

1. Their name may be legion, becauſe they are many. All ſin is in the corrupt nature of man; and there is never a temptation in the world, but there is in our nature ſome luſt or other akin to it. Look through the world, and ſee all the abominations which any where appear; ſome are atheiſts, adulterers, &c. But the corrupt affections are in every body's heart naturally, Prov. xxvii. 19. But reſiſt ye, believing, that, through the grace of the Lord Jeſus, the victory is to be got over them all. There is neither ſtrength nor multitude to be feared, where one by faith can oppoſe both, almighty power being engaged on the ſide of the wreſtlers againſt ſin, 2 Tim. ii. 1. 'Thou therefore, my ſon, be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus.' The blood of Chriſt is of infinite value, and faith muſt rely on it.

2. Their allies are the powers of hell. All the ſnares and temptations that are in the world, are allied to ſome luſt of the heart, which anſwers to them as tinder to fire. But ye ſhould reſiſt, believing that greater is he that is in you, than is in that combat. Oppoſe to theſe by faith the divine attributes, his power, wiſdom, &c. the name of the Lord, which is a ſtrong tower, &c.

3. Their lodging is the corrupt heart: thence they iſ-

ſtir out againſt us. The heart of man is like a common inn, often ſo thronged with ſtrangers, that there is no room for the maſter. But ye muſt reſiſt them, believing that your helper is as near you as your enemies. O it is a trying conſideration to a gracious ſoul to think, that ſin is mixed with one's very conſtitution. But let faith diſcern the union betwixt Chriſt and the ſoul; let the Chriſtian believe that Chriſt dwells in him by an indiſſolvable union; ſo he may get clear of ſin at length.

4. Their qualities are very bad. They are the brats of Babel, the offspring of hell. And,

1*ſt*, They are greedy and inſatiable luſts. They are like the grave, that never ſays, *It is enough.* Where they are indulged, they fill the man's hands continually, ſeeking meat for them, to the provoking of God. And the more they are fed, the more they crave; ſo they 'are 'like the troubled ſea, when it cannot reſt, whoſe wa'ters caſt up mire and dirt.'

But ye muſt reſiſt them, if ye mind for heaven. Make no proviſion for them, but ſtarve them, however painful that may be, Rom. xiii. 14. 'Make no proviſion for the 'fleſh, to fulfil the luſts thereof.' This is the way to rid yourſelves of their trouble: for mens luſts are like fire, that will die out if there be no fuel laid to it. And if ye would do this, ye muſt do it.

(1.) Believing that there is fulneſs enough in Chriſt, to ſatisfy the ſoul, to give the heart reſt, that it ſhall need none of thoſe things which nouriſh luſts. The one pearl diſcovered, ſtays the purſuit after the many. Hence faith contracts the deſires of the ſoul into one, which is the better part. O what is the cauſe men are ſo taken up to ſatisfy their luſts with their proper food, but the not believing the fulneſs of Chriſt?

(2.) Embracing that fulneſs of Chriſt for and inſtead of thoſe things your heart luſts after. This is the import of ſelling all and buying the field; the ſoul taking Chriſt for theſe things, as in buying one takes the commodity bought inſtead of all he pays. The ſureſt way to mortify luſts is by faith, whereby the ſoul makes a happy exchange; inſtead of ſuch luſts, embracing Chriſt, from him to draw that ſatisfaction he ſought in the luſt. Thus men deal with their hearts, as men with children, giving them one thing to get another from them.

(3.) Believing, that you ſhall find that ſatisfaction in Chriſt, which ye ſought in your luſts, Matth. xi. 28. 'Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, 'and I will give you reſt.' Iſ. lv. 1. 'Ho, every one 'that thirſteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath 'no money, come buy wine and milk without money 'and without price.' And if you believe it not, ye believe not the goſpel, and the leſs ye believe it, the ſurer gripe will your heart hold of its luſts. But the more firmly you believe it, the more will you let go your luſts.

2*dly*, They are hurtful luſts. And they extend their hurt to the tendereſt part of a man, and not only to the wounding, but ruining of it, if the effect thereof be not ſtopped. They extend their hurt not only to the party in whoſe breaſt they are lodged, but to others, Eccleſ. ix. 18. 'One ſinner deſtroyeth much good.' Sometimes one's luſt involves many in guilt; like a fire breaking out in a houſe, burning down the houſes neareſt it. Thus Achan's luſt involved his whole family in guilt, and Adam's luſt ruined the whole world.

Ye muſt beware of them, and of the hurt by them. Do not think ye may entertain them, and not be hurt by them. Reſiſt the beginnings of your luſts, nip them in the bud. The longer they go on, they will be the harder to maſter. If they have got upon you, by all means endeavour to hinder their ſpreading; and ſpeedily quench them, if they are ſpread. Do this in faith,

(1.) Putting yourſelves under the divine protection. by truſting in the ſhadow of the wings of a God in Chriſt. Hence ſaid Boaz to Ruth, chap. ii. 12. 'The Lord re'compenſe thy work, and a full reward be given thee 'of the Lord God of Iſrael, under whoſe wings thou art 'come to truſt.' Faith ſees the hazard the ſoul is in from hurtful luſts, and therefore diſpoſeth the ſoul to put itſelf in the Lord's hand for keeping, as the chickens get in under the wings of the hen.

(2.) Applying the Redeemer's blood for purging away the guilt of luſts. This is the only way to remove the hurt of them in that caſe. The guilt of them caſts the conſcience in a fever; but faith applying the blood of Chriſt, obtains pardon of the guilt, and a cool to the ſick conſcience. The acceſs to this blood is free to all, Zech. xiii. 1. 'In that day, there ſhall be a fountain opened to 'the houſe of David, and to the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, 'for ſin and for uncleanneſs.'

(3.) Truſting to the fulneſs of the Spirit, for breaking of the power of theſe luſts. We are not man enough for the leaſt of theſe powers of hell; therefore we are to go out againſt them in the name of the Lord, and ſo we ſhall do valiantly; for he 'ſtrengtheneth the ſpoiled a'gainſt the ſtrong; ſo that the ſpoiled ſhall come againſt 'the fortreſs,' Amos v. 9. Thus many who have long been a prey to their luſts, receiving the Spirit of life from Jeſus Chriſt, have ſhook them off. And in them has been fulfilled in a ſpiritual ſenſe, Iſ. xiv. 2. 'The people 'ſhall take them, and bring them to their place; and 'the houſe of Iſrael ſhall poſſeſs them in the land of 'the Lord, for ſervants and handmaids: and they ſhall 'take them captives, whoſe captives they were, and they 'ſhall rule over their oppreſſors.' And this in virtue of that, Pſal. lxviii. 18. 'Thou haſt aſcended on high, 'thou haſt led captivity captive,' &c.

3*dly*, They are reſtleſs luſts. They are like the midges in a ſummer-day, ever in motion, working to the annoyance of the ſoul. Temptations are thick in the world, and they never want ſomething to ſtir them up. They are ever on the field of battle, never at peace.

(1.) Warring among themſelves, one againſt another. And the ſoul of man is what they are warring for, which ſhall be governor of it. In this reſpect the poor ſinner's heart is like a town ſituated in the territories of ſeveral ambitious princes, which is toſſed and harraſſed amongſt them, one fighting to turn out another. Thus pride and ambition draw the man one way, covetouſneſs another way; contrary luſts at once fight in him. And there is no peace for the man, but by mortifying them.

(2.) They war againſt the ſoul. All of them are enemies to it, and ſeek its ruin. Though they be contrary one to another, yet they conſpire together for the deſtruction of the ſoul; like Herod and Pontius Pilate againſt Chriſt. The ſoul, in reſpect of its make and conſtitution, is allied to heaven, and therefore is the butt of their rage.

Wherefore if ye mind for heaven, ye muſt lay your account with a continued warfare. Ye muſt never lay by your armour, but ſtand ever in a fighting poſture, Eph. vi. 14. 'Stand therefore, having your loins girt about 'with truth,' &c. As there is no peace to be made betwixt contrary luſts, ye muſt not ſide with any of the parties, but maintain a fight againſt both. Fight in faith,

[1.] Believing, that this war will iſſue in a profound laſting peace. Though the war with your luſts muſt be a laſting one; it is good news, that it will not be everlaſting; but the peace will be ſo. Take courage, O Chriſtian, the laſt ſtroke will be given ere long in this battle, which will be the deciſive ſtroke. The enemies 'ye ſee 'to day, ye ſhall ſee them again no more forever,' Exod. xiv. 13. In heaven ye will get eternal peace and reſt. There the men of war lay by their ſwords, and put on their crowns.

[2.] Believing, that your helper is ever as ready as your enemies. It is a weighty conſideration, that Satan walks about as a roaring lion, ſeeking whom he may devour, and onr enemies within are reſtleſs. But faith wants not a ſolid relief to oppoſe unto this, looking to the promiſe, Pſal. cxxi. 4. 'Behold, he that keepeth Iſrael, 'ſhall neither ſlumber nor ſleep.' At what time ſoever the enemies attack us, we may have acceſs to our help, and the faith of the promiſe will fetch it in as quickly as by a look, Iſa. xlv. 22. 'Look unto me, and be ye ſav'ed, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there 'is none elſe.'

[3.] Believing, that his grace is ever ſufficient for you. Though the war laſt long, the ſtock of ſtrength cannot be waſted, ſince it is an inexhauſtible treaſure in Chriſt Jeſus, to which one can never come amiſs, if ye fight in your own ſtrength, ye will ſoon find it waſted: but faith's work is to fetch in ſtrength from Chriſt, and it is ſufficient.

Laſtly, They are deceitful luſts. We are apt to be beguiled by them, if we take not good heed. They deceive ſinners, take them captive, and ſlay them. They are the golden cup in Satan's hand, by which he miniſters poiſon to the ſoul. They are deceitful: for,

(1.) They always promiſe what they never perform. Who is the man that is not diſappointed in them, looking for that ſatisfaction he never finds? How was Judas deceived that way?

(2.) They often commend themſelves to men under the maſk of ſome harmleſs thing, or ſome real virtue. Thus, like Satan, they transform themſelves into an angel of light. So many call evil good, and good evil, &c.

(3.) There is a hidden miſchief in them, when they are moſt ſmiling. There is a hook always, which is covered with the bait, James i. 14. 'Every man is tempted, 'when he is drawn away of his own luſt, and enticed.' It is a metaphor taken from fiſhes caught by the bait, and drawn out of the water. But,

Ye muſt not be ignorant of Satan's devices. Be not raſh, but try ere ye truſt. Forbidden fruit may be fair to look at, and the devil's ground may be very ſmooth, and the ſinner ſee no hazard where death is at his elbow. Therefore fight as againſt a deceitful enemy, Eph. vi. 11. And fight in faith,

[1.] Believing the teſtimony of God concerning the heart, that it is 'deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked.' and therefore keeping a watchful eye over it, Prov. xxviii. 14. 'Happy is the man that feareth always: 'but he that hardeneth his heart, ſhall fall into miſchief.' Faith is the ſoul's going out of itſelf to the Lord, and brings off the man from leaning to his own underſtanding. For theſe are the things that betray a man into the hands of deceitful luſts.

[2.] Truſting to the conduct of Chriſt. He is the Captain of ſalvation, the appointed leader of his people in the wilderneſs, and he will teach thoſe who are willing to be taught, and there is no way to get clear of the deceitful luſts, but by looking to the Lord for light to diſcern our way. For he is made *wiſdom* for us, and by faith in him, *the way-faring men, though fools, ſhall not err in the way of holineſs.*

LASTLY, There is a fight with *death*. This is the laſt enemy ye will have to grapple with; 1 Cor. xv. 16. 'The laſt enemy that ſhall be deſtroyed, is death.' There was never any that eſcaped this combat, but Enoch and Elias; as for all others, the encounter with it is appointed. And there is no freeing of any from this battle, many trouble not themſelves to fight with temptation, or with ſin, but live at peace with their enemies; but, they muſt feel the bitterneſs of death. If ever ye would fight it ſo as to overcome, ye muſt fight in faith. Here conſider,

1. How death may attack you; and,
2. In what ſhapes it may be [illegible].

1ſt, How death may attack you. And that,

Firſt, With ſorrow and heavineſs. Death is apt to let in a flood of ſorrows upon poor ſinners: ſo that thoſe who have ſpent their days in mirth, find all ſwallowed up in that flood; and they who have had a life of ſorrows, feel then the flood ſwelling to the brim. And there are two ſluices death opens to let in this flood.

1. The ſeparation of the man from this world, it comes to ſeparate betwixt him and his neareſt relations; to put an end to any portion of his under the ſun, that he ſhall no more have acceſs to his own houſe, bed, or board. This is apt to let in a flood of ſorrow upon the man, and there is no way to hold out againſt it, but one of theſe two,

1ſt, By turning it into the matter of joy: like thoſe 'which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad when they can 'find the grave;' when the man is ſo wearied of the world, that his heart leaps for joy, when God's meſſenger knocks at his door.

2dly, By a Chriſtian reſignation to the will of the Lord, the man being ready calmly to deliver up into the hands of God, all he has here.

Now, if ye would fight death's ſorrows on this head, viz. ſeparation from the world, either of theſe ways; ye muſt do it in faith.

(1.) Believing, that, through the merits of Chriſt, ye ſhall be admitted into a better world, ſet down at a better table, and lie better, even in Abraham's boſom; nothing elſe will work the ſoul into that Chriſtian reſignation, the heart of a man will never be content to give away this world's goods, while it has no comfortable proſpect of better: therefore Chriſtian reſignation at death, will be according to faith's view of things in the other world.

(2.) Truſting the ſame Lord Jeſus with the charge and care of thoſe whom ye are to leave and are concerned for, 1 Pet. v. 7. 'Caſting all your care upon him, for 'he careth for you.' With an eye to this, the Lord has made that promiſe, Jer. xlix. 11. 'Leave thy fatherleſs 'children, I will preſerve them alive; and let thy widows 'truſt in me.' Ungodly men can have no ſuch comfort, as a godly man may have in this way of believing.

2. The ſeparation of the ſoul from the body, the ſoul and body are cloſely knit; but death comes to looſe the ſilver cord that knits them together; like a whirlwind to carry them far aſunder. The ſoul has a ſure proſpect of ſeparate ſtate, which it has no experience of; and the conſideration thereof is apt to fill it with ſorrow, on the account of its foreſeen widowhood.

There is no making head againſt this, but in faith;

1ſt, Believing the ſoul's union with Jeſus Chriſt. Thus the ſoul has full comfort againſt the ſeparation that death makes. Though the man's ſpirit parts with his body, yet the Spirit of God dwells in the ſoul. God would have his people believe this particularly; and for that cauſe he has appointed the ſacraments, ſignifying and ſealing their union with Chriſt.

2dly, Believing the bleſſed reſurrection of the body. It ſtays the ſorrow of friends at their parting, that they look to meet again in peace: and when the ſoul and body are parting, the ſtronger the faith of the joyful reſurrection is, the leſs will the ſorrow be on that head. All that are Chriſt's have good ground for it: John xi. 25. 'I am the 'reſurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, tho' 'he were dead, yet ſhall he live.'

Secondly, Death may attack you with fear and terror. Hence we read of being *brought to the king of terrors*, Job xviii. 14. And therefore the ſcripture expreſſeth the great conſternation by the terrors of death; as in Pſal. lv. 4. 'The terrors of death are fallen upon me,' Job xxiv. 17. 'For the morning is to them even as the ſhadow of 'death: if one know them, they are in the terrors of 'the ſhadow of death.' Death will fill them with fear, who have been a terror to others in the land of the living. But faith will bear out, where natural courage falls like a dike of ſand before a ſweeping flood. Now, there are three ſources of the terrors of death.

1. Guilt lying on the ſoul, 1 Cor. xv. 56. 'The ſting 'of death is ſin.' By the guilt of ſin the ſinner is bound over to death, that is the ſting wherewith it pierces men. The guilt of ſin binds over the ſinner to death in its full extent; the moderated guilt of it binds over the ſinner to unſtinged death. When death comes up, it takes the man priſoner as a guilty man; and ſo fills him with terror. Here muſt be a cloſe fight of faith to ſtop this ſource of fear and terror.

1ſt, Over the belly of all your fears, ſtretching out the hand of faith to Chriſt, and ſo transferring all your guilt on him. Ye muſt truſt to the obedience and death of Chriſt, for the removal of your guilt; believing, that for his ſake all your ſins ſhall be pardoned. And for the warrant of your ſo truſting, ye muſt diſcern the pardon offered to you through Chriſt in the goſpel; and ſo, amidſt all your doubts and fears, anchor your ſouls on the faithfulneſs of God in the promiſe. Thus ye ſhall pull out death's ſting, obtaining the removal of guilt by faith in the blood of Chriſt.

2dly, Believing and applying to yourſelves Chriſt's full anſwering of the demands of the law, whereby the law is diſarmed of its curſe, and the bond of it as a covenant is looſed from off you. Death's ſtrength lies in guilt: take away guilt off the ſoul, death is like Samſon without his hair. The ſtrength of guilt lies in the law as a covenant; remove the bond of the law from off the man, and the man's guilt is like the cords the Philiſtines bound Samſon with. Let faith apply to the ſoul Chriſt's obedience and death, and his fully anſwering the demands of the law; and then the law can have no more effect on you, than a ſubſcribed bond paid and diſcharged, and rent in pieces, can have on you.

2. The unſeen unknown world, therefore called *the land of darkneſs*, Job x 21. One is apt to be ſeized with fear, when they are to be carried into a place they do not know. Death comes to carry us to another world, which we never ſaw, and that makes it terrible. It is the world of ſpirits: the bleſſed ſpirits dwelling in the upper regions, the damned ſpirits in the lower. We are ſo unacquainted with the inhabitants of that world, that the ſight of a ſpirit, good or bad, would be enough to fright us while here: what wonder then that death be terrible, coming to carry us where there are none but ſpirits? Here is need for faith, to bear up againſt the fear riſing from thence. We muſt then ſtay our hearts by faith,

1ſt, Firmly believing the ſcripture-account of the unſeen world. Though we have never ſeen it, yet the map of it has been laid before us in the Bible: and there we have deſcribed both the upper and lower part of it. And in that map, drawn by inſpired pens, the lower part of that world is not more dreadful, than the upper part is pleaſant. The faith of heaven is ſtaying to the heart in ſome meaſure.

2dly, Firmly believing the ſcripture account of the way to heaven; that Chriſt is the way to it, and that by faith we walk in him to it. If we believe not this, our hearts have nothing to ſtay themſelves on, but are left at an uncertainty, in our encounter with death. Therefore labour to ſtrengthen your faith of this, that it may not be yea and nay, but yea with you, that 'he that believeth ſhall be ſaved.'

3dly, Believing in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, for your ſafe paſſage to the upper part of the unſeen world, committing your ſoul to him, as the captain of ſalvation appointed of God to bring many ſons to glory. Take hold of him by his word of promiſe, and labour to gripe ſome particular promiſe for that end, as Iſa. xliii. 2. 'When thou paſſeſt through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee: when thou walkeſt through the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt; neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee.' Iſ. xxxv. 10. 'And the ranſomed of the Lord ſhall return and come to Zion with ſongs, and everlaſting joy upon their heads: they ſhall obtain joy and gladneſs, and ſorrow and ſighing ſhall flee away.'

4thly, Believing that your Lord Chriſt is Lord of the unſeen world, and that it is wholly under his dominion. It is in his hand that the diſpoſing of ſouls to any part of that world is. Neither is he to fight with the prince of darkneſs, on that ſide, about any ſoul. When one comes there, the devil cannot touch him, till he has given him up to him as an executioner. And he has ſaid it, that none that believe in him ſhall be damned, Mark xvi. 16.

5thly, Believing, that as ſoon as your ſoul leaves your body, God will receive it into his own hand, Pſal. xxiii. 4. 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me, thy rod and thy ſtaff they comfort me.' It ſhall be conducted by angels into Abraham's boſom. Believe, that the ſame God who brought thee out of the womb, when thou waſt a naked and helpleſs infant, and by his providence preſerved thee, will take the ſame care of thee, when entering into the unſeen world. This is the comfort of faith in death; Pſal xxii. 9, 10. 'But thou art he that took me out of the womb; thou didſt make me hope, when I was upon my mother's breaſts. I was caſt upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly.'

Laſtly, That thy God will fit thee for the place, however unfit thou art for it now: he will do it in a moment, as appears from 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. 'Behold, I ſhew you a myſtery; We ſhall not all ſleep, but we ſhall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,' &c. Believe that he will fit thee, not only for the ſight of the ſpirits there before thee, but for communion with him. And thou mayeſt confirm thy faith of this, by the experience thou haſt had (1.) of his fitting thee for communion with the inhabitants of this world, though thou cameſt into it an infant, knowing no body there, no not the mother that bare thee; and (2.) of his fitting thee for communion with himſelf, though thou waſt by nature dead in ſin.

3. The judgment. The appearing before a tribunal is an awful thing. When a guilty creature is lying on a death-bed, and conſiders that in a little he is to be carried before his Judge in another world, to give account of his deeds done in the body, and to receive his ſentence for eternity, in well or wo; no wonder fear and terror ſeize him. There is no fighting againſt this but by faith,

1ſt, Receiving and embracing the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. So in Rev. xvii. 17. the offer of Chriſt is made, after the warning given of Chriſt's coming to judgment: for this only is the way how a ſinner may ſtand before him. While a ſinner breathes in the world, he is in the way: and that is the time to agree with the adverſary. Chriſt and all his ſalvation is offered: and it is the work of faith to receive him, held forth in the goſpel-promiſe.

For this cauſe it is neceſſary to judge ourſelves, and condemn ourſelves; to call over all our bypaſt life, with the ſin of our nature: and renouncing all confidence in ourſelves, to fly to a crucified Chriſt, upon the ground of God's faithfulneſs in the promiſe: John iii. 16. 'For God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.'

2dly, Believing, that the ſame Jeſus who is offered in the goſpel, is the Judge whom you are ſhortly to appear before, John v. 22. 'For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.' This is a fit means to abate the terror of a judgment ſeat to a believer. For thus the ſoul may ſee, that the very ſame perſon who is the redeemer, is the judge. And thus a fountain of conſolation is opened againſt the terrors of death ariſing from the judgment.

3dly, Believing that the judgment will not proceed upon you according to the law of works, but according to the law of faith. The law of works adjudgeth every one that ſins to die; and unbelievers ſhall be judged by it. The covenant of grace adjudgeth every ſoul united to Chriſt to live eternally, for the ſake of Chriſt's obedience and death imputed to him.

Laſtly, Believing that Chriſt's blood is a perfect covert, within which no drop of wrath can fall; and that faith's plea will never be rejected, for God's faithfulneſs is impawned for it. Let the believer then be comforted againſt the terror of death from this quarter.

Thirdly, With deſpondency. This is the moſt fearful weapon wherewith death attacks a man: when it goes about to make his heart ſink within him, and fill him with fear of eternal death. This may be the caſe of thoſe whom death ſeizing after a life ſpent in profanity and wickedneſs, their ſins ſtare them in the face, and are apt to fill them with deſpair. Here is need of faith in a ſpecial manner.

1ſt, Believing the efficacy of Chriſt's blood. The ſoul would behold that blood as the blood of the Son of God, and ſo of infinite efficacy to do away guilt; his Spirit as of infinite efficacy, to wipe away the deepeſt ſtains of ſins as others, 1 Cor. vi. 11. as a water-flood, ſweeping away whole dung hills, as well as mole hills.

2dly, Believing, that ye are ſtill within the compaſs of the goſpel offer. Yea, it is directed to you in particular, Jer. iii. 1. 'Though thou haſt played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again to me, ſaith the Lord.' God has made no exception of ſinners of any ſize, tho' ordinarily a profane life has a good end; they that live graceleſsly, for the moſt part die hardened; yet the caſe of the penitent thief on the croſs, ſhews a poſſibility of its being otherwiſe.

Laſtly, Believing the promiſe of the goſpel, over the belly of all objections. Though you are in a boiſterous ſea, where one wave comes after another ; yet quit not your gripe, but hope againſt hope as Abraham did ; for it will have a good iſſue, as in the woman of Canaan.

2dly, Conſider in what ſhapes death may attack us. There is one way of coming into the world, but there are many ways of going out of it. Which of them may be ours, we know not : wherefore it concerns us to be ready for death, in whatever ſhape it come upon us. I will take notice of theſe four.

1. A violent death by the hands of men. That is the heavieſt death, as in the caſe of malefactors, by the hand of public juſtice ; and men falling ſacrifices to their rage in private quarrels. And I would adviſe you to live by faith, that ye may be kept from ſuch a death. But even in a good cauſe men may be brought to it. And in that ſhape, death muſt be fought,

1ſt, Believing, that was the kind of death Chriſt died, and his own may ſafely venture on it for his ſake. The ſaints of the higheſt claſs have died ſo, and our Lord will have all his to lay their account with it ; Luke xiv. 26. 'If any man hate not his own life, he cannot be my 'diſciple ;' though he does not call them all to it. But many who have been called to it, have rejoiced in it.

2dly, Believing that great truth, Matth. xvi. 25. 'Whoſoever will ſave his life, ſhall loſe it ; and whoſoever 'will loſe his life for my ſake ſhall find it.' When one's life comes in competition with the cauſe of Chriſt, they will ſometimes make ſhipwreck of the faith ; whereas they to whom Chriſt's honour is more dear than their own lives, eternal glory will make up their loſs.

2. A painful death. Death in any ſhape can hardly want pain : but it is more painful to ſome than to others. What ſtruggles and wreſtlings have ſome before their ſouls leave their bodies ! What meaſure of theſe pains is allotted to us, we do not know ; but every one will at length feel his own part of them.

Our buſineſs is to bear them Chriſtianly and patiently ; and that we will never do to purpoſe, but by faith.

1ſt, Cleaving to Chriſt in them by faith. Faith's view of the eternal reſt in heaven, is the beſt cordial in the pains of death. When the ſoul believes that the laſt pain is coming on, after which ſorrow and ſighing ſhall for ever fly away, it will make him bear the ſharpeſt pains of death Chriſtianly and patiently.

2dly, Believing that the body of ſin and death which thou haſt had many a battle with in thy life, is by that means to be put to the door. Death came in by ſin, and ſin muſt go out by death. Every pain looſeth a pin of the tabernacle ; and according as death makes its progreſs in the believer's body, ſin is the nearer to a removal out of his ſoul. A Chriſtian will abide ſore thruſts patiently in the faith of this their thruſting out his worſt enemy.

3dly, By the eye of faith diſcerning death unſtinged, by the death of Chriſt. Hoſ. xiii. 14. 'I will ranſom 'them from the power of the grave : I will redeem 'them from death : O death, I will be thy plagues : O 'grave, I will be thy deſtruction :' and therefore a dying ſaint ſhould believingly ſing, 'O death, where is thy 'ſting ? O grave, where is thy victory ?' That whereby the believer's dying body is pained, is not death's ſting ; he may therefore bear it the better. Death's ſting ſtings the ſoul and conſcience. Theſe pains are but as a bee's ſting in compariſon of that.

3. A longſome or lingering death. Death makes quick work with ſome, but with others it is ſpun out to a great length ; whereby they have many deaths in one. This is a great trial, and therefore we ſhould be prepared for it, and lay up timely for it. We will never manage it well but by faith.

1ſt, Believing always that it is coming ; but at what hour, we know not. The faith of this will make us keep up our watch. They may watch at firſt, who may let it down while the bridegroom delays his coming ; as the fooliſh virgins did. But the faith of this will put us on Job's reſolution, Job xiv. 14. 'All the days of my ap'pointed time will I wait till my change come.'

2dly, Believing that therein the Lord has you on your trials. And if God opens to any of us a ſcene of trial of more variety and greater length than that of others, we ſhould behave well in the trial laid to our hand.

3dly, By the eye of faith diſcerning the eternal weight of glory, on the other ſide of the trial ; and if we weigh the one by the other, the moſt longſome ſtruggle with death will appear both light and momentary, 2 Cor. iv. 17. 'For our light affliction which is but for a mo'ment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal 'weight of glory,' &c.

4. *Laſtly*, A ſudden death. Death ſometimes makes a wide ſtep, ſo that it is upon a man ere he perceives it coming. It may be our lot ; for it is common to good and bad. Good Eli died ſo, as well as Ananias and Sapphira. It concerns us to be prepared for it : which we can never be but by believing. And,

1ſt, Securing ourſelves within the true ark, by believing in Jeſus Chriſt. Then come death when it will, we are ready : it will not looſe the marriage knot betwixt Chriſt and our ſouls. If then it come ſuddenly upon us, it will waft us more ſpeedily into Immanuel's land.

2dly, Reſolutely renewing the actings of faith on Chriſt, at death's ſudden approach. What a man has done before, he may do again ; and a believer may renew his acting of faith, upon death's ſhort warning. If death be ſudden, the act of faith may be as ſudden : and therefore is compared to a look.

And thus I have gone through the Chriſtian warfare, even to the laſt battle. May the Lord thus teach our hands to war, and our fingers to fight.

The EVERLASTING ESPOUSALS.

Being a Sermon preached at the adminiſtration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, Auguſt 1714.

Hos. ii. 19.

And I will betrothe thee unto me for ever.

THIS ſolemn ordinance is the feaſt of the eſpouſals betwixt Chriſt and believers, as alſo the ſeal thereof ; wherefore it is neceſſary the gueſts be ſuch as are eſpouſed to Chriſt, otherwiſe the ſeal is but profaned. The text ſhews, that all is ready on Chriſt's part ; there is nothing to hinder the match, if ſinners be willing. Our eyes do ſee this day, that even the ſeal of the covenant, the holy ſacrament, is ready for us ; and thus we have an occaſion to advance our eternal intereſt. There is ſuch an affinity betwixt marriage and death, that every marriage contract among men runs in theſe terms, "Till "God ſhall ſeparate us by death :" ſo that the dying day muſt needs ſtare the parties in the face on their marriage day. But, behold here is a marriage contract plainly excluding that clauſe, *I will betrothe thee unto me for ever*.

I have already explained theſe words ; but I ſhall put you in remembrance of the nature of betrothing or eſpouſing, as it was uſed among the Jews, ſeeing it gives light into the text. Betrothing or eſpouſing was the bridegroom's taking the bride into a marriage covenant

It was done publickly before witneſſes, under a canopy or tent ſet up for that purpoſe; and hereunto it is thought the Pſalmiſt alludes, Pſal. xix. 4, 5. 'In them hath he 'ſet a tabernacle for the ſun: which is as a bridegroom 'coming out of his chamber.' Some competent time intervened betwixt the eſpouſals and the ſolemnizing and conſummating of the marriage. Nevertheleſs, by the eſpouſals they were truly huſband and wife, as appears from Matth. i. 18, 19, 20. where, while Mary was yet but eſpouſed to Joſeph, he is called her huſband, and ſhe his wife: and therefore, if a betrothed virgin was defiled in the city, both the man and woman were to be ſtoned to death: 'the damſel becauſe ſhe cried not, being in the 'city,' (and therefore held conſenting,) 'and the man 'becauſe he hath humbled his neighbour's wife,' Deut. xxii. 23. So they were puniſhed as adulterers.

Thus you ſee the covenant God propoſeth is a marriage-covenant; that our Maker may be our Huſband. However men may think it unbecoming the gravity of the matter, to ſpeak of the great tranſaction betwixt a Saviour and loſt ſinners, under the notion of a marriage; it is ſufficient to us, that the infinitely wiſe God has not thought it unbecoming, but ſees it to be a condeſcenſion neceſſary for our weakneſs. And it muſt needs be dangerous to mock at that manner of ſpeaking the Lord's word warrants; *I will betrothe thee unto me*, ſays the text.

The parties in this marriage covenant, are *Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God*, and the *captive daughter of Zion*, loſt ſinners. The Father hath made this *marriage for his Son*, Matth. xxii. 2. And the apoſtle tells us, it is Chriſt whom ſinners are eſpouſed to; *I have eſpouſed you to one huſband, that I may preſent you as a chaſte virgin to Chriſt*, 2 Cor. xi. 2. It is the glorious Bridegroom that propoſeth the marriage-treaty; *I will betrothe thee.* It is the peculiar quality of this marriage-covenant, that it is *for ever.* The Lord brought Iſrael into a viſible church-ſtate by the Sinai covenant; but that covenant did not laſt: here he promiſeth to bring them back by the new covenant, from mount Zion; and that this covenant ſhall be perpetual. But, as theſe words look to the ſpiritual Iſrael, the elect ones both of Jews and Gentiles, the covenant is declared to be everlaſting, not confined within the narrow boundaries of time, but reaching forward through all the ages of eternity.

DOCT. I. *The way laid down in the wiſdom of God, and purſued in the goſpel, for reinſtating loſt ſinners in the favour of God, is the eſpouſing of them to Jeſus Chriſt.*

I have already ſpoke to this doctrine at large, and therein explained the nature of a ſinner's eſpouſals to Jeſus Chriſt in ſeveral particulars. There are two points yet remaining, which I ſhall propoſe in a ſecond doctrine.

DOCT. II. *As ſinners may be eſpouſed to Chriſt, ſo whomſoever he eſpouſeth to himſelf, he eſpouſeth for ever, never to part with them.*

In handling of this doctrine,

I. I ſhall ſhew, that ſinners may be eſpouſed to Chriſt.

II. I ſhall conſider the perpetuity and everlaſtingneſs of this marriage-covenant; and then apply it.

But, before I enter on theſe things, it will be neceſſary to reſume ſome particulars touching the nature of the eſpouſals betwixt Chriſt and ſinners: to give you a view thereof in few words.

Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt comes, by his meſſengers, into the *bride's mother's houſe* (the publick ordinances,) and courts her conſent: but words will never prevail in that caſe; he comes forward, by his Spirit into the inner chamber of her heart, and there propoſeth the marriage-treaty, and brings it to a happy iſſue. We may take up this in three things; (1.) Chriſt, by his Spirit, enters the inner room of the heart, with the fiery law going before him as his harbinger; *and ſo terrible is the ſight, that* the ſinner begins *exceedingly to fear and quake;* but yet has no kindneſs for the Bridegroom, no heart to the match. So a tribunal is erected within his own breaſt; he is accuſed, and condemned as a breaker of the law, and then beholds his need of a Saviour. (2.) God *reveals his Son* in the ſinner, by the light of the goſpel ſhining into his heart. The royal Bridegroom is manifeſted unto the ſoul in his glorious ſuitableneſs to its caſe; and withal, in his willingneſs to betrothe the wretched creature to himſelf. (3.) The Spirit of Chriſt powerfully touches the heart of the ſinner, who is thereby made willing to join hands with him in the marriage-covenant. Thus the treaty of eſpouſals comes to be concluded, which we may ſum up in theſe three particulars.

Firſt, The parties are pleaſed with one another; Chriſt is pleaſed with the ſinner, and the ſinner with him. And then the language of the bride's heart is, *1ſt*, I am pleaſed with his perſon. I have been long ſeeking a match for my ſoul, a reſt to this reſtleſs heart; but, whatever I caſt mine eyes upon, I ſtill perceived ſomething about it that was ſhocking, ſomething it lacked, which I could not want: but here is a covering of mine eyes; *he is altogether lovely.* *2dly*, I am pleaſed with all his offices. There is a glorious ſuitableneſs in each of them to my caſe. I am weak, fooliſh, and ignorant; it is good he is a Prophet. I am laden with guilt, it is good he is a Prieſt: the ſight of his precious blood revives my fainting ſoul. My luſts are ſtrong, it is good he is a *King mighty in battle.* *3dly*, I am pleaſed with the marriage-covenant; it is well drawn; there is nothing to be added to it, nothing to be altered in it. *4thly*, I am pleaſed with the marriage duties; the laws of the royal Bridegroom. *Laſtly*, I am pleaſed with the croſs, content to cleave to him for better and worſe, Luke xiv. 26.

Secondly, As Chriſt left his Father's houſe for her, ſhe gives up with her *own people and her father's houſe* for him. She renounceth the firſt huſband, namely, the law, as a covenant of works, never to look for her living by it, any more, Rom. vii. 4. She renounceth all her luſts and idols, and ſets a particular mark of diſgrace on the beloved luſt ſhe had a particular fondneſs for.

Laſtly, The glorious Bridegroom's conſent to be her head and huſband ſhe finds in the word, which the Spirit applies to her, and ſhe by faith applies to herſelf. So Chriſt gives himſelf to her, ſhe receives him, and gives herſelf to him, and from that bleſſed moment ſhe may ſay, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his,' Cant. ii. 16.

Thus ſhe is united to Chriſt, *joined unto the Lord*, and made *one ſpirit with him.* And from this union reſults a communion betwixt the parties, agreeable to the nature of the ſpiritual marriage.

Now, having given this ſhort account of the nature of the eſpouſals,

I. I ſhall evince, that ſinners may be eſpouſed to the Son of God. *Behold, we bring you glad tidings of great joy;* if ye be willing to be eſpouſed to Chriſt. To clear this, conſider theſe following particulars, which may be motives to ſtir you up to accept of Chriſt in the marriage covenant.

Firſt, This match was from eternity projected and concluded, in the cabinet-council of the Trinity, Jer. xxxi. 3. 'I have loved thee with an everlaſting love: therefore 'with loving-kindneſs have I drawn thee.' God, from eternity foreſeeing that all mankind would be ruined by the fall of Adam, ſet on foot a project for recovering loſt ſinners, and ſecuring them when recovered. Man being joined to God at firſt in a ſimple covenant of friendſhip, that covenant was found too ſlender a bond for ſuch an unſtable creature: wherefore a marriage-covenant is deviſed; for that will ſeparate betwixt friends, under the ſtricteſt bonds of friendſhip, which cannot ſeparate betwixt huſband and wife. Now, the King's friend turning to be his enemy by the breach of the firſt covenant; to bring the criminal out of priſon to court again, and reſtore her to favour, it is concluded, that ſhe be eſpouſed to the King's Son, and ſo united to him, as there ſhould not be ſuch a breach betwixt God and the ſinner again.

Secondly, The Bridegroom and all his relations are well pleaſed with the match. We have his own mind, 'I 'will betrothe thee unto me for ever.' But will he indeed betrothe me? may the ſinner ſay. 'Yea, I will be'trothe thee,' ſaith our Lord in the following words, twice in one verſe. Why truly, it is hard for ſenſible ſinners to believe it. If ye would know how it agrees with his Father's mind, Iſaiah will tell you, 'The Lord is 'well pleaſed for his righteouſneſs ſake,' Iſa. xlii. 21. Yea, he ſolicits for him, Matth. xvii. 5. 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed; hear ye him.' It is very agreeable to the mind of his Spirit; 'All things are ready; come unto the marriage,' Matth. xxii. 4. The angels, when firſt the Bridegroom came in perſon into the bride's country, ſung to his arrival, 'Glory to God in the higheſt, and on earth peace, good-will towards men,' Luke ii. 13, 14. Yea, there is a full ſatisfaction with it through all the Bridegroom's country: 'Joy ſhall be in heaven over one ſinner that repenteth.'

I might here tell you, that the mighty ſtir made about this match in the bride's country, to hinder it, is a plain evidence of the reality of it. When the royal Bridegroom was going forth to purſue his deſign of love to loſt ſinners, their father, the devil, addreſſed him, and offered him *all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them,* if he would give over the ſuit. When that did not take, he aſſaulted and murdered him, by his helliſh agents, that the match might be marred; but Jeſus having overcome death, ſat down at the right hand of the Father, ſo he can reach him no more; he turns his rage againſt the bride, and employs his power to the utmoſt againſt her to ſtop it. No ſooner does ſhe begin to lay to heart the offered eſpouſals, than ſhe finds her *own people and her father's houſe* ſet againſt it, and muſt lay her account with vehement toſſing ſhe was not acquainted with before. Her father, the devil, miſrepreſents Chriſt, as a huſband ſhe cannot have a comfortable life with: if that prevail not to make her lay aſide the thoughts of it, he rages and threatens: if ſhe will proceed in it, he ſhall cauſe her repent that ever ſhe entertained the motion, and bring her back again from her new huſband, to her great confuſion; and that therefore it is better for her to draw back in time, and take ſecond thoughts of the offers made her by other hands. Her friends, *even the world that lieth in wickedneſs*, uſe all methods to diſcourage her: they cry out, ſhe will ſtain the reputation of their family, and diſgrace them all: and, be ſure, they will make her the fool of the company at leaſt, if their hands be bound that they cannot imbrue them in her blood. And, to crown the difficulty, the hungry luſts ſhe was wont to feed, and in a ſpecial manner, the beloved luſt, hang about her weeping, becauſe they muſt be ſtarved, if the match go on. All this evidences that ſinners may be eſpouſed to Chriſt.

Thirdly, The lawful impediments of this match are all removed, at the Bridegroom's expences. When the purpoſe of this match was declared, there ſtood up to object againſt it, parties concerned, whoſe mouths could not be ſtopped with fair words. Juſtice ſays, The bride is my debtor, and, *foraſmuch as ſhe hath not to pay*, ſhe muſt be ſold into the hand of vengeance, to ſatisfy the debt. She is my criminal, ſaith the law: ſentence of death is paſſed on her, Gal. iii. 10; and whitherſoever one may go to pick out a ſpouſe to himſelf, he muſt not go into a priſon, and bring forth a condemned woman to be eſpouſed to him; for though marriage break term of ſervice, it muſt not break law: therefore there muſt be an execution-day before a marriage-day. She is my lawful priſoner, ſays the devil, and I will not give her up; 'Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?' Iſa. xlix. 24. Theſe were lawful impediments, which would have put an effectual ſtop to the marriage betwixt Chriſt and ſinners; but his heart was intent upon it, and therefore he ſet himſelf to remove them out of the way. Accordingly, he became ſurety to juſtice for her debt, and paid it to the laſt farthing: and now that the ranſom is paid, the jailor muſt needs let his priſoner go.

Fourthly, The marriage contract is drawn up and ſigned by the Bridegroom, bearing his conſent to match with the captive daughter of Zion: ye have it in our text, and the words following, 'I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea, I will betrothe thee unto me in righteouſneſs, and in judgment, and in loving kindneſs, and in mercies. I will even betrothe thee unto me in faithfulneſs, and thou ſhalt know the Lord.' This is his word which he hath ſealed with his precious blood. And he hath ſent it to you, that ye may conſent to it, and ſo the match is made betwixt Chriſt and you.

Queſt. "But why is this marriage contract drawn up "before the bride's conſent be obtained, yea, and with"out conſulting her at all?" Anſw. We have no ground to complain of this: we have nothing to contract on our part. We have nothing to bring with us, for all our father's houſe go in rags, Rev. iii. 17. Nay, we are worſe than nothing; our father Adam left us with a burden of debt, yea and a burden of the curſe beſides. And well may we increaſe, we can never pay one farthing of the old or new accounts. But our Lord ſeeks no portion with us, he is willing to betrothe us to himſelf, Iſa. lv. 1. 'Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money.' Nay, he will have nothing with us, nor have we any thing worth his taking. And if we do not come to Chriſt content to receive all freely, we may fear we meet with Simon's entertainment, 'Thy money periſh with thee.' Acts viii. 20. Were a prince to marry a beggar's daughter, and ſhe ſhould preſent herſelf to the marriage in her beggarly attire, patched up after the beſt faſhion of her father's houſe; would he not ſay, Take her away, and ſtrip her of theſe garments, ſhe ſhall bring none of them to me: they would be a ſtain to my honour! clothe her with change of raiment on my own expence! The application is eaſy: we have nothing to commend us to Chriſt, and if we pretend to any thing of that kind, we diſhonour the Royal bridegroom. There is no reaſon then we ſhould have any thing ado in the marriage contract, but to bleſs God that it is brought to our hands, and ſign it with our whole heart.

Beſides, had our advice been taken to the framing of it, we ſee ſo little into our true intereſt, we would certainly have marred it, inſerted ſome clauſe that would at length have ruined us. Finally, It is one of the articles of the covenant, that Chriſt ſhall gain the ſinner's conſent, John vi. 37. 'All that the Father giveth me, ſhall come to me.' And ſo ſaith our text, 'I will betroth thee unto me.'

It may be, ſome are ſaying in their hearts, "O that "I knew my name were in that marriage-contract, how "joyfully would I then ſign it! but I fear it is not to be "found there." I anſwer to this, conſider there are two copies of it, the one ſealed, and the other opened. 1. There is a ſealed copy laid up in heaven, under the cuſtody of the Bridegroom and his Father: in this are to be found the names of all that are, or ſhall be, eſpouſed to Chriſt; and behold the ſeal thereof, 2 Tim. ii. 19. 'The foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal, The Lord knoweth them are his.' 2 There is an open copy thereof, let down to earth, and lodged in the bride's hand: this ye have in the Bible, the book of the covenant. It bears not the names of thoſe that are to be eſpouſed to Chriſt, but runs in that form, "We underſubſcribers," &c. Now, the Royal Bridegroom has ſigned this, and it is incumbent on you to ſign it likewiſe, conſenting to take Chriſt, offered to you in the goſpel; Iſa. xliv. 5. 'One ſhall ſay, I am the Lord's: and another ſhall call himſelf by the name of Jacob: and another ſhall ſubſcribe with his hand unto the Lord.' Now, upon this, I offer theſe two things.

1ſt, A view of the ſealed copy is the peculiar privilege of thoſe that are eſpouſed to Chriſt, by ſubſcribing to the open copy: 'The ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him: and he will ſhew them his covenant,' Pſal. xxv. 14. And to require a ſight of that which is laid up in heaven, before ye have complied with the deſign of that which is lodged in your own hands, is to endeavour to overturn the order and method of grace. But, 'Shall the earth be forſaken for thee? and ſhall the rock be removed out of his place?' Job xviii. 4. Thoſe that are eſpouſed to Chriſt, though they ſhall get a full view of it in heaven; yet it is but a ſlender view they get of it now: at beſt, the Lord opens it a little to the believer, ſo as he can ſee to read his own name in it, but cannot ſee the name of his wife or child therein, though their names be really in it. And it may be, ſome of the ſaints never ſee their own names in it, till they come to glory, being ‘ through fear of death, all their life time ſubject ‘ to bondage.’

2dly, Though your name be not in the open copy, yet it is indorſed to you, and every one of you; therefore ye have a warrant to ſign it for yourſelves. Wilt thou anſwer to the name of *thirſty ſinner?* Then read your name, and ſee how it is directed to you, Iſa. lv. 1. ‘ Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters.’ Wilt thou anſwer to the name of *willing ſinner?* Then it is directed to you, Rev. xxii. 17. ‘ Whoſoever *will*, let him take the water of life freely.’ Art thou called *heavy-laden ſinner?* Ariſe then, the maſter calleth thee, Matth. xi. 28. ‘ Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt.’ Are ye a *loſt ſinner?* ‘ The Son of man is come to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt,’ Luke xix. 10. Nay, art thou *the chief of ſinners?* Even to thee is the word of this ſalvation ſent; ‘ Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners, of whom I am chief,’ 1 Tim. i. 15. But, whatſoever artifice ye may uſe to diſown theſe, or any of theſe to be your name; ſurely ye are *men, ſons of men*, therefore it is directed to you, and every one of you: ‘ Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the ſons of men,’ Prov. viii. 4. But to proceed,

Fifthly, The proxies for the Bridegroom are ſent forth to make ſuit for ſinners to be eſpouſed to him; ‘ Now then we are ambaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech you by us,’ 2 Cor. v. 20. And ſurely this muſt be glad tidings to thoſe who are willing to be eſpouſed to our Lord. We are impowered to treat with you, in his name, for this bleſſed match; to declare unto you that he is willing to be yours; and we call unto you, according to the tenor of our commiſſion, Matth. xxii. 4. ‘ All things are ready; come unto the marriage.’ Deſpiſe not our call; for he is great who has ſaid, ‘ He that heareth you, heareth me: and he that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me,’ Luke x. 16. And, by the refuſal of his word in our mouths, ye run the riſk of eternal ruin, Mark xvi. 16. ‘ He that believeth not ſhall be damned.’

Sixthly, The Bridegroom has already put on his marriage robes: the Son of God hath clothed himſelf with the robes of humanity, that he might be a ſuitable match for the children of men. ‘ Foraſmuch then as the children are partakers of fleſh and blood, he alſo himſelf likewiſe took part of the ſame.’ Heb. ii. 14. Such was the diſtance betwixt God and his guilty creatures, that the ſinner could never have joined hands, but with an incarnate God. The bride could never have been able to look on the glorious Bridegroom, in his divine glory and majeſty, without being confounded at the ſight: therefore was his wedding garment taken off on earth, wherewith he hath covered himſelf in view of the marriage. Behold! it is a dyed garment, and of the right colour for a marriage robe; which in this caſe is only red, Iſa. lxiii. 1. ‘ Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?——Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine fat?’ Let thy ſoul then ſay unto him, Ruth iii. 9. ‘ Spread thy ſkirt over thine handmaid, for thou art a near kinſman.’ It was an ancient ceremony in marriage for the man to throw the ſkirt of his garment over the woman's head, in token of appropriating her unto himſelf, her ſubjection to him. It is applied to the ſpiritual marriage, Ezek. xvi. 8. ‘ I ſpread my ſkirt over thee, and covered thy nakedneſs; yea, I ſware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, ſaith the Lord God, and thou becameſt mine;’ i. e. married to me; for ſo marriage is expreſſed in the old Teſtament. And thence that phraſe is found in the New Teſtament, Rom. vii. 4.

Now, no ſkirt but a bloody ſkirt could ſerve his purpoſe. The bride is a criminal, and ‘ without ſhedding of blood is no remiſſion,’ Heb. ix. 22. Therefore there can be no marriage with the Son of God but under a covert of blood. And therefore the chariot wherein Chriſt's ſpouſe is carried to his Father's houſe, hath a *covering of purple*, Cant. iii 10. Now, this purple covering is the blood of our ſlain Redeemer, which covers the ſoul from the ſtorm of God's wrath, as the covering of a chariot defends from ſtorms that come from above. Behold then a crucified Saviour, meet to eſpouſe guilty ſinners to himſelf.

Seventhly, The wedding garment for the bride is ready, being purchaſed at the expence of the bridegroom. It is the white raiment of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, which is offered to all that hear the goſpel This is that glorious raiment which beautifies the ſoul in the ſight of God, wherewith Chriſt's ſpouſe is arrayed, as the lilies, with that for which *they toil not, neither do they ſpin*, though there were ſore toil and bloody ſweat at the making of it. Thus her wedding garment is taken off in heaven, even as his was taken off on earth: a bleſſed evidence of a deſign of perfect peace betwixt heaven and earth in the way of a marriage covenant.

Eighthly, The tent for the eſpouſals is ſet up, even the church. The tabernacle of God has viſited our earth, and therein erected a church, which is the tabernacle he has ſet for the ſun of righteouſneſs, as a Bridegroom, there to eſpouſe ſinners to himſelf. This tabernacle God hath been threatening to pull down, for our contempt of the goſpel; which calls us to comply with the eſpouſals offered: and ſeveral of the cords thereof are broken already; but had not the Lord been on our ſide, it had been lying on the ground by this time. Thanks to God, it is yet ſtanding: but wo to thoſe who ſhall not be eſpouſed to Chriſt before the tabernacle be removed.

Ninthly, The feaſt of the eſpouſals, namely, the holy ſacrament we are now to partake of is ready, that the eſpouſed bride may feaſt and rejoice in her Bridegroom. Though the table be not in heaven, yet the proviſion is from heaven, even the fleſh of Chriſt, which is meat indeed, and his blood, which is drink indeed. This holy feaſt is the ſeal of the marriage covenant, whereby Chriſt ſeals the covenant to us, 1 Cor. xi. 25. ‘ This cup is the new teſtament in my blood.’ The Bridegroom's ſeal is a red bloody ſeal, like his marriage robe.

Queſt. But what need is there of a ſeal to the Lord's covenant? *Anſw.* God's word is as good ſecurity as his writ, and his writ as good as his ſeal: but the difficulty ſinners find in believing requires them all: and therefore the Lord condeſcends to give us all we could require of the moſt faithleſs man on earth, that we may believe him; his word, his writ, yea, and his oath too. Some of you find no difficulty in believing your welcome to Chriſt. I dare not commend the leaſt doubt of God's word, as it is very diſhonouring to God. But I fear the unacquaintedneſs of many with the difficulty of believing, proceeds rather from a ſpirit of pride, than from the ſpirit of faith. The marriage covenant betwixt God and creatures, is ſuch a great thing, that it is a great matter to believe it. And nothing but ‘ the working of God's mighty power, which he wrought in Chriſt when he raiſed him from the dead,’ will make a ſenſible ſinner really believe it. If a prince ſhould ſend a writ to a beggar woman, wherein he appoints her a free houſe, and a few pence weekly, to maintain her while ſhe lives, there would be no difficulty in believing this; it being a ſmall thing: but, ſuppoſing him to ſend an ambaſſador to eſpouſe her unto him; in this caſe, if ſhe were truly ſober, ſhe would hang down her head, and ſay, Do not mock a poor woman. And if upon the producing the marriage contract, ſhe began to believe it, and roſe up to ſubſcribe it; it would be no great marvel, if, looking to her rags and naſtineſs, ſhe ſuddenly halted, and ſaid, I am a fool to believe this; till conſidering the words of grace in the marriage contract, the nature of the prince's oath and ſeal, her heart were *overcome* into a belief of it. The application is eaſy; there is great need of the ſeal of the marriage covenant betwixt Chriſt and ſinners, and it is ready for you.

Tenthly, Here are witneſſes enow. Here are the friends of the Bridegroom, to bear witneſs to the eſpouſals. Yea, as Joſhua ſaith, Joſh. xxiv. 27. ‘ Behold, this ſtone ſhall be a witneſs unto us.’ And they will ſurely witneſs either for or againſt us. They will at leaſt bear witneſs to the offer of the eſpouſals made here this day.

Laſtly, Here is the Bridegroom, and here is the bride; the eternal Son of God, and a company of wretched loſt ſinners gathered together in this place. He has given his conſent already in the words of the text read in your hearing, 'I will betrothe thee unto me for ever.' What would you have more? would ye have him to declare it by a voice from heaven? Nay, but this is *a more ſure word of prophecy*. Bear witneſs then, ye friends of the bridegroom; witneſs all, and every one of you here preſent; witneſs ye ſtones of the place, That the eternal purpoſe of this match is declared, the Bridegroom and all his relations are pleaſed with it, the lawful impediments of it are removed, the contract is drawn up, the proxies for the Bridegroom are ſent forth; he hath put on his marriage robes, and the wedding garment for the bride is ready, the tent for the eſpouſals is ſet up, the feaſt and the ſeal are ready, the Bridegroom and the bride are both preſent: and, as for the Bridegroom he hath given his conſent already; and therefore there is nothing wanting to make up the eſpouſals betwixt the Son of God and ſinners here preſent, but their conſent.

And ſhall it be wanting? Are not ye ſaying, Ye friends of the Bridegroom, ye neighbours, ye ſtones bear witneſs for me, that my heart conſents to take him as he offers himſelf in the marriage covenant, renouncing the law, as a covenant of works; renouncing all my luſts; giving up myſelf, ſoul and body, to be his, and for him; to be his wholly, his only, and his for ever?

II. We ſhall ſpeak of the perpetuity of this marriage-covenant. Here I ſhall enquire, in what reſpects the eſpouſals betwixt Chriſt and the ſoul are for ever.

Firſt, They are for ever in *deſign*.

Secondly, They are for ever in *fact*.

FIRST, They are *for ever in the deſign of the parties*. In eſpouſals amongſt men it is not ſo: the deſign is only for the term of life; for the parties know one another to be mortal, and death will ſeparate them. But in the ſpiritual eſpouſals the parties join hands never to part; they both look upon it as a contract for eternity.

Firſt, Chriſt takes the ſinner with a deſign to be that ſinner's huſband from the moment of the eſpouſals for ever; and his deſigns cannot be broken; he knows perfectly before the eſpouſals, whatſoever will fall out betwixt him and his ſpouſe in the courſe of the marriage; and with a view of all future events, he takes her for ever with a fixed purpoſe, *1ſt*, Never to put her away while ſhe deſires to abide with him. Nay, *2dly*, Never to part with her, though ſhe ſhould deſire to go away, Jer. xxxii. 43. 'And I will make an everlaſting covenant with them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they ſhall not depart from me.'

Secondly, The ſoul conſenting to the eſpouſals, takes Chriſt, with a deſign to be his ſpouſe for ever. Howſoever hypocrites deal with him, the believer takes Chriſt with a ſincere purpoſe never to part with him.

1. The believer takes Chriſt with a ſincere purpoſe never to go away from him, whatever hardſhips he meet with, for cleaving to him and following him: his reſolution is, 'So will not we go back from thee,' Pſal. lxxx. 18. He may indeed fear that he will leave Chriſt; nevertheleſs he can appeal to God's omniſcience, he has no ſuch deſign, but his ſoul lothes it. He has counted the coſt, he has weighed in the balance father and mother, and wife and children, yea, and his own life alſo; and finds that the Royal Bridegroom downweighs them all; and therefore he is peremptorily reſolved, whatever becomes of them, he will never leave him.

2. The believer takes Chriſt with a ſincere purpoſe never to part with him, however unkindly his Lord may carry himſelf towards him; 'Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him,' Job xiii. 15. This is his deſign, although he may be very hardly beſtead in keeping his ground in a time of trial: but in the day of eſpouſals, the ſoul ſees there is no help in any other, and reſolves, that if it die, it ſhall die at his door.

And thus, in the ſpiritual eſpouſals, the voice of the bride, ſweetly anſwers the voice of the Bridegroom; *I will betrothe thee*, ſaith he, *unto me for ever*. *Amen*, ſays the bride, *for ever, ever, ever*.

Allow me here to diſtinguiſh this eternity, this *for ever* of the bride, in three parts, each of which ſhe has in view, in her cloſing with the marriage-covenant.

1. She has in view the beginning of that eternity, which is from the very moment wherein ſhe is eſpouſed. So ſhe is to be altogether his, from that moment. Chriſt ſays, 'To-day if ye will hear my voice;' ſhe dare not ſay, To morrow; no, not the next hour; for that would be a day or an hour kept back of eternity, covenanted away to him, and now no more her own.

2. She has in view the remaining time-piece of that eternity, which lies on this ſide death, Pſal. cxix. 112. 'I have inclined my heart to perform thy ſtatutes alway, even unto the end.' She foreſees there will be many difficult ſteps in her way through that piece of it: but now, that we have once met, ſaith her ſoul on this ſide death, we ſhall never part. 'Whither thou goeſt, I will go; and where thou lodgeſt, I will lodge: thy people ſhall be my people, and thy God my God,' Ruth i. 16. The conſideration of theſe difficulties ſtirs up the ſoul to take hold of Chriſt for that part of the *ever*, Pſal. xlviii. 14. 'This God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death.'

3. In the eſpouſals the ſoul has a view to death, the entrance of proper eternity. The work we have in hand is weighty indeed; it is work for eternity. I think I may ſay, there will not be a ſoul eſpouſed to Chriſt, nor a worthy communicant at the table of the Lord, in this place this day, who will not do their death-bed work here, as if they were fully perſuaded they ſhould never go from the place they ſit upon, but in their coffins. If they take Chriſt, ſurely they take him for ever.

There are two things, which, how long ſoever men may put off, yet they will find neceſſary to do them on their death-beds; one is, to diſpoſe of their ſouls for eternity; the other is, to diſpoſe of their effects, whatſoever they have in the world: both theſe will be done by the worthy communicant at the Lord's table, or whereſoever any ſhall be eſpouſed to Chriſt this day.

(1.) Whoſoever ſhall here be eſpouſed to Chriſt, will diſpoſe of his ſoul for eternity here, as if he were on his death bed. Obſerve how the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, as if he had been to draw his laſt breath, Pſal. xxxi. 5. 'Into thine hand I commit my ſpirit.' So conſenting to the covenant now, is but doing our death-bed work betimes. And there is good reaſon to do it now; for we know not at what hour our Lord will come. They who manage this work aright, will ſurely act for eternity, which they have in their view.

(2.) Whoſoever ſhall here be eſpouſed to Chriſt, will here diſpoſe of all that he has, as if he were lying on his deathbed. And indeed the ſoul's joining with Chriſt, is a dying after a ſort; therefore it is very natural the man make his will, ſeeing he is a dying. It is a dying unto ſin, and ſo he will ſolemnly give up with ſin, leaving all his guilt to be caſt into the ſea of the Redeemer's blood; leaving all his luſts to be broken by the Redeemer's ſanctifying Spirit. It is a dying to the world; and ſo he will give up all his earthly enjoyments to Jeſus Chriſt, pleading no more right to diſpoſe of them himſelf hereafter, than a dead man can claim to. Whoſo give themſelves to the Lord, will make a tender of their relations to him alſo, that they likewiſe may be his; and will lay down at his feet their houſes or lands, liberty and life, and whatſoever is dear to them in the world.

Thus in the eſpouſals, the believer diſpoſeth of his all as on a deathbed, leaving all to the Lord; taking him for and inſtead of all for ever. For the eſpouſals are for ever in deſign, in the deſign of both parties.

SECONDLY, The eſpouſals betwixt Chriſt and the ſoul are *for ever in fact*. As this match is deſigned to be everlaſting, ſo it is everlaſting indeed. It ſhall never end, but laſt it ſhall, from the moment it is made, through all the ages of eternity.

1. It is everlaſting, without interruption.
2. It is everlaſting, without expiring.

Firſt, It is *everlaſting without interruption*: it ſhall never be broken. The marriage covenant betwixt Chriſt and his ſpouſe, is not like Adam's covenant, where a man might be in this day, and out to morrow; nay, it is a bond of peace with God, which the believer ſhall never be ſhaken out of. The ſpouſe of Chriſt receives a kingdom which cannot be moved, Heb. viii. 28. Marriage covenants among men may be broken, before the time come wherein they would expire of courſe: but the marriage covenant betwixt Chriſt and believers is not liable to ſuch uncertainties. If the relation could become extinct in any caſe, it would come to paſs in one or all of theſe four; 1. In the caſe of the adverſity of either party. 2. In the caſe of the advancement of either party. 3. In the caſe of deſertion. Or, 4. In the caſe of the ſpouſe's unchaſtity. But in none of theſe caſes is the covenant broken, or the relation extinguiſhed.

1ſt, The eſpouſals betwixt Chriſt and the believer ſtands firm, in the caſe of the adverſity of either party. This caſe is fatal to many covenants among men, of whom there are many who are like the 'great graſhoppers which 'camp in the hedges in the cold day: but when the ſun 'ariſeth they fly away.' They ſtick cloſe in a time of proſperity, but adverſity drives them off, and they renounce the covenant. But, in this covenant, the parties will never break with one another, how low ſoever either of them be brought.

(1.) Chriſt will not break with his ſpouſe, though ſhe be brought very low; he will cleave to her in her greateſt adverſity. If thou be eſpouſed to Chriſt, though thy worldly comforts fail, poverty and want overtake thee; yea, though thou be brought ſo low by diſtreſs as to be unable to do any thing for thyſelf or thy Huſband; yet know, that in that caſe the covenant ſtands firm. Our Lord will not diſown his ſpouſe though ſhe be going in rags. Job was very low before that God turned his captivity; but as low as he was, the Lord owns his relation to him, Job xlii. 7, 8. 'Ye have not ſpoken of me the 'thing that is right, as my ſervant Job hath. Go to my 'ſervant Job, and my ſervant Job will pray for you, for 'him will I accept: ye have not ſpoken of me the thing 'which is right, like my ſervant Job.' Four times in theſe two verſes, the Lord calls him his ſervant Job. And thus the covenant ſweetens what is bitter in the believer's lot, and makes his thorny crown of afflictions better than a crown of gold.

(2.) Chriſt's ſpouſe will not break with him when he is in adverſity. The apoſtle ſpeaks of the afflictions of Chriſt, to wit, in the members of his body. Theſe offend hypocrites; and in ſuch a time many of them fall off; but Chriſt's people *follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goeth.* Though enemies ſhould prevail to lay Jeruſalem in heaps, they will *favour the very duſt thereof* for his ſake. They will take part with him, though all the world ſhould ſide againſt him; they will never break with their Lord and Huſband, upon the account of the moſt bitter cup his enemies can fill up to them.

2dly, The eſpouſals ſtand firm in the caſe of the advancement of either party. This caſe has been fatal to ſome matches among men: but here *lordſhip does not change manners.* The bride makes choice of Chriſt for her head and huſband, while the world generally deſpiſes and rejects him. The day approacheth wherein ſhe ſhall ſee him come in the clouds of heaven, in the glory of his Father, with all his holy angels, ſit down on his throne, judge the world, and put all his enemies under his feet: but will he then forget the ſoul that is now eſpouſed to him? No. When 'our God ſhall come, and ſhall call 'to the heavens from above, and to the earth that he may 'judge his people;' behold how the eſpouſed ſoul is remembered; 'Gather my ſaints together unto me, thoſe 'that have made a covenant with me by ſacrifice.' On the other hand, howbeit the proſperity of fools ſhall deſtroy them, yet the ſpouſe of Chriſt will never change her huſband, however proſperous her outward condition be. As the world's frowns will not frighten, ſo its ſmiles will not entice a believer away from Chriſt. He will contemn its bribes as well as its boaſts, Cant. viii. 7. 'If 'a man would give all the ſubſtance of his houſe for 'love, it would be utterly contemned.'

3dly, The eſpouſals ſtand firm, and the covenant remains ſure, even in the caſe of deſertion on either ſide. And this is a caſe which often falls out in the preſent ſtate and courſe of the ſpiritual marriage.

(1.) Sometimes the Lord, for holy ends, deſerts his ſpouſe in great meaſure: then the ſoul, that was dandled on the knee is caſt down; ſhe, that was crowned with loving kindneſs, has the crown kicked off her head: but though the marriage covenant is hid from her, it is not torn in pieces; ſtill the relation ſtands, and there is no total deſertion in the caſe, Jer. xxxii. 40. 'And I will 'make an everlaſting covenant with them, that I will 'not turn away from them to do them good.'

(2.) Sometimes the fooliſh creature deſerts her huſband, ceaſeth to entertain actual communion with Chriſt; then does ſhe gad about among created things, as if ſhe had her choice yet to make; and ſhe begins to neſtle in ſome forbidden place. But her Lord will not ſo part with her; he will ſet fire to her neſt, and graciouſly bring her back again, as the Pſalmiſt prays, Pſal. cxix. 176. 'I have gone aſtray like a loſt ſheep; ſeek thy ſervant.' Chriſt's ſpouſe never totally forſakes him; for ſo runs the everlaſting covenant with reſpect to her part, 'I 'will put my fear in their hearts, that they ſhall not de'part from me,' Jer. xxxii. 40.

Laſtly, But what ſhall we ſay in the caſe of the unchaſtity of the ſpouſe of Chriſt? We muſt not ſpeak wickedly for God, Job xiii. 7. It is evident from the Lord's word, that even in that caſe, the eſpouſals ſtand firm, and the covenant remains ſure, Jer. iii. 13, 14. 'Thou——haſt ſcattered thy ways to the ſtrangers, under 'every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, ſaith 'the Lord. Turn, O backſliding children, ſaith the Lord, 'for I am married unto you.' Our caſe is deſperate, if the infirmities of Chriſt's ſpouſe make void the marriage-covenant. But ſurely our Lord will put a difference betwixt *weakneſs* and *wickedneſs*; and we know no ſin a believer falls into but ſins of infirmity. 'For ſin ſhall not 'have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, 'but under grace,' Rom. vi. 14. There is a clauſe in the covenant touching the miſcarriages of believers: 'If 'his children forſake my law, and walk not in my judg'ments; then will I viſit their tranſgreſſion with the 'rod, and their iniquity with ſtripes. Nevertheleſs, my 'loving kindneſs will I not utterly take from him, nor ſuffer 'my faithfulneſs to fail,' Pſal. lxxxix. 30, 31, 32, 33.

Look not on this doctrine as a pillow for carnal ſecurity: for although theſe who are eſpouſed to Chriſt need not fear *putting away*, there remains enough to frighten them, while their ſins may be purſued with ſtrokes upon their bodies, even to death itſelf; and with terrible ſtrokes on their ſouls, even to the *arrows of the Almighty* being within them, *the poiſon whereof drinketh up their ſpirit*, Job vi. 4. Yea, one ſin in them may be puniſhed with ſuffering them to fall into another. And ſo a believer has that to fear which is more to be feared than hell, if of all evils ſin be the greateſt. And he ſpoke right who ſaid, "That if on the one ſide were preſented unto him the "evil of ſin, and on the other ſide the torments of hell, "he would rather chuſe to fall into hell, than fall in ſin."

The ſum of the matter is this: Our Lord has brought his ſpouſe, into a paradiſe on earth, while *the rebellious dwell in a dry land*; and of the tree of life ſhe may freely eat; but, under the pain of her Lord's diſpleaſure, ſhe muſt not taſte the forbidden fruit. Nevertheleſs, the day ſhe eats thereof, is not the term day, that ſhe muſt remove; nay, but he will chaſtiſe her, till ſhe vomit up the ſweet morſel. And he may ſo bruiſe her in his hot diſpleaſure, as her faith and hope may be expiring; yea, ſhe may loſe her life in the cauſe; only the covenant ſtands ſure, the eſpouſals are not diſannulled. The believing Corinthians provoked the Lord by unworthy communicating; and *for this cauſe many ſleep*, viz. the ſleep of death, which they ſhall not awake out of till the reſurrection. They profaned the ſacrament of his body and blood, which many do, and yet prolong their lives: but he made their bodies to fall, he would not ſo wink at it in them. But when God ſent their bodies to the grave *for this cauſe*, did he ſend their ſouls to hell for it likewiſe? No; they were within the bond of the covenant; but God purſued them ſo hard for it in this world, becauſe they were not to be purſued for it in another world; ver. 31. ‘But when we are judged, we are chaſtened of ‘ the Lord, that we ſhould not be condemned with the ‘ world.’ So that the marriage-covenant betwixt Chriſt and believers is everlaſting, without interuption.

Secondly, It is *everlaſting, without expiring*. When a man has a leaſe of houſes or lands, though the tack be not broken, yet at length the years run out, and it expires of courſe: when a man marries a woman, though there be neither adultery nor wilful deſertion in the caſe, yet the marriage-bond is diſſolved at length on the death of either party: but the years of this covenant will run on through eternity, but never run out: the marriage betwixt Chriſt and believers will never expire.

1ſt, It does not expire at death. The eſpouſed bride muſt die indeed; but the marriage covenant ſhall not die with her. The time comes that the believer's laſt pulſe beats, and the ſilver cord that tied his ſoul and body together, is looſed; but even then the golden cord of the marriage covenant remains faſt. The children begotten of his body are no more his; the wife of his boſom is then free; but the eſpouſals betwixt Chriſt and his ſoul continueth firm; he is ſtill *joined to the Lord*, and one ſpirit with him. He is carried to the land of forgetfulneſs; but if his duſt could ſpeak in the houſe of ſilence, it might ſay, on as good grounds as ever, ‘ My beloved ‘ is mine, and I am his;’ for the believer's death is but a ſleep, John xi. 11. ‘ Our friend Lazarus ſleepeth;’ Though dead, yet ſtill our friend. Nay, when his duſt is ſcattered here and there, and the ſteams of his body are flying through the air, they are well wrapt up in the bond of the covenant, which inſures the believer's reſurrection; as our Lord himſelf teacheth, while he proves it from Moſes's calling the Lord, *the God of Abraham*.

2dly, It does not expire with the world's ending. This world will have an end: but the marriage covenant will never end. This world's ending ſhall be by fire: 2 Pet. iii. 20. ‘ But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in ‘ the night, in the which the heavens ſhall paſs away ‘ with a great noiſe, and the elements ſhall melt with ‘ fervent heat, the earth alſo and the works that are there‘ in, ſhall be burnt up.’ What will then become of the farms and merchandiſe, great or ſmall, which now keep many from the marriage of the King's Son they are bidden to, and leave them no appetite for the goſpel feaſt? But theſe who now come into the marriage covenant, ſhall lay up ſomething for themſelves this day, which the fire of that dreadful day ſhall not reach; for though that fire ſhall burn up mountains, caſtles, and palaces, deſtroy the rights and evidences of lands and honours, handed down from father to ſon, yet it ſhall not be able to burn the marriage contract. ‘ For the mountains ſhall depart, ‘ and the hills be removed, but my kindneſs ſhall not de‘ part from thee, neither ſhall the covenant of my peace ‘ be removed, ſaith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.’

But why do I ſpeak of the expiring of that marriage, when the world ends? For, when the laſt day is come, the marriage of the lamb is come; the marriage betwixt Chriſt and his ſpouſe ſhall then be ſolemnized.

Let us take a view of the ſolemnizing and conſummation of the marriage betwixt Chriſt and believers; it is within the compaſs of that clauſe in the text, *for ever*. I ſhall give it in theſe ſeven particulars.

1. At the laſt day the Royal Bridegroom ſhall come out of his Father's houſe, his ivory palaces, the higheſt heavens, in the robes of his glory, attended with all his holy angels, Matth. xxv. 31.

2. The bride ſhall come out of her mother's houſe, the houſe of *mother-earth*, Job i. 21. the grave, that darkſome, narrow, lonely houſe. But it ſhall be a joyful outgoing; never bride had the like. Hear the mirth that will be at that outgoing, Iſa. xxvi. 19. ‘ Thy dead men ‘ ſhall live, together with my dead body ſhall they ariſe: ‘ awake and ſing, ye that dwell in duſt.’ This is a prophecy, which will not till then have its full accompliſhment. Behold the glorious train of angels, whom ‘ he ‘ ſhall ſend to gather together his elect from the four ‘ winds, from one end of heaven to the other,’ Matth. xxiv. 31. And all ſhall rejoice together, for ‘ with glad‘ neſs and rejoicing ſhall they be brought,’ Pſal. xlv. 15.

3. The bride ſhall be preſented to the Bridegroom; ſhe ſhall ‘ meet the Lord in the air,’ 1 Theſſ. iv. 17. She ſees now his lovely picture, in the word of the everlaſting goſpel; but then ſhe ſhall ſee him in perſon. She is preſented *as a chaſte virgin to Chriſt*, 2 Cor. xi. 2. Look upon the bride as preſented that day; where are all her former deformities? ſhe is preſented, *not having ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing*, Eph. v. 27. Where is all her former blackneſs? ſhe *ſhines forth as the ſun*, Matth. xiii. 43. Where are all her rags? *She is brought unto the king, in raiment of needle work*, Pſal. xlv. 14.

4. The witneſſes are preſent; the whole congregation of heaven and earth, to be witneſſes to the marriage. There is the glorious company of holy angels; there is the black company of the wicked, of whom many were wont to ſatisfy themſelves to be only ſpectators of the eſpouſals; and now to their eternal confuſion, they ſhall be ſpectators, and *but* ſpectators.

5. Then the royal Bridegroom ſhall ſolemnly take his eſpouſed bride in marriage, before the world, angels, and men, ſaying, ‘ Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit ‘ the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of ‘ the world,’ Matth. xxv. 34. And in token thereof, he ſhall ſet her down with himſelf on his throne, ‘ To him ‘ that overcometh will I grant to ſit with me in my ‘ throne.’ Rev. iii. 21.

6. There ſhall be a glorious triumph over the enemies of Chriſt and his ſpouſe. All the wicked world ſhall ſtand trembling before them, and be driven from before the throne, in conſequence of that fearful ſentence, ‘ De‘ part from me ye curſed, into everlaſting fire prepared ‘ for the devil and his angels.’ Matth. xxv. 41.

Laſtly, Chriſt and his ſpouſe ſhall be the laſt on the field, and when they have ſeen the backs of all their enemies, they ſhall go and enter into the King's palace, where they ſhall ſit down to the marriage ſupper of the Lamb, at a table that ſhall never be drawn.

So the marriage expires not with the world's ending, but is then ſolemnized and conſummated.

Shall we proceed any farther in queſt of that, which we are ſure we ſhall never find? We have looked into death, and we find the marriage expires not there; we have looked to the world's ending, it is ſo far from expiring then, that then it is conſummated; if we attempt to go further, we loſe ourſelves in the boundleſs ocean of eternity. Let us ſtop then, and conclude, that the bleſſed eſpouſals are for ever; that the ſpiritual marriage, betwixt Chriſt and believers, never never expires.

I proceed to the *Application*. And the only uſe I ſhall make of this doctrine is to exhort you to be for ever eſpouſed to Chriſt. Chriſt makes offer of himſelf to every ſoul here this day; and we are come in his name to gain your conſent thereto. O come into this bleſſed match: accept of Jeſus Chriſt, to be your Huſband for ever. Shall we not prevail in a treaty ſo very much for your advantage? Howſoever it be entertained, we muſt proclaim the royal Bridegroom's will and pleaſure, and make ſuit to your hearts. Therefore ‘ hearken unto me, that God ‘ may hearken unto you.’

Firſt, Are there any in all this company who have an unſtable, falſe, and fickle heart, that they can never get fixed, but ſtill it breaks all bounds? No doubt there are. To ſuch I ſay, Here is a ſuitable match for you. Come into the marriage covenant, put that heart in Chriſt's hand: theſe whom he eſpouſeth, he eſpouſeth for ever. If ye cannot keep the covenant, the covenant will keep you. The covenant of works could never keep an unſtable heart, the condition of it being perfect obedience, without the leaſt failure; a condition ye cannot fulfil, and therefore ye can have no hope from that covenant. I know the ſhifts ſome make to delude themſelves, by patching up a baſtard covenant of works, wherein they engage not with Jeſus Chriſt as a Head and Huſband, to live by him, being united to him, but they covenant with him only as a maſter, to give him their work for wages. Surely this covenant of your own making will never keep you: your hearts, howſoever you watch them, will break it; but the marriage covenant will ſecure the moſt unſtable heart amongſt us: ſo that it ſhall be as the tree whoſe root remains fixed in the earth, howbeit the branches are ſhaken by the wind. Though the ſpouſe of Chriſt may be toſſed to and fro by the blaſts of temptation, yet ‘ the ‘ root of the righteous ſhall not be moved.’ Prov. xii. 3.

Secondly, Are there any here that are mourning for their deceaſed relations? or any that are afraid of ſuch a mournful occaſion abiding them? Here is a ſuitable match for ſuch perſons, the King immortal offers to betrothe you unto him for ever. Ye cannot think of parting with your dear relations, but with greateſt ſorrow of heart. Ye that are of that diſpoſition will find a relative ſuitable to your mind by coming into this marriage covenant. The Lord Jeſus Chriſt will take you into the neareſt relation with himſelf; he is willing to eſpouſe you, and being once eſpouſed, ye ſhall never part. Death who ſnatcheth the huſband from the wife, and the child from the parent, cannot prevail here; and ſhall never be able to ſeparate betwixt Chriſt and theſe that are eſpouſed to him, Rom. viii. 38, 39. ‘ Neither death nor life ſhall be able ‘ to ſeparate us from the love of God which is in Chriſt ‘ Jeſus our Lord.’

Thirdly, Are there any who know not how to get ſafe through the world in the evil day? Here is a ſuitable match for you: be eſpouſed to Chriſt; he will go betwixt you and all hazards. How bad ſoever the times be, they will ſtill be within the compaſs of that clauſe in the text, *for ever*. And our Lord offers himſelf to be a Head and Huſband to us for the evil day. If it be a dark day, he will be a light to you, if it be a day of war, he will cover your head; if it be a day of ſearching of corners, he will hide you in heaven. Embrace the covenant, and then, although ye ſing the triumph before the victory, ye ſhall not be aſhamed, Pſal. xlix. 5. ‘ Wherefore ſhould I fear ‘ in the days of evil?’

Fourthly, Are there any who have none to provide for them? or any under fears, that they will be in a deſtitute and helpleſs condition? Come ye into this match, and ye ſhall never want a Proviſor, who will ſurely furniſh you all that you need; ‘ Verily thou ſhalt be fed:’ yea, ‘ in the days of famine thou ſhall be ſatisfied,’ Pſal. xxxvii. 3. 19. Even your daily bread is ſecured to you by the covenant, Iſa. xxxiii. 16. ‘ Bread ſhall be given ‘ him, his water ſhall be ſure.’ The carnal world will laugh at this, and bid us ſit down and dine upon it; but they cannot laugh the people of God out of their experience, whoſe conſciences bear witneſs, that they have dined ſometimes more ſweetly upon a promiſe of the covenant, than it is poſſible for carnal men to do at their moſt plentiful tables.

Fifthly, Are there any here that have been ranging through the creation, ſeeking ſomething commenſurable to the deſires of their immortal ſpirits, but could never yet find it? Ye have not failed to meet with diſappointments, even where your hopes have been moſt raiſed: and whitherſoever ye have turned yourſelves, ye have ſtill come away diſſatisfied; ye have tried many methods to attain to ſatisfaction, and none of them has anſwered your deſign. Be perſuaded to make trial of this: embrace Chriſt in the marriage-covenant, and be aſſured he will be to you a complete *covering of the eyes*, and a reſt to your heart for ever, Pſal. lxxiii. 25. ‘ Whom have I in ‘ heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I ‘ deſire beſides thee.’

Sixthly, Are there any whom no body cares for, who are rejected at every door? Our Lord will receive you; for ‘ he gathereth together the outcaſts of Iſrael,’ Pſal. cxlvii. 2. His family, ſo far as it is made up of the children of men, is made up of foundlings: Iſrael was a poor foundling; Egypt would lodge them no longer; Canaan would not take them in: but when they were caſt at all hands, the Lord took them up, Deut. xxxii. 10. *He found him in a deſart land, and in the waſte howling wilderneſs: he led him about, he inſtructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.* So, however forlorn your caſe be, he will bring you into the bond of the marriage-covenant.

Ye have a ſcripture full to this purpoſe, repreſenting the caſe of the Jews, whom the Lord took into covenant with himſelf, but applicable to every ſoul whom Chriſt eſpouſeth, Ezek. xvi. 5. ‘ Thou waſt caſt out into the ‘ open field, to the lothing of thy perſon.’ ver. 8. ‘ I ‘ ſpread my ſkirt over thee, and covered thy nakedneſs: ‘ yea, I ſware unto thee, and entered into a covenant ‘ with thee, ſaith the Lord God, and thou becameſt mine.’ It is evident there is an alluſion here to the inhuman cuſtom of expoſing of infants. The Lord ſhews all theſe whom he has eſpouſed, what a ſad caſe he found them in, and how graciouſly he dealt with them in that caſe.

Thou waſt caſt out into the open field; thy caſe was as ill as that of expoſed outcaſt infants. Now, that barbarous cuſtom we find was, to leave the infants in ſome place where they might periſh, if ſome body did not take them up, as Pharaoh's daughter did Moſes, Exod. ii. Such was thy caſe, being abandoned of all, and unable to help thyſelf. This barbarity was exerciſed on thoſe infants that were lame or deformed, and who were not like to be uſeful to the commonwealth. So Chriſt's bride has nothing promiſing about her in the day he begins to manifeſt himſelf unto her; no beauty for which ſhe is to be deſired. Sometimes they expoſed infants to periſh by the waters; ſometimes they laid them down in woods or deſarts, where they might be a prey to ravenous beaſts: accordingly thou waſt caſt out in *the open field*, even *the waſte howling wilderneſs*, Deut. xxxi. 10. Thus the ſinner lay a ready prey for the devourer, and ſo thy caſe was as ill as that of expoſed infants.

But that is not all; it was worſe than theirs uſually was: they were *laid out*, but thou waſt *caſt out; to*, or *in, the lothing of thy perſon*, as ſome abominable thing men cannot endure to look at. When they were expoſed, they were either put in a kind of cloſe baſket, or in an earthen pot; but ſo much kindneſs was not ſhown to *thee; thou waſt caſt out in the open field*, or (as the word is) *to the face of the field;* thrown to, and left upon the bare ground without the leaſt ſhelter.

But it was yet worſe; when infants were expoſed, they were ſwathed and adorned, yea, and precious things, as gold, jewels, rings, were laid down with them for the charges either of their education or burial, if any that found them ſhould be at the pains to do either of theſe unto them. *But I covered thy nakedneſs*, ſaith our Lord. As for theſe whom he takes up, there is nothing to be got by them; it is of mere free grace, that he takes notice of them to help them. They have not ſo much as to cover their nakedneſs.

Now, behold how grace abounds to the foundling: *I entered into a covenant with thee, and thou becameſt mine.* If one freeborn had been expoſed, he loſt his freedom, and paſſed into a ſervile ſtate: but theſe whom our Lord takes up, he does not enſlave them, but eſpouſe them unto himſelf.

Finally, obſerve, That the firſt covering the Lord caſts upon the naked foundling, is the marriage robe, the robe of his own righteouſneſs. He does not delay the eſpouſals till the bride be brought into a better condition than he found her in; but takes her as ſhe is, and, eſpouſing her, covers her nakedneſs; *I ſpread my ſkirt over thee, and* ſo *covered thy nakedneſs.*

O the riches and freedom of grace! Let theſe that are eſpouſed to Chriſt already be humble; and the worſt of ſinners, who are willing now to take him, be encouraged to come forward *unto the marriage.*

Seventhly, Are there any amongſt us, who are difficulted in theſe weighty points of greateſt concernment, to wit, How they ſhall ſafely die, and go into another world; how they ſhall ſtand before the great tribunal? Hearken ye to this offer, Jeſus Chriſt, the Lord of the other world, is willing to betrothe you unto himſelf for ever. Can there be ſuch a proper expedient for the buſineſs of another world, as to be eſpouſed unto the Lord of that world?

Can there be ſuch a proper expedient for a comfortable ſtanding before the tribunal, as to be joined now, in a marriage covenant, to the Judge that ſits on that tribunal?

Laſtly, Are there here any of the children of Adam, who have fallen off from God's favour, and are under his wrath? the gate of heaven is ſhut upon you; and ye are in danger of periſhing for ever: accept of Jeſus Chriſt for your Head and Huſband; ſo ſhall ye be reinſtated into the favour of God, and made happy for ever. 'For ſo an 'entrance ſhall be miniſtered unto you abundantly into 'the everlaſting kingdom of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.'

This offer is made unto you all without exception, Rev. xxii. 17. 'Whoſoever will, let him take the water 'of life freely.' The Bridegroom is ſtretching out his hand, in order to join with you in the marriage covenant; and will not ye *ſtretch out* your *hand unto God?* Will ye not give your conſent to the Son of God, to be eſpouſed unto him for ever? Before ye adventure to refuſe, there are three things I would beg of you as rational creatures.

1. Before ye refuſe to be eſpouſed to Chriſt, conſider how ye will diſpoſe of yourſelves to greater advantage. Will your betaking yourſelves into the devil's fields to feed inſatiable luſts, be to your greater advantage, than to partake of Chriſt and the benefits of his covenant? If ye reckon ſo, ye will find to your eternal loſs, ye have reckoned amiſs.

2. Before ye refuſe it, conſider how ye will do without it. You may make ſhift to live at eaſe in the world, without being eſpouſed to Chriſt: but conſider, how will ye die without it? how will ye ſtand before the tribunal of God without it?

Laſtly, Before ye refuſe this offer of the eſpouſals, make it ſure, that ye ſhall have another offer thereof; and that upon this refuſal, the ſentence ſhall not paſs againſt you. 'For I ſay unto you, that none of thoſe men, which were 'bidden, ſhall taſte of my ſupper.' If it do paſs againſt you, ye are ruined; therefore do not adventure to *refuſe him that ſpeaketh from heaven;* but give yourſelves away to him in the everlaſting marriage-covenant.

Let none raiſe objections againſt themſelves, to hold them off from embracing the covenant. There is as much in the very propoſal of it, as may take off all your objections, 'I will betrothe thee unto me for ever; yea, 'I will betrothe thee unto me in righteouſneſs, and in 'judgment, and in loving-kindneſs, and in mercies. I 'will even betrothe thee unto me in faithfulneſs, and 'thou ſhalt know the Lord.'

But neceſſity has no law. In vain do we ſtand to diſpute, whether or not we ſhall take that way, which we *muſt* needs take, or inevitably periſh. Ye *muſt* be eſpouſed to Chriſt, or God will be your enemy through the ages of eternity. Ye muſt either be eſpouſed to Chriſt for ever, or ye muſt be damned for ever, Mark xvi. 16. 'He that believeth not, ſhall be damned.' If ye reject this marriage covenant, ye muſt die in your ſins. But why will ye judge yourſelves unworthy of eternal life, and reject the counſel of God againſt yourſelves? Will ye fly in the face of the grand device of the wiſdom of God for the ſalvation of ſinners? There is no ſalvation out of this covenant, *ſtrangers* to it *have no hope*, Eph. ii. 12. Wherefore, ye muſt either join yourſelves to the Lord in the covenant of peace, or he will have war with you for ever.

This covenant is drawn with the precious blood of the Royal Bridegroom; it is the *new teſtament in his blood*. Behold how he loved his bride, in whom there was nothing lovely! O trample not upon *the blood of the everlaſting covenant!*

Now, let your hearts give anſwer before the Lord unto theſe few queſtions.

Firſt, Are ye pleaſed with the Bridegroom? His Father is pleaſed with him, the angels and ſaints are pleaſed with him; and are ye not pleaſed with him? He is ſo far pleaſed with the worſt of you, as to take you for his ſpouſe; 'I will betrothe thee unto me for ever.' Are you pleaſed to take him for your Huſband?

Secondly, Are ye willing to renounce all your former lovers, and to part with all your luſts for ever? Aſſure yourſelves, if ye take him, ye muſt let theſe go away. God's covenant is a holy covenant; and ye will bring a curſe upon you, inſtead of a bleſſing, if ye come to ſeek a ſhelter to any one luſt under it.

Thirdly, Are ye content to take Chriſt in all his offices? will ye receive him as your Prophet, to teach you? as your Prieſt, to ſave you by his death and ſufferings? as your King, to reign and rule over you? Art thou content to give up thy own will to him, and that *thy deſire ſhall be to thy huſband*, to grant it, or withhold it, as he ſeeth meet; ſo that thou ſhalt be no more at thine own diſpoſal, but wholly at his?

Laſtly, Will ye take him for ever, from this moment, for proſperity and adverſity, for life and death, for time and eternity?

If it be ſo with you indeed, then ye are eſpouſed to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt for ever; and welcome to the feaſt of the eſpouſals at his table: but, if not, ye will get a long eternity to repent this refuſal, unleſs you change your mind, and repent of it in time.

The Myſtery of Chriſt in the Form of a Servant.

A Sermon preached at the Adminiſtration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

PHILIP. ii. 7.

And took upon him the form of a ſervant.

OUR holy religion is a religion of *myſteries;* myſteries of *faith*, and myſteries of *practice*, neither of which can one be let into, without ſupernatural grace. The myſteries of *faith*, do, *all* of them lead into *practice;* yea, theſe which are moſt *ſublime*, the more they are truly *believed*, the more do they influence men to *holineſs*. Wherefore the apoſtle, in the context, to preſs the Philippians unto the *practice* of *moral duties*, particularly to *love their neighbour as themſelves*, and for that end to deny *themſelves*, and *condeſcend* to *others* for their good; lays before them, to be *believed*, that conſtellation of *myſteries* appearing in the *incarnation* of the Son of God: a motive to *good works*, unknown to the Jewiſh Rabbies, but ſealed in the experience of believers, as the moſt powerful *incentive* to *univerſal holineſs*.

In this verſe are three of theſe myſteries. The firſt, which is the leading one, is, that 'Chriſt Jeſus being in 'the form of God, not thinking it robbery to be equal 'with God, yet made himſelf of no reputation.' To *be in the form of God*, is to be *very* God, having the very nature and eſſence of God: the form being that which eſſentially diſtinguiſheth things, and makes a thing to be preciſely that which it is. And foraſmuch as the *form* is the foundation of his *equality* with God his Father; it can denote no leſs than his being *very* God: for no excellency whatſoever, really different from the divine eſſence, can found an equality with God; but ſtill there would remain as great a diſproportion as betwixt *finite* and *infinite*. Here then is a wonderful myſtery: Chriſt being the Supreme, the Moſt High God, equal with his

Father, emptied himſelf of his divine glory, laying it aſide, caſting a thick vail over it, for a time. The ſecond myſtery is, 'He took upon him the form of a ſervant.' Thus it was that he *emptied* himſelf. This *form*, to wit, of a *ſervant*, was the veil he drew over his divine glory: for ſo the original words run, 'But emptied himſelf, taking the form of a ſervant.' The third myſtery is, 'He was made in the likeneſs of men.' In regard of the *ſinfulneſs* cleaving to mens nature, which he was abſolutely free of, he is ſaid to have been made, not in a *ſameneſs* with, but in the *likeneſs* of, men; truly man in ſubſtance and nature, but without *ſin*, however *like* to ſinful fleſh he appeared, Rom. viii. 3. 'God ſending his own Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh.' This was it that was prerequiſite unto, and qualified him for, taking upon him the *form* of a *ſervant*, for ſo ſtand the words in the original, 'Taking the form of a ſervant, being made in the likeneſs of men.'

It is the ſecond of theſe myſteries, *And took upon him the form of a ſervant*, which I am to inſiſt upon. And two things here are to be opened; namely, *What the form of a ſervant is.* And, *What Chriſt's taking it upon him bears.* I begin with the latter of theſe.

Whatever is particularly meant by the *form of a ſervant*, it is plain, that in the general it denotes a mean and low condition. And our Lord's *taking it upon him*, imports, 1. That he voluntarily ſubmitted to it, for the ſake of poor ſinners. He was not *originally* in the form of a *ſervant*, as ſome men have been, who were born in a ſtate of ſervitude; nay, he was from eternity the Son of God, his Father's *equal*, but he, being Lord of heaven and earth, came, of his own accord, under the form of a *ſervant*. It was not laid upon him againſt his will; but he freely took it on himſelf, and became *bound*, when he might have continued *free*. 2. It imports, that what he was *before*, namely, very God, equal with the Father, he ſtill *continued* to be, notwithſtanding of his ſubmitting to the form of a ſervant. He *took upon him the form of a ſervant*; that is, continuing in the form of *God*, he took upon him the form of a *ſervant*.

By the *form of a ſervant*, is not underſtood the *likeneſs of a guilty man*. That expoſition weakens the force of the apoſtle's argument, and the force of that term, the form of God; though indeed the thing itſelf is truth, and is taught in the laſt clauſe of the verſe. Neither is it to be underſtood of man's nature, which in reſpect of God is ſervile: becauſe Chriſt's emptying of himſelf, conſiſting, according to the text, in his taking on the form of a ſervant, was ſurely over, in his exaltation, and the full manifeſtation of his divine glory; while yet his human nature remains. Neither doth that ſervile kind of condition, into which he was brought in his ſufferings, ſeem to explain ſufficiently the form of a ſervant, which he took upon himſelf.

The plain and literal ſenſe of theſe words I take to be the true ſenſe of them, viz. That the Son of God, our bleſſed Lord Jeſus Chriſt, really became a ſervant, as really as ever man did, who ſerved for his bread. He voluntarily took upon himſelf, that wherein the eſſence of that relation, on the ſervant's part doth conſiſt: and ſo was formally conſtitute a ſervant, to all intents and purpoſes of the bargain with him whoſe ſervant he became. As this is the literal ſenſe of the words, from which we are never to depart without neceſſity; ſo it is confirmed to be the genuine ſenſe, by the true import of that phraſe being in the form of God. His being in the form of God, denotes his being very God: therefore his taking upon him the form of a ſervant, muſt denote his becoming really a ſervant.

Now, the ſcripture repreſents Jeſus Chriſt, (1.) As a ſervant in his ſtate of humiliation, and ſo he is called, *a ſervant of rulers*, Iſa. xlix. 7. (2.) As a ſervant in his ſtate of exaltation, Iſa. liii. 21. 'By his knowledge ſhall my righteous ſervant juſtify many.' Compare Acts v. 31. 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Iſrael, and forgiveneſs of ſins.' It can hardly be a queſtion with any who reads the text and context, whether the form of a humbled ſervant, or of an exalted ſervant, is meant here? Our Lord Jeſus did take on both, the one in his humiliation, and the other in his exaltation: but it is evident, the former is here meant; and they are vaſtly different. The form of a humbled ſervant he ſubmitted to; the form of an exalted ſervant was conferred on him, as the reward of that ſubmiſſion. In this form of a ſervant, he has a moſt exalted miniſtry; being a ſervant, for whoſe law the iſles ſhall wait. 'For the Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son,' and hath 'given him all power in heaven and in earth.' Matth. xxviii. 18. But in that form the text ſpeaks of, he had a ſervice low and humble, a ſurety ſervice, a ſervitude: and ſo the form was the form of a bond ſervant. In both the one and the other, Joſeph was a type of him, being firſt ſold for a ſervant; and then exalted to be ruler over all Egypt under Pharaoh.

Here is a myſtery: Chriſt Jeſus, the Father's equal, became a ſervant for us, a bond man, or bond ſervant; for ſo the word properly ſignifies, and that word is uſed in that new teſtament phraſe which we read *bond or free*, or *bond and free*, 1 Cor. xii. 13. and other ſcriptures. The greateſt inequality found in any relation among men is in that betwixt a maſter and a ſervant, ſo the loweſt levelling among them is that mentioned, Iſ. xxiv. 2. 'It ſhall be, as with the ſervant, ſo with the maſter.' Then what unparallelled condeſcenſion, was this! God's equal becoming a ſervant for ſinners! Both theſe characters met together in Chriſt, in his ſtate of humiliation, Zech. xiii. 7. 'Awake, O ſword, againſt the man that is my fellow, ſaith the Lord.' Iſ. xlii. 1. 'Behold my ſervant;' the very ſame word that is rendered bond man, or bond ſervant.

Doct. *Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, continuing to be his Father's equal, humbled himſelf into a ſtate of ſervitude, and became his ſervant, his bond ſervant in man's nature, for poor ſinners of Adam's race.* This was a ſtep lower than his becoming man; but the lower it was, the higher did his free love to man appear.

I am aware that ſome who meaſure goſpel myſteries by their carnal reaſon, may be apt to ſay here, 'This is an hard ſaying, who can bear it?' But it is undeniable that Chriſt is expreſsly called God's ſervant in the holy ſcripture, Iſ. xlii. 1. 'Behold my ſervant whom I uphold,' &c. Zech. iii. 8. 'I will bring forth my ſervant the branch.' But what kind of a ſervant unto his Father was he? did he become a bond man, a bond ſervant? Yea, he did. Pſal. xl. 6. 'Sacrifice and offering thou didſt not deſire, mine ears haſt thou opened,' or, as in the margin 'Mine ears thou diggedſt through,' that is, boredſt, as it is well expreſſed in our pſalms in metre, 'Mine ears thou bored.' This hath a view to that law concerning the bond ſervant, Exod. xxi. 6. 'Then his maſter ſhall bring him unto the judges, he ſhall alſo bring him to the door, or unto the door poſt; and his maſter ſhall bore his ear through with an awl; and he ſhall ſerve him for ever.' This is confirmed from Hoſ. iii. 2. 'So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of ſilver.' In the original it is, 'So I digged her thorough to me,' &c. the ſame word being here uſed, as Pſal. xl. 6. It is a pregnant word, which is virtually two in ſignification: and the ſenſe is, I bought her, and bored her ear to my door poſt, to be my bond woman, according to the law, Deut. xv. 17. 'Thou ſhalt take an awl, and thruſt it through his ear into the door, and he ſhall be thy ſervant for ever, and alſo unto thy maid ſervant thou ſhalt do likewiſe.' The boring of her ear as a bond woman, was noways inconſiſtent with the prophet's betrothing of her to himſelf, ſee Exod. xxi. 8.

I ſhall only add, that his moſt precious life was ſold by Judas for thirty pieces of ſilver, the ſtated price of the life of a bond ſervant, Exod. xxi. 32. 'If the ox ſhall puſh a man ſervant or maid ſervant, he ſhall give unto their maſter thirty ſhekels of ſilver, and the ox ſhall be ſtoned.' And the death he was put to, was a Roman puniſhment, called by them the ſervile puniſhment, or puniſhment of bond ſervants: becauſe it was the death that bond men malefactors were doomed unto: free men ſeldom, according to law. And it is plain, that 'Joſeph who was ſold for a ſervant,' was therein a type of Chriſt.

Now, for the opening of this myſtery, of the ſtate of ſervitude the Lord of glory put himſelf into for ſinners, we ſhall conſider the following particulars. 1. To whom he became a ſervant. 2. For whom. 3. The neceſſity of it. 4. The contract of ſervice. 5. His fulfilling of it. 6. Wherefore he engaged in it.

I. *To whom he became a ſervant.* The Son of God, became a ſervant to man's great Lord and Maſter. He put himſelf in a ſtate of ſervitude to his Father, who ſaid unto him, 'Thou art my ſervant,' Iſa. xlix. 3. It was with his Father he entered into the contract of ſervice; it was his Father's buſineſs he was employed in, and to him he behoved to work, John ix. 4. 'I muſt work the work of him that ſent me.' So, howbeit our Lord Jeſus was and is, the Father's equal; yet he acknowledgeth the Father greater than he, as the Lord is greater than the ſervant, John xiv. 28. 'My Father is greater than I.' Chap. xiii. 16. 'The ſervant is not greater than his lord, neither he that is ſent, greater than he that ſent him.'

Chriſt is indeed called a ſervant of rulers, Iſa. xlix. 7. But not in reſpect of the prime ſervile relation he ſtood in; but in regard of a ſecondary occaſional relation; as when a maſter obligeth his ſervant to ſerve another man in any piece of buſineſs. Thus our Lord ſubjected himſelf to the Jewiſh and Roman rulers; he paid tribute, and was by them both treated as a ſervant. But herein he was ſtill about his Father's buſineſs.

II. *For whom he became a ſervant.* Our bleſſed Jeſus took on the ſervice *for* others, who were bound to it, but utterly unable for it. The cup is found in Benjamin's ſack; therefore poor Benjamin muſt be kept a bond man in Egypt: Nay, ſays Judah, 'Let me abide inſtead of the lad, a bond man to my Lord, and let Benjamin go.' Gen. xliv. 33. An elect world is found guilty before the Lord; they muſt therefore be bond men for ever as well as the reſt of mankind: Nay Father, ſaith our Lord, who *ſprang out of Judah*, that yoke will be utterly inſupportable to them: I will take their ſtate of ſervitude upon me, let that yoke be laid on my neck, let me be thy bond man in their ſtead; and let them go free. So be it, ſaid God, I am well pleaſed with the exchange; thou then 'art my ſervant, O Iſrael, in whom I will be glorified.' Iſa. xlix. 3. It is evident from the context, that Chriſt is the party therein ſpoke to. By Iſrael is meant the ſpiritual Iſrael, the elect of mankind. Rom. ix. 6. 'They are not all Iſrael who are of Iſrael.' The former text ſtands thus preciſely in the original, 'Thou art my ſervant; Iſrael, in whom I will glorify myſelf.' As if the Father had ſaid to Chriſt, Son, theſe are utterly unable to make out their ſervice, I cannot expect a good turn off their hand: be it known then, that it is agreed, that I take thee in their room, to perform the ſervice due in virtue of the original contract; thou art Iſrael's repreſentative in whom I will glorify myſelf; as I was diſhonoured by Iſrael the collective body of the elect. So it was for the elect Chriſt became a ſervant.

III. *The neceſſity of his becoming a ſervant for their ſalvation.* No doubt all mankind might have been left to periſh, without any imputation of injuſtice, either on the Father or the Son. The ſaving of any of the loſt race of Adam, was not a neceſſary act; but an act of ſovereign free grace. Howbeit, on the ſuppoſition that God would have an elect company ſaved, there was neceſſity of Chriſt's taking upon himſelf the *ſtate of ſervitude* for them. This will appear from the following particulars,

1. The elect of God were, with the reſt of mankind, conſtitute God's hired ſervants by the firſt covenant, and actually entered to that ſervice, in the firſt Adam. And in token of this, we are naturally inclined in that character to deal with God; though we are rendered incapable to perform the duty of it, Luke xv. 19. 'Make me as one of thy hired ſervants.' Their work was perfect obedience to the law; the hire they were to have for it was life: 'The man which doth thoſe things, ſhall live by them,' Rom. x. 5. The penalty of breaking away, was perpetual bondage under the curſe, Gal. iii. 10. 'Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law to do them.'

2. Howbeit they never made out their ſervice: but, by the time they were well entered home, they violated their *covenant of ſervice*, and brake away from their Maſter. So they loſt all plea for the hire; and juſtly became bond-men under the curſe of the broken covenant, liable for their malfices, to die the death of ſlaves, Gal. iv. 24. 'Theſe are the two covenants; the one from mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage.' Their falling under the curſe inferred the loſs of their liberty, and conſtituted them *bond men* for ever; as is evident from inſtances of the curſed in other caſes, as Gen. ix. 25. 'Curſed be Canaan; a ſervant of ſervants ſhall he be.' Joſh. ix. 23. 'Now therefore ye (the Gibeonites) are curſed, and there ſhall none of you be freed from being bond-men.' The very ground being curſed, falls under bondage, according to the ſcripture, Gal. iii. 13. 'Curſed is every one that hangeth on a tree;' which hath a ſpecial reſpect to dying on a croſs, the puniſhment for bond-men.

3. By the breaking of that covenant, they loſt all their ability for their ſervice, and were left *without ſtrength.* They had no ſuffering ſtrength to bear the puniſhment of their breaking away from their ſervice; but they muſt have for ever periſhed under it. They had no *doing* or *working* ſtrength left them; their work-arm was now quite broken, ſo that they could work none to any good purpoſe: nay, they had neither hand nor heart for their work again, Rom. viii. 7. 'The carnal mind——is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' So it was not poſſible for them to make out their ſervice, Joſh. xxiv. 19. 'Ye cannot ſerve the Lord.'

4. Howbeit, the puniſhment due unto them behoved to be borne; and the ſervice itſelf behoved to be made out, according to the covenant of works; elſe they could never have life and ſalvation. The truth of God inſured this, Gen. ii. 17. 'In the day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.' The honour of God's holy law and covenant required it, Iſa. xlii. 21. 'He will magnify the law, and make it honourable.' And his exact juſtice confirmed it, Gen. xviii. 25. 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?'

Laſtly, Since all this behoved to be done, and they could not do it; the ſervice behoved to be fulfilled, and they could by no means work it out: it was therefore abſolutely neceſſary, that Jeſus Chriſt ſhould come under the curſe due to them, take on himſelf the form, put himſelf in the room of the poor bond man, enter home to the ſervice in their ſtead, and transfer on himſelf their ſtate of ſervitude, Gal. iii. 13. *Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us: for it is written, Curſed is every one that hangeth on a tree.*

IV. *The contract of the ſervice.* It is the covenant of grace, made between the Father and Chriſt, the ſecond Adam, repreſenting all the elect his ſpiritual ſeed. The covenant of grace is juſtly looked upon as a covenant of ſervice, ſtrictly and properly ſo called; wherein ſo much work is to be done for ſo much wages. But it is a lamentable abuſe of the covenant of grace, by legaliſts in their principles, and of the communicants in their practice, that they put the work, for earning of wages, in the wrong hand; namely, that they ſhall be the workers, and eternal life be the hire of their work. This is to trample under foot God's covenant of grace, and make a new one of our own, which he will never approve of. Heaven's device in this caſe was, that Chriſt ſhould be the worker of life and ſalvation to poor ſinners; and that they ſhould get life and ſalvation through him; and ſo work from life received, as ſons intitled to the inheritance, Rom. iv. 4, 5. 'Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that juſtifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteouſneſs.' So the covenant of grace was, in reſpect of Chriſt, a *covenant of ſervice,* and the reward is of *debt* to him, and him only, as the ſervant that worked for it, according to the covenant; and none but he was fit for that ſervice.

Here conſider, 1. This contract of ſervice was entered into from eternity. The covenant, by which ſalvation is to be had, is not a covenant of yeſterday, or of to-day: it was made in every point thereof before the world was. What remains for us is to take hold of it by faith. 2. The deſign of it was, (1.) To illuſtrate the divine glory, much darkened by the hired ſervants of God's own houſe. There was, by ſin, an invaſion made upon God's declarative glory, and Jeſus Chriſt was choſen to make the reparation. So, whatever wrong was done to the holineſs and goodneſs of God, or any other divine perfection, by the ſin of thoſe in whoſe room he ſtood; it is laid upon him to repair it, Iſa. xlix. 3. (2.) To ſave loſt ſinners; to reſtore the Iſrael of God to life and favour. God had ſet his love from eternity on a ſelect company of mankind; they were loſt, and they muſt be ſaved; and Jeſus Chriſt enters into his Father's ſervice for that effect. 3. The ſervice which he undertook to perform, was, to fulfil the whole law for them; fully to anſwer the demands which the broken covenant of works had upon them, Heb. x. 9. 'Then ſaid he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.' Thus the parts of the ſervice were theſe two; (1.) His bearing the puniſhment which they were bound to in virtue of the penalty of the covenant of works. And hereby he was to ſatisfy the penalty of that covenant, the law's ſanction of death. (2.) His performing the obedience which they were bound to fulfil, by the ſame covenant of works, though broken. And hereby he was to ſatisfy the commanding part of that covenant, requiring perfect obedience for life, Gal. iv. 4, 5. 'God ſent forth his Son made 'under the law, to redeem them that were under the 'law.' Chap. iii. 13. 'Chriſt hath redeemed us from 'the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us.' 4. The covenanted reward of the ſervice was a glorious exaltation to himſelf, and eternal life for them. Of the former the apoſtle makes mention, Philip. ii. 9. 'Wherefore God 'alſo hath highly exalted him.' Of the latter, Tit. i. 2. 'In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promiſed before the world began.'

V. *The fulfilling of the ſervice, according to his contract.* It was a hard ſervice, but he went through with it, became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs. And herein three things are to be conſidered.

1. He entered to his ſervice, in bringing a holy human nature into the world, which he retained to the end. Thus he anſwered the demand the law had on them, for holineſs of nature, as a condition of life, Iſa. ix. 6. *Unto us a child is born*: even *that holy thing*, Luke i. 35. That this was a piece of the ſervice he performed for them, appears from Pſal. xl. 6. 'Sacrifice and offering 'thou didſt not deſire, mine ears thou haſt opened;' and Heb. x. 4. 'Sacrifice and offering thou wouldſt not, but 'a body haſt thou prepared me.' Where the boring of his ears to God's door poſt, in the room of the elect, is expounded of preparing him a body, a human nature.

2. He went on in his ſervice in the righteouſneſs of his life, being obedient unto death. All that he did while he lived upon earth, was the fulfilling of the whole law in its commands; which was that wherein Adam failed, and ſo ruined all mankind. And thus the great Surety ſervant anſwered the demand of the law, for perfect righteouſneſs of life: John xvi. 4. 'I have glorified 'thee on the earth: I have finiſhed the work thou gaveſt 'me to do.'

Laſtly, Having ſuffered all his life long, he finiſhed his ſervice in his death and burial; thus anſwering the law's demand of ſatisfaction for ſin, John xiv. 30. 'When 'Jeſus therefore had received the vinegar, he ſaid, It is 'finiſhed: and he bowed his head, and gave up the 'ghoſt.' The term of his continuance in this ſtate of ſervitude, was till death, but no longer. John ix. 4. 'I 'muſt work the works of him that ſent me, while it is 'day: the night cometh when no man can work.' He was to ſerve during all the days of his life, that is, in the language of the law, for ever, Exod. xxi. 6. 'His maſter 'ſhall bore his ear through with an awl; and he ſhall 'ſerve him for ever,' i. e. till death. In common caſes the law made an exception here of a jubile intervening: but in his caſe, there could be no ſuch exception, in regard the true jubile was to be brought about by his death, Howbeit, in the grave 'the ſervant is free from his ma'ſter,' Job iii. 19. ſo, having ſerved out his full time, he put off the form of a ſervant, and he *roſe and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living*.

VI. and *laſtly, Wherefore he put himſelf into, and took on him, this ſtate of ſervitude.*

1. Love to his Father, and the love he had to his deſigned ſpouſe the captive daughter of Zion, and to his children and ſpiritual ſeed, engaged him to undertake it; as in the caſe of the ſervant under the law, Exod. xxi. 5. 'I love my maſter, my wife and my children, I will not 'go out free.' He ſaw that his Father would entirely loſe his ſervice from all mankind, if he did not in their nature take the ſervice on himſelf. Wherefore he 'took 'on him the form of a ſervant, being made in the like'neſs of man.' The captive daughter of Zion he could not have, but as Jacob had Rachel, by ſerving for her as unlovely as ſhe was. But he loved her freely; and becauſe he ſo loved her, he took on the form of a ſervant for her. He loved his children, the ſpiritual ſeed, given him of his Father; he ſaw they would be loſt, if he ſhould go out from them free; therefore he conſented to the boring of his ears to ſerve for them while he ſtaid on earth.

2. He took it on him, for releaſing of them from that ſtate of bondage which their father Adam had brought them into. What Judah offered to do, in the caſe of Benjamin his brother, Gen. xliv. 33. Chriſt really performed in the caſe of his brethren, becoming a bond man in their ſtead, that they might go free. They were in bondage under the curſe of the broken law; and could never, by their own doings or ſufferings, have worked themſelves out of their bondage; but had periſhed in it, had not he put himſelf in their room and ſtead.

3. He did it for paying of their debt. The law, in ſome caſes, allowed parents to ſell their children for paying of their debt. Hence our Lord ſaith unto Iſrael, 'Which of my creditors is it to whom I have ſold you?' Iſa. l. i. Thereby ſhewing, that it was not to him, but to themſelves their ruin was owing. We have a ſtory to this purpoſe of one of the ſons of the prophets, who was a holy man, but had died in debt: it is thus related by his poor widow, 2 Kings iv. 1. 'Thy ſervant my huſ'band is dead, and thou knoweſt that thy ſervant did fear 'the Lord: and the creditor is come to take unto him 'my two ſons to be bond-men.' Thus ſtood the caſe with the elect. Their father Adam had left them under a double debt, a debt of obedience, and a debt of puniſhment, which they were utterly unable to pay. And juſtice, as the creditor, was come to take them away for bond men, and force them to ſerve for payment of the debt, never to be releaſed till the laſt farthing of it was fully ſerved for: but Chriſt ſaith, O juſtice, take me for a bond man in their ſtead; if the ſervice for payment of the debt lie on them, it will never be paid out; but I will ſerve for them. It was accepted: and the Lord Jeſus took their room, and went away with the creditors for a bond man in their ſtead.

Laſtly, He took on him the form of a ſervant, to bring them into a ſtate of adoption in the family of God. He became a bond ſervant, that they might become ſons and daughters. Gal. iv. 1. 'The heir as long as he is a 'child, differeth nothing from a ſervant.' verſe 3. 'Even 'ſo we were in bondage.' verſe 4. 'But God ſent forth 'his Son made of a woman, made under the law.' verſe 5. 'To redeem them that were under the law, that we 'might receive the adoption of Sons.'

USE I. What is ſaid may ſerve for alarming of ſinners who are ſtrangers to Jeſus Chriſt. Being in your natural ſtate, not united to Chriſt, there is a heavy yoke wreathed about your necks, from which ye are not able to deliver yourſelves. Ye are bond men under the law; and ſo,

1. It lies on you, to fulfil the ſervice man was bound to by the covenant of works, under the pain of the curſe, Rom. iii. 19. 'Curſed is every one that continueth not 'in all things written in the book of the law to do them.' Now ye can as ſoon remove mountains as perform this:

therefore ye can never be ſaved, while ye are out of Chriſt. Behold, on Chriſt's taking on him the form of a ſervant, how that ſervice behoved of neceſſity to be performed, ere one ſinner could be ſaved. And if God did ſo ſtand upon the honour of his law with his own Son, that he behoved completely to fulfil that ſervice for thoſe whom he ſhould ſave; it is vain for you to think that God will grant an abatement of that ſervice to you. Nay, if you obey not perfectly, you do nothing to purpoſe: no leſs can be accepted off your hand, ſince ye are not in Chriſt.

2. It lies upon you to bear the puniſhment due to you for your breaking away from your Lord and Maſter; Gen. ii. 17. ‘In the day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.’ All that ye can ſuffer in this world, will not compenſate the wrong thereby done to the honour of God; nay, ye ſhall never be able through the ages of eternity, to get from under that puniſhment. None leſs than God's equal was able to go through it: therefore the Son of God took on him the form of a ſervant, that therein he might bear it away from all that believe. A certain proof that none out of Chriſt ſhall eſcape it.

Conſider then how preciſely God ſtands to his having the ſervice owing him in virtue of the firſt covenant fully made out; that rather than any ſhould be ſaved without its being fulfilled, he would have his own Son to take on him the form of a ſervant, and fulfil it for them.

Use II. Let all be exhorted to flee to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as their hope for ſalvation. Here is a myſtery of faith; Chriſt taking upon him the form of a ſervant, propoſed to be believed and applied by each one in particular to himſelf, for ſalvation. It will be good tidings,

1. To the poor broken hearted ſinner, who ſees he cannot ſerve the Lord according to the demand of the law, who is out of conceit with his own beſt doings, becauſe they are ſo ill done. There is a ſervice performed by the Mediator for ſinners, that is perfect even in the eye of the law. And life and ſalvation is thereby gained for all that ſhall believe.

2. To ſuch as are under terror for their running away from God's ſervice, and the diſhonour they have done him. Here is the way by which ye may return to him as a Father; even through his own Son, who, took upon him the form of a ſervant, and finiſhed his work.

Jeſus Chriſt, with his ſervice, and all the benefits thereof, is offered unto you this day: refuſe him not, but take him for your righteouſneſs in which you will ſtand before the Lord; take him for your treaſure, out of which all your debt will be paid; take him for your Huſband, Head, and Lord: take him for your all in all. Take himſelf, and his ſervice ſhall be imputed to you; in him thou ſhalt be received for ever, not now as ſervant, but above a ſervant; Philem. 15, 16. So you ſhall get both heart and hand for working works truly good; as children working to their Father, having the inheritance ſecured to them before, by the works of their elder brother.

Object. 1. “But will ever Chriſt make me partaker of the benefits of this ſervice, who have ſerved my luſts, inſtead of ſerving him?” *Anſw.* Chriſt became not a bond ſervant, but for thoſe who were in bondage to ſin and Satan: and it was the very end for which he took on him the form of a ſervant, that, by communicating to them the benefits of his ſervice, he might deliver them from the ſervice of ſin, and cauſe them to ſerve him, Luke i. 74. ‘that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might ſerve him.’ Doubt not then, but that, coming to him, ye ſhall be partakers of the benefit of his ſervice; and particularly, that ye may be no more bond ſervants under ſin, but honorary ſervants to himſelf. ‘And ſuch were ſome of you: but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God’.

Object. 2 “I fear I am none of theſe in whoſe room and ſtead Chriſt took on him the form of a ſervant; how then can I embrace him, and apply his ſervice to me by believing?” *Anſw.* Your right to take him, and apply his ſervice to you by believing, doth not at all depend on that matter, which is a ſecret not to be known by you till you believe; but it depends on the offer of Chriſt, his ſervice which he ſerved, made to you in the goſpel of God, Rev. xxii. 17. ‘Whoſoever will, let him take the water of life freely.’ Howbeit Chriſt took on him the form of a ſervant, only in the name and ſtead of the elect; yet a crucified Jeſus, having fulfilled the bond ſervice, is the ordinance of God for life and ſalvation unto all; that whoſoever ‘believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.’ John iii. 16. And his righteouſneſs is made over in the goſpel to all the hearers of it; ſo as it is lawful for them to take poſſeſſion of it by believing. Hence to believe, is to ‘receive the abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteouſneſs.’ Rom. v. 17. And this is ſo certain, that ye muſt either receive it and be ſaved: or be held refuſers of heaven's gift of righteouſneſs made to you, and ſo periſh for ever, Mark xvi. 16. ‘He that believeth and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not, ſhall be damned.’

Use laſt, O Chriſtians, communicants, come to the Lord's table with the faith and admiration of this ſtupendous myſtery, Chriſt in the form of a bond ſervant for you. See it in the exact juſtice of God, the invaluable price of your ſalvation from ſin and wrath, and the ſtrongeſt motive to the obedience of ſons. And let the faith of it fill your hearts with love to him, who ſo loved us; with repentance, and kindly ſorrow for your ſin, which brought God's equal ſo very low; with thankfulneſs for this unſpeakable benefit; and with holy purpoſes of new obedience.

The continuation of the improvement.

This doctrine of Chriſt's ſtate of ſervitude is too fruitful, in faith and practice, to be diſmiſſed without further improvement: therefore I ſhall endeavour to improve it for your further inſtruction, and for exciting to the practice of holineſs.

First, This doctrine diſcovers the ground and reaſon of ſeveral other goſpel truths, which ſpring from it as a root principle. And, among theſe, I ſhall take notice of the following particulars.

1. Here is a clear ground, upon which the dead elect, incapable by any work or doing of their own, to make themſelves to differ from others, are, in a conſiſtency with God's impartial juſtice, quickened, and endowed with ſaving faith; while others remain dead about them; quickening grace coming on them ‘as a dew from the Lord, as ſhowers upon the graſs, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the ſons of men.’ Micah v. 7. Our Lord Jeſus having, in their name, taken on him the form of a bond ſervant, performed the ſervice required of them by the covenant of works; but he did not perform that ſervice in the room of others. Hence to them is given life, as the reward of the ſervice performed for them by the ſecond Adam; even as their life was loſt through the marring of that ſervice in the hands of the firſt Adam. ‘For as in Adam all die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive.’ 1 Cor. xv. 22. And now that the Lord Jeſus is riſen again to be Lord of the dead and living; how can they miſs of being quickened, each one in his time, ſince he lives, to ſee that the life, for which he ſerved a hard ſervice, be made forthcoming to them, according to the contract of ſervice he entered into with his Father? ‘Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo.’

2. Here is a clear ground upon which the obedience of the man Chriſt may be imputed to believers for righteouſneſs, as well as his ſatisfaction by ſuffering: notwithſtanding obedience was due from the human nature of Chriſt as a creature. For it is evident, that Chriſt's obeying his Father in the character of a bond ſervant could no more be due, antecedently to his contract of ſervice, than his ſatisfaction by ſuffering.

3. Here is the ground upon which believers in Chriſt come to be juſtified before God; not upon the account of any thing wrought in them, or done by them, whether faith itſelf, or any obedience of theirs whatſoever, but upon the account of Chriſt's ſervice, imputed to them for righteouſneſs in the ſight of God, as the apoſtle deſired, that he might ‘be found in him, not having his own righteouſneſs but that which is through the faith of Chriſt,’ Philip. iii. 9. For in the ſecond covenant there

was a transferring on him their ſtate of ſervitude, under which they ſtood bound to make out the ſervice, which was the condition of life: accordingly he wrought the work, and fulfilled the ſervice for life, in their name and ſtead, both in the doing and ſuffering part of it. Now, they being united to him by faith, his righteouſneſs becomes theirs, and is imputed to them. And ſince a holy juſt God inſiſted to have his ſervice fulfilled for life and ſalvation to poor ſinners, and Jeſus Chriſt did that work, not they; it cannot be, that any thing elſe ſhould be imputed to them for righteouſneſs but Chriſt's ſervice, for the performing of which he became a ſervant, Rom. iii. 22. ‘Even the righteouſneſs of God, which is by faith of Jeſus Chriſt unto all, and upon all them that believe.’ 2 Cor. v. 21. ‘For he made him to be ſin for us, who knew no ſin, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.’ It is to his bearing the puniſhment, we owe the pardon of all our ſins; and to the obedience given by him only, we owe our acceptance, as poſitively righteous in the ſight of God.

4. Here is a clear ground upon which believers are delivered from the law as a covenant of works. For that broken covenant being ſo far ingroſſed in the covenant with the ſecond Adam, as that from it the ſervice he was to perform in their ſtead, was ſtated in all the parts thereof, it plainly follows, that the ſervice being fully performed by him for them, and being really become theirs by faith, they are wholly delivered from that covenant; ſo that it can demand no more ſervice of them, than a maſter can demand of a ſervant, who, in the perſon of another by him accepted, hath ſerved out his time, and ſo hath a right to the full hire, Rom. vii. 4. ‘Wherefore, my brethren, ye alſo are become dead to the law by the body of Chriſt.’ John viii. 36. ‘If the Son therefore ſhall make you free, ye ſhall be free indeed.’

5. Here is the ground upon which believers are no more bond-ſervants, to work for life and ſalvation; but advanced to the dignity of ſons, to whom the inheritance belongs by their relation to their Father. For ſince Jeſus Chriſt took on him the form of a bond-ſervant for them; and, having finiſhed that ſervice, became free again; they, being united to Chriſt, can no longer remain bond-ſervants; it being the very end of Chriſt's becoming a bond ſervant, to ſet them free. This is their privilege before the Lord; howbeit, through the weakneſs of their faith, they often ſerve the Lord as bond-men. And ſince it was the Father's equal, who ſerved in the character of a bond-ſervant for them, they are, by the merit of that, advanced to be ſons of the houſe of heaven, Gal. iv. 7. ‘Wherefore thou art no more a ſervant, but a ſon.’

6. Here is the ground upon which believers are freed from the guilt of eternal wrath, and can never fall under condemnation; howbeit their ſins make them liable to the effects of God's fatherly anger. For Chriſt taking on him the form of a bond-ſervant for them, bore all the curſe, due to them for their ſins, whether before or after their union with him: the which ſervice is imputed to them, upon believing in him; and from that moment is ever upon them. The truth is, the curſe would reduce them into the ſtate of bond-ſervants again, as the guilt of eternal wrath, ſpeaks the ſinner on whom it falls to be a bond-ſervant, and not a ſon, Gal. iii. 13. ‘Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us.’ iv. 7. ‘Wherefore thou art no more a ſervant, but a ſon.’ Rom. viii. 1. ‘There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus.’ Iſa. liv. 9. ‘For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have ſworn that the waters of Noah ſhould no more go over the earth; ſo have I ſworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.’

7. Here is the fountain-head of ſanctification through faith in Chriſt; which is the only true ſanctification competent to fallen Adam's children, the ſpring of all holy obedience and good works to be found amongſt them. A ſinful creature, in a ſtate of bondage, under the covenant of works, is a *bond ſervant to ſin*; for ‘the ſtrength of ſin is the law,’ binding over the ſinner to death, yea, binding him down under death. And, being a bond-ſervant to ſin, he is in bondage to Satan too; ſince the power of ſin is his ſceptre, whereby he rules over the children of fallen Adam. Hence, while the ſinful man continues in bondage under that covenant, ſin retains its full ſway over him; even as the vermine doth over the dead corpſe in the grave: ſo that he can neither be truly good, nor do any thing truly good. But the holy Jeſus becoming a bond-ſervant under the law, anſwered all the demands thereof: and having finiſhed the ſervice, was, of courſe, freed from its yoke. Now, the ſinner uniting with him by faith, Chriſt's ſervice is imputed to him. Hence his bondage under the law is done away; and he partakes more abundantly of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus: ſo the reigning power of ſin and Satan over him is broken, and he dies unto ſin and lives unto righteouſneſs, in holy obedience to the law of the ten commandments, as a rule of life to him in the hand of the Prince of life. And this the apoſtle teacheth, Rom. vii. 5, 6. ‘For when we were in the fleſh, the motions of ſin, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held, that we ſhould ſerve in newneſs of ſpirit, and not in the oldneſs of the letter.’

8. Here is the ground in law, for the perſeverance of the ſaints; that they ſhall never fall away totally nor finally, but the life given them muſt needs be eternal. For the ſervice upon which their life depends, is completely performed by Jeſus Chriſt; and the life, which was the reward of that ſervice, is beſtowed on them in ſome meaſure; which life, can never totally nor finally fail, without the failure of the promiſe, the condition of which is already fulfilled. Wherefore, the time of trial for life and ſalvation to believers, being now over, in the ſecond Adam their head engaging in the ſervice; their perſeverance is as ſure as the faithfulneſs of God can make it. For, as the law ſaith, ‘He that doth theſe things ſhall live:’ ſo the goſpel ſaith, ‘The juſt by faith ſhall live:’ as ſome valuable interpreters read this text, and I think, rightly.

Laſtly, Here is the only ground of their right to complete life and ſalvation in heaven, namely, Chriſt's works and ſervice performed for them, and pleaded by them in the way of believing. For what plea can one have for the hire or reward, but the performance of the ſervice upon the account of which it was promiſed? Now, Chriſt alone performed that ſervice: therefore we cannot found our plea before the Lord for heaven's happineſs, on any other ground but Chriſt's works and ſervice. Paul renounceth all other grounds, while he deſires to ‘be found in Chriſt, not having his own righteouſneſs,——but that which is through the faith of Chriſt,’ Phil. iii. 9. ‘For they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteouſneſs, ſhall reign in life by one, Jeſus Chriſt,’ Rom. v. 17. And the great deſign of the contrivance of ſalvation was, ‘That grace might reign through righteouſneſs unto eternal life, by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord,’ ver. 21. There is a glorious *recompence of reward*, that follows the ſaints *work and labour of love*: but the truth is, it is the reward of the ſervice of their head, not of the ſervice of their hands.

SECONDLY, This doctrine of Chriſt's ſtate of ſervitude, is a moſt powerful incentive to goſpel-obedience; and, being applied to one's ſelf by faith, will be found to be a ſpring of holineſs. And thus it may be improven, (1.) More generally. (2.) More particularly.

Firſt, More generally, in two branches.

I. If ye have any part or lot in this matter of Chriſt's ſervice, let it be the buſineſs of your life to ſerve the Lord Chriſt. And devote yourſelves to the ſervice of God in Chriſt, which is your reaſonable ſervice. Serve him in the duties of worſhip, external and internal: in ſecret, in your families, in the congregations of his people; ſerve him in firſt and ſecond table duties: ſerve him in your civil and natural actions; ‘Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatſoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.’ Serve him in doing for him, and ſuffering for him, as he calls you. Set his holy law before you, and know that it is the rule and meaſure of the ſervice ye owe to him. Look upon the ſervice Chriſt performed for you, and let it excite and animate you to ſerve him.

Here is a powerful motive, to engage you to ſerve him. And that it may have due influence upon you, conſider,

1. He was in the *form of God*, who ſerved for you; ye were bond ſervants to ſin and Satan, the worſt of maſters. If you ‘ look to the rock whence ye were hewn, and to ‘ the hole of the pit whence ye were digged;’ and withal look unto the Son of God, leaving the Father's boſom, deſcending from his throne of majeſty, and taking on the form of a ſervant, therein to ſerve for you; ye muſt needs be haled to his ſervice by the overcoming force of his humiliation. *For the love of Chriſt conſtraineth us.*

2. He has no need of your ſervice to him, but ye were in abſolute need of his ſervice for you. Though ye had remained bond ſlaves to Satan for ever, all the diſſervice ye could have done to the Lord of glory, could not have hurt him; nor can your ſervice add any thing to his happineſs, Job xxxv. 7, 8. But, without his ſervice for you, ye had periſhed for ever, for your breaking of the firſt covenant of ſervice. Are not ye and your ſervice then wholly his? And, if ye believe ye had periſhed unleſs he had ſerved for you, can ye refuſe him your ſervice?

3. The ſervice he performed for you was hard ſervice; the yoke he puts upon you is eaſy, Matth. xi. 30. He ſerved as a bond ſervant for you; he requires you to ſerve him as a *ſon ſerveth his father*, Mal. iii. 17. If his people make their own ſervice harder, they owe it not to his Spirit, but to their own ſpirit, Rom. viii. 15. ‘ For ‘ ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear.’ No leſs than obedience, every way perfect, could be accepted at his hand: but he will graciouſly accept ſincere obedience attended with imperfections, at your hand. He had a hot ſervice, a hot fighting ſervice, for you, in the fire of the wrath of God, ſtanding in your room. Behold him in the garden, in a cold night, ſweating great drops of blood at his ſervice! behold him on the croſs, at once grappling with the Father's wrath, the rage and power of devils and men! and hear him calling for your ſervice on that very ſcore, Cant. v. 2. ‘ Open to me—for ‘ my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops ‘ of the night.’

4. His ſervice being finiſhed, he is now exalted to be Lord of all, Philip. ii. 9. ‘ Wherefore God alſo hath ‘ highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jeſus every knee ‘ ſhould bow.’ He is now crowned king in Zion: and all are commanded to kiſs the Son, Pſal. ii. 12. Our Joſeph, who was ſold for a ſervant, is now made ruler over the land; he rides in the ſecond chariot, and it is cried before him, *Bow the knee.* His ſheaf ſtands upright; let all his brethren bow down before him. Behold him, O believer, who ſerved for thee in the character of a bond ſervant, now highly exalted; behold him ſitting on the right hand of the throne of majeſty, commanding thee to the broad law of the ten commands, the eternal rule of righteouſneſs: and ſtrictly binding thee to obedience thereto, by the authority of God thy Creator and Preſerver; and with the additional tie of his mediatory authority, his right of redemption over thee, and his dying love to thee, which may well ſupply the place of the bond of the covenant of works, and the curſe, the only tie unto obedience which he hath taken from off thee by his ſervice.

5. Chriſt ſerved his hard ſervice for you, to this end, that ye being delivered from your bondage under ſin, *might ſerve him in holineſs and righteouſneſs*, Luke i. 74. It was for this end the Lord Jeſus undertook his ſervice for you: why would ye then go about to fruſtrate the end of your Redeemer's undertaking for you? It is unthankfulneſs with a witneſs, to refuſe him your ſervice, to which ye are bound by the ſtrongeſt ties of gratitude for the greateſt favour from your beſt friend.

6. Your ſervice is dear bought. It is the price of the blood of the Son of God, ‘ Who gave himſelf for us, ‘ that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify ‘ unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works,’ Tit. ii. 14. Serving of the Lord is a precious privilege, as well as a duty, Rev. xxii. 3. ‘ His ſervants ſhall ſerve ‘ him.’ Ye were in bondage to ſin and Satan, which would not permit you to ſerve the Lord; untill Chriſt by his ſervice took their yoke from off your necks. Ye were bound hand and foot, yea, dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, that ye could not ſerve the Lord: untill his precious blood ſet you free, and his death gave you life and ſtrength. And ſhall your ſervice be with-held from the glorious Purchaſer? So far as it is ſo, it is doubtleſs owing to unbelief. O believer, look to the croſs of Chriſt, and behold how he paid for every good work, yea every good word of thine. There is not one of theſe found, or that ſhall be found with thee, but it ſprings from the merit and never failing efficacy of Chriſt's ſervice. And had not the Lord Jeſus taken on him the form of a ſervant for us, there had never been one piece of acceptable ſervice to God, found among the children of men, after the breach of the firſt covenant.

7. There is a glorious reward, gained by Chriſt's ſervice, awaiting all his ſervants at the end of their courſe; even the full enjoyment of God in the other world; in which ye ſhall be completely happy for all eternity, 1 Theſſ. iv. 17. ‘ So ſhall we ever be with the Lord.’ Our Lord Jeſus having run in name and on the head of the deſigned heirs of glory, and having won the prize for them all; now ſits on the throne at the end of the race, with the prize in his hand, calling you to make haſte and follow him, and *to run ſo, that ye may obtain*, 1 Cor. ix. 24. Have *reſpect to the recompence of reward*, Heb. xi. 26. ſet and keep your eye upon it, as a prize won for you by the great ſervant: and let the hope of it animate you to the hardeſt pieces of ſervice in your way towards it. The time is but ſhort: wherefore, though your ſervice be difficult, it will not be longſome: and the glorious reward will more than counterbalance all your toil. And remember, that, according to your works in his ſervice, ſo will your ſhare of the reward be, greater or ſmaller, 2 Cor. ix. 6. ‘ He which ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall reap alſo ‘ ſparingly; and he which ſoweth bountifully, ſhall reap ‘ alſo bountifully.’ The reaſon is, both our ſervice to God, and our reward are purely the fruits of Chriſt's ſervice for us; and ſo they are propportioned to the efficacy of it in us: wherefore, according to the efficacy of Chriſt's ſervice to us; ſo will our ſervice be, and ſuch our reward; and ſo, the greater ſervice, the greater reward.

8. If ye do indeed belong to Chriſt, as theſe for whom he ſerved, ye ſhall certainly ſerve him. For if he was crucified for you, your old man was nailed to the ſame croſs with him, that ſin might be deſtroyed in you, and you might ſerve him: Rom. vi. 6. ‘ Knowing this, that ‘ our old man is crucified with him, that the body of ſin ‘ might be deſtroyed that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve ‘ ſin.’ And your ſervice is a part of the reward of his ſervice, which he cannot loſe; for he has his Father's faithfulneſs engaged for it, in the promiſe of the covenant made to him, Pſal. xxii. 30. ‘ A ſeed ſhall ſerve him.’ they ſhall ſerve him ſincerely here, and perfectly hereafter. So that heaven and earth ſhall be overturned, and the whole courſe of nature reverſed, rather than one ſoul, for which Chriſt ſerved, be left in bondage to his luſts.

Take heed then to yourſelves: for your deliverance from the bondage of your luſts, and your ſerving the Lord, is the neceſſary deciſive evidence of your part in Chriſt, and his ſervice. If ye ſerve him in truth, his ſervice is yours, imputed to you for all the purpoſes of life and ſalvation. If ye ſerve him not, ye have neither part nor lot in that matter, but muſt periſh for ever, Luke xiii. 3. ‘ Except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.’ Rom. viii. 13. ‘ If ye live after the fleſh, ye ſhall die: but if ‘ ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ‘ ye ſhall live.’ If ye be not his ſervants, to ſerve him, ye are ſervants to the devil and your luſts; and ye ſhall die the death of ſlaves for your tranſgreſſions: ye ſhall die under the curſe of the law, ſtaking you down under eternal wrath, from which you ſhall never be able to lift your head: ye ſhall die a ſhameful death, the whole world beholding your ſhame; ye ſhall die a death painful beyond expreſſion, through revenging wrath, like nails and ſpears piercing into your very ſouls; and ye ſhall die a lingering death, ſpun out through all the ages of eternity.

Laſtly, By Chriſt's ſervice there is a ſtrength purchaſed, wherewith ye may ſerve him; and it lies open to you, to be improved in the way of believing, for enabling you to your work, Iſa. xlv. 14. 'Surely ſhall one ſay, In the 'Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength.' The ſervice which the Lord Jeſus took off our hand unto himſelf, was what we neither had nor could have ſtrength for. Strength for the ſuffering part of it man never had; ſtrength for the working of it man once indeed had, but now it is loſt. Hence theſe who continue in the bond ſervice ſtill, under the law or covenant of works, can work none at all; they can work no work truly good and acceptable in the ſight of God. And it is vain, upon that view, to bid them work, without directing them, in the firſt place, to get in to Jeſus Chriſt, from under that covenant. But now the Mediator has purchaſed a new ſtock of ſtrength, for the new ſervice which he puts in our hand: and it is treaſured up in him as the head of influences: and in the faith of it we are to ſet about our work, 2 Tim. ii. 1. 'Thou therefore, my ſon, be ſtrong in the grace that is 'in Chriſt Jeſus.' So ſhall we be enabled for the hardeſt ſervice required of us, Philip. iv. 13. 'I can do all things 'through Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth me.' Come then, and reſolutely ply the ſervice he calls you to.

II. If ye have any part or lot in Chriſt's ſervice, ſerve him as ſons and daughters; ſerve him as a ſon ſerveth his father, not as a bond ſervant ſerveth his maſter. If thou art in Chriſt, 'thou art no more a ſervant, but a ſon.' Gal. iv. 7. Serve him then agreeable to the character ye bear before him. And as it is your duty, ſo it is your privilege, that ye have acceſs to ſerve him in that manner. It is the price of Chriſt's blood: ſlight it not. He ſerved as a bond man, that ye might ſerve as ſons. Ye had been bond ſervants for ever, had not the Son of God become a bond-ſervant for you, being 'made under the 'law, that ye might receive the adoption of ſons,' Gal. iv. 4, 5. And indeed he only was fit to ſerve God in that character: none elſe was able to have managed it acceptably. Wherefore,

1. Serve him out of *love* to him: let your work and labour be a work and labour of love. Behold God's Son ſerving a hard ſervice in your ſtead, from love to his Father, and love to you who were altogether unlovely; and let the love of Chriſt conſtrain you to obedience. Believing views of Chriſt in the form of a ſervant will produce this conſtraining love, 2 Cor. v. 14. 'For the love of Chriſt 'conſtraineth us.' They will alſo prevent your acting from a ſlaviſh fear of puniſhment, ſo unbecoming your ſtate, 2 Tim. i. 7. 'For God hath not given us the ſpi'rit of fear; but of love, and of a ſound mind.'

2. Serve him *univerſally*, ſo as ye may *ſtand perfect and complete in all the will of God*. The Spirit of adoption brings men unto this evangelical perfection: but a ſinner in the ſtate of bondage will ſtill have exceptions againſt ſome commanded duty or other, Pſal. cxix. 6. 'Then 'ſhall I not be aſhamed when I have reſpect unto all thy 'commandments.' Serve ye the Lord then as ſons, ſticking at no piece of ſervice commanded, however dangerous; for ſo Chriſt ſerved you, ſticking at no danger.

Laſtly, Serve him *conſtantly*, to the end, Pſal. cxix. 112. 'I have inclined my heart to perform thy ſtatutes alway, 'even unto the end.' It argues the ſpirit of a ſinner in the ſtate of bondage, to ply the work no longer than the whip is held over one's head, or than one has ſomething to gain to himſelf by his work. Shew yourſelves Sons of God, by ſerving him continually, and never going back to your old maſters again. Remember him who was obedient even unto death.

Secondly, more particularly, If ye have any part in this matter, let the ſame mind be in you which was in Chriſt Jeſus, who for you took on him the form of a ſervant.

1. Be of a loving and charitable diſpoſition towards your brethren. Lay aſide all malice and revenge, envy and grudge at the good of others, and ſhow yourſelves partakers of the Spirit of Chriſt. Love your neighbour as yourſelves. Let the love that Chriſt ſhewed in taking on the form of a ſervant for you, inſpire you with this love.

2. 'As ye have opportunity, do good unto all men, 'eſpecially to the houſhold of faith.' Whatever they be, withhold not ye the good that is in the power of your hand to do them. The Father ſet his love on a ſelect company of mankind, but they behoved to be bought with a price: and the Son conſented to pay this price for them, and to take on him the form of a ſervant for that effect. If the ſame mind be in you that was in Chriſt, it will not divert you from doing good to men, though they are unworthy of kindneſs, have done wrong to you, and ye cannot expect compenſation from them. Could any of theſe arguments have prevailed with the Son of God to withhold his helping hand from us, we had been as yet without all hope. And let it move you to do good to the ſaints eſpecially, that they are the perſons in particular for whom Chriſt took on him the form of a ſervant.

3. Put on bowels of mercy towards thoſe in diſtreſs. A ſelfiſh diſpoſition, void of ſympathy, is moſt unlike that mind which was in Chriſt Jeſus, who took on him the form of a ſervant, to relieve miſerable ſinners. But 'he 'ſhall have judgment without mercy that hath ſhewed 'no mercy,' James ii. 13.

4. Shew a regard to juſtice in your dealings. It was from a regard to juſtice, and that the ſervice due unto God from the elect, might be performed, that Chriſt took on him the form of a ſervant, and made out the ſervice.

5. Be humble, and condeſcend to low things neceſſary for the good of others. For this we have the example of Jeſus Chriſt recorded in John xiii. 14, 15. 'If I then 'your Lord and maſter have waſhed your feet, ye alſo 'ought to waſh one another's feet. For I have given you 'an example, that ye ſhould do as I have done to you.'

Laſtly, Be mortified to the pomp and ſplendor of the world. Be ready to forego the comforts of a preſent life, 'looking unto Jeſus, who, for the joy that was ſet before 'him, endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame,' and ſit down contented, though the world ſhould neither give you its good word, nor kind look. All the time our bleſſed Lord was in the world, he was in the character of a bond ſervant; and accordingly had but coarſe entertainment, hard lodging, being held in no reputation, and at length buffeted, ſcourged, and crucified.

The peculiar MERCY and BUSINESS of LIFE opened up, and applied.

Several SERMONS, preached at Etterick, in the Year 1727.

ISAIAH xxxviii. 19.

The living, the living, he ſhall praiſe thee, as I do this day: the father to the children ſhall make known thy truth.

IT is much to be deſired, that men would conſider the great buſineſs of their life; but few do it, till it is juſt going or gone out of their hands. Hezekiah had been at the brink of the grave, and learned thoſe juſt thoughts of life, which he gives us with much concern in the text. Wherein we have,

1. The mercy of life: *The living, the living, he ſhall praiſe thee*, &c. Verſe 18. he had been ſpeaking of the

dead, the inhabitants of the gloomy manſions of the grave; and in oppoſition to theſe he here ſpeaks of the living, and in a triumphant manner propoſeth to ſpeak of them, as ſeeing the mercy of life.

2. Wherein the mercy of life conſiſts. And the deciſion of this is in a vein of thought peculiar to ſpiritual men.

1*ſt*, Aſk the carnal man where lies the mercy of life? And,

(1.) If he is in proſperity, he reckons the mercy of life lies, in that the living man may enjoy the pleaſures of ſenſe, and may lay up wealth for him and his; all which ſtern death robs a man of. But there is not one word of this here.

(2.) If he is in adverſity, he either cannot ſee the mercy of life at all, but thinks they are beſt off that are lying at eaſe in the duſt. So croſſes make him wiſh to be away. At beſt, he reckons it the mercy of life, that he is not where he would be worſe, viz. in hell. But there is not a word of all this neither in the text.

2*dly*, Aſk the renewed man in an ill frame of ſpirit, where lies the mercy of life? If he is in outward proſperity, he will be ready to reckon it lies in the comforts of this life. If he is in adverſity, the troubles of life are ſo great, that the mercy of it is ſmall in his view; only heaven bulks in his eyes, as a place of reſt from trouble. But there is nothing of this neither in the text.

The deciſion is, The mercy of life lies in the buſineſs of life, to wit, being ſerviceable for God in the world: *The living, the living, he ſhall praiſe thee*, &c. Hezekiah counts that the great mercy of life, to have acceſs to be uſeful for God in the world. Which ſpeaks (1.) A high eſteem of God and his ſervice, as men count it a favour to be allowed to ſerve their prince. (2.) An ardent love to him, as men delight to ſerve the intereſts of thoſe they dearly love. This will be to a ſpiritual man the moſt deſirable thing in life: Phil. i. 20, 21. 'According to my 'earneſt expectation and my hope, that in nothing I ſhall 'be aſhamed, but that with all boldneſs, as always, ſo 'now alſo Chriſt ſhall be magnified in my body, whether 'it be by life or by death. For to me to live is Chriſt, 'and to die is gain.' This is a juſt endearment of life. Now, the buſineſs of life, is twofold.

1. To praiſe or glorify God in the world; to ſpeak of the perfections of his nature, and ſhew forth the praiſes of him who hath called us, among men, to the advancement of his kingdom here under the ſun: to ſtrike up beams of his glory in a dark world, and to commend him and his way before and to others. Now, here conſider,

1*ſt*, Whoſe is this privilege: *The living, i. e.* the living all along in a ſucceſſion of generations to the end of the world. That is the import of the doubling of this word. This acceſs to the praiſing of God in the world, is peculiar to the living. And,

(1.) It is not thoſe that are now dead, but thoſe that are now living, that have acceſs to ſhew forth his praiſe, in a world where he is ſo much diſhonoured; to ſide with him, and take his part againſt his enemies. It is true, the ſouls of dead ſaints are praiſing God in heaven in the loftieſt ſtrains: but what better is the world of theſe praiſes? No more than they that are ſitting in a dark room down ſtairs, are the better of a glorious lamp ſhining in the upper room. Is there ever a poor ſinner brought acquainted and to fall in love with Chriſt by their means? No; their praiſes of God are to ſinners here as if they were not; they hear them not. Is the kingdom of Chriſt in the world advanced by theſe praiſes? No. It is the living, the living only, that have acceſs to thoſe pieces of ſervice to God. The living man that ſits in a cote-houſe, has the acceſs to glorify God in the world that no ſaint in heaven has.

(2.) If thoſe that are now living were once dead, they will have no more acceſs to praiſe him in the world; but thoſe that will be then living: and ſo on to the end. Men will go off the ſtage one after another, but they will not carry that work with them; but it will ſtill be left in the hands of the living, and no other, whatever they make of it. There are heads, tongues, and hands of miniſters and Chriſtians lying in the grave, that have contrived, ſpoken, and acted well for God in the world; but now, if the cauſe of God and religion, which is very low, were at the laſt gaſp, there is no more help to be had from thoſe heads, tongues, and hands. The living only muſt ſpeak and act for it, or it muſt lie.

2*dly*, An inſtance of it: *As I do this day.* Hezekiah was recovered from ſickneſs, and he gives God the praiſe of it. He looked on it as his bounden duty to fall cloſely again to that buſineſs of life, which was likely to have been taken out of his hands by death. What time of life the Lord lengthens out to us, after threatening a removal, we ſhould be careful to uſe for the honour of God.

2. To propagate his name and praiſe: *The father to the children ſhall make known thy truth.* It is the ſpecial buſineſs of life, to endeavour that the name of God may be glorified in the world, when we are dead. It is a black mark for perſons not to care what come of the world if they were out of it. A child of God will be concerned, that religion may be kept up in it: and while he is living, he has acceſs to contribute to it. And conſider,

1*ſt*, What he has acceſs to do for that end; namely, to praiſe God to the younger ſort, that are likely to live after he is gone; eſpecially to his own children. They may ſhew to them how lovely God is, and how deſirable his way; and when they have children, they may do the ſame to them; and ſo on, God's praiſe will be kept up in the world.

Now obſerve, he is ſtill ſpeaking of the living, for theſe are the ſubject expreſsly to be ſpoken of. *Q. d.* As for the living, the living father may praiſe thee to the living ſon. It imports,

(1.) If the father die, though the children live, he can do God no more honour, and them no more ſervice that way. If he has neglected his duty to his family in his life, he cannot come back again to mend the matter. If he left them ignorant of God, though one word from him could ſave them from the pit, he cannot give it.

(2.) If the children die, though the father live, he can do God no more honour, and them no more ſervice that way. He may take care of their duſt, but he can do no more for their ſouls; but when one of them falls, that work is at an end.

2*dly*, How he may do it, how he may commend him to them; namely, by making him known to them, as an object worthy of their confidence: *Shall make known thy truth.* The expreſſion in the Hebrew is conciſe, *He may make known, unto thy truth.* The word rendered *to hope*, verſe 18. properly ſignifying, *intenſely to look*, Neh. ii. 13. 15. is underſtood. So two things are to be conſidered.

(1.) The proper method of praiſing or commending God to the riſing generation; and that is, by making him known. The more he is known, the more lovely will he appear. 'God is light.' The beſt way to commend the ſun to one ſitting in a dark room, is to open the windows, and let him look to it with his eyes; the beſt way to commend God and religion to the generation riſing, is to labour that they may know them by teaching.

(2.) The great thing we are to have in view in that work. It is, that they may look intenſely unto his truth; that they may look away from the vanities the world is holding out to them, to be embraced as their portion; and that they may look to the truth of God in Chriſt, in the promiſe of the goſpel, by an eye of faith, fixed on it, and hold by that as their ſure portion.

This is what men may do for the riſing generation, and the view they ſhould do it on; but God only can give it efficacy. No doubt Hezekiah did as he ſaid, commended God, and made him known to Manaſſeh his ſon: but how unſucceſsful all he did that way was, is notour from the wicked life his ſon led. Yet Hezekiah's work was accepted, and his prayers heard in the end; and perhaps his words were minded too, in Manaſſeh's converſion at long run.

Three doctrines are deducible from the words.

DOCT. I. *It is the peculiar mercy of life, that the living only are, and all along will be, thoſe that have acceſs to praiſe and glorify God in the world.*

DOCT. II. *It is the ſpecial buſineſs and privilege of life,* *to propagate religion, God's name and praiſe, the ſtanding generation to the riſing generation, the fathers to the children, all along.*

DOCT. III. *The true way of propogating religion, the ſtanding to the riſing generation, is, That the former make God known to the latter, ſo as they may betake themſelves unto him, his truth and faithfulneſs, by faith and truſt.*

We ſhall handle each of theſe doctrines in order.

DOCT. I. *It is the peculiar mercy of life, that the living only are, and all along will be, thoſe that have acceſs to praiſe and glorify God in the world.*

In proſecuting this doctrine, we ſhall,

I. Conſider the praiſing or glorifying God in the world.

II. Shew how it is a valuable mercy and privilege of the living, that they have acceſs to praiſe God in the world.

III. How this acceſs to praiſe God in the world, is and will be the peculiar mercy of the living.

IV. *laſtly*, Apply.

I. We ſhall conſider *the praiſing or glorifying God in the world.* And here we ſhall ſhew,

1. What praiſing of God is.

2. What are the peculiarities of the praiſes of the living.

Firſt, What praiſing of God is. It is the acknowledging and declaring of the glorious excellencies of God as he has manifeſted himſelf in his word and works; and imports,

1. The belief of the being of God: Heb. xi. 6. ‘He ‘that cometh to God muſt believe that he is.’ Atheiſm wholly cuts off the praiſes of God; for who can praiſe that which he does not believe to be? The works of creation and providence proclaim his being: but ſuch is the natural enmity of man againſt God, that he ſecretly wiſheth there were not a God, and ſo is diſpoſed to believe ſo, if he could get any footing for it, Pſal. xiv. 1. ‘The fool ‘hath ſaid in his heart, There is no God:’ and that is at the root of mens living to a contrary end to his praiſe. Tit. i. ult. ‘They profeſs that they know God; but in ‘works they deny him, being abominable and diſobedi‘ent, and unto every good work reprobate.’

2. The knowledge of God. To whom he is an unknown God, he will be an unpraiſed God. Hence ignorance is ruining, Iſ. xxvii. 11. ‘It is a people of no un‘derſtanding; therefore he that made them, will not have ‘mercy on them, and he that formed them will ſhew them ‘no favour.’ To live to the praiſing of God requires,

1*ſt*, The knowledge of *who he is.* We are baptized in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, One God. If we know him not ſo, we know not the God to whom we are engaged in baptiſm; and ſo cannot praiſe him.

2*dly*, The knowledge of *what he is:* the diſcerning of his glorious perfections, which are the matter of his praiſe. We muſt know him as he is God infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wiſdom, power, holineſs, juſtice, goodneſs, and truth; more excellent than any creature, being the fountain of all excellency in them.

3*dly*, The knowledge of *what he has done.* His works are glorious, creation, providence, and redemption. By them he ſhews what he is, Pſal. xix. 1. ‘The heavens ‘declare the glory of God: and the firmament ſheweth ‘his handy work,’ and we are to think on them for that end, that we may from thence praiſe him, Pſal. cxi. 2. ‘The works of the Lord are great, ſought out of all them ‘that have pleaſure therein.’ And it is highly offenſive not to regard them: Pſal. xxviii. 5. ‘Becauſe they regard ‘not the work of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands, ‘he ſhall deſtroy them, and not build them up.’

3. The love of God. Love is the mother of praiſe, and natively brings it forth. They that love not God, can never acceptably praiſe him. ‘God is love,’ not only ſubjectively, but objectively, wholly lovely. And ſo he is in the eyes of all who live to his praiſe. To them every attribute of God is lovely. The holineſs and purity of his nature is moſt lovely to them, Exod. xv. 11. ‘Who ‘is like unto thee, O Lord, glorious in holineſs, fearful ‘in praiſes, doing wonders?’ Pſal. xxx. 4. ‘Sing unto ‘the Lord, O ye ſaints of his, and give thanks at the re‘membrance of his holineſs.’ His works are lovely. The works of creation and providence are lovely works; but the moſt lovely is the redemption of the world by Chriſt.

4. The admiration of God; which is love raiſed to a high pitch. This is the neareſt cauſe of praiſe; for it is the heart ſwelling with admiration of the object, that burſts forth in praiſes. They that live to God's praiſe, are admirers of him: they ſee all excellencies in him to be tranſcendent, and believe there are infinite treaſures of excellency in him which they cannot comprehend. So their heart ſaith, ‘Whom have I in heaven but thee? and ‘there is none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee.’ Pſ. lxxiii. 25. Launching into the ocean of the glories of his nature and works, they ſee it is ſhoreleſs: Pſal. cvi. 2. ‘Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord?

5. *laſtly*, The expreſſing that love to him: Micah vii. 18. ‘Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth ini‘quity, and paſſeth by the tranſgreſſion of the remnant ‘of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, ‘becauſe he delighteth in mercy.’ The eſſence of praiſing God lies here, and is the great end for which man was made: and it is the native becoming return the creature is to make to its Creator, from whom it has received all, and to whom it can give nothing, but only commend him, and ſet forth his glory. And this not being confined to words, is twofold.

1*ſt*, Vocal, by words. It is called *the calves of our lips*, Hoſ. xiv. 2. Man's tongue is called his glory, as being a prime inſtrument wherewith he is furniſhed for praiſing and glorifying God. And thus we are to praiſe him, in the duties of worſhip, ſinging his praiſes; and in ſpeaking to his praiſe, as occaſion offers.

2*dly*, Real, by deeds or actions, though it be not accompanied with words; for as there is a practical atheiſm, ſo there is a practical praiſing or glorifying God. And this is the main thing in that praiſe which is the end of life, without which vocal praiſe avails not. It is twofold.

(1.) In heart, 1 Cor. vi. 20. ‘Ye are bought with a ‘price: therefore glorify God in your ſpirit, which is ‘God's.’ Men's praiſe of men from the teeth outward may paſs, but God knows the heart; and if the heart harmonize not with the tongue, it cannot be accepted of him, Iſ. xxix. 13. He muſt be praiſed in our underſtanding, eſteeming him above all; in our will, chuſing him above all; and in our affections, loving him above all.

(2.) In life and converſation: Matth. v. 16. ‘Let your ‘light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good ‘works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.’ A holy life is a ſhining light, to let a blind world ſee the glory of God; for as God has expreſſed his nature in his word, ſo his word is expreſſed again in a holy life. The ſtudy of holineſs ſays *God is holy;* mourning for every ſin proclaims him ſpotleſs; and horror of ſecret, as well as of open ſins, is a teſtimony to his omnipreſence and omniſcience.

Secondly, What are the peculiarities of the praiſes of the living? The praiſes of living ſaints have theſe peculiarities, which the dead have no acceſs to.

1. They are the praiſes of the whole man, in ſoul and body too: 1 Cor. vi. 20. ‘Ye are bought with a price: ‘therefore glorify God in your body, and in your ſpirit, ‘which are God's.’ Thoſe of the dead are of their ſouls only; but the living have acceſs to praiſe God, ſoul and body. Even the body hath, for the time of life, acceſs to join in this honourable work: but death breaks it in pieces, that it can no more bear a part in God's praiſe.

2. They are praiſes which may ſpread among the living: Col. iii. 16. ‘Let the word of Chriſt dwell in you ‘richly in all wiſdom; teaching and admoniſhing one ‘another in pſalms, and hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs, ſing‘ing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.’ The voice of the praiſes of living ſaints, may be heard under this vault of the heavens; but the praiſes above, as high a ſtrain as they are in, reach not hither, to this our earth.

3. They are praiſes raiſed by the way to the heavenly kingdom, which the dead have no more acceſs to join in. The living are upon the road, the dead are at their journey's end. There is a ſong of praiſe raiſed in the houſe of our pilgrimage, but there is a deep ſilence in the grave. The wilderneſs-ſong is peculiar to the living.

4. They are praiſes of faith, not of ſight: 2 Cor. v. 7.

‘ For we walk by faith, not by ſight.’ The ſaints in glory raiſe a ſong of praiſe to God, upon their ſeeing and enjoying; the living ſaints, upon their believing what their eye hath not ſeen. Praiſing of God on what one ſees of him, is more comfortable to the party himſelf: but praiſing him, upon what one believes of him, is more to the honour of God: John xx. 29. ‘ Jeſus ſaith unto him, ‘ Thomas, becauſe thou haſt ſeen me, thou haſt believed: ‘ bleſſed are they that have not ſeen, and yet have be‘ lieved.’ Rom. iv. 20, 21. ‘ Abraham ſtaggered not at ‘ the promiſe of God through unbelief; but was ſtrong ‘ in faith, giving glory to God: and being fully perſuad‘ ed, that what he had promiſed, he was able to perform.’

5. *laſtly*, They are praiſes to God amidſt a deal of diſhonours done him. David takes notice of God's covering a table to him in the midſt of his enemies: and God will take notice of praiſes given him in the midſt of thoſe that diſhonour him: Rev. ii. 13. ‘ I know thy works, ‘ and where thou dwelleſt, even where Satan's ſeat is: ‘ and thou holdeſt faſt my name, and haſt not denied ‘ my faith, even in thoſe days wherein Antipas was my ‘ faithful martyr, who was ſlain among you, where Sa‘ tan dwelleth.’ The ſaints in glory praiſe him, there being none to open a mouth to his diſhonour: but living ſaints praiſe him, in the face of contradiction by a wicked world: Prov. xxviii. 4. ‘——Such as keep the law, ‘ contend with the wicked.’

II. The ſecond general head is, to ſhew, *How it is a valuable mercy and privilege of the living, that they have acceſs to praiſe God in the world.* The living ſhould value this as their privilege.

1. In regard they might juſtly ere now have been put beyond all poſſibility of praiſing God at all; but might have been blaſpheming in hell: Lam. iii. 22. ‘ It is of ‘ the Lord's mercies that we are not conſumed, becauſe ‘ his compaſſions fail not.’ The rich man in hell, had no no acceſs to praiſe God: the burden of wrath lying on the damned there, will hold down their praiſes, and change them to howlings.

2. In regard of the honour thereby to be brought to God in the world; which in itſelf is moſt valuable, and therefore is man's chief end: 1 Cor. x. 31. ‘ Whether ‘ therefore ye eat or drink, or whatſoever ye do, do all to ‘ the glory of God.’ He lives to good purpoſe, that lives to the honour of God; and he that doth not ſo live, doth at beſt but trifle away a life, never reaching the main end. Nothing ſhould be ſo dear to us as God's honour; and therefore our all muſt be laid out on it as he calls for it. And it is the mercy of life, that we have acceſs to honour him in the world.

3. In regard of the good to be thereby done to others. The view of this made Paul content to abide out of heaven for ſome time; Phil. i. 23, 24. ‘ I am in a ſtrait be‘ twixt two, having a deſire to depart, and to be with ‘ Chriſt; which is far better: nevertheleſs, to abide in ‘ the fleſh, is more needful for you.’ O what a ſatisfying thought muſt it be, to be inſtrumental towards the ſaving of a ſoul from hell, and bringing it to acquaintance with Chriſt! No body knows what a good word at any time may do: and to this the living have acceſs only; but once dead, men can be no more ſerviceable to the world of mankind, Eccleſ. ix. 10.——‘ *For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom in the grave whither thou goeſt.*

4. It is an honour to ſerve and honour God in the world. This makes a man truly worthy and honourable. The dignity of the maſter, and the work, reflects an honour on the ſervant that does it, Pſal. lxxxiv. 10. ‘ A day in ‘ thy courts is better than a thouſand: I had rather be a ‘ door-keeper in the houſe of my God, than to dwell in ‘ the tents of wickedneſs.’ And ſince no maſter is ſo honourable as God is, it muſt be a peculiar honour to be ſerviceable to him, Heb. xi.

5. This is the only true balance of that meanneſs, and trouble, that attends this life. Conſidering the ſpiritual original, make, and vaſt capacity of the ſoul of man; it will appear but a very mean thing to be taken up in eating, drinking, building, or planting, on this curſed earth. From the ſeat of the bleſſed could we take our proſpect, men ſo employed here, would appear as a company of emmets buſy in a hillock. The troubles that attend this life are innumerable, and they fly about us, as the midges do in a hot ſummer-day. All which viewed by the ſoul, are apt to make a noble mind ſick of this life, as a bird would be of a cage. The only balance for all this is, that in it there is acceſs to praiſe God in the world. Hereby the meaneſt things are ennobled, and the hardeſt things ſoftened, that God is to be honoured in thoſe.

6. As men have acceſs to praiſe God in this world, they have acceſs to raiſe their reward in another world. Men think it a great matter to have acceſs to raiſe an eſtate for themſelves: but we have acceſs, by our honouring of God in this world, to raiſe our reward in the other. For though the Lord doth not give eternal glory *for* our works, he gives it *according* to them: 1 Cor. ix. 6. ‘ He which ‘ ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall reap alſo ſparingly: and he ‘ which ſoweth bountifully, ſhall reap alſo bountifully.’ And they that have ſhined here in uſefulneſs moſt, will ſhine there in glory moſt, Dan. xii. 3. ‘ They that be ‘ wiſe ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament; and ‘ they that turn many to righteouſneſs, as the ſtars for e‘ ver and ever.’

7. *laſtly*, The praiſing of God carries a reward in its boſom: Pſal. xix. 11. ‘ In keeping of thy judgments, ‘ there is a great reward.’ There is a ſecret ſatisfaction in one's having done his duty, endeavouring to live to the honour of God. And particularly it makes a pleaſant reflection, when one is come to the end of his courſe: as in the caſe of Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 7. ‘ I have fought a good ‘ fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith.’ Compared with what our Lord ſays, John xvii. 4. ‘ I ‘ have glorified thee on earth; I have finiſhed the work ‘ which thou gaveſt me to do.’ And he that praiſeth God to others, is himſelf partaker of the fruits.

III. The third general head is, to ſhew, *How this acceſs to praiſe God in the world, is, and will be the peculiar mercy of the living.*

1. It is the peculiar mercy of us who are now living on the face of the earth: it is peculiar, I ſay, to us at this time. They who are yet unborn, can do nothing; they who are now dead, have no more acceſs to praiſe God in this world. There have been many generations before us; and millions of men and women are gone from hence to another world, who ſometime had their turn of acceſs to this praiſe; but now, though they are, yet none of them all have acceſs to join us in praiſing God.

2. In all time to come, to the end of the world, this privilege will be confined to thoſe who for the time ſhall be on the ſtage. There will be generations after us, as there have been before us; and the work will be devolved on the next generation, for their time. And then they will go, and another riſe up in their ſtead, and get the work put into their hands, and ſo on to the end. The reaſons are,

1ſt, There is no returning to this world, when once gone. Death is a flitting for good and all, never to come back. Job was ſenſible of this, when he ſaid, ‘ I go whence ‘ I ſhall not return, even to the land of darkneſs, and the ‘ ſhadow of death.’ We muſt praiſe him before we lie down in the grave, or never, for there is no riſing out of it to that work, Pſal. lxxxviii. 10. We cannot come back, and God will not bring us back.

2dly, The ſtate and buſineſs of the two worlds are, by an unalterable purpoſe, made different. Here men are in a ſtate of trial; there in a ſettled ſtate for ever, according to their management in the trial. Here is the place of working at the command and for the honour of the maſter: there is the place of the reward of their works. If the ſun ſhould come back over from weſt to eaſt, and ſo make night day too, the ordinance of heaven would be quite altered; ſo no body expects it. As little is the acceſs of any but the living, to praiſe God in the world, to be expected or looked for.

3dly, This world is under a peculiar mark of divine indignation, as defiled by ſin, and ſhould have been deſtroyed, when it was defiled, had not the mediator interpoſed to keep up the tottering fabric for ſome time for the elects ſake. So men are haſted through it, as through a defiled place, and have an opportunity of praiſing God by the way. And therefore it cannot be expected, that ever that opportunity ſhall be repeated.

Laſtly, When the dead ſhall live again, this world ſhall be deſtroyed. As long as we ſhall lie in our graves, this world will laſte, but when we ſhall live again at the reſurrection, it ſhall be conſumed by the general conflagration. So there is no acceſs to praiſe God in the world, but for thoſe that now live, and that ſhall live to the end, Rev. xx. 22. ‘ The dead were judged out of thoſe things ‘ which were written in the books, according to their ‘ works.’ Chap. xxi. 1. ‘ And I ſaw a new heaven, and ‘ a new earth: for the firſt heavens and the firſt earth ‘ were paſſed away; and there was no more ſea.’ In the new heavens and earth God will be praiſed, but he will have no more praiſes here off the hand of any, when once they are gone off the ſtage, which will fall down under the laſt generation to be on it.

USE 1. of *Information*. Hence learn,

1. That the buſineſs of life is to honour God in the world. And if that be ſo, many have been many years on it, that have never yet fallen to their buſineſs, nay nor once ſeriouſly laid to heart what their buſineſs is. Hear the great Maſter ſaying to you, Matth. xx. 6. ‘ Why ſtand ‘ ye here all the day idle?’ and ſee how ye will anſwer that queſtion. Ye are buſy doing nothing, worſe than nothing: but what are you doing for God? Ye are living, but what honour comes to God by your living? I beſeech you conſider this, as ye will anſwer it to God, who hath ſaid, Mal. i. 6. ‘ A ſon honoureth his father, ‘ and a ſervant his maſter: if then I be a father, where ‘ is mine honour? and if a maſter, where is my fear?’

Object. 1. Some I fear will think, though not ſay, that they have other buſineſs to fill their hands with, how to get a throughbearing in the world for them and theirs. *Anſw.* Ah, is another world not worth your conſideration? Or can ye think that ever ye ſhall enjoy God in that world, who are not careful to honour him here? 1 Sam. ii. 30. ‘ Them that honour me, I will honour; and they that ‘ deſpiſe me, ſhall be lightly eſteemed.’ To ſpend all the time you live in wreſtling with this world for a throughbearing, and after ye are dead to wreſtle with the wrath of God for ever, is a ſad tryſt; better ye had never been born. Be concerned to honour God while ye live; and God will ſee to your proviſion while ye live, and make you happy after.

Object. But I have no acceſs to do any thing for the honour of God, in reſpect of my circumſtances in the world: worldly buſineſs is by providence laid to my hand for the buſineſs of my life.

Anſw. 1*ſt*, It is a common miſtake in point of practice, that there are any who have no acceſs to honour God in the world. Though ſome are placed in higher and more extenſive ſpheres of activity for God, yet there is no ſtation ſo low in the world, but it is a ſphere wherein people may honour God, if they have a heart for it. This you may ſee verified in the parable of the talents, Matth. xxv. 14, 15. ‘ The kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling ‘ into a far country, who called his own ſervants, and de‘ livered unto them his goods: and unto one he gave ‘ five talents, to another two, and to another one, to every ‘ man according to his ſeveral ability, and ſtraightway ‘ took his journey.’ If one is in life, though never ſo low, according to the text, he may honour God. If one is a magiſtrate, or a church officer, he has acceſs to honour God among thoſe over whom he is ſet. Though he be neither, if he is a perſon of weight and conſideration in the place where he lives; as far as that weight goes, ſo far goes the ſphere of his activity for God, which he is to fill up by honouring of God. If he is a maſter of a family, there is a ſphere of activity for God he is put in. If he is a ſingle member of a family, he has a ſphere of activity among other ſingle members of it. To this purpoſe ſpeaks the apoſtle, 1 Cor. vii. 24. ‘ Brethren, let e‘ very man wherein he is called, therein abide with God.’

2*dly*, It is the honouring of God in our ſeveral ſtations that is the true honouring of him. That we cannot do for the honouring of God what does not belong to our ſtation, is ſo far from being our ſin, that it would be a diſhonouring of him to attempt it. The moon is uſeful to the world, though it ſhines not by day; the ſtars too, though they ſhine not ſo bright as the moon. The hands are uſeful to the body, though one does not walk on them; the feet, though one does not ſee with them, *&c.* Are you a child of a family? your buſineſs of life as ſuch is to be an obedient child: are you a ſervant? yours is to be a faithful ſervant. Whatever relation you ſtand in, ye are to honour God by a conſcientious practice of the duties of your relation.

3*dly*, Whatever buſineſs God has laid to your hand, follow it as a duty from God laid upon you: Col. iii. 17. ‘ Whatſoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name ‘ of the Lord Jeſus, giving thanks to God and the Fa‘ ther by him.’ And ver. 23. ‘ Whatſoever ye do, do it ‘ heartily, as to the Lord.’ Set about your buſineſs as commanded you of God, acting in it as under the eye of God, and looking to his word as your rule, and to the merit of Chriſt for God's acceptance of it. Whatever trials and ſufferings the Lord lays on you, bear them patiently; and bear them for Chriſt's ſake that bare greater for us; and look for the acceptance of your bearing them through Chriſt. So ſhall the honouring of God be the buſineſs of your life, whatever your circumſtances are.

2. The buſineſs of honouring God in the world, formerly in the hands of the former generation, is now devolved on you. See what ye will do with it, Pſal. cxlv. 4. ‘ One generation ſhall praiſe thy works to another, ‘ and ſhall declare thy mighty acts.’ The former generation of the righteous, by keeping the law, contended with the wicked, and maintained the honour of God in the world; they rowed againſt the ſtream of an ungodly crew, in the face of perſecution, till they fell by death holding up the ſtandard for the honour of God: and then they gave it you, ſaying, ‘ The living, the living, he ſhall ‘ praiſe thee, as I do this day; the father to the children ‘ ſhall make known thy truth.’ On this I would ſay,

1*ſt*, Ye muſt anſwer for the ſtandard now. If it go now while ye live, your life ſhall go for ever for it, tho' ye were left alone to hold it up: Pſal. lx. 4. ‘ Thou haſt ‘ given a banner to them that fear thee: that it may be ‘ diſplayed becauſe of the truth.’ Mark viii. ult. ‘ Who‘ ſoever therefore ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my ‘ words, in this adulterous and ſinful generation, of him ‘ alſo ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed, when he cometh ‘ in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.’ Take heed then, there is a ſacred truſt committed into your hands; the generation of martyrs all along have conveyed it to you at the expence of their blood, it having been ſet up firſt at the expence of the blood of Chriſt.

2*dly*, Ye muſt either hold it up, or treacherouſly deſert into the enemies camp, Matth. xii. 30. *He that is not with me, is againſt me: and he that gathereth not with me, ſcattereth abroad.* Many ſet up for neutraliſts; they go not into all exceſs with the openly profane, but they are as far from making it the buſineſs of their life to honour God. God will rank ſuch with his enemies: Pſal. cxxv. ult. ‘ As for ſuch as turn aſide unto their crooked ‘ ways, the Lord ſhall lead them forth with the work‘ ers of iniquity.’

3*dly*, The ſaints of former generations will condemn you, as a ſpurious brood of treacherous men, and made ſo little account of what they wared their all on to tranſmit to you: 1 Cor. vi. 2. ‘ Do ye not know that the ſaints ‘ ſhall judge the world?’ Ye do by your ungodly lives, diſhonouring God, declare them fools: the day will come, that they will declare you fools, though ye have come out of their loins: Rev. xix. 3. ‘ And again they ſaid, ‘ Alleluia. And her ſmoke roſe up for ever and ever.’

3. The buſineſs of honouring God in the world ye are to tranſmit to the ſucceeding generation, ſince it is the living, all along in a ſucceſſion of generations that have acceſs to the praiſing of God, Pſal. lxxviii. 2, 3, 4. ‘ I ‘ will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark ‘ ſayings of old: which we have heard and known, and

our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, ſhewing to the generations to come, the praiſes of the Lord; and his ſtrength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.' As ye have received the ſtandard from the former, ye are to hand it down to the ſucceeding generation; that when ye are gone, inſtead of the fathers, there may be the children. See then what ye do, that God may be honoured when ye are in the duſt.

1ſt, It lies on every one of you to do for it ſomething: Rom. xiv. 7. 'For none of us liveth to himſelf, and no man dieth to himſelf.' Love to God and your neighbour binds it on you; and none of you can want occaſion for it, while ye live among perſons, ſome of whom may live after you; and have a tongue to ſpeak, and hands to act.

2dly, If ye do it not, the honour of God is far from your heart. They that have nothing of God to communicate to others, have nothing of God within themſelves. Grace is a fire, and fire will go about to ſet on fire whatever is next it; ſo that if it do not burn, it is becauſe it is not combuſtible. In the creation of plants, every tree was made with its ſeed in itſelf; ſo it is in the new creation of the trees of righteouſneſs.

3dly, If ye do it not, ye lay a ſtumbling block before the ſucceeding generation, which they may be ruined by. The generation of Jews in Chriſt's time rejected the goſpel, as they murdered Chriſt, they have murdered ſixteen generations of their offſpring ſince. What will come of the ſucceeding generation that looks to you, that live not to the honour of God? When God calls for the ſtandard of his honour at their hand, they will ſay, they never ſaw it; though that will not excuſe them, it will aggravate your condemnation.

4. Know, that ye muſt honour God in the world now or never: Eccl. ix. 10. 'Whatſoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom in the grave whither thou goeſt.' Now is the accepted time, wherein ye may act for your own ſalvation; miſs the time, and the door will be ſhut on you never to be opened again, Prov. i. 24. &c. Now is the working time for the honour of God; miſs it, and this occaſion you will never more have. I would aſk you,

1ſt, Does it concern you to honour God? or is it none of your buſineſs? If the Father created you, certainly ye are bound to live for his honour. If the Son redeemed you, there is a double tie on you to live for him who died for you. If the Holy Ghoſt has ſanctified you, he has fitted and diſpoſed you for it.

2dly, When will ye lay out yourſelf for it then? It is not a work to be done at any time, but confined to one time, the time of life, John ix. 14. 'I muſt work the works of him that ſent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.' Now the glaſs is ſet up to you: there is much of it run, as ye may ſee by looking to the lower end, the time ye have lived: the upper end ye cannot ſee, what time ye have yet to live; how ſoon it may run out, ye know not. But it will never be turned for you. When the laſt ſand runs out, the word is given, The Maſter allows no more time for his work to you, *Give account of your ſtewardſhip.*

5. *laſtly*, Life is valuable, as giving acceſs to honour God in the world. Hence ſays Hezekiah in the text and context, Iſa. xxxviii. 18, 19. 'The grave cannot praiſe thee, death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he ſhall praiſe thee, as I do this day; the father to the children ſhall make known thy truth.' There are many impreſſions of vanity in life. In itſelf it is become a vapour ſuddenly vaniſhing; it is like a poſt for ſwift paſſage, a dream for vanity. It is the place of rendeavous for innumerable troubles and afflictions; and is a low ſtation for an immortal ſoul, with much meanneſs about it. There are two things which it is valuable for, viz. that there is acceſs in it,

1ſt, To act for eternal ſalvation to ourſelves, which the dead can no more do: 2 Cor. vi. 2.——'Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of ſalvation.' And in this reſpect an hour's life may be worth a thouſand worlds, becauſe eternity may depend on it, and heaven be ſecured.

2dly, To act for the honour of God in the world, which the dead have no more acceſs to. To a good man an opportunity of doing good is valuable, as to an ill man to do miſchief. What folk love, they will value acceſs to ſerve: ſo the ſinner values acceſs to ſerve his luſts, and the ſaint to ſerve his Lord. So, on this conſideration,

(1.) Life is carefully and honourably to be preſerved, as a valuable thing; and not to be thrown away, by neglect of the means of its preſervation, or expoſing it wilfully to means of deſtruction: Exod. xx. 13. 'Thou ſhalt not kill.'

(2.) The acceſs to honour God in life, is to be laid in balance with the troubles of life, that the former may downweigh the latter, by that overweight that God's honour bears to our caſe: Phil. i. 20. 'According to my earneſt expectation, and my hope, that in nothing I ſhall be aſhamed, but that with all boldneſs, as always, ſo now alſo Chriſt ſhall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.'

(3.) It is nicely to be improven to its proper ends, as a precious opportunity; every filing of it is to be gathered up as a gold ſparkling. Hence Paul exhorts to 'redeem the time, becauſe the days are evil,' Eph. v. 16.

USE 2. of *Reproof* to ſeveral ſorts of perſons.

1. To thoſe who look on the buſineſs of praiſing and honouring God in the world as a burden. In itſelf it is the mercy of life; but they treat it as the plague of life. They are, as Doeg, detained before the Lord; and any holy exerciſe is a wearineſs to them; Amos viii. 5. 'When will the new moon be gone, that we may ſell corn? and the ſabbath, that we may ſet forth wheat?' The Lord takes notice of this temper of ſpirit, Mal. i. 13. 'Ye ſaid alſo, Behold, what a wearineſs is it, and ye have ſnuffed at it, ſaith the Lord of hoſts.' O how would would ye take with heaven? but be ſure ye will never get there in that caſe, as not being made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light, Col. i. 12. Ye will be eaſed of that burden, but for a heavier one.

2. To thoſe who look on it as none of their buſineſs, whoever elſe be concerned in it. They make no profeſſion of living to the honour of God, and their practice is conform. This ſpeaks you neither to look on God as your Maſter, nor your Father, Mal. i. 6. And if ſo, doubtleſs ye cannot look for his reward; nor for the eternal inheritance of his children: where then will lie the gain of this liberty which you take to yourſelves?

To thoſe who ſpend their life without conſideration of the chief buſineſs of life. They ſpend their years as a tale that is told, Pſal. xc. 9. O how many are dreaming away a lifetime, out of which they are not like to awake till death. They can conſider any thing but their ſoul's ſtate: but the thought of that they cannot dwell on. They that cannot conſider the great buſineſs of life, will certainly loſe the opportunity of that buſineſs, and it will ſit to them in the end, Prov. xx. 4. 'The ſluggard will not plow by reaſon of the cold; therefore ſhall he beg in harveſt, and have nothing.'

4. To thoſe who delay the buſineſs of honouring God, till they ſhall be near death. Many ſuch are there, who can never find the time to begin their work, though they do not want thoughts of it; as was the caſe with Felix, who ſaid to Paul, 'Go thy way for this time: when I have a convenient ſeaſon, I will call for thee.' When they are young, they put off till they be old; then, till they be going to die; when ſickneſs comes, they put off ſtill, in hopes of recovery; when they are paſt hopes, they are not capable for it; and ſo the ſoul is loſt. Mean while, all they are concerned for, is their own ſafety, not God's honour: and being regardleſs of this latter, no wonder they fall ſhort of the former.

5. *laſtly*, To thoſe whoſe life is a life of diſhonouring God, by ſecret and open wickedneſs. And this ſeems to be the caſe of this generation, by which we appear to be a generation of God's wrath, Mic. vii. 2-4. *The good man is periſhed out of the earth: and there is none upright a-*

mong men: they all lie in wait for blood: they hunt every one his brother with a net. The beſt of them is a brier: the moſt upright is ſharper than a thorn hedge: the day of thy watchmen, and thy viſitation cometh; now ſhall be their perplexity. Corruption of life and manners is become univerſal, ſo that people are become proof againſt conviction from the word, being ſo hardened under the means of grace, that their caſe is grown hopeleſs; all which cannot miſs, ſoon or late, to bring down ſome rouſing ſtroke, Jer. vi. 15. ‘Were they aſhamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all aſhamed, neither could they bluſh; therefore they ſhall fall among them that fall: at the time that I viſit them, they ſhall be caſt down, ſaith the Lord.’

Use 3. of *Exhortation*. Make it the buſineſs of your life to live to the honour of God.

Queſt. How ſhall we do that?

Anſw. 1. Honour him by faith: Rom. iv. 20. ‘Abraham ſtaggered not at the promiſe of God through unbelief; but was ſtrong in faith, giving glory to God.’ Faith gives God the honour of all his glorious perfections as manifeſted in the word; and without faith there is no acceptable honouring of him. Therefore the Chriſtian life is a *life of faith*. And honour him,

1ſt, By receiving and reſting on Jeſus Chriſt as your Saviour from ſin and wrath; 1 John iii. 23. ‘This is his commandment, that we ſhould believe on the name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt.’ If ye honour not God this way, ye honour him not at all. God has ſent his Son in the character of Saviour of the world: put your caſe in his hand, that ye may be ſanctified, and ſaved from wrath through him. If ye do not believe him able and willing to ſave you, ye diſhonour God egregiouſly, 1 John v. 10, 11. ‘He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, becauſe he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.’

2dly, By truſting God in all times and caſes, Iſa. xxvi. 4. ‘Truſt ye in the Lord for ever.’ The eſtabliſhed way of communication with heaven, is by truſt in God: and faith is productive of hope, which is the anchor of the ſoul, keeping it ſafe and ſpiritually at reſt, in all ſtorms public or private. Truſting in the creature is a putting it in God's place; and under ſuch a weight it muſt fall. But God is honoured by truſting him.

3dly, By believing his word in all the parts of it, 2 Chron. xx. 20. ‘Believe in the Lord your God, ſo ſhall you be eſtabliſhed; believe his prophets, ſo ſhall ye proſper.’ God is to be honoured by faith's acting on every part of the word; on the commands, believing the divine authority of them; on the promiſes, believing the accompliſhment of them; and on the threatenings, believing the juſtice and truth of them.

2. Honour him by the practice of holineſs; 1 Pet. ii. 9. ‘Ye are a choſen generation, a royal prieſthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye ſhould ſhew forth the praiſes of him who hath called you out of darkneſs into his marvellous light.’ To lead a holy tender life, is the way to honour God, and labouring to be like him in all converſation. If ye be not univerſal in your obedience, that part ye are deficient in may bring a blot on all the reſt, as Judas's treachery wiped out all his good deeds. And if ye would live to the honour of God, I would recommend to you particularly,

1ſt, Diligent and reverent worſhipping of God, Matt. iv. 10. ‘Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve.’ Worſhip him in your families, in ſecret, and in the publick aſſemblies; ſet up for his honour in the world; make conſcience of joining therein for the honour of God. And be reverent in the frame of your heart, and in your outward geſture, as knowing that he is a great God with whom ye have to do: and there can be no reverence in their hearts, who behave irreverently.

2dly, Be exact in point of juſtice in your dealings; ſhaking your hands of all gain of unrighteouſneſs. Iſa. xxxiii. 15, 16. ‘He that walketh righteouſly, and ſpeaketh uprightly, he that deſpiſeth the gain of oppreſſions, that ſhaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that ſtoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and ſhutteth his eyes from ſeeing of evil: he ſhall dwell on high,’ &c. That baſeneſs of ſpirit, diſpoſing to ſteal, cheat, and catch any little advantage they can get of their neighbour, that one can truſt them no farther than they ſee, is moſt diſhonouring to God, as if either he did not ſee, or elſe did approve of their wicked practices.

3dly, Be readily diſpoſed to the duties of humanity, being compaſſionate to them that are in diſtreſs, Col. iii. 12. ‘Put on therefore (as the elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, long ſuffering.’ This honours God in a very particular manner: Luke vi. 35, 36. ‘But love you your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again: and your reward ſhall be great, and ye ſhall be the children of the Higheſt: for he is kind unto the unthankful, and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father alſo is merciful.’ And it has much encouragement by promiſe: Prov. iii. 9, 10. ‘Honour the Lord with thy ſubſtance, and with the firſt fruits of thy increaſe. So ſhall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy preſſes ſhall burſt out with new wine.’ A ſelfiſh, unkind, unſympathiſing, narrow ſpirit, is a great ſtain on an otherwiſe fair character.

4thly, Be the ſame in ſecret where no eye ſees you, that you would be in public. This will much honour God, when the conſcience of his eye being on you, is as forcible to reſtrain you from evil, as the eyes of the world would be, as was Joſeph's caſe, ‘How can I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God.’ O what do the practiſers of ſecret miſchief think of God? They can do a miſchief unſeen, and then cover it with a lye. But alas! is there not a God in heaven, that ſees himſelf diſhonoured by ſuch practices? Open ſhame, or elſe a ſecret ſtroke will be the conſequence.

5thly, Shew yourſelves on God's ſide, amidſt the diſhonours done him in the world. For ye muſt either join with the diſhonourers of his name, or elſe teſtify againſt them: hence ſays our Saviour, Matth. xii. 30. ‘He that is not with me, is againſt me: and he that gathereth not with me, ſcattereth abroad.’ If you have no heart nor brow to appear for God, while ye ſee him diſhonoured, remember what God accounts of that, and how he will treat it, Mark viii. ult. ‘Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and ſinful generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.’ Beware of being partakers with other mens ſins; but ſet yourſelves to be a check upon it, and witneſs againſt them, elſe ye honour not God.

6thly, Commend the way of God and religion to others, and encourage good motions where ye can perceive them. Grace is communicative for the honour of God; and every gracious perſon is diſpoſed to propagate religion. Hence ſaid the Lord of Abraham, Gen. xviii. 19 ‘I know him, that he will command his children, and his houſhold after him, and they ſhall keep the way of the Lord, to do juſtice and judgment,’ &c. The wearing out of that ſo much now, from what it was in former years, is one of the ſymptoms of the decay of religion.

7thly, Learn to bear troubles in the world with a Chriſtian patience, and holy chearfulneſs. This doth exceedingly tend to the honour of God; as you ſee in the worthies mentioned Heb. xi. There is a deſpiſing of the chaſtening of the Lord, wherein the proud and fooliſh ſcorn to be lowered by the rebukes of providence, wherein the Atheiſm of the heart, and contempt of God appears. There is a fainting under the rebukes of providence, wherein unbelief appears. Both are diſhonourable and to be guarded againſt, Heb. xii. 5. The middle courſe is to God's honour.

Laſtly, Walk with God in a conſcientious performance of the duties of your ſtation. Hence is that exhortation of the apoſtle's, 1 Cor. vii. 24. ‘Brethren, let every man wherein he is called, therein abide with God.’ That is the ſphere wherein ye are ſet to honour God: and God is much honoured that way. No man can live to the honour of God, who does not carefully notice, and diligently purſue the duties of his ſtation to the honour of God.

I ſhall give you a few motives to live to the honour of God.

Mot. 1. God is the author of thy life. The life and being thou haſt, thou haſt from God: Rom. xi. 11. 'For 'of him, and through him, and to him are all things: Therefore *remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth*. And ſince he is your firſt cauſe, is it not reaſonable he ſhould be your chief end? The life which you had from him, will ye not improve for him?

Mot. 2. God is the preſerver of thy life, Pſal. xxxvi. 6. 'Lord, thou preſerveſt man and beaſt.' For every moment's life thou haſt had, thou art his debtor. Thy life is continually in his hand, to prolong it, or take it away, as ſeems good in his ſight. If he ſhould but withdraw his upholding hand, thy life would preſently go. Every moment there muſt be a new outletting of influence from him for preſervation of thy life. How unaccountable muſt it then be not to live to his honour? This was a grievous charge againſt Belſhazzar, Dan. v. 23. 'The God in whoſe hand thy breath is, and whoſe are all 'thy ways, haſt thou not glorified.'

Mot. 3. God is the giver of all thou haſt, whereby thou mayſt honour him. Haſt thou a tongue to ſpeak, and hands to act for God? he gave them to thee. Haſt thou any health, ſtrength, wealth, and reputation, whereby thou art in capacity to honour him? all is from him; and ſhall not his own be uſed for him? Hence ſaith David, 2 Chron. xxix. 14. 'All things come of thee, and 'of thine own have we given thee.' Is it not ſacrilegious to do otherwiſe?

Mot. 4. God puts opportunities in thine hand for honouring of him. As he has given thee means whereby thou mayſt honour him, ſo his providence lays to thy hand opportunities to uſe them. Every opportunity is a providential call, to lay out what the Lord has put in thy hand for his ſervice. And it is dangerous to hide one's talents in the earth, and not to lay them out for God.

Mot. 5. There are ſome who are deprived of abilities ye have to honour God. So the Pagan world is deprived of goſpel light which we all have; the ſick of thoſe which the healthy have. The not improving of them then will aggravate your condemnation. It is ſad to be cumberers of the ground in God's vineyard, taking up room in it uſeleſsly, which others might improve to good advantage.

Mot. 6. You have forfeited by ſin your abilities, and your very life. God might juſtly have taken them all from us, and made us as incapable to ſpeak or act for his honour, as we have been unwilling for it. But his patience has ſuffered us long, and he has done us good, tho' unthankful and evil, if peradventure theſe might lead us to repentance. Shall not this engage us to honour him?

Mot. 7. This was the deſign of the redemption purchaſed by Chriſt, Tit. ii. 14. 'Who gave himſelf for us, 'that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify 'unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' Man was made at firſt for the honour of God, ſin entering rendered him unfit for that work. Therefore Chriſt died, that they might be again brought to live to God's honour. If then ye are not ſo living, it is an evidence Chriſt's redemption is not applied to you as yet; and if ye continue ſo, it will evidence that you are none of his.

Mot. 8. It is the deſign of the ſanctification of the Spirit, 1 Pet. ii. 9. 'Ye are a choſen generation, a royal 'prieſthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye 'ſhould ſhew forth the praiſes of him who hath called you 'out of darkneſs into his marvellous light.' When God puts his Spirit into a man, it is that he may walk in his way. So that, if ye live not to the honour of God, it is an evidence that ye have not the Spirit.

Mot. 9. *laſtly*, It is a loſt life that is not lived to the honour of God, Matth. xvi. 25, 26. 'Whoſoever will 'ſave his life, ſhall loſe it; and whoſoever will loſe his 'life for my ſake, ſhall find it. For what is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own 'ſoul? or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his 'ſoul?' If ye live not to the honour of God here, never expect to live with him hereafter in heaven. Remember the end of the ſlothful ſervant, Matth. xxv. 30. 'Caſt 'ye the unprofitable ſervant into outer darkneſs, there 'ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.' For your help to live to the honour of God, take theſe directions.

1. Allow yourſelves ſeriouſly to conſider, now, that ye are living, and muſt die, what will be the beſt way for you to ſpend that bit of life. It is pity people ſhould not propoſe to themſelves a deſign of living, and conſider what is that deſign of life that will come to the beſt account at length. Sure if ye do, ye will find no deſign ſo reaſonable and advantageous as this.

2. Then take him for your God in Chriſt, that ye may live to his honour; and do not think that it is by your living to his honour, that he muſt become your God. Faith muſt go before obedience, if ever the obedience be kindly. Faith firſt embracing ſalvation in the free offer of the goſpel, natively engages the heart to honour God, as a ſon doth his father.

3. Labour to keep up the love of God in the heart, by believing his love; and that will be a ſtrong band, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. 'The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us, becauſe 'we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all 'dead: and that he died for all, that they which live, 'ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto him 'which died for them, and roſe again.'

4. *laſtly*, Firmly believe that there is a reward for the righteous; and that not a good word or good work, ſpoke or done for God, ſhall want a reward, 1 Cor. xv. ult. 'Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye ſtedfaſt, unmo'veable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for'aſmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in 'the Lord.'

DOCT. II. *It is the ſpecial buſineſs and privilege of life, to propagate religion, God's name and praiſe, the ſtanding generation to the riſing generation, the fathers to the children, all along.*

In diſcourſing this doctrine, I ſhall ſhew,

I. What it is to propagate religion, God's name and praiſe to the riſing generation.

II. Who are the ſtanding and riſing generation, the fathers and the children, among whom this propagation of religion is to paſs.

III. In what reſpects it is the ſpecial buſineſs of life.

IV. In what reſpects it is the ſpecial privilege of life.

V. *laſtly*, Apply.

I. I ſhall ſhew *what it is to propagate religion, God's name and praiſe, to the riſing generation*. It implies theſe four things.

1. The having of religion ourſelves. None can propagate what they have not. If men have not the knowledge of God themſelves, how can they praiſe him to others? Men are ſenſible, that if they gain not a competent portion of the world to themſelves, they can leave none to their children: ſo if they be idle or waſters, they are unjuſt to their families. Even ſo if ye are not religious, ye not only diſhonour God, and deſtroy your own ſouls, but ye are unjuſt to the riſing generation, and deſtructive to your ſouls too.

2. The profeſſion of religion, Rom. x. 10. *With the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs, and with the mouth confeſſion is made unto ſalvation.* Men may have a profeſſion without the practice of religion; but the practice requires the profeſſion of it. And no man will ever propagate religion that is not himſelf a profeſſor of it. And the profeſſion muſt be ſuch as is not viſibly contradicted by the practice: for if example deſtroy what precept builds up, there is no propagating religion to others by that means. So a credible profeſſion of religion is a debt owing to the riſing generation.

3. A deſire to continue and ſpread religion in the world. Without this none will propagate it: for what men have no deſire of the ſpreading of, they will be loth to propagate. And it is the want of concern for the ſpreading of religion, that makes men ſo careleſs abou the propagating thereof. They have no due concern fo

their own ſouls; therefore they have none either for thoſe that come after them.

4. *laſtly*, Contributing our endeavours to bring others, and particularly the riſing generation, to the knowledge of religion. Pſal. lxxviii. 2, 3, 4. ‘ I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark ſayings of old: which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, ſhewing them to the generation to come, the praiſes of the Lord, and his ſtrength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.’ Man is born like a wild aſs's colt, wanting both knowledge and experience. We ſee ſuch as come into our world, come in naked among us; and we judge ourſelves obliged to clothe them, feed them, and teach them how to do for themſelves. But withal they can do as little for their ſouls, as for their bodies; and ſhall we leave them deſtitute in that point? How will we anſwer that to God? Now, to contribute endeavours to bring them to religion, lies in endeavouring,

1*ſt*, To bring them to faith in Jeſus Chriſt, which is the foundation of all religion: Pſal. lxxviii. 7. ‘ That they might ſet their hope in God, and not forget the works of God; but keep his commandments.’ They come into the world under God's wrath and curſe. There is a Saviour provided; but they know it not, till the ſtanding generation tell them of it. They are averſe naturally to come to that Saviour, and are not aware of the danger of ſlighting him; it is juſtice and charity then to deal with them, in order to convince and bring them in.

2*dly*, To bring them to holineſs of life; as did Abraham, Gen. xviii. 19. ‘ I know him, (ſays the Lord,) that he will command his children, and his houſehold after him, and they ſhall keep the way of the Lord, to do juſtice and judgment.’ When they come into our world, they bring a corrupt nature with them, which begins early to ſprout. Satan will begin his temptations with them as ſoon as they are capable, loſing no time. The longer ſin continues in them uncurbed, the ſtronger does it grow. It nearly concerns the ſtanding generation then to contribute their endeavours to quench the helliſh flame, and to turn the ſtream and courſe of their life from ſin to holineſs. And this,

(1.) By precept and counſel. Thus we are to praiſe God to them, by word of mouth. We ſhould ſhew them what we have to ſay in God's behalf, commend religion, diſparage the way of ſin and of the world to them; bind duty on their conſcience, and oblige them thereto by any authority we have over them.

(2.) By example. Let us write our religion in our own walk before them, that they may be brought to copy after us. Thoſe precepts that are illuminated with example, are moſt ready to take. Beware of caſting an ill example before their eyes; for the corruption of nature lies that way, and he that ſins before a child, ſins twice; for his ſin lies fair to be repeated by the young ſpectator.

(3.) By dependence on the Lord for a bleſſing on the means uſed for their good, 2 Cor. x. 4. ‘ The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of ſtrong holds.’ Whoever he be that plants, if God give not the increaſe, there will be none. That is a great truth in all caſes, in ſpiritual as well as worldly things, 1 Sam. iii. 9.——‘ By ſtrength ſhall no man prevail.’ If a man ſhould uſe the beſt arguments, the ſtrongeſt motives, for bringing others into the way of religion; and upon the ſuitableneſs of the means promiſe himſelf ſucceſs, he takes the way moſt likely to render them ineffectual. The word ſpoken needs to be mixed with faith in the ſpeaker. And he is moſt likely to ſucceed that uſes the means of God's appointment for doing good, with entire dependence on the Lord for ſucceſs.

(4.) *laſtly*, By prayer for them. Thus it is promiſed concerning Chriſt, that *prayer ſhall be made for him continually*, viz. that his kingdom may come, by the daily coming in of new ſubjects to him. Since the ſucceſs of all that we can do for the riſing generation depends on the Lord's bleſſing, it is neceſſary that we plead for them at the throne of grace, quickening ourſelves thereto, by conſideration of the honour of God, and their eternal welfare, that depend on it.

II. The ſecond general head was to ſhew, *Who are the ſtanding and riſing generation, the fathers and the children, among whom this propagation of religion is to paſs.* And this muſt be ſtated according to the language of the Holy Ghoſt, and the analogy of other parts of ſcripture, if we would rightly ſee whoſe is this duty. In general I ſhall premiſe,

1. All ſuperiors and inferiors are in ſcripture-ſtile comprehended under fathers and children. This is plain from the fifth commandment, which under the name of *father* and *mother*, whoſe relatives children are, preſcribes the mutual duties of ſuperiors and inferiors. Therefore every one is to propagate religion to his inferiors.

2. Foraſmuch as there is no perfect and abſolute equality among men, but ſome who are inferior in one reſpect to others, may be ſuperior to them in another reſpect; it is the duty of equals and inferiors to propagate religion among themſelves, and to their ſuperiors, mutually communicating their light and warmth.

3. Some may belong to the ſtanding generation in one reſpect, who belong to the riſing one in another; as a perſon who is inferior to ſome, and ſuperior to others. So they are to have it propagated to them, and they are to propagate it to others again.

4. *laſtly*, The ſame command of God that binds the ſtanding generation and fathers to propagate religion, binds the riſing generation and children to receive it. God by binding parents to inſtruct, binds the children to receive inſtruction, they that are the riſing generation now, will be the ſtanding ſoon. But more particularly.

1. Fathers of the ſtate, magiſtrates, ſupreme, or ſubordinate, are to propagate religion to their ſubjects. They are God's vicegerents on earth, to be employed for God, in whoſe name they act. Iſa. xlix. 23. ‘ Kings ſhall be thy nurſing fathers, and their queens thy nurſing mothers.’ And it is one of the blackeſt ſymptoms of the corruption of the world, that oft times they are found ſet to extirpate religion.

2. Fathers in the church, miniſters, and church officers, to their eccleſiaſtical children. It is for this very end they are put in office. Heb. xii. 17. ‘ Obey them that have the rule over you, and ſubmit yourſelves: for they watch for your ſouls, as they that muſt give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you.’ Jeſus Chriſt brought this religion from heaven, employed his apoſtles to propagate it, to them they ſucceed in the office of propagating religion, and muſt ſee to make it their buſineſs, as they will be anſwerable.

3. Fathers of families to their children. For every family ought to be a church, wherein holy worſhip, doctrine, diſcipline, and government ought to be maintained, by the heads thereof. And particularly,

1*ſt*, Fathers and mothers to the children procreated of their bodies. This is the chief thing in the text, ‘ The father to the children ſhall make known thy truth.’ It is but an inferior part of your charge, to provide meat and cloaths for your children, and to put them in a way of living: the chief part is to ſee to their ſouls, that they may be recovered out of the loſt ſtate they are in by nature. It will be but a ſorry kindneſs, to be concerned for their proviſion in time, if ye neglect them as to their eternal concerns. It is by them your name is to be propagated, and you are to propagate God's name to them, in point of gratitude to God, and natural affection to them.

2*dly*, They are to do it alſo to all others in their family, whether they be ſervants, or whatever they be. Being in your family, ye are inſtead of fathers and mothers to them, and owe them that benefit. Hence maſters are called fathers, 2 Kings v. 13. and the duty of propagating religion is expreſsly extended to one's houſehold. And whoſoever have the chief authority in a family, though ſervants themſelves, are the fathers of it in this ſenſe.

4. Fathers in gifts or grace, to thoſe who are children in theſe reſpects, in compariſon of them. So Joſeph was a father to Pharaoh, Gen. xlv. 8. If God has beſtowed on you more gifts or grace than on others; mind ye are

thereby made fathers to thoſe that are weaker than you, and are obliged to communicate your light to them. So teachers are called fathers, Gen. iv. 20. and the Spirit of God the common Father. It will then make a dreadful reckoning, for men to have gifts, and not lay them out for the benefit of others; to uſe their gifts juſt for oſtentation, and inſtead of helping, to brangle and confound, and perplex the weaker with them.

5. Fathers in years, to thoſe who are children in reſpect of age to them. It is Elihu's obſerve, that 'days 'ſhould ſpeak, and the multitude of years ſhould teach 'wiſdom.' The more days the more experience, the more acceſs to improve in knowledge; and ſo to be more uſeful to the younger. Mind then, that your ſuperiority in years conſtitutes you fathers to thoſe younger than you. Ye will not forget it in point of the regard ye expect from them, and God allows you it; but then you ſhould make conſcience of the duty too, propagating religion to them.

Thus ye ſee the ſtanding and riſing generation. And if theſe fathers would ſet themſelves to the propagating of religion to their reſpective children, the work would go on.

III. The third general head was to ſhew, *In what reſpects it is the ſpecial buſineſs of life.* The buſineſs of life appointed by the great Maſter is manifold; but the ſum of it is to honour God: and the chief branch thereof, the ſpecial buſineſs of life, is to propagate religion, the ſtanding to the riſing generation. This will appear in the following particulars.

1. It is the buſineſs of life, that would have been the buſineſs of it though ſin had never entered into the world. The buſineſs of the lawyer, and phyſician, and many handy crafts now in the world, owe their original and neceſſity to ſin's entrance. Nay, the very buſineſs of our ſalvation does ſo too; for if Adam had ſtood the time of trial, all his poſterity's eternal happineſs would have been thereby ſecured to their hand. But God having ſettled the manner of the propagation of mankind, Gen. i. 28. it was an evidence that the ſucceeding generations were not to be created in their prime as Adam was; but to be born infants, and grow up by degrees in knowledge of religion, and other things, as appears from Luke ii. ult. And this would have afforded this buſineſs.

2. It is the buſineſs of life that moſt ſingly looks to the honour of God. God is honoured by our working out our own ſalvation: but then our own advantage bears great ſtroke in it allowably, as well as his honour; but this is a buſineſs carried on not for ourſelves, but for God allenarly; and in that reſpect is the more noble. Hence we find the apoſtle willing, for the great end of the propagation of religion, either to live or die. And he prefers one's edifying the church to his own comfort. He edifies the church, that edifies his houſe, Neh. iii. 28. 30.

3. It is the buſineſs of life, that is the end of life and ſalvation given to the elect, and all their comforts and enjoyments. Hence ſaid our Lord to Peter, 'I have pray'ed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art 'converted, ſtrengthen the brethren.' We get life and ſalvation by believing in Chriſt; and are as really poſſeſſed of eternal life that we can never loſe, upon our firſt believing, as the ſaints in heaven are, though not in that meaſure. When the Lord had a mind to honour Paul to propagate religion, he reached his own heart firſt by his grace; and then he ſet him to work. Is not that the ſpecial buſineſs of life, for which God brings people into a ſtate of ſalvation?

4. It is the buſineſs of life, that the new creature as natively falls to, as the new born infant falls a breathing. Pſal. xxii. 30, 31. 'A ſeed ſhall ſerve him, it ſhall be ac'counted to the Lord for a generation. They ſhall 'come, and ſhall declare his righteouſneſs unto a people 'that ſhall be born, that he hath done this.' So the woman of Samaria, John iv. 29. 'Come, ſee a man that told 'me all things that ever I did: is not this the Chriſt?' Paul, as ſoon as he was converted fell a propagating the religion that before he perſecuted. Grace makes people communicative; and there is never a ſoul in which the leaven of grace is infuſed, but would, if it could, leaven the whole world with the ſame.

5. It is the buſineſs of life, that is moſt uſeful to mankind. Both conſcience and intereſt require us to live ſo, as to be uſeful to our fellow creatures, Rom. xiv. 7. 'For 'none of us liveth to himſelf, and no man dieth to him'ſelf.' Some have been great bleſſings to mankind by their uſefulneſs, in propagating arts and ſciences, and in relieving the poor and needy: but none ſo uſeful as thoſe who have propagated religion among them. And a diſpoſition to be uſeful to mankind would prompt men to this.

6. It is the buſineſs of life of the moſt diffuſive uſefulneſs. It brings honour to God, comfort to ones ſelf, and advantage to others. It reaches not only to the preſent generation, but to the generations yet unborn; in ſo far as you, propagating religion to your children, they will propagate it again to theirs, and ſo on. It is to be lamented, that ſome children follow not the ſteps of their religious parents. But every body may obſerve, that there are ſome families wherein one generation after another appears for God; others wherein, generation after generation, religion can never get place among them. Trace theſe back, and ye may come to one that was careful to propagate religion to his children, and his children propagated it again to theirs, and ſo on; and to another that had no care that way about his children, and his children had as little about theirs, and ſo on.

7. *laſtly*, It is the buſineſs of life that is moſt worthy of the dignity of an immortal ſoul, and likeſt the life that Chriſt led in the world. The buſineſs of moſt men is nothing but laborious trifling; their thoughts are wholly ſpent on things pertaining to this life; as if they had ſouls of no other conſtitution than their bodies. It is nothing like the life of Chriſt, who went about doing good, 1 Pet. ii. 21. 'Chriſt ſuffered for us, leaving us an exam'ple, that we ſhould follow his ſteps,' 1 John ii. 6. *He that ſaith he abideth in him, ought himſelf alſo ſo to walk, even as he walked.*

IV. The fourth thing propoſed was, to ſhew, *In what reſpect it is the ſpecial privilege of life.*

1. It is that whereby we may honour God moſt, and ſo anſwer the end of our creation. In our embracing of religion we receive the light, in propagating of it we diffuſe the light received to the glory of God: 1 Pet. ii. 9. 'Ye are a choſen generation, a royal prieſthood, an holy 'nation, a peculiar people; that ye ſhould ſhew forth the 'praiſes of him, who hath called you out of darkneſs in'to his marvellous light.' Hence among thoſe who turn from ſin unto righteouſneſs, thoſe who turn moſt of others to it, will have the greateſt glory; Dan. xii. 3. 'They 'that be wiſe, ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the firma'ment; and they that turn many to righteouſneſs, as the 'ſtars for ever and ever.'

2. It is that whereby we may be moſt uſeful to others. No benefit done to our fellow-creatures is comparable to it. We have indeed acceſs to do for their temporal advantage, but this is for their eternal. And when the opportunity of life is over, there is no more doing that way.

Uſe. 1. of *Reproof* to ſeveral ſorts of perſons. And,

1. To thoſe who make no conſcience of propagating religion to their families. Every man is by divine appointment the prophet of his own family to teach them, the prieſt to worſhip God with them, and the king to rule them. Each will maintain his own authority to his power; but family worſhip with many is not ſo cloſely ſtuck to, but family teaching the leaſt of all, which is yet commanded of God: Deut. vi. 6, 7. 'Theſe words which I 'command thee this day, ſhall be in thine heart. And 'thou ſhalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and 'ſhalt talk of them when thou ſitteſt in thine houſe, and 'when thou walkeſt by the way, and when thou lieſt 'down, and when thou riſeſt up.' The want of this makes miniſterial teaching in preaching and examination ſo unſucceſsful. How will men anſwer this neglect of the ſpecial buſineſs of life?

2. To thoſe who are backward and averſe to receive family-inſtruction, or ſubmit to family diſcipline, checks and reproofs for their miſcarriages. They will get away from family catechiſing on Sabbath nights, ſhift family exerciſe, and cannot endure to be checked for their miſ-

carriages; and therefore they like beſt to be in thoſe families where leaſt of theſe is to be found. But if it is the duty of others to propagate religion to you, it is on the peril of your ſouls ye refuſe to receive it. It will aggravate your condemnation, John iii. 10.

3. To thoſe who ſet an ill example before thoſe that are younger than they. Much of the corruption of children is owing to the ill examples ſet them by parents, and others whom they are near. This lets them ſee much ill which they would otherwiſe be ignorant of; and the bias of their nature lying that way, they are by that means carried down the ſtream. So a woe is brought on themſelves, and them that ſet them the copy: Matth. xviii. 7. ‘Wo unto the world becauſe of offences: for it muſt needs be that offences come: but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh.’ Oh that men would conſider, that they do in effect teach that which they do or ſay before the younger ſort; for childhood imitates age.

4. To thoſe who do not check the outbreakings of corrupt nature in thoſe of the younger ſort. O the cruelty of ſome parents, who, by their ceaſing to nip ſin in the bud in their children, betray them into ſuch habits of ſin, as afterwards is too late to correct. They will neglect prayer, ſwear, lie, and meet with no check: they will ſteal little things, and their parents will make them welcome. And thus, by their means, ſome are ſo accuſtomed to ſin, that as they grow, it grows, till it brings ſome to an ill end. Remember the children of Bethel, 1 Kings ii. 25, 24.

5. To thoſe who propagate irreligion to the riſing generation; who teach a young generation to deſpiſe godlineſs, contemn the ordinances, and to lead licentious lives, impatient of reſtraint. Do they not propagate irreligion, who keep up their minced oaths, *Haith*, *faith*, &c. which would die out of their language, were it not that they were propagated from father to ſon; who keep up the obſervation of ſuperſtitious times and cuſtoms, *Yule*, *Faſtens-even*, &c. the relics of Popery and Paganiſm, which might be razed out of memory, were it not that they are propagated from one generation to another?

6. To thoſe who go about to debauch a young generation, by inſtilling into them licentious principles, which youth is ready to fall in with; by taking a liberty in obſcence filthy ſpeaking, making youthful luſts the ſubject of their mirth; leading them into drunkenneſs, an inlet to all other vices; tempting them to the commiſſion of the ſin of uncleanneſs with them, which will be bitterneſs in the end to the ſeducer and the ſeduced; encouraging them to acts of diſhoneſty, ſtealing from their parents or maſters. Theſe are factors for hell, who do what in them lies to deſtroy ſouls Chriſt died for.

7. To thoſe that are ready to cloke the ſcandalous ſins of others, that they may not be brought to light. How many poor ſouls of the younger ſort, might have been recovered out of the ſnare of the devil, if it had not been their cruel kindneſs, who beſtirred themſelves to cover their ſin? But thereby they have been hardened, and have gone from evil to worſe, till at length they have been ruined altogether. See what an awful threatening there is pronounced againſt ſuch, Lev. v. 1. ‘If a ſoul ſin, and hear the voice of ſwearing, and is a witneſs, whether he hath ſeen or known of it; if he do not utter it, then he ſhall bear his iniquity.’

8. *laſtly*, To thoſe who cannot ſee themſelves under any obligation to propagate religion, and concern themſelves as little about it. They think that may be the buſineſs of miniſters, and poſſibly of fathers to their own children; but not theirs. As ſoon as the Spirit of God touches your hearts in earneſt, ye will change your mind; ye will find a natural concern for the advantage of the kingdom of Chriſt: John iv. 29. ‘Come, ſee a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Chriſt?’ The love of God, and of your neighbour, planted in the heart, will create a concern this way: and not daring to be againſt him, and ſcatter, ye will be for Chriſt, and gather with him. The leaven will ſeek.

Uſe 2. of *Exhortation.* Make it the ſpecial buſineſs of your lives to propagate religion to the riſing generation.

Motive 1. There is the ſtrongeſt obligations on you for it. Ye are in that point under the tie of,

1ſt, Divine authority. God requires it of you. It is commanded to all to edify one another, 1 Theſſ. v. 11. yea, all things muſt be done for that end. And the reaſon is plain, that God has placed men in ſociety, for that end, Rom. xiv. 7. And the elder ſort are made tutors and teachers to the younger ſort for that end.

2dly, Gratitude to God. Is not God your Creator, Preſerver, and Suſtainer? And what can ye do for him, for all the goodneſs beſtowed on you, if ye do not ſtrive to ſtir up the love and fear of him in the riſing generation? If ye have any ſhare in the redemption of Chriſt, ye cannot but find yourſelves under the ſtrongeſt ties of gratitude, to labour that his name may be tranſmitted from generation to generation, Pſal. lxxii. 17. ‘His name ſhall endure for ever; his name ſhall be continued as long as the ſun: men ſhall be bleſſed in him; and all nations ſhall call him bleſſed.’

3dly, Juſtice to former generations, who have propagated religion to us. What caſe had we been in this day, if it had not been for the ſufferings of confeſſors, and the blood of martyrs, which they underwent, that religion might be tranſmitted to us, and by us to ſucceeding generations? Had they given up with it, it had been loſt as to us. Now, they have an intereſt in ſucceeding generations; and if we propagate it not to them, we are unjuſt to them, and denude the ſucceeding generation of the inheritance of their fathers. We ſhould, like thoſe ſpoke of Pſal lxxviii. 3, 4. ‘utter the things which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us, not hiding them from our children, ſhewing to generations to come, the praiſes of the Lord, and his ſtrength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.’

4thly, Our own intereſt. That maxim, Prov. xi. 24. *there is that ſcattereth, and yet increaſeth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty*, holds in this, as much as in any thing. Religion is a fire, which being ſmothered, goes out; but getting a vent, increaſeth. It is like the widows oil, that increaſed in the pouring out; and like the bread that increaſed in the breaking. Were men more ſet on propagating religion to others, they would have more of it to themſelves,

5thly, Charity to the riſing generarion, Their eternal ſtate depends on their embracing or continuing ſtrangers to religion. They need your help: for the bias of their nature lies the wrong way; the devil and an evil world ceaſe not to ply them to walk according to that bias: and if their ſpiritual enemies gain their point they are ruined.

Mot. 2. This is the chief part of your generation work. The work of our own ſalvation muſt be ſeen to, but that is not all we have to do. We are to do that for ourſelves; but then, for the honour of God, and the good of our fellow creatures, we are to ply our generation work, and that mainly lies here, Pſal. cxlv. 4. ‘One generation ſhall praiſe thy works to another, and ſhall declare thy mighty acts.’ Ye are all doing; but what are ye doing for the honour of God, for the ſervice of your generation? Ye have a room in this generation; and God who ſet you in it, will call you to account how ye fill it up.

Mot. 3. As ye carry yourſelves in this matter, your ſin or your good works will be going on, after ye are dead and gone in this world. The laſt judgment we muſt undergo, is not without reaſon delayed to the end of the world; for the ſins of wicked men, and the good works of the godly, will then be hugely increaſed, beyond what they are at their death. Good Abel is uſeful to this day: Heb. xi. 4 ‘He being dead, yet ſpeaketh.’ Haman in his life ſet a miſchief a-going, which continued after he was dead, and the ſin of Jeroboam the firſt king of Iſrael, continued till that kingdom was at an end. If ye propagate religion to the riſing generation, that good work will ſurvive you; and if ye neglect it, your omiſſion may live and deſtroy ſouls long after ye are gone, which will be laid to your charge at the great day.

Mot. 4. It is a noble and beneficial work. James v. 19, 20. ‘Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth,

‘ and one convert him; let him know, that he which ‘ converteth the ſinner from the error of his way, ſhall ‘ ſave a ſoul from death, and ſhall hide a multitude of ‘ ſins.’ To ſave a ſoul from periſhing, is ſuch a noble work, that it is an honourable thing to be aiming at it.

Mot. 5. *laſtly*, The doom of unprofitable ſervants is dreadful: Matth. xxv. 30. ‘ Caſt ye the unprofitable ſer‘ vant into outer darkneſs; there ſhall be weeping and ‘ gnaſhing of teeth.’ No man can profit God, but every man may and ought to lay out their talents for the good of others; and if they do not, they will be caſt into outer darkneſs, as thoſe who would not work when they had light.

Object. But they are froward, and will not receive inſtruction, nor take advice. *Anſw.* That is a part of their natural diſeaſe. Men take pains to break young beaſts, till they make them tractable: and ſhall they not be at pains with thoſe of their own kind? The waters wear the ſtones; and what has often ſlipped off, may at length come to ſtick. And a word ſpoken to them for their good, may lie long under the clod, and ſpring up at length. But our ſucceſs is not the rule: we muſt do our part.

But more particularly, let heads of families be exhorted to propagate religion to their children and families.

Mot. 1. Conſider ye have a charge of their ſouls from God who has committed them to you. Hence the fourth commandment, is directed to heads of families. And in Abraham's example their duty is laid before them: Gen. xviii. 19. ‘ I know him, that he will command his chil‘ dren, and his houſhold after him, and they ſhall keep ‘ the way of the Lord, to do juſtice and judgment.’

Mot. 1. They are born like wild aſſes colts, and have a natural bent to the way of ſin: Pſal. lviii. 3. ‘ The wic‘ ked are eſtranged from the womb, they go aſtray as ‘ ſoon as they are born, ſpeaking lies.’ It is a blind love to your children, that makes you take no notice of the corruption of their nature. And if they are naturally corrupt, what can ye expect but that they will run to their own ruin, if ye are not at pains with them for their ſouls good? Hence ſays Solomon, Prov. xxix. 15. ‘ The rod ‘ and reproof give wiſdom: but a child left to himſelf, ‘ bringeth his mother to ſhame.’

Mot. 3. Parents propagate that corruption of nature to them, by natural generation. The ſinful nature of children is a glaſs wherein the parents may get a humbling view of their own, Gen. v. 3. ‘ Adam begat a ſon in his ‘ own likeneſs, after his image, and called his name Seth.’ Job xiv. 4. ‘ Who can bring a clean thing out of an un‘ clean? not one.’ Have ye been inſtrumental in conveying the poiſon to them, and will ye not be thereby ſtirred up to miniſter the antidote to them?

Mot. 4. They are in the midſt of many ſnares, entered into a world where offences abound. Their youth makes them raw and unexperienced, and diſpoſes them to be raſh and heedleſs. They have need of a monitor. How ſhall they learn if they are not taught?

Mot 5. Ye muſt die: and it is like will die before them. Will ye not be concerned, that it may be well with them, when ye are away? Your concern for their temporal proviſion will not make it well with them, while ye are not concerned to ſow the ſeeds of religion in their hearts. That will be but to give ſo much ſail to an empty ſhip without ballaſt, that may ſink her in the deep ſea, as is ſeen in the ſad experience of many.

Mot. 6. They muſt die: and it may be they may die before you, and then they will have no uſe for all the temporal proviſion ye have laboured for, for them. But religion propagated by you to them, will then appear a precious treaſure. But if ye have neglected that duty to them, that will then appear a criminal neglect, which ye will never more be capable to mend; and it will leave a galling ſting in your conſcience, if ye be not quite ſtupid.

Mot. 7. *laſtly*, What comfort can ye have in their caſe while ye can have no comfortable proſpect of their eternal happineſs? If they were to be lords and ladies in this world, but to periſh eternally in another world, what comfort can be there? The barren womb and dry breaſts are preferable to the bringing forth children to the murderers; much more to bringing them forth for hell.

Let thoſe things work upon your conſciences, to beſtir yourſelves towards the propagating of religion to the riſing generation. If ye have any conſcience of duty towards God, any humanity towards your fellow creatures, neglect it no more. For particular directions, I propoſe,

DOCT. III. *ult. The true way of propagating religion, the ſtanding to the riſing generation, is, That the former make God known to the latter, ſo as they may betake themſelves unto him, his truth and faithfulneſs, by faith, and truſt.* This is the ſenſe of the words of the text, and agreeable to the matter, Hezekiah's life being prolonged in virtue of that promiſe, 1 Kings viii. 25. ‘ There ſhall ‘ not fail thee a man in my ſight to ſit on the throne of ‘ Iſrael; ſo that thy children take heed to their way, as ‘ thou haſt walked before me.’ So this notification is not of the matter as a ſpeculation, but as a practical thing, that the riſing generation may be brought to God.

In diſcourſing this doctrine, we ſhall conſider,

I. The end to be aimed at in our teaching the riſing generation.

II. The means to be uſed with them for that end.

III. Give the reaſons why this is the true way of propagating religion, the ſtanding to the riſing generation.

IV. *laſtly*, Apply.

I. We ſhall conſider *the end to be aimed at in our teaching the riſing generation.* And that is, that they may be brought to betake themſelves unto the truth of God by faith and hope. This is expreſsly taught, Pſal. lxxviii. 6, 7. ‘ That the generation to come might know them, e‘ ven the children which ſhould be born; who ſhould a‘ riſe, and declare them to their children: that they might ‘ ſet their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, ‘ but keep his commandments.’ Now, here we are to conſider,

1. What is this truth of God we are to endeavour to bring the riſing generation to. 2. How one betakes himſelf unto God's truth, which is that we ſhould aim to bring the riſing generation to.

Firſt, What is this truth of God we are to endeavour to bring the riſing generation to? The truth of God may be conſidered three ways.

1. In the divine doctrine in general. And thus whatever the Lord teaches in his word, is true to a tittle. Hence ſays David, Pſal. cxix. 160. ‘ Thy word is true.’ All the diſcoveries made to us therein, are to be relied on as moſt firm truth. But that truth of doctrine is not here meant; for it belongs to the means, the object to be made known.

2. In the divine threatenings. They are not mere ſcarecrows, as the wicked world looks on them, but ſhall have a certain accompliſhment in their true meaning and intention: for which cauſe believers tremble at them, Iſa. lxvi. 2. But neither is this here meant; ſince it is not the object of hope, but of fear.

3. In the divine promiſes. Theſe are of two ſorts. (1.) Law promiſes; as, ‘ He that doth them, ſhall live in ‘ them.’ This cannot be here meant neither; for no man can be happy that way, Rom. viii. 3. (2.) The goſpel promiſes; ſuch as, Heb. viii. 10. ‘ This is the co‘ venant that I will make with the houſe of Iſrael after ‘ thoſe days, ſaith the Lord; I will put my laws into ‘ their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will ‘ be to them a God, and they ſhall be to me a people. The belief of theſe is more difficult; but it is by them a ſoul can only be made happy. Therefore it is the truth or faithfulneſs of God in the promiſe of the goſpel that is here meant. That is it we are to endeavour to bring the riſing generation to.

Now, the promiſe of the goſpel is held forth under the notion of *God's truth*, on theſe accounts.

1. In reſpect of the weight of the things promiſed therein. They are ſo great and weighty, that were not the infallible truth of God impawned for them, they could not be believed by ſenſible guilty creatures: 2 Pet. i. 4. ‘ Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and preci‘ ous promiſes, that by theſe you might be partakers of ‘ the divine nature.’ Luke xxiv. 25, 26. ‘ Then Jeſus ‘ ſaid unto them, O fools, and ſlow of heart to believe all ‘ that the prophets have ſpoken! Ought not Chriſt to

have ſuffered theſe things, and to enter into his glory ?’ That the eternal Son of God ſhould take on man's nature, and ſuffer the moſt ignominious death therein, for ſinners, who could have believed on another than God's own teſtimony ? That God freely gives eternal life in him to ſinners, who otherwiſe could believe ?

2. The foundation of believing it is in God only. A true believer *receives the kingdom of God as a little child*, on the mere teſtimony of his Father. There is nothing in nature's light to bring us to the belief of the goſpel. So faith is called the evidence of things not ſeen. The threatening of death in the law, a natural conſcience prompts men to believe. But the promiſe of life in the goſpel, depending allenarly on revelation, the belief of it reſts on the truth of God only ; yet, nature riſes up againſt it. The corrupt mind looks on it as fooliſhneſs ; the corrupt will rejects it ; the corrupt affections muſter themſelves up againſt it ; and the natural conſcience, the more it is awakened, the more hard it makes the belief of it. So the truth of God has all theſe to drive over, and pull down. 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. ‘ The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of ſtrong holds ; caſting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itſelf againſt the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Chriſt.’

3. In oppoſition to the falſehood, vanity, and lies of the world, which ſinners betake themſelves to.

1ſt, The world ſwarms with lies, and has always ſince Satan hatched the firſt lie in it. The things of the world are lies, 1 John ii. 16. ; the men of the world are liars, Rom. iii. 4. ; yea, the beſt of them a lie, Pſal. lxii. 9. There is no truſting of them, Jer. xvii. 5, 6.

2dly, The world itſelf is one great lie. Its appearances are unfair and deceitful ; it appears to vain man quite another thing than it is ; its ſhadows appear ſubſtantial, and ſo catch the unwary heart. It is not what it ſeems to be. Its promiſes are falſe, it never performs ; the good things of it are greater in expectation than fruition ; they diſappoint, which is lying in ſcripture ſtyle.

Secondly, How one betakes himſelf unto God's truth, which is that we ſhould aim to bring the riſing generation to. It lies in theſe five things,

1. In a conviction of the vanity of the world, and its deceitful luſts, Pſal. cxix. 96. ‘ I have ſeen an end of all perfection ; but thy commandment is exceeding broad.’ The vain world offers itſelf as a ſatisfying portion to the riſing generation, as ſoon as reaſon begins to dawn in them. To the infant it makes its court by the luſt of the fleſh in meat and drink ; to the child by that and the pride of life in clothing ; and it is long ere they know there is any thing better than theſe. To the youth it ſpreads out its all, *the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life* ; and whatever notions of religion they may have in their heads, till grace open their eyes, they will never truly ſee any thing to be better. Now, we ſhould labour to convince them of the vanity of the world, that it will never afford a reſt to the heart ; that its luſts are deceitful, and there is a ruining hook hid under that bait.

2. In renouncing the world for a portion, and its luſts for our way, as being a broken reed, that will not only not bear our weight, but run through the hand that leans on it, Jer. xvi. 19.——‘ The Gentiles ſhall come unto the Lord from the ends of the earth, and ſhall ſay, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit.’ It is natural to man, and therefore to the riſing generation, to ſtick by it, and not to give over the purſuit ; but after a thouſand diſappointments ſtill to hope for better from it. And the little experience youth has, makes them the more ready to do ſo. But we ſhould endeavour to bring them to part with it, as a hopeleſs thing they will never mend themſelves of.

3. In believing that there is an upmaking portion held forth in the promiſe of the goſpel. This is the finding of the treaſure hid in the field, Matth. xiii. 44. The carnal mind looks on the promiſes of the goſpel but as idle tales ; it is a treaſure hid in a field, which men go over without noticing what is in it, becauſe they ſee it not. But Chriſt is there, and in him the fulneſs of the Godhead, enough to ſatiſfy the boundleſs deſires of a ſoul. And could we bring the riſing generation really to believe this, we could do a great thing.

4. In truſting to the report of the goſpel allenarly for life and happineſs, and a reſt to the heart, upon the ground of God's faithfulneſs. Here is the nature of faith, a betaking one's ſelf unto God's truth, by truſting to him in his word of promiſe for all. It implies theſe three things. The ſoul ſeeing there is in the promiſe what is not in all the creation, enough to anſwer all its needs, and to make it completely happy,

1ſt, Believes its own common intereſt in the promiſes, that itſelf, as well as others, has acceſs to claim it with all that is in it, and to rely on it as held out to him in particular, to truſt upon for his upmaking in time and eternity. For no man can embrace the promiſe of the goſpel, that does not firſt ſee himſelf warranted ſo to do. And the nature of the promiſe warrants all, John iii. 16. ‘ God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.’

2dly, The man thereupon lays the weight of his happineſs wholly on it, truſting that it ſhall be made out to him. Thus he buys the field, takes poſſeſſion of it, and the treaſure hid therein. This is the embracing of the promiſe, as one takes an honeſt man's word for his ſecurity, reſts there, and looks no further. So what truſt was before placed in the world, he places in the promiſe.

3dly, The ground on which he bottoms his truſt in the promiſe, is not any thing in himſelf, but the truth and faithfulneſs of God. The man ſees the promiſe is not yea and nay, as the promiſes of fickle men are ; but that it is the word of God which is ſurer than heaven and earth. And to this truſt we ſhould labour to bring the riſing generation, which is to bring them unto a reſt for their reſtleſs hearts, by bringing them to Chriſt, and by him to God. When we ſee hungry infants moving about with their mouths for ſomething to ſuck, natural affection teaches to ſet them on the breaſt : but as they grow up, ye might obſerve their hungry ſouls moving up and down among the creatures for a fill, and ſtill reſtleſs becauſe they cannot get it. It would be as great charity in that caſe, to endeavour to bring them to the breaſts of divine conſolation in the promiſe of the goſpel.

5. *laſtly*, In hoping and waiting for their happineſs from the promiſe of the goſpel, Rom. viii. 24, 25. ‘ We are ſaved by hope : but hope that is ſeen, is not hope : for what a man ſeeth, why doth he yet hope for ? But if we hope for that we ſee not, then do we with patience wait for it.’ There is much got out of the promiſe, for the preſent in hand ; but ſtill there is more in hope, to be got on the other ſide death. The natural cry is, *Who will ſhew us any good ?* It is hard to make children wait even for temporal good things ; they would ay have all preſently, whenever they take it in their head ; but it is harder to get them to wait in the matter of a portion for their heart. So they greedily embrace the preſent world. But we ſhould labour to get them off that, and wait for happineſs in another world.

II. *The means to be uſed with them for that end.* That is, to make God known to them. He is to many of the aged among men an unknown God, as to any ſaving acquaintance with him : but to young ones, he is an unknown God ſo much as by report or hearſay, till the aged do tell them of him. The ſaving knowledge of himſelf God only can give : but there is a doctrinal making of him known to the riſing generation, and that is our duty, Pſal. xxii. 31. ‘ They ſhall come, and ſhall declare his righteouſneſs unto a people that ſhall be born, that he hath done this.’

Now, ye are to make him known to the riſing generation, as a God in Chriſt : for as ſuch only he is the object of a guilty creature's truſt for ſalvation. The blind world pretend to truſt in God as an abſolute God, not eyeing him as in Chriſt : but ſo he is *a conſuming fire*, Heb. xii. ult. And he is not honoured, but diſhonoured by ſuch a truſt. In Chriſt he appears,

1. As a God of majeſty and glory. There is no glaſs in which ye can repreſent to the riſing generation the glory and majeſty of God ſo lively as in Chriſt. The creating a world of nothing, the deluge, deſtruction of Sodom, are but dim glaſſes, in compariſon of the myſtery of Chriſt. Here the glory of his infinite holineſs, and infinite hatred of ſin, his exact juſtice, his unſearchable wiſdom, moſt fully appear.

2. As the God of grace. The former view of God is apt to fill the ſoul with awe, and reverence of him, fit ballaſt for the vain heart: this view of God is apt to fill the ſoul with faith and love, whereby the heart may be diſengaged from the vain world, and knit to him as the alone upmaking portion of the ſoul. In Chriſt ye can let them ſee majeſty vailed with mercy, righteouſneſs and peace kiſſing mutually, a cryſtal wall to go between them and the conſuming fire.

III. The third thing is, to *give the reaſons why this is the true way of propagating religion, the ſtanding to the riſing generation.*

1. Becauſe all true religion begins with the knowledge of God in Chriſt, John xvii. 3. 'This is life eternal, that 'they might know thee the only true God, and Jeſus 'Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.' As long as ignorance of God continues in the ſoul, the works of darkneſs go on there, and the party is on the way to everlaſting darkneſs. Therefore cruel are they that bring up young ones, whether children or ſervants, in ignorance; eſpecially conſidering, that it is the learning age, which ſeaſon miſſed, the loſs is ſeldom retrieved.

2. Becauſe vain is that religion that brings not the ſoul to betake itſelf to God's truth for a portion, and to renounce the world and its way. Our aim in all our teaching ſhould be to affect the heart, to bring ſinners to God, to be his only, wholly and for ever. To ſatiſfy ourſelves with filling their heads with notions of religion, while we are careleſs of getting their hearts to Chriſt, is ſorry ſervice.

3. Becauſe the right diſcerning of the glory of God in Chriſt, is the true way to bring a ſinner to faith in him: Pſal. ix. 10. 'They that know thy name will put truſt 'in thee.' John iv. 10. 'Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto 'her, If thou kneweſt the gift of God, and who it is that 'ſaith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldeſt have 'aſked of him, and he would have given thee living water.' All who are brought acquainted with him, cannot but take up their ſouls reſt in him: and whoever do not betake themſelves to him, it is becauſe they know him not. For his glorious excellency truly diſcerned, cannot miſs to captivate the heart.

USE. Make God known to the riſing generation, ſo as they may be ſtirred up to give up with the vain world, and to betake themſelves to the promiſe of the goſpel, therein to take God for their portion. I have given motives already, I will direct how to manage the work.

1. A general direction. Aim at that particularly, and teach them to know God in Chriſt. Never ſatiſfy yourſelves with letting them know, what God is in himſelf, out of Chriſt; for that may ſtrike them with terror, but it will never bring them to him in faith and love. But labour to diſcover to them the glory of God in the face of Jeſus. Shew them Chriſt, and ye ſhew them the Father, for in him the fulneſs of the Godhead dwells. In his perſon, you may let them ſee God's willingneſs to take mankind into union and communion with himſelf; in his offices, how willing he is to teach them, juſtify them and ſanctify them; in his holy birth, what a nature is pleaſing to him; in his righteous life, what a converſation he requires; in his ſatisfactory death, how dreadful his wrath is againſt ſin; and in a word how they may be made holy and happy for ever. Therefore inculcate on them the knowledge of Chriſt. I urge this for three reaſons,

1ſt, Do this, and ye do all to them, 1 Cor. ii. 2. 'I 'determined not to know any thing among you, ſave Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified.' When the darkneſs of the night ſits down on the face of the earth, as many candles as are burning abroad, ſo many ſpots of the earth will be enlightened; but let the ſun ariſe, and there will be light over all; for the one ſun will do more than millions of lighted candles. So, whenever Chriſt the ſun of righteouſneſs ariſeth, that groſs darkneſs which covers the mind, will ſuddenly be diſpelled. There is more of the glory of God to be ſeen in the face of Jeſus, than throughout the whole compaſs of the heavens and the earth, which yet were made to declare the glory of God. Life, eternal life, is in the knowledge of him.

2dly, Neglect this, and ye do nothing for them to purpoſe, John viii. 24. 'If ye believe not that I am he, ye 'ſhall die in your ſins.' That light that is without him is but darkneſs, and the ſparks of knowledge and religion that is without illumination in the knowledge of Chriſt, will leave thoſe that walk in the light of them, to lie down in ſorrow at length. Not one truth is rightly learned, that is not learned as it centers in Jeſus.

3dly, Becauſe the riſing generation is in extreme hazard in this point at this time, beyond what they have been for many years. A religion is like to come in among them, that has no relation to Chriſt and his Spirit, which is in effect but refined Paganiſm. With ſome Chriſt is almoſt dropt out of their practical divinity, and morality in doctrine is juſtling out the goſpel of the grace of God: and hence immorality in practice comes in like a flood. And principles are vented highly injurious to his glorious Godhead.

2. Particular directions are theſe,

1ſt, Acquaint them with God's word. Let your children be learned to read, and your ſervants that cannot read, be ſo charitable as to teach them. And ye ſuch ſervants ſecure that in your hiring of yourſelves. And preſs them, and ſtir them up to read the ſcriptures ordinarily when they can do it. It is recorded of Timothy, to his honour, that 'from a child he had known the holy ſcriptures, 'which are able to make men wiſe unto ſalvation, through 'faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus.'

2dly, Neglect not family catechiſing. Oblige them to get the *Shorter Catechiſm*, and labour to make them underſtand it by examining them. For which cauſe ye have many good helps laid to your hand.

3dly, Often inculcate on them their ſinful and miſerable ſtate by nature, and the ſalvation for them in Jeſus Chriſt.

4thly, Join practical exhortation with your catechiſing. It might be profitable to cloſe the catechiſing on every queſtion of the Catechiſm upon a particular head, with a ſhort admonition to them by way of uſe. *Ex. gr.* on the firſt, Well, mind that the great thing ye have to do in the world, is to glorify God; and that the great thing ye have to ſeek, is the enjoyment of him.

5thly, Inculcate upon them, and train them up in a reverence and eſteem of the miniſtry of the goſpel, as an ordinance of Chriſt for the ſalvation of ſinners. And oblige your family to a conſcientious attendance; none of them to ſit at home that are capable of profiting by the word, without a reaſon that will bear weight before God. I urge this the rather, that ſome are trained up in a neglect of it, to the inſnaring of their poor ſouls. Mind the children of Bethel.

6thly, Inculcate and labour to impreſs them with the belief and of the vanity of the world, and the impoſſibility of finding a reſt to their heart in any creature. Tell it them from the word, your own and their experience.

7thly, Inculcate and labour to impreſs them with the belief of the full happineſs to be found in a God in Chriſt, held forth to them in the promiſe of the goſpel. Solemnly aſſure them, that there they may find a reſt to their heart; and that God is offering himſelf to them as ſuch.

8thly, Make known to them, how good a Maſter God is; how pleaſant the way of holineſs is; what an ill maſter Satan is; how contrary and odious ſin is to God, how dear it ſtood Chriſt; how bitter it will be to the ſinner here or hereafter.

9thly, Put them on praying by any means, and teach them to pray, and inculcate on them the neceſſity of it.

10thly, Make known to them how God is a God of exact juſtice, and pureſt truth, and from thence, as ye love their ſouls, endeavour often to inculcate on them, and impreſs them with a horror of injuſtice in the leaſt things, and of lying in any caſe. The ſad way ſome are brought up in theſe points, leave them without any conſcience of common honeſty or truth.

And mind that 'precept muſt be upon precept, pre-'cept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here 'a little and there a little.' Iſa. xxviii. 10.

And be not diſcouraged though ye ſee not the fruit. The fruit may come when ye are in your grave. Mind Manaſſeh's converſion, after his godly father was dead.

Now, ye young folk, and young ones, for whoſe cauſe ſo much has been ſaid, I will leave this text, with three words to you, and a great offer.

1. Chriſt and the devil is ſtriving about you. Chriſt is ſtriving for you by his miniſters, your parents, and maſters, that ſhow a concern for your ſoul, and by your own conſciences. The devil is ſtriving to hold you, by his temptations, a vain world, and your own luſts. But the devil is a murderer, the world is falſe, and your luſts are deceitful, which ye will find if ye truſt them.

2. Ye are between the loſing and the winning now. If Chriſt get you when ye are young, ye will ſerve him with life and ſpirit: if the devil prevail, the older ye grow, ye will go the farther from God. For youth goes with a great ſwing right or wrong.

3. Eternity is at ſtake with you; eternal well or wo, according to the ſide ye ſhall chuſe.

I offer Chriſt to you, and declare that he is willing to be yours, and make you happy for ever, and be a reſt to your hearts, Matth. xxii. 4. 'Tell them which are bid-'den, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and 'my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come 'unto the marriage.' Prov. viii. 17. 'I love them that 'love me; and thoſe that ſeek me early, ſhall find me.' Remember this, and ſay Amen.

The Evil and Danger of SCHISM.

A SERMON preached at Ettrick in the Year 1708.

1 Cor. i. 10.

Now I beſeech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye all ſpeak the ſame thing, and that there be no diviſions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together, in the ſame mind, and in the ſame judgment.

THE church of Corinth was now lying bleeding of her wounds, given her not by open and avowed enemies, but by her own children, ſome ſaying they were of Paul, others, that they were of Apollos, &c. The apoſtle applies himſelf to the curing of this rent and broken church, in the words of the text, which is a pathetical exhortation to unity. In the words we have three things.

1. The compellation, *Brethren*: it is a kindly compellation, whereby he inſinuates himſelf into their affections, or endeavours ſo to do; for it is hard for faithful miniſters to get peoples affections kept, where once diviſions enter. In this compellation there is an argument for unity: he minds them that they are brethren: and it is a ſhameful thing for brethren to fall by the ears, Gen. xiii. 8. 'Let there be no ſtrife I pray thee,' ſays Abraham to Lot, 'betwixt me and thee, &c. for we be brethren;' and Gen. xlv. 24. Joſeph ſays to his brethren, 'See that ye 'fall not out by the way.'

2. There is a moſt pithy obſecration, *I beſeech you by the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*. Paul turns a petitioner to them for the church's peace, and begs of them, as he did of the jailor, that they would do themſelves no harm, and that it might have the more weight with their conſciences, he interpoſeth the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *I beſeech you*, ſays he, *by the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that*, &c. It implies two things. 1. It is as much as if he had ſaid, As ye have any regard to the authority of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath ſo often enjoined peace, unity, and brotherly love to his followers, beware of diviſions. It is not I, (as if he had ſaid,) but Chriſt, the prince of peace, that requires this of you. 2. It is as much as if he had ſaid, As ye love the Lord Jeſus, as ye tender his honour and glory, ſpeak the ſame thing, and let there be no diviſions among you; for the name of Chriſt ſadly ſuffers by your contentions, factions, and diviſions. The apoſtle's beſeeching of them notes his gentleneſs, but withal his vehemency of ſpirit, intreating with them for the peace and unity of the church; he handles their wounds tenderly, yet ſo as they might ſee he was in good earneſt to have them healed. It imports alſo how heavy their contentions were to him, how grateful it would be to him if they would unite, and how grievous, if they ſhould continue their rents ſtill; therefore he obteſts them, and after a ſort adjures them by the name of the Lord, that they ſhould all ſpeak the ſame thing, and let no diviſions be among them: If I cannot obtain this of you for my own ſake, yet let me obtain it of you for Chriſt's ſake. This is the manner of his exhortation.

3. We have the matter of his exhortation, which lies in three things.

1*ſt*, He exhorts them to unity of principles, *that ye all ſpeak the ſame thing*; he beſeecheth them, that they would not vent principles contrary to the truth, and one another: for now, inſtead of unity ſome were crying one thing, and ſome another, like that confuſed multitude, Acts xxi. 34. there was nothing but contradiction and contention among them, till ſome of them came at length to deny the reſurrection.

2*dly*, He dehorts them from *diviſions*: the word in the Greek is *ſchiſms*, as ye may ſee in the margins of ſome of your Bibles: the word properly ſignifies a cutting or ſection in a ſolid body, as in the cleaving of wood, when the parts of it before united are rent aſunder. Thus the one church of Corimth was rent aſunder into divers parties and factions, ſome following one miniſter, ſome another; therefore ſays the apoſtle, 'Is Chriſt divided?' As if he ſhould ſay, Why, ſeeing there is but one Chriſt, are there ſo many bodies? Where will you get a Chriſt to head your different and divided party? Through theſe diviſions among them, it would ſeem they had ſeparate communions, they would not tarry for one another. The apoſtle alſo taxeth their diviſions, 1 Cor. iii. 3. 'For 'whereas there is among you envying, ſtrife, and divi-'ſions, are ye not carnal.' Where the word tranſlated *diviſions* properly ſignifies ſeparate ſtanding, where one party ſtands upon one ſide, and another party on another ſide. It denotes diſſention, wherein men ſeparate one from another.

3*dly*, He exhorts them to amend what was amiſs already among them in that matter, *to be perfectly joined together*, in oppoſition to their contentions and diviſions. The word in the original is very emphatic, and ſignifies two things, 1. To reſtore disjointed members into their proper places again, Gal. vi. 1. 'Reſtore ſuch an one.' It is a metaphor from chirurgeons ſetting members on joint again; as if he had ſaid, Set ſuch an one in joint again: ſo it aims at healing the church of her rents, reſtoring ſuch as had ſeparate and withdrawn. It ſignifies to perfect and eſtabliſh in the ſtate to which a perſon or thing is reſtored: and ſo it denotes a firm union betwixt the members of that church: he would have them connected together as a body, in which all the parts do fitly cleave together, each of them in its proper place; and withal he adds here the bonds of this union, the ſame mind, that is, the ſame heart, will and affections, as the word mind is taken, and the ſame judgment or opinion anent matters; if the laſt cannot be got, yet the firſt may. From the words we draw theſe following doctrines.

Doct. I. *That ſchiſm and diviſion is an evil incident to the churches of Chriſt while in this world.*

Doct. II. *That profeſſors ought to beware of ſchiſm and diviſion, as they tender the authority and honour of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

Doct. III. *Where ſchiſm and diviſion enter into a church, there will be great heats, diverſity, yea, contrariety of opinions, people contradicting one another in matters of religion;* That ye all ſpeak the ſame things, *&c.*

Doct. IV. *That however hard it be, yet it is poſſible to get a rent church healed.*

Doct. V. *That it is the duty of all church members to endeavour the unity of the church, and the cure of rents; and particularly, it is the duty of disjointed members to take their own place in the body again.*

Lastly, *That ſchiſms and diviſions, as they are grievous to all the ſons of peace, ſo they are in a ſpecial manner heavy and afflicting to faithful miniſters of the goſpel of peace.*

Here is work ſhapen out for many days, but I deſign not to inſiſt.

As to the firſt of theſe doctrines, to wit, *That ſchiſm and diviſion is an evil incident to the churches of Chriſt in this world*; I. I ſhall illuſtrate the truth of this doctrine. II. I ſhall give you ſome obſerves as to the riſe and way of carrying on this ſad plague in churches. And I challenge your attention, and beſeech you by the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that, without prejudice, ye will hear and conſider what I am to ſay; and if I ſay any thing contrary to the word of God, reject it; but what I may ſay, as agreeable to God's word, I require it may have place in, and weight with your conſciences. I ſhall endeavour to hold off perſonal reflections, but muſt take liberty freely to handle the cauſe.

I. then, I ſhall illuſtrate this ſad doctrine. Alas! it is written, I may ſay, in letters of the blood of our mother, who cries out, ‘She is wounded in the houſe of her friends.’ This broken bleeding church, expoſed to the laughter of Papiſts and malignants by her diviſions, is a ſad inſtance of it. Now, ſeeing ſome are apt to ſtumble at all religion, by reaſon of our diviſions, and others are apt to pride themſelves in them, I ſhall, for the ſake of both, ſhew, that theſe things are no uncouth, ſtrange, or new things. For which conſider,

1. Theſe things are foretold in the ſcripture. Our Lord Chriſt has given us fair warning, Matth. x. 34, 35, 36. ‘Think not that I am come to ſend peace on earth: I ‘came not to ſend peace, but a ſword. For I am come ‘to ſet a man at variance againſt his Father, and the ‘daughter againſt her mother,’ &c. Not that this is the kindly and native effect of the goſpel of peace, but ſo it proves, by reaſon of the corruptions of men. The apoſtle tells the church of Epheſus, Acts xx. 30. ‘Alſo of your ‘own ſelves ſhall men ariſe, ſpeaking perverſe things, to ‘draw away diſciples after them.’ I ſhall only add another ſcripture, 2 Tim. iv. 4. ‘After their own luſts ‘ſhall they heap to themſelves teachers, having itching ‘ears; and they ſhall turn away their ears from the truth,’ &c. From all which we may ſee, that church renters ſhall not be wanting, nor ſhall they want ſucceſs.

2. Conſider the ſad experience of the church in ſeveral ages; I ſhall give you two inſtances out of the Old Teſtament: the firſt you have, Numb. xvi. Even when the church had a Moſes and Aaron in it, there was a violent ſchiſm ſet a-foot in it by Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. That this buſineſs was not ſo much a ſedition in the ſtate, as a ſchiſm in the church, (though I deny not but there was ſomething of ſedition in it, for ſchiſm and ſedition go often together,) is clear from the great cauſe of the quarrel, which was about the prieſthood, as is clear from Numb. xvi. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. which ye may read at your leiſure, but conſider eſpecially the 10th and 11th verſes, where Moſes ſays, ‘And ſeek ye the prieſthood ‘alſo? For which cauſe both thou, and all thy company ‘are gathered together againſt the Lord: and what is ‘Aaron, that ye murmur againſt him?’ Compare with this Jude 11. where the ſeducers, the diſturbers of the church, are ſaid to periſh in the gainſaying of Core. Many were laid aſide into this ſchiſm, Numb. xvi. 19. ‘And Korah gathered all the congregation againſt them,’ viz. againſt Moſes and Aaron. Two of the heads of it, being called to come before Moſes, ſent him a declinature, ſtuffed with ſcandalous defamations againſt him, Numb. xvi. 12, 13, 14. ‘And Moſes ſent to call Dathan and Abiram the ſons of Eliab: which ſaid, We ‘will not come up. Is it a ſmall thing that thou haſt ‘brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and ‘honey, to kill us in the wilderneſs?’ &c. Yea, when God himſelf had inflicted the cenſure on them, the people would not quit their good opinion of them; but as it is in the 41ſt verſe, ‘They murmured againſt Moſes and ‘Aaron, ſaying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord.’ Another notable ſchiſm was that made by the ten tribes, 1 Kings xii. where two things are very remarkable, *1ſt*, The riſe of it, their diſſatisfaction with the civil government, whereupon they refuſed to own Rehoboam as their king, and alſo ſeparated from the church of Jeruſalem, who owned his authority, though he was very far degenerate from the piety and wiſdom of David and Solomon. *2d* thing remarkable in it, is the way how it was maintained, viz. by prieſts that were not of the ſons of Levi, that is, men who had no right to the prieſtly office. The New Teſtament is ſo full of diſmal accounts this way, that there is not almoſt an epiſtle written, wherein we have not ſomething of church rents and diviſions, exhortations to unity, or ſome one thing or another of that kind. See Rom. xvi. 17, 28. ‘Now I beſeech you, brethren, mark them which cauſe diviſions and offences, ‘contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and ‘avoid them. For they that are ſuch, ſerve not our ‘Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but their own belly; and by good ‘words and fair ſpeeches deceive the hearts of the ſimple.’ For the 1ſt epiſtle to the Corinthians, read our text and downwards. See the x. xi. and xii. chapters of the 2d epiſtle to the Corinthians throughout, where Paul is put to defend himſelf againſt the ſlanders caſt on him by falſe teachers, and to compare himſelf with them. As to the epiſtle to the Galatians, I need not cite chapter and verſe, the body of that epiſtle being againſt them that troubled the churches of Galatia. Eph. iv. ye have a pathetical exhortation to unity, from ver. 1. to 17. Phil. ii. 1. and downwards, ‘If there be any conſolation in Chriſt, ‘if any comfort of love, if any fellowſhip of the Spirit, ‘if any bowels and mercies; fulfil ye my joy, that ye ‘may be like minded.’ Col. ii. 18. and downwards, ‘Let no man beguile you of your reward,——Where‘fore are ye ſubject to ordinances? touch not, taſte not, ‘handle not; which things have indeed a ſhew of wiſdom,’ &c. The Theſſalonians are exhorted, 1 Theſſ. v. 14. to ‘warn them that are unruly.’ In the 2d epiſtle to the Theſſalonians, chap. ii. 2. there are ſome troubling the church, and ſhaking them in their minds by their doctrine, 1 Tim. vi. 3, 4. ‘If any man teach otherwiſe, ‘——he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about ‘queſtions and ſtrifes of words,’ &c. and chap. i. 6, 7. ‘From which ſome having ſwerved, have turned aſide ‘unto vain jangling; deſiring to be teachers of the law, ‘underſtanding neither what they ſay, nor whereof they ‘affirm,’ 2 Tim. iii. 6. the apoſtle ſpeaks of ſome *that creep into houſes, and led captive ſilly women;——and that reſiſt the truth, as Jannes and Jambres withſtood Moſes*, ver. 8. Tit. ii. 11. he tells them, ‘he muſt ſtop the ‘mouths of ſome that ſubvert whole houſes, teaching ‘things which they ought not.’ The epiſtle to Philemon, a ſingle perſon, is to unite him and Oneſimus. In the epiſtle to the Hebrews, the apoſtle taxeth ſome that forſook the church aſſemblies, Heb. x. 25. ‘Not forſaking the aſſembling of ourſelves together, as the manner of ſome is,’ James iii. 14. and downwards, ‘But

‘ if ye have bitter envying and ſtrife in your hearts, glory not.—This wiſdom deſcendeth not from above, but is earthly, ſenſual, and deviliſh.—But the wiſdom that is from above is firſt pure, then peaceable, &c. And the fruit of righteouſneſs is ſown in peace of them that make peace. 1 Pet. iii. 8. ‘ Finally, Brethren, be ye all of one mind.’ 2 Pet. ii. read throughout the whole, which treats altogether of falſe teachers. 1 John ii. 19. ‘ They went out from us, but they were not of us.’ 2 John 10. ‘ If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your houſe, neither bid him God ſpeed.’ In 3 John 9, 10. we find a Diotrephes prating againſt the apoſtle with malicious words. Read the whole epiſtle of Jude, for I need not cite a verſe or two of it to our purpoſe. See alſo Rev. ii. iii. The church of Epheſus had tried theſe that ſaid they were apoſtles, and were not, chap. ii. 2. Smyrna was troubled with theſe that ſaid they were Jews, and were not, but were the ſynagogue of Satan, verſe 9. ſo was Philadelphia, chap. iii. 9. The church of Pergamos had them that held the doctrine of Balaam, Rev. ii. 14. In Thyatira was Jezebel teaching and ſeducing, verſe 20.

Here is a cloud of witneſſes from whom we may clearly learn two leſſons.

1ſt, That though the apoſtles themſelves were alive to guide and govern the churches, yet they would not be able to prevent ſchiſms, diviſions, and renting of churches.

A ſecond leſſon we may learn from them is, That thoſe who had moſt of the Spirit of God, were of the moſt peaceable temper, moſt tender of the peace of the church, moſt careful to preſerve it where it was entire, and moſt careful to reſtore it where it was loſt.

If we take a view of after times, we ſhall find ſchiſm and diviſion infecting the church. When the Pagan perſecution was over, the fire of contention burnt up the church. Then was that accompliſhed, Rev. viii. 5. ‘ Fire from the altar was caſt into the earth.’ When Conſtantine the great had reſtored peace unto the church, ſhe was miſerably defaced by the Schiſms of the Donatiſts, who ſeparated from the church at firſt, to eſchew the impurity of promiſcuous communion. This ſchiſm laſted more than two hundred years. They held, that men were defiled with the corruptions of theſe with whom they kept church communion, and that there was no true church but their own. That which led them to theſe extravagancies, was, that the church kept in miniſterial communion with her one Cecilian, whom the Donatiſts would have had depoſed; becauſe, as they alledged, that when he was a deacon, he had hindered ſome people to aſſiſt ſome that were in priſon for the cauſe of Chriſt, and that he had been ordained by theſe that were traditors, that is, who had delivered up the Bible to the perſecutors; ſo thinking the whole church polluted with the fellowſhip of this man, and his fellows, they ſeparated.

When the Lord raiſed up Luther to reform the church from Popery, then came in the Anabaptiſts, who rebelled againſt the magiſtrate, and taught ſedition; and withal pretended, that Luther had made but a half reformation, that he had only cut off the branches of Popery, but they would ſtrike at the root. Hence complained that holy man thus, “ It coſts us ten years pains to erect a little church, and then comes one that knows nothing, but to rail on faithful miniſters, and he in one moment overturns all.” And elſewhere he ſays, “ They that received the doctrine of the goſpel from us, even they perſecute us moſt bitterly.” How our own church was thus troubled in the time of former preſbytery, is evident from the writings of worthy men of that time, againſt ſeparation; So we find an act of the aſſembly 1643. *appointing to ſearch for books tending to ſeparation.* I cannot but particularly remark an act of the aſſembly 1641. ſeſſ. 10. againſt impiety and ſchiſm, wherein they charge all miniſters and members of this kirk, to endeavour to ſuppreſs all impiety, and mocking of religious exerciſes. And upon the other part, *That, in the fear of God, they be aware, that under the pretext of religious exerciſes, otherwiſe lawful and neceſſary, they fall not into error, hereſy, ſchiſm, ſcandal, ſelf conceit, and deſpiſing of others, preſſing above the common calling of Chriſtians, and uſurping that which is proper to the paſtoral vocation, contempt or diſregard of the public means,* &c. This I take plainly to be meant of what we call fellowſhip meetings, which have been ſo much mocked by wicked men on the one hand, and abuſed on the other hand to ſchiſm, &c. But the aſſembly 1647. ſeſſ. 19. in their directions for ſecret and private worſhip, and mutual edification, for cheriſhing piety, for maintaining unity, avoiding ſchiſm and diviſion, which are ordinarily bound in with the Confeſſion of Faith, towards the latter end of the book, they diſcharge theſe meetings altogether, as you may ſee, in the ſeventh direction, where they ſay, “ Whatever hath been the fruits and effects of meetings of perſons of divers families, in the times of corruption and trouble, yet ſuch meetings of perſons of divers families, (except in the caſes mentioned in the directions,) are to be diſapproved, as tending to the prejudice of the public miniſtry, to the renting of the families of particular congregations, and (in progreſs of time) of the whole kirk.” I bring not in this to ſhew my own judgment anent theſe meetings, but to let you ſee there was a ſpirit of ſeparation going on in theſe days as well as now; and how the fire of diviſion left not this church till ſhe was caſt into the fire of perſecution, is too well known; O that it had from that time left us!

II. I come now to the *ſecond* thing propoſed, to give you a few obſerves, as to the riſe and way of carrying on this ſad plague in churches. And,

1. I ſay God has his own holy ends in theſe things. By theſe he tries his people, and thereby puniſheth men for the contempt of the goſpel, and not receiving the truth in love.

2. We find ſchiſms and diviſions raiſed in the church, under the plauſible pretext of ſtrictneſs. This was the way how the churches of Galatia were rent in pieces. The corrupt teachers would needs add the obſervation of Moſes's law to the goſpel, as if that were a more perfect and ſtrict way. Thus the corrupt teachers among the Coloſſians pretending great ſtrictneſs, cry, ‘ Touch not, taſte not, handle not,’ Col. ii. 21. This, in part, ſeems to have been the riſe of the ſchiſm in Corinth, which the apoſtle points at in the matter of the Lord's Supper, while he ſays, ‘ Let a man examine himſelf,’ 1 Cor. xi. 28. This was the ſchiſm of the Novatians and Donatiſts brought in of old, in that diſcipline was not exerciſed as they would have had againſt theſe that fell in time of perſecution.

3. There are ordinarily ſome, (I hope I am not ſpeaking to theſe with whom the very ſcripture text will be accounted treaſon:) there are ſome, I ſay, who are at great pains going hither and thither to ſpread the flame, that compaſs ſea and land to make proſelytes. Thus we find ſome travelling from Jeruſalem to Antioch through Syria and Cilicia, to make diſciples, and diſturb the churches, Acts xv. 23, 24. Unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia: Foraſmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, ſubverting you.’

4. We may always obſerve, that one main thing church-renters aim at is to do diſcredit to the miniſters of the goſpel, as if the word were, Fight neither with ſmall nor great but the miniſters; for Satan knows, if once the miniſtry be made contemptible, and their credit ſunk, then they will be uſeleſs; and if once they were laid by as uſeleſs, his kingdom were in a fair way of thriving. Theſe are the wolves, who, though they be in ſheeps clothing, yet diſcover themſelves by barking at the ſhepherds. Look to the epiſtles to the Corinthians and Galatians, and ſee how the renters of theſe churches railed upon the apoſtle Paul; they ſaid he was no lawful apoſtle, hence he is ſo oft put to clear his call, 1 Cor. ix. 1, 2. Gal. i. ii. they ſought a proof of Chriſt ſpeaking in him, 2 Cor. xiii. 3. they charged him with levity and inconſtancy, as if his words were not to be regarded, 2 Cor. i. 17. they charged him with walking after the fleſh, 2 Cor. xi. 2. they held him out to be a vain glorious perſon, and a very contemptible man, 2 Cor. xi. 9, 10.

5. We often find they have great pretences to holineſs and attainments above ordinary; ſo they are ſaid to go in ſheeps clothing, and to transform themſelves into apoſtles of Chriſt: and no marvel, for Satan himſelf is transformed into an angel of light, 2 Cor. xi. 13, 14. And it doth not a little favour their deſign, that men who have ſuffered for the cauſe of Chriſt, are ſometimes engaged in it, Rev. ii. 19. where we find Jezebel ſeducing Chriſt's ſervants; for ſometimes even good men may run the devil's errands, and yet be ſaved at laſt.

Laſtly, We may obſerve what characters the ſcripture gives ſuch, 2 Pet. ii. 10. 'Preſumptuous are they, ſelf-willed: they are not afraid to ſpeak evil of dignities.' 1 Tim. vi. 4. 'Proud, knowing nothing, but doting about queſtions,' &c. Rom. xvi. 17, 18. they are ſaid to be 'ſuch as ſerve not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but their own belly.' They are entertained by theſe 'that have itching ears,' 2 Tim. iv. 3. See how the apoſtle ſtrikes at the root of diviſion, Philip. ii. 3. 'Let nothing be done through ſtrife or vain glory, but in lowlineſs of mind, let each eſteem other better than themſelves.' Men that are irritated by a church, vain glorious or conceity, eſteeming themſelves better than others, are dangerous men, and fit wedges to cleave the church of Chriſt.

Now I ſhall name the ſecond doctrine, and then apply.

DOCT. II. *That profeſſors ought to beware of ſchiſm and diviſion, as they tender the authority and honour of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

Let me apply it in the words of our text, *Now I beſeech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye all ſpeak the ſame thing, and that there be no diviſions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the ſame mind, and in the ſame judgment.* Dearly beloved, as ye tender the authority and honour of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, beware of this ſchiſm and diviſion that is now troubling this church. I foreſee it will be needleſs for me to offer to preſs this exhortation with motives, till I have removed three prejudices out of the way. The *firſt* is, that they are the ſtricteſt party: the *ſecond* is, that the church has given them juſt ground to ſeparate: the *third* is, that their principles are the principles of our covenanted reformation. Some, may be, will be amazed to hear us offer to queſtion theſe things; but I beſeech you conſider what I ſay.

The *firſt* prejudice then is, That theſe who diſſent and ſeparate from us are the ſtricteſt party. In anſwer to this, conſider there is a twofold ſtrictneſs; a ſtrictneſs in practice, and a ſtrictneſs in opinion. As for ſtrictneſs in the point of a holy practice, life and converſation; though they ſeem in a late printed paper to appropriate the name of the godly to their own party, yet God forbid I ſhould appropriate it to ours. Only I ſhall ſay, that among theſe that conſcientiouſly attend the ordinances this day in our church, there are people as eminent for holineſs of life, that have as much of the exerciſe of godlineſs upon their ſpirits, as any in the nation; ſo far as I can diſcern. I could ſay more to this purpoſe, but that I deſire not to give offence. As for the miniſtry, whatever defects be among them; and though there are many of them with whom I have no acquaintance; yet there are among them, of whom I could ſay, (if it were lawful to ſay it of any man.) O that my ſoul were in their ſouls ſtead! and at whoſe feet I would willingly ſit down and learn the knowledge of Chriſt and practical godlineſs: this I declare to be my opinion of them, however low thoughts many have of them. As for ſtrictneſs of opinious, as to government and church communion, if we meaſure ſtrictneſs according to the dictates of mens own ſpirits, we will yield to them for ſtrictneſs; and ſo would our Lord to the Phariſees, and the apoſtles to the falſe teachers. But if we meaſure ſtrictneſs according to the word of God, we deny they are ſtricteſt, but they are indeed wideſt from the rule. I will follow Chriſt to the ſynagogue of the Jews, and in ſo doing I will be more ſtrict than theſe that ſcruple to follow Chriſt's example, for fear they be involved in the guilt of the corruptions among them; for the nearer I follow Chriſt, the more ſtrict I am, if ſtrictneſs be meaſured according to the word of God. However this is but an aſſertion; but it brings me to the ſecond thing, where I ſhall prove it.

The *ſecond* prejudice is, That the church has given them juſt ground to ſeparate; and therefore they cry out on the commiſſion of the general aſſembly, for repreſenting them to the world as ſchiſmaticks. To this I anſwer, That it is plain they have made a total ſeparation from us, and refuſe communion with us in ordinances, unleſs it be at ſome times to ſerve a turn. If this their ſeparation from us be a ſin, then their ſeparation is a ſchiſm: but ſo it is, that their ſeparation from us is ſinful, which I ſhall prove by one argument, not to multiply words. The argument is this, Theſe who reject communion in the ordinances of Chriſt with a true church, and ſeparate from her, becauſe of corruptions in her, while, in the mean time, they might keep communion with her without ſin, are guilty of ſchiſm and ſinful ſeparation; this I think will not be denied, for if our thus keeping communion be not our ſin, it muſt be our duty; ſurely it is not indifferent: But ſo it is, that our diſſenters do thus reject communion with us, and ſeparate from us, while in the mean time, they might keep communion with this church without ſin: therefore their ſeparation is ſchiſm, and they are ſchiſmatics. That they might keep communion with us without ſin, that is, without involving themſelves in the guilt of the corruptions of the church, will appear, if ye conſider, that there are no corruptions amongſt us, whether real or pretended, which the church obligeth them to approve or join in the practice of, as terms of communion with her: nor is there any real or pretended truth which they own, that the church obligeth them to renounce as a term of communion with her. This holdeth abſolutely as to the people for laick-communion, as they call it; and I am ſure it has been offered to ſome of them, that they ſhould be allowed to exoner their own conſciences, by proteſting againſt theſe things which they look upon as corruptions amongſt us, if they would but come and join with us. As for miniſterial communion, it muſt be remembered, that the miniſters of this church are obliged to own the Confeſſion of Faith, as the confeſſion of their faith, which is very juſt: and if we will believe the leaders of that party, they own it as well as we; ſo that herein they will move no debate. It remains then that they may keep communion with us without ſin, unleſs mere joining in communion with a church, wherein there are many corruptions, be a ſin, and defile a man. To this narrow point, I think the controverſy betwixt them and us is brought: this I take to be the very foundation of the ſeparation, which if it fall, all falls together with it; and that this is a groſs untruth, I ſhall evince by two arguments. The *firſt* argument is from Rev. ii. 24, 25. 'But unto you I ſay, and unto the reſt in Thyatira, As many as have not this doctrine,—I will put upon you none other burden; but that which ye have already, hold faſt till I come.' In the church of Thyatira, Jezebel was ſuffered to teach and ſeduce Chriſt's ſervants; for ſuffering of her the angel is reproved, and called to amend this fault. The party that kept themſelves pure are not required to ſeparate; nay, in effect are commanded to continue in the communion of that church; while the Lord expreſsly tells them, *He will lay no other burden upon them, but* commands them *to hold faſt*, and yet there is not one word anent their ſeparating to keep themſelves pure. This could not have been, if their keeping communion with the church of Thyatira, in which there were ſuch groſs corruptions, and corrupt members, had been a ſin.

The *ſecond* argument is from our Lord's example, Luke iv. 16. 'And he came to Nazareth where he had been brought up, and as his cuſtom was, he went into the ſynagogue on the Sabbath-day, and ſtood up for to read.' What corruptions were in the Jewiſh church in Chriſt's day, ye may find by reading of the goſpels, as great, I dare ſay, as can in any meaſure of modeſty be pretended to be in the church of Scotland; and ye would remember they were a covenanted land as well as we; yet our Lord keeps church communion with them in the ordinances of God; though he joined not with them in their corruptions, he joined with them in the ordinances, and conſequently it was no ſin; and people may keep themſelves from the guilt of corruptions in a church, and yet keep communion with a church wherein theſe corruptions are. Mark, that it was his cuſtom to go to the ſynagogue in the place where he was brought up, for it plainly relates to his cuſtom which he had while he lived a private man in Nazareth, ſeeing it appears from the context, that this was the firſt time he was in Nazareth, after he had entered upon the public exerciſe of his miniſtry; which cuts off that exception, that Chriſt went thither only to preach to them. Nay, afterwards he did not go to their ſolemn feaſts? and we have plain ſcripture for his hearing their teachers, Luke ii. 42. 'And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jeruſalem, after the cuſtom of the feaſt;' and in the verſe immediately preceding, it is ſaid of holy Joſeph and Mary, 'they went to Jeruſalem every year, at the feaſt of the paſſover,' ſo far were they from ſeparating. And in the 46th verſe, 'They found him in the temple, in the midſt of the doctors, both hearing them, and aſking them queſtions.' They that would find this point more largely proved, let them conſult Rutherford's Peaceable plea for Preſbytery, and Durham on ſcandal, and on the Revelation, both proving this point againſt the ſeparatiſts of their time.

I come now to the third prejudice; and I beſeech you bear with me, for if I were to handle this point in an ordinary way, ye ſhould not hear ſo much at once. Our great buſineſs is to preach Chriſt, if we could get leave to do it for our diviſions. The third prejudice, I ſay, is, That their principles wherein they differ from us, are the principles of our covenanted reformation, and that their practices in the points of difference, are agreeable thereto; and ſo they give it out, that they adhere to our National, and Solemn League and Covenants, Confeſſion of Faith, Directory, *&c.* But we will examine their pretenſions in theſe matters.

Firſt then, As to the National covenant, I ſhall take notice of two things. 1. I find theſe words in the National Covenant, "This true reformed kirk, to the which we join ourſelves willingly, in doctrine, faith, religion, diſcipline, and uſe of the holy ſacraments, as lively members of the ſame, in Chriſt our Head, promiſing and ſwearing by the great name of the Lord our God, that we ſhall continue in the obedience of the doctrine and diſcipline of this kirk." Let any compare with this the aſſembly 1638, their explanation of the National Covenant, as ye have it ſeſſ. 16. of that aſſembly, where repeating theſe foreſaid words of the National Covenant, they ſubſume, "But ſo it is, that Epiſcopal government is abhorred and deteſted, and the government by miniſters and elders, in aſſemblies general and provincial, and preſbyteries, was ſworn to, and ſubſcribed, in ſubſcribing that Confeſſion, and ought to be holden by us, if we adhere to the meaning of the kirk, when that Confeſſion was framed, ſworn to, and ſubſcribed, unto which we are obliged by the national oath, and ſubſcription of this kirk, as is evident by," &c. Now, I would appeal to the conſcience of any ſeparatiſt, who hath knowledge to diſcern things that differ, whether or not we have the ſame doctrine and diſcipline that they had, when that covenant was firſt taken; and the ſame doctrine and diſcipline which the aſſembly 1636, declares to be the doctrine and diſcipline meant in that covenant, unto which we are obliged by the national oath. Seeing then, we have the ſame doctrine and diſcipline, they are by the National Covenant, obliged to join themſelves to this kirk, and to continue in the obedience of the doctrine and diſcipline thereof; and, by their ſeparating, they make themſelves plainly guilty of the breach of this ſubſtantial part of the covenant. And hence, by the bye, appears the unreaſonableneſs of ſpeaking ſo ſlightly of theſe days, the doctrine and diſcipline of that time being that which the National Covenant ſtill binds to. 2. I find, that at the firſt taking of the covenant, they ſwear to maintain the king's authority: as alſo when, with additions, it was renewed in the year 1638, they ſwear to ſtand to the defence of his majeſty's perſon and authority. How agree our diſſenters principles, rejecting the authority of the queen, with this part of the covenant? O, ſay they, "ſhe is not a covenanted queen, and therefore cannot be queen of a covenanted land." Strange prejudice! Was not Scotland a covenanted land long ere the Solemn League and Covenant was heard tell of? Was not King Charles I. king of a covenanted land at that time when the covenant was renewed, and his authority ſworn to be defended? But was he a covenanted king? Did he own their covenant? No, no, upon the contrary, he obliged ſome of their public at London to abjure it, declared the covenanters rebels, and brought down an army againſt them to force them from it.

Apol. Rel. p. 53.

As for the Solemn League and covenant, we find them guilty the ſame way. It binds us expreſly againſt ſchiſm, as well as Prelacy, ſuperſtition, and hereſy. And that they are ſchiſmaticks has been proven before. It alſo bound us unto the maintaining of the king's authority, it being far from the mind of the covenanters to caſt off the authority of the magiſtrate, though it was entered into without the king's conſent. Was it ever the mind of the covenanters that they would own no king, but one that had taken this covenant? I am ſure the Parliament of Scotland thought not ſo, when in the year 1649, they proclaimed and declared to all the world, That Charles II. was king of Britain, &c. their ſovereign lord and king, and this was a full year before he took the covenant: for which ſee the Apologetical relation, p. 64, 65. Nor did the general aſſembly 1649, think ſo, when in their letter to the king's majeſty, (to be found amongſt the printed acts of the aſſembly, in their laſt ſeſſion,) before he was come home, or had taken the covenant, they call him moſt gracious ſovereign; and ſubſcribe their letter thus, *Your majeſty's moſt loyal ſubjects, and humble ſervants, the miniſters and elders convened in this national aſſembly of the kirk of Scotland*: while in the mean time, they tell him in the ſame letter, *That he had ſettled a peace with the Iriſh Papiſts, the murderers of ſo many thouſands of his Proteſtant ſubjects, and granted to them (contrary to the ſtanding laws of his royal progenitors) a full liberty of their abominable idolatry*: which, ſay they, *cannot be otherwiſe judged, but a giving of your royal power to the beaſt*; and they exhort him to lay aſide the ſervice book. And ſeveral other things may be there found, that may make men bluſh of their agreeing with the church of Scotland in her principles in theſe times, and yet rejecting the authority of the preſent queen. And which is moſt lamentable, even theſe worthies which laid down their lives for the covenants, whoſe teſtimonies are recorded in Naphtali, having owned the king's authority, and prayed for him on the ſcaffolds, muſt by this new doctrine be reputed to die as fools, who underſtood not the covenants they were laying down their precious lives for. As to the Confeſſion of Faith.

1. How does their refuſing to pray for the queen, to pay her ceſs, and to own her authority, becauſe ſhe is not a covenanted queen, agree with the Confeſſion of Faith, Chap. 23. § 4. "It is the duty of people to pray for magiſtrates, to pay them tribute and other dues, and to be ſubject to their authority for conſcience ſake; infidelity, or difference in religion, doth not make void the magiſtrate's juſt and legal authority?" I know they will ſay, that article is meant of lands not covenanted: there had been ſome ſhadow of force in this perhaps, if this Confeſſion of Faith had been framed before the Covenant; but upon the contrary, it was long after, and was the product of the Solemn League and Covenant, as appears from the firſt article of the covenant, in theſe words, "And ſhall endeavour to bring the churches of God in the three kingdoms to the neareſt conjunction and uniformity in religion, confeſſion of faith," &c. The Solemn League and Covenant was ſworn in the year 1643, the Confeſſion of Faith was ſent hither and approven by the aſſembly not till the year 1647, for which ſee the act of aſſembly printed before the Confeſſion. And can we think, that theſe who, in purſuance of the covenant, framed this Confeſſion of Faith, to declare to the world the

faith of Covenanters, would ſo juggle, as to put in articles of faith which would bind others, but not themſelves?

2. How does their reckoning the taking the oath of allegiance to the queen, one of the ſteps of the church's defection, conſiſt with confeſſion, chap. 22. § 2. *A lawful oath, being impoſed by lawful authority, in ſuch matters ought to be taken*; and § 3. of the ſame chapter. *Yea it is a ſin to refuſe an oath, touching any thing that is good and juſt, being impoſed by lawful authority?* It is true, they reckon her no lawful queen; but one error will not atone for another. The famous author of the *Apologetical relation* was not of our diſſenters mind, (nay, he thought there had been no Chriſtian of their mind, and for ought I know there were none in theſe days,) for, ſpeaking of the reaſons why the oath of ſupremacy, called then, though falſely, the oath of allegiance, ſhould be refuſed, and anſwering this objection, viz. Such as refuſe this oath of allegiance, declare that they are not dutiful and loyal ſubjects, he ſaith, *It hath been ſhown what difference there is betwixt this oath and the oath of allegiance; and there is no miniſter or Chriſtian ſhould ſcruple at the taking the pure oath of allegiance*, Apol. Rel. p. 259. If it was this author's mind, that no miniſter or Chriſtian ſhould have ſcrupled the oath of allegiance to the king Charles II. when he had taken the covenant, broken it, and overturned the work of reformation; ſure, he would far leſs have thought it a ſin to take the oath of allegiance to the preſent queen.

3. How doth their ſeparating from this church, leſt they be involved in the guilt of the corruptions amongſt us, by keeping communion with us, agree with Conf. chap. 26. § 2. "Saints, by profeſſion, are bound to maintain an holy fellowſhip and communion in the worſhip of God;—which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended to all theſe, who in every place, call upon the name of the Lord Jeſus?"

4. How doth that principle of theirs, ſometime at leaſt owned by them, though left out in their laſt paper, againſt *the power of the magiſtrate to call aſſemblies*, agree with Conf. chap. 31. § 2. "As magiſtrates may lawfully call a ſynod of miniſters, and other fit perſons, to conſult and adviſe with about matters of religion?" and with act of aſſembly 1638, ſeſſ. 26. concerning yearly general aſſemblies, where they ſay, "If, in the mean time, it ſhall pleaſe the king's majeſty to indite a general aſſembly, ordaineth all preſbyteries, univerſities, and burghs, to ſend their commiſſioners, for keeping the time and place which ſhall be appointed by his majeſty's proclamation?" They cry out on the incroachment of the magiſtrates in diſſolving of aſſemblies; but as our aſſemblies are conſtituted in the name of Chriſt, ſo are they diſſolved in his name. What diſſolution the magiſtrate makes, is looked upon as the diſmiſſing of the members. There have indeed been incroachments made by the magiſtrate in diſſolving aſſemblies before they had done their buſineſs, and there have been proteſtations made againſt this. And though, in the late paper, they charge the church for not proteſting againſt the incroachments, and recording the ſame; yet that proteſtations have not been made againſt them, is an untruth: but where the magiſtrate's deed is not recorded, neither are the proteſtations recorded. I was eye and ear-witneſs to the magiſtrate's raiſing the aſſembly in the midſt of buſineſs; and proteſtations were made againſt it, and for the church's intrinſic power; and, from every corner of the houſe, members adhering thereto. And this proteſting is recorded in the acts of aſſembly; ſo that, from my certain knowledge, I can ſay, they ſpeak an untruth in that charge in the declinature; yea, I have the acts of the aſſembly by me, where they, or any that queſtion the truth of what I ſay, may read it with their own eyes.

5. How doth their rejecting and deſpiſing the teſtimony of the commiſſion of the general aſſembly againſt the union, and reproaching them for it, becauſe it was given into the parliment by way of humble addreſs, and not by way of proteſtation, agree with Conf. chap. 31. § 5. "Synods and councils are to handle and conclude nothing but that which is eccleſiaſtical, and are not to intermeddle with civil affairs, which concern the commonwealth, unleſs, by way of humble petition, in caſes extraordinary, or by way of advice, for ſatisfaction of conſcience, if thereunto required by the civil magiſtrate?"

Laſtly, How does their crying out on the magiſtrates occaſional appointing of faſts and thankſgivings, agree with the Confeſſion of Faith, allowing the magiſtrate to call aſſemblies? This I ſpoke to formerly in another ſermon. And further, how agrees it with the laſt paragraph of the Directory concerning public ſolemn faſting, where we have theſe words, "Beſides ſolemn and general faſts enjoined by authority, we judge," &c. It may be obſerved how frequently the apoſtles enjoin obedience to magiſtrates, and honouring of them, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. 'I exhort therefore, that prayers be made for kings, and for all that are in authority.' Rom. xiii. 1. 'Let every ſoul be ſubject unto the higher powers,' &c. Tit. iii. 1. 'Put them in mind to be ſubject to principalities and powers, to obey magiſtrates,' 1 Pet. ii. 13. and downwards. All which may ſhew us, that we have no more right to take away the fifth command out of the decalogue that requires obedience to magiſtrates, than the Papiſts have to take away the ſecond, which condemns their idolatry. I think there is a ſtrange inclination amongſt ſome that profeſs religion, not only amongſt Diſſenters, but others, to ſpeak evil of dignities, and to embrace every thing that may make againſt the magiſtrate; ſo that the murdering of king Charles I. wherewith Preſbyterians are ſlandered by Papiſts and malignants, is owned and adopted by ſome, as if it had been a laudable action. Wo's me, that ignorance, and an inclination to vilify magiſtrates, ſhould give ſuch a handle to the enemy againſt us. If it was ſuch a glorious action, the ſectaries muſt have the glory of it; for it was they, and not Preſbyterians, that did the deed, and it was proteſted againſt, by the commiſſioner both from the church and ſtate of Scotland, for which they were hardly uſed at London; for which ſee Apol. Rel. p. 64. Yea, the general aſſembly of the church of Scotland 1649, gave their teſtimony againſt it in their ſeaſonable warning, ſeſſ. 27. they ſay, "That prevailing party of ſectaries in England, who have broken the covenant, and taken away the king's life, look upon us with an evil eye." And in their exhortation to their brethren in England, "We have obtained this mercy, to be ſtedfaſt to our old principles, in bearing free and faithful teſtimony againſt their proceedings, both in reference to the toleration and government, and the taking away the king's life." And in their letter to the king, "We do from our hearts abominate and deteſt that horrid fact of the ſectaries, againſt the life of your royal father our ſovereign." Both which are to be found in the laſt ſeſſion of that aſſembly.

Let me now renew my exhortation and preſs it. *I beſeech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye all ſpeak the ſame thing, and that there be no diviſions among you.* Beware of diviſion yourſelves, and give your help to recover, in all tenderneſs, theſe that have withdrawn, and encourage them not in their way. I am perſuaded, that if they were not ſo much countenanced and encouraged by theſe that are the hearers, the number of ſuch would not be ſo great as it is. Let not that itching ear get place with you, ſo as to run away to their meetings, whenever ye have opportunity, and ſo to caſt yourſelves into a ſnare, and to do what in you lies to ſtrengthen the diviſion, and trample on the grave authority of the church, whereby one of their preachers is depoſed from the miniſtry, and the other, who never was a miniſter, his licenſe to preach is declared null and void: and both are certified, that if they repent not, and amend their ways, they ſhall be excommunicated. I know it is ſaid, that it is thought ſtrange, the commiſſion threateneth to cenſure theſe men with the higheſt cenſures of the church, while yet they declare them to be none of their communion. But I think it more ſtrange to find men amuſed with this, who though ſome curates, and others who have been cenſured by this church, who were as little of our communion as theſe men, yet are diſſatisfied that the church does not cenſure more of them, and that more ſeverely. Beware then of this diviſion, I beſeech you.

1. For their ſakes that have withdrawn, that ye may not confirm them in their courſe, tending ſo much to the diſadvantage of their ſouls, in withdrawing from the means of grace and knowledge, which they ſtand in need of, as well as others. O Sirs, be concerned this way; the Lord's people are of an uniting and gathering ſpirit, Iſa. lxvi. 20. 'And they ſhall bring all your brethren for an 'offering unto the Lord, out of all nations, upon horſes, 'and in chariots, and in litters, to my holy mountain.' They ſhall bring them not by force, but by goſpel motives. But ſome of them are far off; what then? yet they ſhall bring them; may be they cannot walk, then ſhall they bring them on horſes; may be they are ſo weak they cannot ride on horſes, then they ſhall get chariots; ſome may be ſo ſickly they cannot come in chariots, then they ſhall come in litters that are for carrying of ſick folk: But by all means they will endeavour to bring them to the mountain of the Lord. Some will not concern themſelves this way, but let every one do as they pleaſe in theſe matters. But O for this gathering ſpirit!

2. I beſeech you for the ſake of thoſe, both amongſt them and us, that have no religion. O Sirs, what ſhould come of the many periſhing ſouls up and down Scotland, that are ſtrangers to Chriſt and their own ſoul's ſtate, if, as theſe men would have it, all ſhould leave us, and we be left to preach to toom walls, or hold our tongues? Will they be able for the whole kingdom?

3. I beſeech you, for your own ſakes, have pity on your ſouls, caſt not away your ſpiritual food; yield not ſo to Satan, who, if he could, would ſet you at variance with the ordinances, becauſe he well knows that men in that caſe may get greater eaſe in their luſts, for it will be long ere a reproof get reached from the pulpit to the fields, or their fire ſides. I am very apprehenſive, that the preaching of the word, as being levelled at peoples ſtate, and caſe of their ſouls before the Lord, has been over hot for ſome, that has made them withdraw from miniſters, as men that tormented them that dwell upon the earth.

4. I beſeech you for the church's ſake, whoſe beauty is marred with diviſion, Cant. i. 6. 'Look not upon me, 'becauſe I am black; my mother's children were angry 'with me.' There is no danger from enemies without like that from diviſions within. The unity of the church would be the ſtability of it, Iſa. xxxiii. 20. 'Thine eyes 'ſhall ſee Jeruſalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that 'ſhall not be taken down, not one of the ſtakes thereof 'ſhall ever be removed, neither ſhall any of the cords 'thereof be broken.' Though the kingdoms of the world be built on mountains, yet they ſhall fall; but the church when ſhe is a quiet habitation, though ſhe be but a tent, ſhe ſhall ſtand; and though that tent be but fixed with ſtakes, yet they ſhall not be removed; though it be fixed but with cords, not with great ropes, yet none of them ſhall be broken. Diviſion mars reformation in a church. It is very remarkable how diſcipline was weakened in the church of Corinth; diviſions were ſo hot there, the inceſtuous man was tolerated amongſt them, they could not get that work minded or plied for the contentions among them, Zeph. iii. 9. 'For then will I turn to the people a 'pure language, that they may all call upon the name of 'the Lord to ſerve him with one conſent.' There is a reforming time, and then they will ſerve the Lord with one conſent, ſo we read it; but in the firſt language, it is one ſhoulder; they ſhall, as it were, all ſet one ſhoulder to the Lord's work, and then the work will proſper.

5. I beſeech you for miniſters their ſakes. Miniſters are made very odious this day by the dividers of the church; but we hope they have not made ſuch impreſſions on you, but that you, at leaſt ſome of you, will do ſomething for our ſake. Our requeſt is, that ye would not burden our ſpirits with diviſion, that ye would not mar the Lord's work in our hands, and make our work a burden to us; ye ſee that in other things we are not mere ignorants more than yourſelves; that in other things we are not men of proſtitute conſciences more than yourſelves; muſt a man then be accounted quite ignorant of his duty, or one that will go over the belly of his own light, in things properly belonging to his office, juſt becauſe he is a miniſter of this church this day? I am ſure it is a changed world with ſome, to whom it may be ſaid in the words of the apoſtle, Gal. iv. 14.—16. 'And my temptation which was in 'my fleſh, ye deſpiſed not; but received me as an angel 'of God. Where is then the bleſſedneſs you ſpoke of? 'For I bear you record, that if it had been poſſible, ye 'would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given 'them to me. Am I therefore become your enemy, be'cauſe I tell you the truth?'

Laſtly, I beſeech you, for Chriſt's ſake, that ye beware of diviſion. I beſeech you for the ſake of the Prince of peace, who in his ſolemn prayer prayed for the uniting of his people, John xvii. 21. 'That they all may be one,— 'that the world may believe that thou haſt ſent me:' for his ſake who, in the night wherein he was betrayed, inſtituted the ſacrament of his ſupper, to ſeal our union and communion with God, and with one another; for his ſake who laid down his life to procure our peace with God, and ſhed his precious blood to unite his elect, Eph. ii. 14. 'For he is our peace, who hath made both one, 'and hath broken down the middle wall of partition be'tween us.' As ye tender the authority, and honour of Jeſus Chriſt, beware of diviſion. As ye would have his bleſſing upon the church and the pariſh, beware of diviſion, Pſal. cxxxiii. 1. 3. 'Behold, how good and how 'pleaſant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. 'For there the Lord commandeth the bleſſing, even life 'for evermore.' And ſo I cloſe with that of the apoſtle, 2 Cor. xiii. 11. 'Finally, brethren, farewel: be perfect, 'be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and 'the God of love and peace ſhall be with you.' Now to the God of peace, even to the Father the fountain of peace, to the Son the purchaſer of peace, to the Holy Ghoſt the worker of peace, be glory for ever, Amen.

The Neceſſity and Foundations of a Throne of Grace for the behoof of poor Sinners pointed out and illuſtrated.

The Subſtance of three SERMONS, preached on Sacramental Occaſions. The firſt at Maxton, Saturday, July 4. 1719.

PSAL. lxxxix. 14.

Juſtice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth ſhall go before thy face.

A Moſt ſolemn and awful approach is before us. We have on our hands buſineſs of the greateſt import, buſineſs with a king, ~~a king on his throne,~~ not a mortal king, but the King immortal, ~~the King of the world, the King of the church~~, God himſelf. And whether we conſider our buſineſs or our party, we have no need to trifle. Our buſineſs is for eternity, if we come ~~ſpeed~~ at the throne, we are made for ever; if not, we are undone. Our party is God on his throne, a throne where we ſee a glorious mixture of majeſty and grace, which requires management with utmoſt ſerіouſneſs. In the words we have a glorious view the Pſalmiſt takes of Zion's God and King, in two things.

1. The throne he ſits in, and appears on, which is moſt glorious. *Juſtice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne.* Where let us conſider,

(1.) The perſon ſitting on the throne, it is he to whom the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, even God himſelf, verſe 8. and particularly the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, verſe 19. 'Then thou ſpakeſt in viſion to thy holy One, and ſaidſt 'I have laid help upon one that is mighty.' And he is here repreſented as actually upon the throne; for ſo *mercy and truth going before his face*, does require it to be underſtood.

(2.) The throne itſelf. ~~I think this~~ by which we text wronged, by expounding the throne of the throne of providence, and God's government of the world in general; the uſhers that go before this enthroned ~~King oblige us to~~ underſtand ~~it of~~ the throne of grace, ſince truth joined with mercy, ~~as here~~, is always underſtood of faithfulneſs in fulfilling promiſes; and ~~the uſhers in the kingdom of providence,~~ are juſtice as well as mercy.

(3.) The habitation of this throne, are *juſtice and judgment* ~~marg. the~~ *eſtabliſhment* or *place.* So that the habitation is not to be taken natively, for that which inhabits the throne; but paſſively, for that in which the throne abides or inhabits. The word is of ſuch a frame as denotes an inſtrument of ſomething, and it properly ſignifies a baſe, ſupporter or ſtay, or foundation, on which a thing ſtands firm, Ezra ii. 68. and iii. 3. Pſal. cxiv. 5. Now juſtice and judgment are the baſe or foundation of his throne, *i. e.* ſay ſome, juſt judgment is the ſtability of God's throne, namely, in his government of the world. I am not clear of that ſenſe its being ſafe, far leſs genuine: for though juſt judgment is the ſtability of a creature's throne, who is capable to do unjuſtly; I ſee not how it can be thought to be the ſtability of his throne of providence, who can do no wrong, whoſe dominion is founded on his having created all things, and is abſolutely, and in itſelf unalterable.

By *juſtice* ~~then~~ I underſtand God's juſtice proceeding on righteouſneſs; by *judgment*, the execution of juſtice againſt ſin; which done, juſtice gives what is due. Theſe are baſes, ~~ſupporters, or ſtays,~~ which the or foundations ~~the~~ throne of grace ſtands on; and ~~you~~ we may eaſily perceive they relate to Chriſt, the Mediator, who became juſtice's party, and on whom judgment was execute for the ſatisfaction of juſtice. The throne of grace could not have been ſet up but on theſe baſes; and were it poſſible they could fail, that moment they failed, the throne would tumble down.

2. The harbingers which go before him, *Mercy and truth ſhall go before thy face.* Here is,

(1.) Something expreſſed, viz. that mercy and truth go before this enthroned King, as kings have their uſhers who go before them. The one is *mercy*, i. e. loving kindneſs, bounty, clemency, good-will towards poor ſinners. The other is *truth*, viz. faithfulneſs in performing all the promiſes made to the Mediator in favours of thoſe that are his. A glorious reviving ſight to a loſt world!

(2.) Something ſuppoſed, namely, that the throne is a portable throne. For theſe *go before his face* ſitting on his throne. God has a throne of glory in heaven, of juſtice in hell, of providence through the whole world, of grace in the church, Jer. iii. 17. And wherever the goſpel comes, there God comes ſitting on this throne of grace, with mercy and truth going before his face, managing the treaty of peace with poor rebel ſinners, and allowing all his people acceſs to him, 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. '—God was in Chriſt reconciling the world unto him-'ſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them,' &c.

DOCT. *The throne of grace, which God ſits upon for the behoof of poor ſinners, is founded and ſtands upon juſtice, and on judgment execute againſt ſin, in the perſon of Chriſt the Mediator.*

In diſcourſing this doctrine,

I. I ſhall ſhew the neceſſity there was of a throne of grace, for the behoof of poor ſinners.

II. I will ſhew the neceſſity of theſe foundations and ſtays of juſtice and judgment againſt ſin, for the throne of grace to ſtand on.

III. We ſhall conſider the laying of theſe foundations, and the erecting of the throne of grace upon them.

IV. Apply.

I. I ſhall ſhew *the neceſſity there was of a throne of grace, for the behoof of poor ſinners.* There was an abſolute neceſſity of it for the ſalvation of any of the poſterity of fallen Adam. For,

1. Sin having entered, they could have no more benefit by the throne of law-goodneſs, which runs in that channel, *Do this and live*, Gen. iii. 22. 24. 'And the 'Lord God ſaid,—And now leſt he put forth his hand, 'and take alſo of the tree of life, and eat, and live for e-'ver.—So he drove out the man,' &c. The whole tribe of Adam turning rebels againſt the throne of heaven, the promiſed life and favour was forfeited, their claim was cut off by that one blow of the firſt ſin, at the rate that they, with the help of angels, could never have been able to recover it, Rom. viii. 3.

2. They were bound over to anſwer at the throne of ſtrict juſtice; for ſo was the law treaty related and determined, Gen. ii. 17. 'But of the tree of the knowledge 'of good and evil, thou ſhalt not eat of it; for in the 'day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.' This made them liable to eternal death for the leaſt tranſgreſſion, Gal. iii. 10. Taſte but of the forbidden fruit, and lo! they muſt die. This made our guilty father, when he heard the voice of God, run and hide himſelf, when he looked to have the ſummons to that awful tribunal put in his hand.

In this caſe there was the utmoſt neceſſity for a throne of grace. A throne of grace, might the criminals cry, elſe we die, we all die, we periſh, we periſh. For,

1ſt, They could have no claim to law goodneſs and bounty, but upon perfect obedience, Gal. iii. 12. And that was put beyond their reach by their ſin, which both broke the law, and waſted entirely their ſtrength for ſuch obedience in time to come. So the Mediator found them without ſtrength, fallen down in their race, and not able to go a ſtep farther, Rom. v. 6. nay, dead in their ſins.

2dly, They were utterly unable to ſtand before the tribunal of juſtice, Pſal. cxxx. 5. and cxliii. 2. If their proceſs be led there, the ſinner falls, he is a condemned man without remedy. No plea can do there, but Not guilty; and that the ſinner cannot plead. The judge is omniſcient, and the criminal can never outwit him, nor deceive him, and keep up the truth from him. And in that court, there is no advocate, interceſſor, mercy; but the ſentence paſſed muſt needs be execute, and the criminal fall a ſacrifice to juſtice: for he is juſt and omnipotent, there is no moving him with cries and tears in prejudice of juſtice, no out braving of him, or making head againſt the judge or the law.

3dly, The criminal once falling under the weight of the ſentence a ſacrifice to juſtice, there is no *riſing* again, he is *cut off* for ever, Pſal. xciv. 23. Were it thouſands of rams, or the fruit of one's body, would ſatisfy for the ſin of the ſoul, the ſinner poſſibly might make ſhift; yea, were finite ſufferings ſo, though for millions of years, they would have an end: but the offence againſt an infinite God cannot be expiate but by infinite ſufferings, which lay the criminal's head ſo on the block, that he can never raiſe it up again.

4thly, Juſtice had determined the execution day to be the ſame with the ſinning day, Gen. ii. 17. And had it not been that the throne of grace was erected the ſame day, to which the proceſs was by appeal carried from the throne of ſtrict juſtice, the ſentence had been fully executed that day. When man was fallen, juſtice lays hand on the criminal, and binds him for execution. Everlaſting love minds a throne of grace, to reſcue a ruined world: but where ſhall a foundation be had to ſet up the white throne for the pale criminal? angels nor men could furniſh nothing would bear the weight of it. Then ſaid the Son of God, Pſal. xl. 7. 'Lo I come, in the volume of 'the book it is written of me.' Let my blood, the blood of God, be the baſe of the throne; that will bear it; ſo it was done. Hence ye read, Gen. iii. 6. ‘They heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themſelves from the preſence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.’ Ver. 15. ‘And the Lord God ſaid unto the ſerpent, I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy ſeed and her ſeed; it ſhall bruiſe thy head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel.’ And verſ. 21. ‘Unto Adam alſo and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of ſkins, and clothed them.’

Laſtly, Ye may ſee the neceſſity of a throne of grace for the behoof of poor ſinners, in the hopeleſs caſe of the fallen angels. They were the firſt that ventured to break over the hedge of the law, and no throne of grace being provided for their behoof, they were ruined beyond all remedy, 2 Pet. ii. 4. For at the throne of ſtrict juſtice they muſt anſwer, and they have no acceſs to the throne of grace, Heb. ii. 16. ‘For verily he took on him the nature of angels.’ The ſame had been our caſe, if a throne of grace had not been provided for us.

II. I will ſhew *the neceſſity of theſe foundations and ſtays of juſtice and judgment againſt ſin, for the throne of grace to ſtand on.* Blind ſinners, who never ſaw ſo much of the ill of ſin, as to make them queſtion, whether the ſaving of ſuch wretches was conſiſtent with God's honour or not, are apt to think the throne of grace might have been ſet up on mere mercy. Nay, but it would ſtand on no other but juſtice and judgment againſt ſin.

1. The juſtice of God would not ſuffer it to be erected but on theſe baſes, Gen. xviii. 25. ‘Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?’ 1 Theſſ. i. 9. ‘It is a righteous thing with God to recompenſe tribulation to them that trouble you.’ Sinners, by the dictates of their own conſciences, know themſelves to be worthy of death, and that God has a right to puniſh them, Rom. i. 32. And ſhall not a juſt God give ſin its due? Who can expect mercy over the belly of juſtice, or that a throne of grace ſhould have been ſet up on the ruins of the juſtice of God?

2. The holineſs of God and his hatred of ſin would not ſuffer it. Hence ſays the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. v. 5. ‘The fooliſh ſhall not ſtand in thy ſight: thou hateſt all workers of iniquity.’ And ſays the prophet, Hab. i. 13. ‘Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canſt not look on iniquity.’ When God does but ſpare ſinners a while, they are apt to think he is like themſelves, in which he ſhews he will vindicate his own honour, Pſal. l. 21. ‘I will reprove thee, and ſet them in order before thine eyes.’ How then could the honour of his holineſs been ſupported, in letting out the fountain of his mercy and grace upon the ſinner, without taking due vengeance upon the ſin?

3. The truth of God was a bar in the way of emanations of mercy and grace without ſatisfaction to juſtice. He ſaid, Gen. ii. 17. ‘In the day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.’ What ſhould have come of the truth of God, had not death followed ſin, according to the threatening. True, if one will die for the criminal, he may have life with the good leave of juſtice and truth, the ſurety's death ſatisfying juſtice. But no mercy without ſatisfaction, either by the party or the cautioner.

4. The honour of the holy law, the eternal rule of righteouſneſs, ſtood in the way of erecting a throne of grace but on theſe foundations; it behoved to be *magnified, and made honourable*, Iſ. xlii. 21. The law's hedge was broken down by the ſinner, it was the fair tranſcript of God's holy nature; and therefore it was impoſſible this gap ſhould always ſtand open, never be made up, and they that made it not only eſcape free, but be received into favour.

Laſtly, If there had not been an abſolute neceſſity of theſe foundations for a throne of grace to ſtand on, they had never been laid at the coſt of the blood of the Son of God, Rom. iii. 25. How can we believe that an infinitely good and wiſe God would have given his own Son, the Son of his love, to a moſt cruel and curſed death, to found his throne of grace to ſinners on, if there had been no neceſſity of ſuch foundations, John iii. 16. ‘God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh but have everlaſting life.’ If there had not been a neceſſity for it, this love does not appear.

Uſe of exhortation. And hence I would direct an exhortation to two ſorts of perſons.

Firſt, Secure ſinners, going on in your ſins, fall in with the fair occaſion of grace and mercy, now put in your hands, while the Lord is come among you appearing on a throne of grace, and offering you his grace and favour through Jeſus Chriſt. Give up with your ſins, ſubmit yourſelves to this glorious king, and ſlight not goſpel grace any more.

Mot. 1. Look to him that ſits on this throne of grace, that is the great King, and you will ſee two things may move you.

1. He is one whoſe favour ye muſt have, elſe ye are ruined; for in his favour only is life, Pſal. xxx. 5. He is the beſt of friends, and of all enemies the moſt dreadful. How can ye live without his favour, ſince ye live on his ground, and live at his coſt? Acts xvii. 25. How can ye die without it; will ye be able to face the king of terrors without peace with the King of heaven? The throne is among you, then make your addreſs.

2. His favour ye *may* have, for he is on a throne of grace; come and fall down before him on that throne, and make peace, Iſa. xxvii. 5. The golden ſceptre is ſtretched out, come forward and let not the occaſion ſlip, 2 Cor. vi. 2. ‘Behold now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of ſalvation.’ The proclamation of grace is iſſued out for peace and pardon to rebels, ſtand not off, leſt the day of grace go over with you, and that be pronounced, Luke xiv. 26. ‘I ſay unto you, that none of theſe men which were bidden, ſhall taſte of my ſupper.’

Mot. 2. Look to theſe that go before this enthroned King, and you will ſee two things may overcome your hearts to comply.

1. Mercy goes before it to embrace you, and give you a complete remedy for your miſery; ſlip not the golden ſeaſon, Iſa. lv. 6, 7. ‘Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.’ And it is ſure mercy ye may well truſt to; precious mercy, it is moſt dangerous to ſlight, ſince it iſſues out on a throne ſtabliſhed on juſtice ſatisfied by the obedience and death of Chriſt.

Mot. ult. Look to the foundations this throne ſtands on, and you will ſee two things may determine you.

1. That it is coſtly grace and mercy that is offered you. This white throne had never appeared amongſt us, if Chriſt had not, by his obedience and death, made a foundation for it to ſtand on. Has he been at the expence of his precious blood to rear it up, and will ye ſlight the grace purchaſed at ſuch a rate. Ye cannot do it but ye trample under foot the blood of the Son of God.

2. What ye muſt lay your account with, if ye continue in your ſins, and ſlight the offers of grace from the throne, even juſtice and judgment on your own ſouls for evermore, Heb. ii. 3. Will ye look for mercy, yet not take God's way of mercy in Chriſt. Juſtice will ſtep in betwixt you and mercy, and part you for ever. If this was done in the green tree, much more will it in the dry. If God ſpared not his own Son, how ſhall the ſlighters of him expect ſparing? Nay, another throne ſhall be ſet up againſt you, where the flaming ſword to devour the adverſaries ſhall go for ever before the face of the dreadful Judge, 2 Theſſ. i. 9.

Secondly, Poor trembling ſinners, preſſed with the ſenſe of ſin and unworthineſs, come forward with humble boldneſs to the throne of grace, that ye may *obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*, Heb. iv. 16.

Look to him that ſits on the throne: it is not an abſolute God but a *God in Chriſt*, 2 Cor. v. 19. whoſe rays of majeſty ſhoot not forth immediately to you, unvailed;

theſe indeed would confound the poor guilty creature; but they ſhoot through the vail of the fleſh of Chriſt; ſo thou may look on them, and be refreſhed with them.

Look to the uſhers which go before him: theſe are not juſtice and judgment with the flaming ſword; theſe would deſtroy the guilty ſinner at the firſt approach; they are *mercy and truth*, mercy to ſpare and pardon, truth to enrich thee with the King's favours.

Look to the ſtays that ſupport the throne, *juſtice* fully ſatisfied, *judgment* execute againſt ſin, in the perſon of Chriſt; hence the waters of mercy flow out, ſay then, 'Spring up, O well; ſing ye to it.' Look to theſe, and ye will ſee an anſwer to all the queſtions that perplex your ſouls.

1. Will ever the Lord look favourably on the like of me? *Anſw.* Yes, he is on a throne of grace, erected on purpoſe for his looking favourably on the guilty.

2. But I am laden with chains of guilt, can ever I have acceſs to the throne? *Anſw.* Mercy and truth go before his face, to cauſe all theſe fall off, and bring thee in before him.

3. But is it conſiſtent with the honour of God to pardon ſuch ſins as mine are, againſt ſo much light, love, &c. to put me among his children, who am the worſt of ſinners? *Anſw.* Yes, very conſiſtent, his juſtice, holineſs, truth, law, his honour ſhall ſuffer nothing by it; Chriſt has laid a foundation, that equally bears up God's honour, and thy ſalvation, even thine.

Maxton, Sabbath, July 5th, 1719.

Psal. lxxxix. 14.

Juſtice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth ſhall go before thy face.

The ſecond Sermon on this Text.

III. WE ſhall conſider *the laying of theſe foundations, and the erecting of the throne of grace upon them.* Here conſider,

1. The general ends of this new erection.
2. The neceſſary foundations of this throne.
3. How theſe foundations were laid.

FIRST, *The general ends of this new erection.* For what ends was it to be made and ſet up? The particular ends are as many as the needs of loſt ſinners were, but they may be and are by the apoſtle reduced unto two heads, Heb. iv. *ult.*

1. The ſaving of ſinners from the wrath of God due to them for their ſins; *Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy.* Sin entering into the world made a gap, at which the flood of wrath following might enter, and would certainly enter and ſweep away all before it into the pit, if the gap was not made up. This throne then was to be erected, that mercy might fill up the gap, rejoice over judgment, and ſave the ſinner from periſhing; that the ſinner might be pardoned, his guilt of eternal wrath be taken away, and he taken out of the jaws of devouring death.

2. The making of ſinners poſitively happy in the favour of God for evermore; *And find grace to help.* By ſin's entering into the world, their right to heaven was forfeited and razed, they could not come thither. They could have no communion with God here or hereafter. Juſtice had drawn a bar betwixt them and it, and ſhut the door never to be opened, but on anſwering ſuch demands of its own, which the ſinner never could do. The throne of grace then was to be erected, that grace might open that door, and let in the ſinner to the forfeited inheritance again; not only that the rebel might get his pardon, but might be reſtored to the Prince's favour, and loaded with benefits to his everlaſting and complete happineſs.

SECONDLY, *The neceſſary foundations of this throne.* The text ſays, theſe are *juſtice and judgment.*

1. *Juſtice*, as diſtinguiſhed from judgment, whereby God gives good unto any, agreeable to the laws of righteouſneſs, which the juſtice of his nature requires to be obſerved in his government of the world, Gen. xviii. 25. 'Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?' This juſtice annexeth his favour and good-will to the obedience, the perfect obedience of his law; ſecures the delivery of a purchaſe upon the payment of a valuable price for it; and cannot admit of the keeping back of any good that is due. This is juſtice, this is what is right, which the Judge of all the earth cannot but do, in ſo far as he cannot but be juſt.

This anſwers the end of making the creature happy, upon due obedience to the great Lawgiver, during the courſe of ſuch obedience. And though there was grace in the firſt covenant, in ſo far as the obedience of innocent Adam was not proportionable to the great reward promiſed therein: yet as it was not comparable to goſpel grace, it might have ſtood upon this ſingle foot of juſtice. But ſuppoſing this foundation laid, it could not have ſupported a throne of grace in favours of ſinners; it could not have ſtood on this ſingle foot, unatoned guilt would have undermined it. Therefore there is a

2d, namely, *Judgment*, whereby vindictive juſtice is ſatisfied for ſin, for the breaking of the holy law; vengeance is taken upon it in proportion to the offence, which in a ſort is an infinite offence. Hereby,

(1.) Sin is condemned, Rom. viii. 3. Sentence is paſſed from the throne of revenging juſtice againſt it, whereby, according to the law, the curſe is pronounced againſt it, wrath ordained to purſue it in full meaſure, where it is found; and never to leave it, till full ſatisfaction be had of the party, who, by the appointment of God, ſtands anſwerable for it.

(2.) The ſentence is execute, revenging juſtice is let looſe upon it; floods of wrath overflow the party anſwerable for it; the fire kindled by the breath of an angry God preys upon him, till the vengeance is complete, and infinite juſtice has enough, that it can demand no more.

This anſwers the end of ſaving ſinners from the wrath of God, if this foundation can be laid without them.

THIRDLY, *How theſe foundations were laid.* The whole creation could not furniſh materials for them.

1. Man himſelf could not, for he was quite unable to obey the law perfectly; he had loſt all his ſtrength for obedience by the fall, Rom. v. 6. He could no more do it than he could reach the ſtars with his hand. Beſides, he was quite unable to ſatisfy the juſtice of God for his ſin, by ſuffering; for the puniſhment required, behoved either to be infinite in value, or in duration. The firſt he could not be capable of, being a mere creature; the laſt would leave him for ever ruined.

2. Angels could not neither; for though they were capable to obey the law perfectly, yet they owed that obedience for themſelves, and therefore could not perform it for a fellow creature. Neither could they, being but finite beings, bear infinite puniſhment, ſo as to ſatisfy infinite juſtice; and they were not of the ſame nature with thoſe who had ſinned, and for whom the throne of grace was to be erected.

Thus there being no help among the creatures, God laid help on his own Son, Pſal. lxxxix. 19. When the poor criminals ſtood hopeleſs and helpleſs before the juſtice of God, he undertakes for them, to provide for the laying of theſe foundations of juſtice and judgment, a throne of grace might ſtand firm on.

In order to this the Son of God was incarnate, he becomes man, John i. 14. For this he did ſtrike hands with the Father from eternity; and being it was impoſſible that covenant could be broken, upon the virtue of what he was to do and ſuffer in the fulneſs of time, the foundation was laid, and the throne of grace ſtood firm thereon in Old Teſtament times.

Behold now how he was fitted to make proviſion for theſe foundations of the throne of grace to ſtand on. (1) He was true man, *fleſh of our fleſh, and bone of our bones;* a *ſon of Adam*, Luke iii. *made of a woman*, a daughter of Adam, Gal. iv. 4. Having a true human ſoul, of which he ſays, 'My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful, even unto 'death.' Thus obedience was to be performed to the law; and juſtice ſatisfied with ſuffering, in the ſame nature that had ſinned, Heb. ii. 14.

(2.) He was true God too, 1 John v. 20. and ſo God and man in one perſon, which was neceſſary to make his obedience and death of infinite value, in order to the full ſatiſfaction of juſtice and the law. In this reſpect his precious blood was the blood of God, Acts xx. 28. And from thence did ariſe its virtue to ſupport the throne of grace, for all the gracious purpoſes God has deſigned it for. Hence is that of the apoſtle, 1 John i. 7. 'The blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son cleanſeth us from all ſin.' And that, Heb. ix. 14. 'How much more ſhall the blood of Chriſt, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himſelf without ſpot to God, purge your conſcience from dead works to ſerve the living God?' Thus he made proviſion,

1. For the firſt foundation of the throne of grace, namely, *juſtice*, by his obeying of the law completely in the ſinner's room, obſerving exactly and giving obedience to its commands. And this for laying the foundation of juſtice to the throne of grace, Matth. iii. 15. 'Thus it becometh us (ſaith Jeſus himſelf) to fulfill all righteouſneſs.' He was holy in his birth, life, and death, Heb. vii. 26. 'Holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparated from ſinners.' And his obedience was,

1ſt, Univerſal, 1 Pet. ii. 22. *who did no ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth*. He ſtuck at none of the law's commands. The hardeſt of them he complied with, he loved his enemies, denied himſelf. And all his enemies were bid defiance to convince him of the leaſt trip, 'Which of you convinceth me of ſin?' ſays he, John viii. 46. And he was juſtified from heaven, by his reſurrection from the dead.

2dly, It was perfect in degrees: John xv. 13. ſays Chriſt, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' He ſcrued up love, which is the fulfilling of the law, to its higheſt pitch. So that the law could not but ſay, It had enough of work.

3dly, It was conſtant, Phil. ii. 8. ſays the apoſtle, *He became obedient unto death*. The temptations of Satan, the reproaches of his enemies, the treachery of his friends, could not make him make the leaſt halt in his courſe, 1 Pet. ii. 23. 'When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatened not.' The firſt Adam broke off fair, but quickly ſat up, the ſecond endured to the end.

4thly, It was voluntary, Pſal. xl. 8. 'I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart,' ſays he. The doing of God's will was his meat, John iv. 34. Though he was a man of ſorrows, yet he was never diſcouraged, Iſ. xlii. 4.

2. He made proviſion for the other foundation, namely, *judgment*, by ſuffering in the ſinners ſtead. Hence ſays the apoſtle, Gal. iii. 13. 'Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us.' He ſet himſelf up for the mark at which the law might ſhoot all the poiſoned arrows, which ſhould have ſtuck in the ſouls of the elect for ever. The fountains of the great deep, and the windows of heaven were opened againſt him; the flood of wrath purſuing the ſins of the elect finding him in the gap, diſburdened itſelf wholly into him. Juſtice put ſuch a load of wrath on him, as made him in the open air, in a cold night, ſweat great drops of blood. And his ſufferings were

(1.) Moſt exquiſite, judgment execute upon him to the utmoſt rigour, Rom. viii. 32. 'He ſpared not his own Son.' Juſtice purſued him from his birth to his burial, and never left him, till it brought him to the duſt of death. His cup was pure unmixed vengeance, it was filled unto the brim, and he drank out the bitter dregs of it. In his greateſt extremity, he could not have a cup of cold water to drink, but vinegar mingled with gall; nay not ſo much as the light of the ſun to ſhine on him, but it hid its head then, becauſe 'light is ſweet to the eyes, and a pleaſant thing it is to behold the ſun.'

(2.) Neverthelеſs they were voluntary, John xviii. 11. Iſa. liii. 7. without the leaſt murmuring, that ſo juſtice might have complete ſatisfaction. He ſtood and anſwered all the demands juſtice and judgment could have of the ſinner, in order to his finding grace in the ſight of the Lord.

Uſe. I would drop a word to two ſorts of perſons.

Firſt, To ſpectators of this ſolemn ordinance. And,

1. Unconcerned ſpectators who have no part in, but look lightly on this ſolemn approach here made to the throne of grace. (1.) Had ye no buſineſs at the throne of grace, that ye ſatisfied yourſelves with mere onlooking? Is not eternity at ſtake with you as well as others? Or is it poſſible for you to be ſaved, without application to the throne of grace in the Lord's own way? Acts iv. 12. ſays the apoſtle Peter, 'Neither is there ſalvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we muſt be ſaved.' And if ye value God's grace and favour, is it poſſible for you to undervalue the ſeal of it? (2.) How deep muſt the guilt of ſlighting a throne of grace draw, which coſt ſo dear to ſet it up? Is it not a trampling the Father's love, and the Son's blood under foot? (3.) Ye will not get leave to be mere ſpectators too at the throne of judgment, but muſt come out of your graves with others, and receive your ſentence, which will be dreadful, if ye do not timely make your application for peace with God while on the throne of grace.

2. Spectators duly concerned, whatever has kept you back from this ordinance, do ye not prize the throne of grace? Are ye not reſolved to ply it, for the intereſt of your ſouls for eternity? If ye do not, ye are not concerned ſpectators. If ye do, I tell you, though the communion be over, the throne of grace ſtands, and there is acceſs to it for you; yet there is room. Therefore go away reſolved to ſettle your buſineſs there for eternity while it is day.

Secondly, Communicants, ye have been profeſſing to approach this throne, how went the matter? how managed ye your buſineſs there?

1. It is to be feared ſome have quite miſmanaged it. Theſe are they that have been careleſs, formal, and hypocritical in their management, who have retained ſome underhand management with ſome one luſt or other, whoſe hearts have not opened to receive Chriſt with his whole yoke, and have not given themſelves honeſtly to the Lord. (1.) Ye have loſt a fair occaſion of ſettling your matters for eternity, and God only knows if ever ye have ſuch another; repent, and with all ſpeed manage better, and do in ſecret what ye would have done at the table, as ye would prevent a curſe on your treachery. (2.) It is a ſtout heart that could trifle in ſuch a ſolemn approach to ſuch a throne, founded on juſtice and judgment: ſure ye have not looked to the bottom it ſtands on, elſe it would have commanded dread, reverence and utmoſt jealouſy, as it did in Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 17. 'How dreadful is this place! (ſaid he,) this is none other but the houſe of God, and this is the gate of heaven.'

2. Some have been ſincere in their management, whoſe conſciences cannot but witneſs for them, they have been upright in the main, whatever miſmanagements there have been. Yet,

1. Some ſuch may be drooping for that the king on the throne has hid his face from them, and that they have no token of acceptance from the throne; ſo they fear they have quite miſmanaged. *Anſw*. (1.) If ſincere in the main, whatever miſmanagements there have been, remember it is a throne of grace, where ſincerity is not marred by unallowable infirmities and miſcarriages, 2 Cor. viii. 12. 'For if there be firſt a willing mind, it is accepted, according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.' (2.) If ſin has been made more hideous and frightful to thee by this ordinance, the glorious baſes the throne ſtands on, has not been quite hid. If thy deſire after a God in Chriſt be more enlarged, neither has he that ſits on the throne quite hid himſelf from thee. If thou haſt got a kindly melting of heart for ſin, mercy and truth hath darted their beams on thee. (3.) Be as it will, the throne ſtands, abide ye by it; and what ye have not got, ye ſhall get in God's time, as did the ſpouſe, Cant. iii. 4. 'It was but a little that I paſſed from them, but I found him whom

'my ſoul loveth.' And ye ſhall be made to ſay, Grace times its viſits well.

2. Others may have had ſenſible reviving and refreſhing from the throne. All I ſay is, remember that the leaſt kind glance from the throne is precious; it is not the price of your pains, preparations, tears; it is the price of blood, of the Son of God. Not a ſmile from heaven but comes through the wounds of a Redeemer, not a pardon but is written with his blood. Therefore walk ſoftly, and quench not the Spirit.

Laſtly, To all whoſe hope and expectation is all from this throne.

1. Look on ſin as the moſt frightful evil, and ſtand at a diſtance from it, Rom. xii. 9. 'Abhor that which is 'evil, cleave to that which is good.' Oppoſe to temptations to your former luſts the remembrance of juſtice and judgment the throne of grace ſtands on.

2. Never entertain cheap thoughts of pardon; leave it to them that know not God, his law, nor his goſpel, to think it is but to aſk mercy; and have it. There is no pardon of the leaſt ſin, without the good leave of juſtice.

3. Love the Lord Jeſus, and remember his love, to whoſe obedience and death we owe the throne of grace. Grieve not his Spirit by untender walking; but let his love conſtrain you to live henceforth not unto yourſelves, but unto him which died for you, and roſe again.

4. If at any time ye be obliged either to ſin or ſuffer, chuſe rather the greateſt ſuffering than the leaſt ſin. And to animate you thereto, conſider what Chriſt ſuffered, in order to lay a foundation for the throne of grace.

5. Having ſettled your matters at the throne by a ſincere embracing of the covenant from thence offered, ſtrengthen your faith, and confirm your confidence of grace and ſalvation, by looking to the firm foundations the throne ſtands on.

Laſtly, Be much at the throne by prayer and ſupplication, in the name of Chriſt.

Morbottle, Saturday, July 18. 1719.

PSAL. lxxxix. 14.

Juſtice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth ſhall go before thy face.

The third ſermon on this text.

I Come more particularly to conſider, *how theſe foundations of juſtice and judgment, were laid.* When a throne of grace was to be erected for the behoof of poor criminal ſinners, juſtice and judgment ſtand up in the behalf of a holy, but broken law, and require to be ſatisfied of the ſinner, before there could be a throne of grace erected in his favours. And Chriſt anſwers for the ſinner.

FIRST, Juſtice requires of the ſinner, in behalf of the holy law, perfect obedience of its commands, pleading the truth of God, Iſa. xlii. 21. Otherwiſe there can be no throne of grace erected in his favours, ſince it cannot be ſet up on the ruins of the holy law. Therefore juſtice ſays to the ſinner, Matth. xix. 17. 'If thou wilt enter 'into life, keep the commandments.' But this ſinful man could not do; and if the throne of grace cannot ſtand but on this foundation, he muſt loſe the benefit of it for ever. Alas then, muſt all periſh? No, Chriſt anſwers for his own: what they could not, he did. He preſents himſelf, and whatever juſtice has to demand of them for laying this foundation of the throne of grace, he affords. Hear the demands.

1ſt, demand. Thy nature muſt be abſolutely pure and holy; for if the fountain be poiſoned with ſin, how can the ſtreams be otherwiſe? Hence ſays Job, chap. xiv. 4. 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not 'one.' And ſays the apoſtle John, Rev. xxi. ult. 'There 'ſhall in no wiſe enter into it any thing that defileth.' Without the law's being ſatisfied in this point, there is no grace nor mercy for thee. Alas, the ſinner can never anſwer this. He has a corrupt nature, he cannot purify it, Prov. xx. 9. He was born in ſin; can he enter again into his mother's belly, and be born again without ſin?

But Chriſt anſwers this demand for his people; the law ſhall have all its aſking. Therefore the Son of God takes to himſelf a true body and ſoul, both ſinleſs. The Ancient of days becomes an infant of days. He is conceived without ſpot by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, in the womb of the virgin Mary, and in due time born without ſin, Luke i. 35. Heb. vii. 26. His nature was not in the leaſt tainted, but abſolutely free from the leaſt ſeed of ſin. Here is now ſuch a birth, ſuch a nature, as the law exacted; ſo that demand is anſwered, that bar in the ſinner's way drawn.

2d demand. Thou muſt obey every command of the broad law. Thy obedience muſt be as broad as the law. If ſome, not all, a curſe ſhall come on thee, and not a bleſſing, according to that, Gal. iv. 10. 'Curſed is every 'one that continueth not in all the things which are 'written in the book of the law to do them.' Alas, what can the ſinner do with this! He has loſt much of the knowledge of the law; many of theſe commands he does not know, yet ignorance of the law excuſes no man, many quite againſt the grain with him, *Love your enemies*, many that, if his life were a thouſand times lying on them, and he would ſet himſelf to the utmoſt dilgence and watchfulneſs, he will break ſometimes, as by vain thoughts.

Chriſt anſwers this. He obeyed all; *fulfilled all righteouſneſs*, Matth. iii. 15. *did no ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth*, 1 Pet. ii. 22. He made the law, he could not but know it in every point. It was the tranſcript of his own holy nature, he fulfils it in every jot. Hence ſays he, Matth. v. 17. 'Think not that I am come to de'ſtroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to de'ſtroy, but to fulfil.' He gave it external and internal obedience, in heart and life. Its hardeſt commands he baulked not, loved his enemies, denied himſelf. Never an idle word dropt from the holy mouth, never a vain thought could run through his holy heart.

3d demand. Every part of thy obedience muſt be ſcrewed up to the higheſt pitch and degree the law requires: Matth. xxii. 37. 'Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God 'with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all 'thy mind.' If any thing of the due meaſure be wanting, there can be no favour. To be ſincere, to deſire to do better, and to be ſorry at the heart thou canſt not, will not be accepted here, Gal. iii. 10. forecited. Alas, the ſinner ſhall as ſoon reach the clouds with his hands, as this perfection of degrees the law requires. Let him do his beſt, corruption clogs him ſo as he can never mount to the top; let him be praying never ſo fervently, there is ſome coldrifeneſs about him, his faith is mixed with unbelief, his very ſincerity is not without mixture of hypocriſy.

Chriſt anſwers this.. His love to his Father was moſt ſeraphic, moſt ardent and intenſe, it flamed in his holy breaſt to the utmoſt point the law could require. His love to men was incomparable, John xv. 13. He went to the outmoſt boundaries of love with them. Every action of his was abſolutely ſpotleſs, perfectly refined, and without the leaſt mixture of imperfection.

Laſt demand. All this muſt be continued to the end, without the leaſt trip in one jot, Gal. iii. 10. Shouldſt thou live all thy days in a courſe of perfect obedience, but at the hour of death one vain thought run through thy heart, all is gone. Alas! the ſinner can never anſwer this. He cannot keep perfectly right one year, day, hour, minute, if a thouſand hells were upon it.

Chriſt ſatisfied this demand too, Philip. ii. 8. 'He be'came obedient unto death.' The firſt Adam broke fair off, but he tripped quickly; the ſecond continued to the end. The law could never in its greateſt rigour challenge him of the leaſt ſin from the womb to the grave, by day or night, alone or in company. His heart and life ſhone in holineſs, before his Father and the world, in its meridian brightneſs, without the leaſt cloud or ſpot to ſtain it. Thus the firſt foundation of the throne, namely, juſtice, was laid. But,

SECONDLY, Ere the throne can ſtand for all this, the judgment, in behalf of the broken law, requires of the ſinner ſatisfaction for the wrong done to the honour and law of God. Juſt judgment taking the ſinner by the throat, ſays, *Pay what thou oweſt.* Thou art in debt to the juſtice of God for ſins committed, thou muſt ſatisfy the juſt threats of the law, and bear the curſe: and without this ſatisfaction there can be no grace nor mercy ſhown.

O then, might the ſinner ſay, ‘Will the Lord be pleaſed with thouſands of rams, or with ten thouſands of rivers of oil ? ſhall I give my firſt born for my tranſgreſſion, the fruit of my body for the ſin of my ſoul ?’ Mic. vi. 7. No, theſe are too mean to ſatisfy here, Pſal. xl. 6. ‘Sacrifice and offering thou didſt not deſire:—— burnt offering and ſin offering haſt thou not required.’ But, O ye crowned heads, mighty monarchs, may not ye be cautioners for this debt ? No, they cannot; if they would ſell their crowns, kingdoms, and dig up all the gold in the bowels of the earth, and lay it down, it will not pay their own debt; themſelves muſt have a cautioner, elſe they are ruined. O mighty angels, may not ye rather undertake for this debt, than your fellow-creatures ſhould be ruined ? Alas ! they cannot, they never were able, they would be broken with the payment of the thouſandth part of it, and it would never be paid for them. O high demands of juſt judgment, no creature in heaven nor in earth can anſwer ! Then ſaid the Mediator, Pſal. xl. 7. ‘Lo, I come, in the volume of thy book it is written of me.’ What are juſt judgments demands of the ſinner ?

1ſt, demand. Sinner, thou muſt ſuffer for the breaking of the holy law, die the death, for the word is gone out of the Lord's mouth, Gen. ii. 17. ‘In the day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.’ Alas, how ſhall this be anſwered ? If the ſinner's life go for it, what has he more ? and if death, armed with law vengeance, once get him down, it will hold him down for ever. O may not bearing croſſes do it ? No, juſt judgment requires bearing of curſes, not croſſes. May not tears for ſin do it ? No, it is ſhedding of blood, not pouring out of water, it requires, Heb. ix. 22. ‘Without ſhedding of blood is no remiſſion.’

But Chriſt ſatisfies the demand. He preſents himſelf to the ſword of juſtice, and judgment is execute on him, Zech. xiii. 7. ‘Awake, O ſword, againſt my Shepherd, and againſt the man that is my fellow, ſaith the Lord of hoſts.’ Death armed with its ſting, and all the force a broken law gave it, falls on him, ſheds his precious blood, wounds him to the heart, ſeparates ſoul and body, carries him priſoner to the grave, and lays him in the duſt of death. Death gave him the firſt fall, but becauſe he was God, he riſeth again; and death having got its due, he brings away the keys of hell and death with him.

2d demand, more particular. Sinner, thy ſufferings muſt be univerſal in the whole man: that is juſt judgment, for ſo has thy ſinning been. That body of thine, as the inſtrument of ſin, muſt ſuffer: that head that contrived the miſchief againſt the law, muſt be wounded: that heart, the ſpring of all, muſt be pierced; theſe feet, that have carried thee ſo many black gates; theſe hands, that have wrought ſo much iniquity, &c. And thy ſoul muſt ſuffer chiefly, as being the principal actor in all thou haſt done againſt a holy God. Ah, who can endure this ! it is a thouſand deaths in one.

Chriſt ſatisfies this demand too. He ſuffers in his body: his head is crowned with thorns, and his heart is like wax, it is melted in the midſt of his bowels, Pſal. xxii. 14. His feet, his hands are pierced, his tongue cleaves to his jaws, his bones are out of joint. His body has nothing but ſhame to cover it, his ſtrength is dried up. The wrath of God fell on his ſoul, it was troubled, in an agony: the arrows dipt in the curſe were ſhot into it, till the law had no more to require: Gal. iii. 13. ſays the apoſtle, ‘Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us.’

3d demand. Thy ſufferings, O ſinner, muſt be moſt exquiſite, thou ſhalt have no pity, no ſparing, but judgment without mercy. This is juſt judgment. Ah ! who is able to abide this ? ‘Who can dwell with everlaſting fire ? It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.’

But Chriſt ſatisfied this too. So God ſpared him not, Rom. viii. 32. Though his body was of a moſt refined temperature, and ſo his ſenſes moſt exquiſite, his death was a moſt tormenting death. And in his death he was denied what benefits are not refuſed to malefactors: his eyes were denied the light of the ſun, his ears were grated with mockers and cruel inſults. He got vinegar to drink, mingled with gall. He was in travailing pains, ſoul-travail; he had no help in it, and he died in it.

4th demand. Thy ſufferings, O ſinner, muſt be infinite. It is juſt judgment, for it is infinite juſtice thou haſt offended.’ Ah ! who is able to abide this ? This is killing, ſaddeſt of all a thouſand times. Univerſal, exquiſite, yet infinite ! ‘Who can dwell with everlaſting burnings ?’ It is the hell of hell, and muſt fill a finite being brim-full of deſpair.

But Chriſt anſwers this too. He was God, and therefore infinite; ſo his ſufferings, though not infinite in duration, yet were ſo in value. And what the creature could not have borne but by piece-meal without end, he bears all together.

Laſt demand. Thy ſufferings muſt be voluntary; God hates robbery for burnt offering, Lev. i. 3. If thou at all murmur under all thy ſufferings, it will be new ſin, and mar the acceptance of the ſacrifice, for which juſt judgment will repeat its demands. Ah ! what man can perform this ? The weight of wrath makes the devils and damned to roar. The man cannot bear a fit of the gout or gravel, nay, nor a ſtitch in the ſide, but he is in hazard of impatience.

Chriſt ſatisfies this too, Iſa. liii. 7. ‘He was oppreſſed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the ſlaughter, and as a ſheep before her ſhearers is dumb, ſo he opened not his mouth.’ In all his ſufferings he never had the leaſt wrong or unbecoming thought of God, Pſal. xxii. 1, 2, 3. Never the leaſt murmuring. He willingly underwent what he was to ſuffer. When his hour came, though he was able to have reſcued himſelf, he would not. He meekly prays for the murderers of him, even when he was in his extremity, Luke xxiii. 34. Thus the demand of judgment is ſatisfied.

And thus were the foundations of juſtice and judgment laid, for the throne of grace to ſtand on. On theſe it was erected, and ſtands for the behoof of poor ſinners.

Uſe 1. O ſinners, come to God, through Jeſus Chriſt, and while God is on a throne of grace to ſettle you, ſettle your buſineſs for eternity at this throne.

Firſt, What is your buſineſs at the throne of grace ?

1ſt, More generally, your great and comprehenſive buſineſs at the throne, is to get God to be your God by a ſpecial covenant relation. Sinners, do not ye know ye have loſt God, that ye are *without God in the world ?* Eph. ii. 12. Sin has diſſolved all ſaving relation betwixt God and Adam's loſt poſterity; and his wrath abides on the rebels and traitors, while in that ſtate, John iii. *ult.* But hear good news from a throne of grace to you, who ſtand condemned at the bar of juſtice, Heb. viii. 10. ‘This is the covenant that I will make with the houſe of Iſrael after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord;——I will be to them a God, and they ſhall be to me a people.’ Iſa. lv. 3. ‘Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your ſoul ſhall live, and I will make an everlaſting covenant with you, even the ſure mercies of David.’ And if ye had that ſecured, your buſineſs for eternity is ſecured.

Queſt. How ſhall we manage that buſineſs at the throne ?

1. Believe with application to yourſelves, that this covenant is offered to you from the throne. You have the Lord's own word for it carrying the offer of it to all to whom the goſpel comes, Iſa. lv. 1. 2, 3. ‘Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye ſpend money for that which is not bread ? and your labour for that which ſatisfieth not ? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good,

'and let your ſoul delight itſelf in fatneſs,' &c. If you had a voice from heaven calling, and offering it to you by name, would ye not believe it? Ye have a more ſure word of prophecy, which reaches you among whomſoever you rank yourſelves, Rev. iii. 20. 'Behold, I ſtand at the door and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will ſup with him, and he with me.' And chap. xxii. 17. 'Whoſoever will, let him take the water of life freely.' If ye do not believe it thus, in greater or leſſer meaſure, ye cannot accept of the covenant, ſo ye periſh without remedy.

Object, But how can I believe that ever God will be my God, who am ſuch a monſtrous vile ſinner? *Anſw*. Look to the foundations of the throne, and you will ſee a perfect righteouſneſs, and a complete ſatisfaction for the ſins of all, that will take the benefit of the throne of grace erected thereon. This truth is written in characters of the precious blood of the Son of God, the which, to what purpoſe was it ſhed, if it could not ſecure the buſineſs of any poor ſinner at the throne: 1 John i. 7. 'The blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son cleanſeth us from all ſin.'

2. Conſent ſincerely and honeſtly to the covenant, and your buſineſs is done, according to that, Iſ. xliv. 5. 'One ſhall ſay, I am the Lord's, and another ſhall call himſelf by the name of Jacob: and another ſhall ſubſcribe with his hand unto the Lord, and ſirname himſelf by the name of Iſrael.' Let your ſouls and hearts open this day to the offer, and conſent that from henceforth God ſhall be your God in Chriſt, and ye ſhall be his. And if ye be ſincere in taking him for your God, you will let other gods go; the devil, the world, any luſt and idol, whatever fondneſs ye have had for it, ſhall be no more your god; but caſt it to the bats and to the moles. You will conſent to be his, only, wholly, and for ever, to take part with him and his people, for better and worſe.

2dly, More particularly, it is to get ſupply to all your wants, in that God through Chriſt. Hence ſays the apoſtle, Heb. iv. 16. 'Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.' Here is the place to ſupply: and think not ſtrange of that, for here is the price of all our mercies, the obedience and death of Chriſt. It is your buſineſs to get,

1. Pardon and peace with God, Rom. v. 1. Weighty buſineſs, that can do no where elſe. Every where elſe, but at the throne of grace, ye will meet the flaming ſword ſtaving you off from pardon and peace. Unpardoned ſin will be a ſinking weight to your ſoul; want of peace of God will hide peace from your eyes for ever, if once they were opened. Come then, and ply your buſineſs.

2. The ſanctifying Spirit, and his grace to make you holy, Luke xi. 13. Without holineſs no happineſs, Heb. xii. 14. without the Spirit no holineſs, 2 Theſſ. ii. 13. And as the fire that burnt the incenſe, was fetched from the altar of burnt offering; ſo the Spirit comes to us from a crucified Chriſt.

3. Right to heaven and eternal life, that you may be happy in another world, 2 Cor. v. 1. This is buſineſs abſolutely neceſſary; leave it not till ye be a dying; do it now, and it will be a death bed comfort to you.

Laſtly, A ſettled communication betwixt the Lord and you, that ye may have recourſe to in all the exigencies of your life, Eph. ii. 18. 1 John iii. 3. Ye have an ill world to go through: ye will need both for life and godlineſs: and here ye are to make the ſettlement for both. Ye may come to ſee ſad days of publick calamity, wherein they that cannot draw comfort from heaven, muſt want it for altogether. Settle the communication for that.

Secondly, Motives to preſs this.

1. God is on a throne of grace to tranſact with you in this place; for there the throne is wherever goſpel-ordinances are ſet up, Jer. iii. 27. He has tryſted once more with you here. What ſhall be the iſſue; ſhall the buſineſs betwixt heaven and you now be brought to a period? If not, ye will give a new ſlight to the enthroned King; and what will be the end of that?

2. It coſt the Redeemer his precious blood to erect this throne. If he had not died, we ſhould have had no more throne of grace to come to than devils have. O ſlight not the glorious and coſtly erection.

3. Your buſineſs at the throne is moſt weighty, and neceſſary. It is ſoul-buſineſs; buſineſs for eternity; buſineſs that can be done no where elſe. If it be ſlighted or miſmanaged here, it is gone; and if ſo, nothing can make up the loſs, Matth. xvi. 26. 'For what is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?'

Laſtly, It is a moveable throne; ſee the text. It will not ſtand always for you. It has ſtood in ſome places, where now it is no more: but the ſometimes churches are unchurched. However, at death, ye will have no more acceſs to it, if ſlighted now. And how ſoon the Lord may remove it, ye know not.

Uſe 2. O Chriſtians, communicants, ye have heard your buſineſs, that is your buſineſs ſpecially at a communion table. Learn here your communion frame, and fetch it from a view of the throne.

1. Come believingly, and with expectation of good at the Lord's hand. Faith has here the moſt firm foundation; juſtice and judgment execute againſt ſin, in the perſon of Chriſt the Mediator. Has he anſwered all the demands; then are the children free; free from wrath, free to the benefits of his purchaſe.

2. Come with repenting, broken, bleeding hearts for ſin, and filled with hatred of it. See what Chriſt ſuffered for your ſins, and ſee the malignant nature of it.

3. Come with love, remembering his love more than wine. Behold how the Redeemer purchaſed the throne for you with his precious blood; and when none in heaven nor earth was to prevent your ruin, he ſtepped in.

Laſtly, Come with thankfulneſs for, and admiration of the glorious work of redemption. Behold juſtice ſatisfied, truth preſerved inviolate; yet mercy and free love magnified, by wiſdom finding out this way.

The Evidences and Cauſes of the Decay of Religion, in the Soul diſcovered, and the Method of its Cure preſcribed.

Two SERMONS preached at Morbottle, at the Celebration of the Lord's Supper there. The firſt upon Sabbath July 19, 1719.

REV. iii. 2.

Strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.

WHoſo looks on the face of the generation this day, in reſpect of religion, may behold a lamentable decay in ſpirituals therein. Great things has God done for us again and again, not only of old, but of late; but alas, amidſt all our repeated deliverances, we are like to pine away under ſpiritual plagues. O that on ſuch ſolemn occaſions we were ſtirred up to *ſtrengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.*

This is a direction given to the church of Sardis, which had a name to live, and yet was dead. A church which had as much as made thoſe about her to reckon her in a good condition; but God knew, and themſelves might know, they were far from it; death had got up into their windows, and was making havock of the ſpiritual caſe of all ſorts. The directions for a recovery in this verſe are two. (1.) *Be watchful.* Careleſſneſs had ruined all with them; they are called to beſtir themſelves to habitual watchfulneſs. (2.) *Strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die.* In which you may notice two things.

1. The decaying and declining condition of this church. *The things which remain, that are ready to die.* In which two things are to be obſerved,

(1.) Religion among them was brought to a very low ebb; they had ſome remains of it with them, but it was remains. Their former ſtock was much ſpent, the holy fire was become very weak. There is no neceſſity of reſtraining this to the really godly among them. It is ſpoken to the body of that church. Time was when there was another face upon them; ſome had life like ſtirrings by common operations of the Spirit, ſome by the ſaving ones: but alas! both ſorts had quenched the Spirit, and were not now what ſometimes they had been.

(2.) That which was among them was like to *die out;* they were every day growing worſe and worſe; their light was growing dimmer and dimmer; their lamp like to go out.

2. A ſeaſonable duty preſſed on them for their recovering, *Strengthen the things which remain,* &c. Hold hand to what is left, that it do not go too. Underprop the tottering building, that it fall not down altogether. Repair the breaches that are made in it. Add new fewel to the dying ſpunk, that it may not be extinguiſhed, but nouriſhed and cheriſhed, till it break out into a flame again.

Doct. *When religion with a perſon or people is brought to dying remains, it is high time for them to beſtir themſelves, and ſtrengthen theſe remains, in order to a recovery.*

In handling this doctrine, I ſhall ſhew,

I. When one's religion is decayed to dying remains.

II. What are the cauſes that brings one's religion to dying remains.

III. Wherein lies the ſtrengthening of things that remain, and are ready to die.

IV. *laſtly,* Apply.

I. *When one's religion is decayed to dying remains.* This is a weighty point; and in ſpeaking to it, I ſhall ſhew,

1. Some things, from whence one's religion may ſeem to be brought to dying remains, while really it is not ſo.

2. Some things that will evince one's religion to be brought to dying remains, whether they think it or not.

Firſt, I ſhall ſhew ſome things, from whence one's religion may ſeem to be brought to dying remains, while really it is not ſo.

1. The wearing away of violent affections and commotions of heart in religion, or the ſettling of flaſhes of affection. It is true, ſome never had more of religion; in that caſe indeed when theſe are gone, all is gone, Matth. xiii. 5, 8. But even the true convert may have more gliſtering affections, than are true ones, when religion is new to him: and when theſe ſettle, and he gets more ſolidity of religion, that is not dying remains. James and John could have fired whole towns for Chriſt, Luke ix. 54.; but when they had more of the Spirit, they were not ſo fiery. See that prayer of the apoſtle's, Philip. i. 9. ‘And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more ‘and more in knowledge, and in all judgment.’

Some think, O the love they had to Chriſt! ſometimes they could not have prayed with dry cheeks, &c. But how like ye Chriſt now; would ye not rather part with all than with him? are ye tender of grieving his Spirit? do ye pray weighted with a ſenſe of your ſinfulneſs and unworthineſs? Theſe are not dying remains, as you may learn from what the apoſtle ſays, Rom. viii. 20., ‘Likewiſe the Spirit alſo helpeth our infirmities: for we know ‘not what we ſhould pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itſelf maketh interceſſion for us with groanings which ‘cannot be uttered.’ And 1 John v. 3. ‘This is the love ‘of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous.’

2. One's not being able to go through with duties, with that eaſe that ſometimes they have done before. Hezekiah ſays, Iſa. xxxviii. 15. ‘I ſhall go ſoftly all my years ‘in the bitterneſs of my ſoul.’ Self confidence mixing itſelf with grace, may give more eaſe in the performance of duties than is leel come; the which when it is broken, ſo much of that eaſe is removed. One may have more temptations than formerly; the wind blowing harder in his face, travelling is not ſo eaſy; but the horſe may retain his metal, though he go not ſo cleverly, carrying double as when ſingle. But he who in the courſe of his way is ſtriving, wreſtling, and preſſing forward to perfection, whether with leſs or more eaſe than formerly, is not come down to dying remains.

3. The marks of the decay of natural vigour left on religious duties. Chriſt ſays for his diſciples, Matt. xxvi. 41. ‘The ſpirit indeed is willing, but the fleſh is weak.’ Though the being of religion does not depend on the caſe of the body, yet there is ſuch a cloſe union betwixt the ſoul and body, that the body may be ſometimes a clog to the ſoul in religious duties, which is yet going forward in the way of God, not backward. It is not dying remains with old profeſſors, who, in the way of believing and holy tenderneſs, are preſſing towards the mark; that ſometimes they could have remembered much of ſermons, continued long in prayers, and holy exerciſes, heard or prayed not with dry cheeks; but now it is not ſo. Why, natural vigour is gone, moiſture is dried up, memory is failed, &c. Was David's courage gone, when Abiſhai the ſon of Zeruiah having ſuccoured him, and ſmote the Philiſtine, and killed him, his men ſware unto him, ſaying, ‘Thou ſhalt go no more out with us to battle, that ‘thou quench not the light of Iſrael,’ 2 Sam. xxi. 17. The man may have as great love to God, hatred of ſin, deſire to remember the word as ever; and the impreſſions abide, though the expreſſions ſlipt from him, as ever. But he cannot make ſo good muſick as he did; not becauſe the ſkill is failed, but the inſtrument is cratcht.

Laſtly, More felt ſtirring of corruption than before. The apoſtle Paul ſays, Rom. vii. 21. ‘I find a law, that ‘when I do good, evil is preſent with me.’ And verſe 24. he cries, ‘O wretched man that I am, who ſhall de‘liver me from the body of this death?’ This did not ſpeak him under a decay, becauſe the ſtruggle was kept up. Corruption may ſtir more than it did, when it has leſs ſtrength than before; as when death ſtrikes to the heart of the patient, there are greater fightings than formerly, not becauſe he has more ſtrength, but that then what he has is put out to the utmoſt.

Secondly, I ſhall ſhew ſome things that will evince one's religion to be brought to dying remains, whether they think it or not.

1. When the conſcience boggles not but at groſs outbreakings. That ſpeaks very little tenderneſs left with the man, that conſcience has little of God's bonds on it; it has ſo little feeling, that it is very near to being paſt feeling, Jude verſe 23. It is not ſo with thriving Chriſtians; Pſal. cxix. 113. the Pſalmiſt ſays, ‘I hate vain ‘thoughts: but thy law do I love.’ The conſcience is the firſt thing that is awakened, and becomes lively, when the Lord is at work with the ſoul; and when it becomes untender, it is an evidence little is left.

The untender conſcience is an unfaithful watch in the ſoul, which may quickly involve it in ruin. (1.) It eaſily lets pieces of one's religion go one after another. (2.) It eaſily admits into one's practice, things that have not the king's ſtamp on them, one after another. And thus churches, and particular profeſſors, haſten to ruin, the ſpiritual building being taken down piece-meal, by growing untenderneſs, Prov. xxv. ult. ‘He that hath no rule ‘over his own ſpirit (ſays Solomon) is like a city that ‘is broken down, and without walls.’

2. When one's conſcience is ſtrait in the circumſtantials of religion, but lax and wide in the ſubſtantials of it, as in the caſe of the ſcribes and Phariſees, Matth. xxiii. 23, 24. where Chriſt ſays, ‘Wo unto you, ſcribes and

‘ Phariſees, hypocrites; for ye pay tithe of mint, and ‘ aniſe, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier ‘ matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith,’ &c. Theſe are come to dying remains: for alas! the main channel wherein tenderneſs ought to run is dry, or ſhamefully ſhallow. Where lies the main of religion? In holineſs of heart and life, that is, in moral duty to God and our neighbour, according to the ten commands. All the ordinances of church communion and ſociety, are but means to that end; and therefore they ſhall be laid by, when this is fully attained; and they avail nothing when they do not advance holineſs. Wherefore we ought to be tender of both, Matth. xxiii. 13. ‘ Theſe ought ye to ‘ have done, and not to leave the other undone.’ And whether one make bold with the one or the other, his religion is like the legs of the lame, not equal; and what he has of it is but dying remains.

3. When there is any one thing lacking to the perfection of one's religion in parts: ſee the text. That religion is in a ruinous condition, that is not *entire*, Jam. i. 4. like the houſe that ſtands wanting the cope-ſtone. The parts of religion are ſo neceſſarily to be joined together, that if one part be lacking, the reſt cannot but moulder away, Mark x. 21. So the whole of what the man has, is but dying remains in regard of what is wanting. And hence it comes to paſs, that as one may bleed to death at a neglected wound, while all the reſt are taken care of; ſo one allowed luſt will eat out the life of the ſoul, whatever execution ſeem to be made on the reſt.

4. When folks ſtrength againſt ſin and temptation is abated; that is a plain indication of a decay, for ‘ the ‘ path of the juſt is as the ſhining light, that ſhineth more ‘ and more unto the perfect day,’ Prov. iv. 18. This is a ſad caſe, for one the longer he lives, to grow the weaker; to be the eaſier enſnared by a ſubtile devil, and deceitful world: that ſays the communication betwixt Chriſt and the ſoul is much ſtopped, if there be any at all; that corruptions wax ſtronger, as the nails grow in decaying folk. May be ye think, ye can pray as well as ere ye did: but indeed ye are not ſo patient, humble, denied to the world, ſelf denied, ye are eaſier led aſide to ſin. Then thou art come to dying remains.

5. When the work of mortification is at a ſtand; the man's not watching his heart, and noticing the luſts riſing there, and ſetting himſelf to mortify them, Rom. viii. 13. A Chriſtian, if he be not going forward, is going backward; if not adding to his ſtock, he is loſing. The garden will quickly be overgrown with weeds, if one be not daily working at them to pluck them up. The leaking ſhip is drawing water, if one be not buſy at the pump, it may quickly be ſwallowed up. The thriving Chriſtian never wants work. Hence ſays the apoſtle, Philip. iii. 13, 14. ‘ Brethren, I count not myſelf to have apprehen‘ded: but this one thing I do, forgetting thoſe things ‘ which are behind, and reaching forth unto thoſe things ‘ which are before, I preſs toward the mark, for the prize ‘ of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.’

6. What though the duties of religion be kept up, yet ſpirituality in duties is gone. Then what is left but dying remains; for ſays our Lord, John iv. 24. ‘ God is a Spi‘rit, and they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in ſpi‘rit and in truth:’ and hence ſays the apoſtle, Philip. iii. 3. ‘ We are the circumciſion, which worſhip God in ‘ the ſpirit.’ The ſenſe of God's command does not ſtir up the man to duty; love to the Lord does not draw him to it; God's honour is not in his eye. He goes out in his duty in the power of his gifts, but no panting for the blowings of the Spirit. The ſpirit of the man goes not along with his body; his bodily worſhip, actions, and geſtures, are but naked, yea falſe ſigns; he cloſes his eyes, but his heart is not fixed on God; bows his knees, but his heart is not humbled; he aims not at the enjoyment of God; but all his duties run into the dead ſea of ſelf.

Laſtly, When one is become a ſtranger to the life of faith in Chriſt Jeſus, what is left is but dying remains. The ſoul, if it have any life in that caſe, is in a ſwoon; for ‘ the life which we now live in the fleſh, we live by ‘ the faith of the Son of God,’ Gal. ii. 20. The thriving ſoul is employing him daily, as a Prophet, a Prieſt, a King, growing into him, coming out of itſelf more and more, believing his word, prizing his imputed righteouſneſs as its only hope, and labouring to ſubject the whole ſoul unto him in his commands, and the diſpoſals of his providence. Where there is not, and the ſoul never grows more ſelf denied, more humble, reſigned to the will of the Lord, what is there but dying remains?

II. I ſhall ſhew, *What are the cauſes that bring one's religion to dying remains.*

1. Unwatchfulneſs, Rev. iii. 2. Careleſſneſs about one's body is oft times fatal to it; about one's ſubſtance, breeds a conſumption in their eſtate; and unwatchfulneſs over the heart, breeds a ſpiritual decay. How many this day have little or nothing left them in religion, which were once in a fair way of thriving, had they but watched their hearts? Alas there are too many enemies waiting to enſnare the ſoul, from without and within, for any to think, they will get their attainments kept, if they do not watch.

2. Spiritual ſloth, Eccleſ. x. 18. This is a bewitching ſin; and if once Satan get men aſleep on this enchanted ground, be ſure they ſhall be robbed and ſpoiled there. Thus the ſpouſe will rather let Chriſt go, than ſet her foot on the cold and wet ground, Cant. v. 3. Every one has a devil's agent within him, buzzing in his ear, *Maſter, ſpare thyſelf;* and when men ſleep, the enemy ſows his tares.

3. Quenching of the Spirit, 1 Theſſ. v. 19. When the Spirit goes, as he goes, ſo livelineſs goes. Some caſt water on this holy fire, by ſinning againſt light, which waſtes the conſcience, defiles the ſoul, fills it with darkneſs and deadneſs by neglecting of it. Some ſmother it, by taking part with ſome one luſt or other againſt it, and ſo reſiſt and rebel againſt the Spirit, to their own wreck.

Uſe. I ſhall drop a word to two ſorts of perſons.

Firſt, To thoſe with whom nothing remains, but all is died out. Time was ye had convictions and awakenings, at a ſermon, on a ſick-bed, or otherwiſe: but now of all that ever they got at all the communions, ſermons, afflictions, &c. nothing remains, but they are juſt where they were before that time, if not worſe. To ſtir you up to ſee to yourſelves in time, I ſhould poſe your conſciences with the following queries.

1. When ye had your awakening, would ye not have given all the world to have had that undone ye had done? Why then turn back to the ſame courſes?

2. Did ye not reſolve never to be ſo unconcerned about your ſouls as ye had been? what have ye done with theſe reſolutions? were ye fools to make them? or were ye fools to break them?

3. Did ye think God's wrath againſt ſin a mere ſcarecrow then? Why look ye ſo on it now? Could you ſleep ſound this night, if God ſhould ſend you home with his arrows again in your conſcience? They have need of ſtrong armour, that have God for their party.

4. Was not death very terrible then? and is the turning back to your old courſes the way to make it pleaſant now? Is there any more ſand in your glaſs now? It may be farther from your mind, but ſure it is nearer your heels than then.

Secondly, To thoſe with whom ſomething remains, though ready to die. This is the prevailing caſe of the generation, which is in a decaying dying condition, whereof there are ſeveral ſymptoms.

1. The ſtomach for our ſpiritual food is gone. Ordinances are not prized, but deſpiſed. We look as we had got a ſurfeit of the goſpel. Farms and merchandiſe go nearer the heart, than occaſions of communion with God. A ſign we may come to faſt till we find our ſtomach.

2. Zion's children have generally loſt their colour, their beauty gone. That heavenlineſs, ſpirituality, tenderneſs, ſavour of godlineſs, ſometimes about them, is much away. Add ſelf conceit, pride, formality, worldly mindedneſs, and untenderneſs, has made them the colour of the earth.

Laſtly, Death is working powerfully amongſt us by the moſt horrid ingratitude of the generation, for moſt ſignal repeated deliverances, under which the generation is nothing bettered; and by the many melancholy diviſions, whereby we are crumbled into many pieces; all foreboding ruin!

Stir up yourſelves to ſtrengthen what remains with you, and is ready to die. Improve this ordinance, communicants, for ſtrengthening the dying remains, and follow on with any little you have, in order to a recovery.

Mot. 1. The longer ye be a beginning, it will be the harder to recover.

2. If ye do not, ye may come to loſe more, yea, ſome may loſe all that they have, the remaining ſpunk die out.

Laſtly, You may and ſhall get a recovery, if ye will ply the means, Hoſ. vi. 3. ſays the prophet, 'Then ſhall 'we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going 'forth is prepared as the morning; and he ſhall come 'unto us as the rain; as the latter and former rain unto 'the earth.'

Object. I meet with many diſappointments, I think I will never recover. *Anſw.* Conſider the caſe of Job, Job xxiii. and the caſe of the ſpouſe, Cant. iii. Diſappointments ſharpen the appetite, teach honourable thoughts of ſovereignty, and make the enjoyment ſweeter when it comes.

Object. But I grow worſe and worſe. *Anſw.* The darkeſt time of the night may be before day-break. See Mark ix. 20.——26.

Morbottle, Monday, July 20, 1719.

Rev. iii. 2.

Strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.

The ſecond ſermon on this text.

I Proceed to enquire into *the cauſes that bring one's religion to dying remains.*

4. Slacking in diligence about the duties of religion; Prov. xiv. 15. ſays the wiſe man, 'Slothfulneſs caſteth 'into a deep ſleep; and an idle ſoul ſhall ſuffer hunger.' The heart touched with the finger of God, is like to a watch, which will ſtand, if it be not duly rolled up. Thomas having miſſed one occaſion of communion with Chriſt, his heart was overgone with a power of unbelief. If one be not diligent in the means of ſouls thriving, how can he think his ſoul will proſper? It will be owned, that religion, among the profeſſors of it, is not this day, as it has been: but is it not as ſure, folks are not ſo diligent now, as they were in the thriving times of religion?

5. Doing any thing with a doubting conſcience, doubting whether the practice be lawful or not, Rom. xiv. ult. Venturing forward, though they are not perſuaded in their own minds but it is forbidden ground. This is ſuch a *caſting of God behind one's back,* as the phraſe is, Ezek. xxiii. 35. that it cannot miſs to give one's ſoul's caſe a fram'd caſt. It quenches the Spirit, gives the conſcience a throw, wounds faith and confidence in the Lord, caſts the ſoul into a kind of ſpiritual palſy, wherein the whole ſpiritual caſe is looſed, nothing firm, and the man decays daily, till recovered by repentance.

But here beware of confounding a doubting and a ſcrupling conſcience. The former hangs in ſuſpence betwixt the two parts of the queſtion, lawful, or not, aſſenting to neither of them. The latter aſſents to one part of it; but there is a certain uneaſineſs, ariſing from ſome difficulties in the matter, inclining the conſcience to the other ſide. In this laſt caſe, one ſhould endeavour to have his conſcience well informed from the word, that the ſcruples may evaniſh: but if after all they remain, in caſe one be ſure from the word, that there is no ſin on the ſide to which the ſcruples tend, they may forbear the action. But otherwiſe they ſhould throw them by, or act even againſt them; becauſe the conſcience has light on the other ſide, and they are but the weakneſſes of conſcience, and without ſolid foundation. If it were not ſo, folk might ſcruple themſelves out of all religion. For it is certain ſome have been ſo toſſed by the wiles of the tempter, ſtriking in with a weak conſcience, that they have ſcrupled, even to pray any more, or eat any more. Though God's expreſs command for praying, and the ſixth command, gave light for praying and eating; yet they had ſuch ſcruples againſt theſe things, that they could not anſwer, and made the light dim. Yet to have followed theſe would have been but to gratify the tempter, and diſhonour God, and foſter the weakneſs of the conſcience. The caſe is the ſame in other duties of reading, hearing, communicating, &c. all which might be ſhovelled away with ſcrupling. There is a caſe, Deut. xiii. 1.—4. 'If there ariſe among you a prophet, or a dreamer of 'dreams, and giveth thee a ſign or a wonder, and the 'ſign or the wonder come to paſs, whereof he ſpake un'to thee, ſaying, Let us go after other gods, (which thou 'haſt not known,) and let us ſerve them; thou ſhalt not 'hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dream'er of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you, to 'know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your 'heart, and with all your ſoul. Ye ſhall walk after the 'Lord your God, and fear him, and keep his command'ments, and obey his voice, and you ſhall ſerve him, and 'cleave unto him.' The ſign's coming to paſs could hardly miſs to raiſe ſcruples in favours of his doctrine, yet they were not to be regarded ſo as to be complied with.

6. Worldlineſs and carnality, Jam. i. *ult.* When one goes aſide from God to the world, he lies down among the lions dens, and the mountains of the leopards; and how can he come away without loſs? Therefore Chriſt ſays to the church, Cant. iv. 8. 'Come with me from 'Lebanon, my ſpouſe, with me from Lebanon: look 'from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and 'Hermon, from the lions dens, from the mountains of 'the leopards.' The world has given many up their foot in religion for altogether; witneſs Demas. And many a good ſtock of grace it has brought down to little thing. And,

1*ſt,* The cares of the world, Luke viii. 14. When the the heart is ſet on the tenter-pins for getting and keeping the world, good motions evaniſh. One cannot hold the gripe of religion, while he takes ſuch a greedy gripe of other things: more than one can graſp heaven and earth at once. They are Beelzebub's flies and waſps, that he ſends to buzz about the ſoul, and diſturb its reſt in the Lord. Hence many, while they are young, and without care of the world, how blooming and lively are they in religion! but when once they come to get a family, they enter into a cloud of cares, and their religion melts away like ſnow before the ſun.

2*dly,* The drenching of the heart in worldly eaſe, comforts, and pleaſures, Luke xxi. 34. Troublous times kept the people of God waking; but now, they find eaſe ſweet, put their hand in their boſom, and it grieveth them to bring it again to their mouth. The warm ſun of worldly eaſe has cauſed men to caſt the cloke from them, which they held faſt in ſpite of the boiſterous wind of perſecution. O deceitful world, that with ſilken cords draws ſouls into perdition! Even lawful things may prove ruining. A very gourd ſtole away the heart of Jonah, and caſt him into a decay; two graceleſs ſons the heart of good Eli.

Laſtly, The entertaining of any one luſt, or idol of jealouſy, Pſal. lxvi. 18. While Samſon lay in Delilah's lap, he loſt his locks and ſtrength; and God departed from him. How many have tampered with ſome boſom luſt, till it has given them a deadly wound? like the fly, flying about the candle till its wings are burnt, and it falls down. Gideon had ſeventy ſons by his wives, but one by his Shechemite concubine; but that one deſtroyed all the ſeventy but one. So one ſin indulged deſtroyeth much good.

III. *Wherein lies the ſtrengthening of things that remain, that are ready to die?* It lies in two things,

1. In blowing up the remaining ſpunk that is ready to die out, 2 Tim. i. 6. 'Wherefore I put thee in remem'brance, that thou ſtir up the gift of God, which is in thee 'by the putting on of my hands.' It is weak in itſelf, ſtir it up that it may act more vigorouſly. May be ye have nothing but a conviction of ſinfulneſs, and that very weak; hold hand to it, preſs it forward, till it be deeper,

and more lively. If conſcience has got the firſt touch, the heart may get the next. If ſin is become uneaſy to the conſcience, it may become a burden to the heart next, and the ſweet morſel be vomited up. May be hearing, or joining in prayer, to purpoſe is gone; but praying alone remains, though ready to die; why, ſtir up that, when alone, pray more believingly, fervently, &c. ſo ſhall you *ſtrengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.*

2. In adding to the remains, 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7. 'And 'beſides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godlineſs; and to godlineſs, brotherly kindneſs; 'and to brotherly kindneſs, charity.' Is there a remaining coal, put to another; that will ſtrengthen the dying remains. O decaying Chriſtians, look about you, and you will ſee ſeveral gaps in your religion; make up theſe gaps, fill up the void ſpaces, if ever ye would ſtrengthen the dying remains. Many one's religion this day is like a city wall, wherein there are many fearful ſlaps, and at theſe the enemy brings in, and carries out, to the ruin of the city, and ay the longer the gaps are not made up they grow the wider: and the enemy has the eaſier acceſs. If ye would ſtrengthen the dying remains, ye muſt repair the wall, and fill up what is the gap; and ſo what remains will ſtand firm. Make up what is wanting in external duties, in internal duties and graces.

Uſe. O decayed Chriſtians, profeſſors, all ye with whom it is come to dying remains, ſtir up yourſelves to *ſtrengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.* And as for you with whom it is better, who are in a thriving caſe, what is ſaid to them, may be of uſe to you, to look to yourſelves, that ye come not to that paſs.

Mot. 1. Dying remains are not for the work a Chriſtian has to do in the world. Ye have much work, much oppoſition from the devil, the world, and the fleſh, and ye have little time to do it in; ye have need of ſtrength; they that have moſt grace will have enough ado with it.

1. Salvation work is on your hand; hence is that exhortation of the apoſtle, Philip. ii. 12. 'Wherefore my 'beloved, work out your own ſalvation with fear and 'trembling.' How will that be done with dying remains? Faint wiſhes, and languiſhing endeavours, will not work that work. The garden will grow over with weeds, if there be not plying in earneſt.

2. Generation work is on your hands, namely, to be uſeful for God in the world; and not to take up room there for no good purpoſe, according as it is ſaid of David, Acts xiii. 36. that *after he had ſerved his own generation by the will of God,* he *fell on ſleep.* But will ever your dying remains make you uſeful for God? Eccleſ. ix. 10. I will ſay two things.

1. Dying remains are very unfit for any time, the beſt of times, there is difficulties in the way to heaven, that will be enough to try the ſtrength of the moſt grown Chriſtian. There is holy violence to be uſed, Matth. xi. 12. There will be the ſtriving to enter in at the ſtrait gate, Luke xiii. 24.; wreſtling with principalities and powers; a race to be run; a good fight to be fought, and victory to be obtained. How will dying remains ſuit theſe?

2. They are eſpecially very unfit for our time we live in: the ſtream of profanity and wickedneſs runs violently among many of this generation; the ſtream of formality, deadneſs, and untenderneſs, among profeſſors, that it will be hard to keep what remains from dying out, if not ſtrengthened, Rev. iii. 4. And the Lord is threatning the generation, as a generation of his wrath, ſo that we are very like to ſee ſuffering times, which our dying remains make us very unfit for; hence is that, Jer. xii. 5. 'If thou haſt run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canſt thou contend with horſes? 'and in the land of peace, wherein thou truſtedſt, they 'wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the ſwelling 'of Jordan?'

Mot. 2. If ye do not ſtir up yourſelves to *ſtrengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die,* and recover it, it will be bitterneſs in the end. Sleeping, decaying Chriſtians, if they awake not at the Lord's call, will readily get a ſad awakening. If ye hold on, take heed ye get not,

1. Jonah's awakening, being plunged into a deep ſea ere ye are aware, getting a whale's belly to ſeek ſtrengthening in, for the things that remain. Conſider the caſe of Joſeph's brethren. The Lord will not let a people he has a kindneſs for, ſo decay on, and on, till what remains die quite out. But a midnight cry they will get; and what the word does not, his heavy hand will perform, Rev. iii. 3. 'Remember therefore how thou haſt receiv'ed and heard, and hold faſt, and repent. If therefore 'thou ſhalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and 'thou ſhalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.'

2. David's awakening, over head and ears in a deep mire, ere ye are aware. A fall into ſome ſcandalous ſin, that will make you go halting to the grave. It is a fearful threatening againſt Laodicea, Rev. iii. 16. *So then, becauſe thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will ſpue thee out of my mouth.* Many keep up the carcaſe of religion, but the ſoul and life of it is gone; and God oven lets them fall, ſo as the world may ſee they were never found at the heart. 'Wherefore let him that ſtand'eth, take heed leſt he fall.'

Mot. ult. It is hard work, but muſt be done. The fire almoſt out is ill to kindle. Ye have all to undo ye have been doing ſince ye went back from God. Ye have been weaving a net to entangle your own feet; building a partition wall betwixt God and you; ſetting up idols of jealouſy in every corner of thy heart and life: ye muſt open out the net, demoliſh the wall, ſacrifice the idols to the jealouſy of an angry God. But it muſt be done, elſe ye will repent it bitterly in time, or in eternity, according as your ſtate is.

What ſhall we do to recover from a decay, to ſtrengthen the dying remains?

1. Labour to work on your hearts a deep ſenſe of the ill of this decaying caſe. Hear God ſaying to thee as to Adam, *Where art thou?* Conſider how ye are robbed and ſpoiled, and ſnared and taken. How it mars all ye do, your praying, hearing, communicating, &c. And try to bring meat out of the eater, and ſweet out of the ſtrong, when ye obſerve it. (1.) Humiliation of ſoul before the Lord, ſaying with Aſaph, Pſal. lxxiii. 22. 'So fooliſh was 'I, and ignorant: I was as a beaſt before thee.' (2.) Senſe of the need of grace, while ye ſee what ſad work ye make in your decaying condition, crying out with the apoſtle, Rom. viii. 24. 'O wretched man that I am, who 'ſhall deliver me from the body of this death!'

2. Be ſenſible of your inability to recover yourſelf, ſaying with Ephraim, Jer. xxxi. 18. 'Turn thou me, 'and I ſhall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God.' Sometimes grace prevents the decaying Chriſtian, and puts him in a fair way of recovery: but all is marred by ſelf confidence, and turning into ſtrength of reſolution, inſtead of going out of one's ſelf to Chriſt. And ſo the reſolution breaks and gives way, and he is where he was before.

3. Believe, accept, or renew your acceptance of Chriſt offered in the goſpel covenant, as if ye had never done it before. And look to him for quickening influences, depend on him for them; to him the Father ſends you for quickening, Rev. iii. 1. And believe the promiſe ſuited to your caſe, and that with application to yourſelf, Hoſ. xiv. 7. 'They that dwell under his ſhadow ſhall return, 'they ſhall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the 'ſcent thereof ſhall be as the wine of Lebanon.' Mal. iv. 2. 'But unto you that fear my name, ſhall the Sun 'of righteouſneſs ariſe with healing in his wings; and ye 'ſhall grow forth as calves of the ſtall.'

4. Reflect on former experiences, muſe on the days when it was better with you, Hoſ. ii. 7. Recal to mind the particular times and places where ye had ſomething of God ye have not now. God ſays to Jacob, Gen. xxxi. 13. 'I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedſt the 'pillar, and where thou vowedſt a vow unto me.' Old experiences ſometimes give a freſh ſmell when handled anew, as in Jacob's caſe, Gen. xxxv. 3. 'Let us ariſe, '(ſays he,) and go up to Bethel; and I will make there

an altar unto God, who anſwered me in the day of my diſtreſs, and was with me in the way which I went.' They help to fill the face with holy ſhame. Every one of them comes out with that inſcription, Jer. ii. 13. 'O generation ſee ye the word of the Lord: have I been a wilderneſs unto Iſrael? a land of darkneſs? wherefore ſay my people we are lords, we will come no more unto thee?' They ſtrengthen faith, according to that, Iſa. li. 9. 'Awake, awake, put on thy ſtrength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?'

5. Repent, or renew your repentance, Rev. iii. 3. Search your ways, take a review of your decay in the ſeveral ſteps of it, in the doleful effects of it on your heart and life. Trace it to the ſource thereof; and let your eye affect your heart with indignation againſt ſin, and ſelf-loathing. Humble yourſelves before the Lord, and lament your backſlidings, with ſincere purpoſe to return to your firſt love.

6. Begin forthwith, and watch, Rev. iii. 2. Satisfy not yourſelves to be affected with your decay on a ſabbath, or at a communion ſeaſon, and to ſtuff your prayers with dry unactive complaints of deadneſs and decay; but forthwith ſet your watch, and call in your heart from its wandering. Watch heart, life, the whole man; watch the beginnings of a revival, and blow the coal, Hoſ. vi. 3.

7. Conſider the ſigns of the times, as did Noah, Heb. xi. 7. who 'by faith being warned of God, of things not ſeen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the ſaving of his houſe.' Behold how the harveſt ripens for the ſickle of wrath. Look over your bed, and ſee how the houſe is like to go up in a fire about your heads, that ye may bend your feet. Concern about the public, not improven for the behoof of one's ſoul, is little worth.

8. Make uſe of godly conference. It is ſaid, Luke xxiv. 15. 'While the two diſciples communed together, and reaſoned, Jeſus himſelf drew near, and went with them.' Converſe with lively Chriſtians is very upſtirring, Prov. xiii. 20. Theſe are rare, ye may ſay: but ye that ever had any experience of religion, tell your caſe one to another, and though you and your fellow be both alike, two cold flint ſtones ſtruck together may produce fire. See Prov. xxvii. 17. Eccleſ. iv. 9, 10, 11. Chriſt ſent out his diſciples by pairs.

9. Fix your eyes on the particular ills of your heart, and purſue them with the knife of mortification, Gal. v. 24. Theſe are the ſuckers that draw away the ſap from thy ſoul, and have made it wither. And be ſure, as any of them thrives, ye will decay. And beguile not yourſelf with what you call your weak ſide; for if ever ye ſee heaven, ye muſt get above it, Matth. v. 29. Remember what is written, Mark x. 21. 'Then Jeſus beholding him, loved him, and ſaid unto him, One thing thou lackeſt; go thy way, ſell whatſoever thou haſt, and give to the poor: and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven; and come, take up the croſs, and follow me.'

Laſtly, Be much in prayer, *fervent* in it, Rom. xii. 11. If your hearts be dead, yet violent them to livelineſs, if I may ſo ſay. One benumbed with cold, going becomes capable to run, and running gathers heat. Stint not yourſelves to morning and evening prayers; but take occaſions between hands, if ye would thrive, and can get them. Uſe ſecret faſting and prayer; a moſt proper remedy for the worſt of decays; for ſome devils are not caſt out but by prayer and faſting.

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